

Discovery Woods

A Montessori Inspired School



Discovery Woods

Student - Parent Handbook

Discovery Woods is a public charter school that is authorized by Osprey Wilds.

DISCOVERY WOODS
STUDENT - PARENT HANDBOOK

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

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

Public Charter School DISTRICT #4198-07-010

There is no tuition charge for students in our charter program, kindergarten through grade 6, during the school day. There is a charge for preschool and the after school program.

2023-2024 SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER ROSTER

Dawn Verdon	Chair/Community Member
Emma Needham	Vice Chair/Parent
Amanda Westlund	Treasurer/ Parent
Ashley Gangestad	Secretary/Parent
Rebekah Kent-Ehlebracht	Member/Parent
Matt Hastert	Member/Parent
Natalie Schiferl	Member/Community Member
Dawn Snook	Member/Teacher
Kristi Crocker	Ex-officio/School Director

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Discoverywoods 2023-2024 Calendar

	S	M	T	W	T	F	S		In Session	Workshop
August	27	28	29	30	31			Teacher Workshop 8/28-8/31		4
September							1 2			
	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Labor Day 9/4	4	
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	First Day of School 9/5	5	
	17	18	19	20	21	22	23		5	
	24	25	26	27	28	29	30		5	
									19	
October	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	No School - Inservice Day 10/6	4	1
	8	9	10	11	12	13	14		5	
	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	No School - EM Conference	3	1
	22	23	24	25	26	27	28		5	
	29	30	31						2	
									19	
November				1	2	3	4		3	
	5	6	7	8	9	10	11		5	
	12	13	14	15	16	17	18		5	
	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	No School - November Break	3	
	26	27	28	29	30			No School - Inservice Day 11/27	3	1
									19	
December					1	2			1	
	3	4	5	6	7	8	9		5	
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16		5	
	17	18	19	20	21	22	23		4	
	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	No School - Winter Break 12/22-1/2	0	
	31								15	
January										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	No School - Winter Break 12/22-1/2	3	
	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	School Resumes 1/3	5	
	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	No School - Inservice Day 1/15	4	1
	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	End of 1st Semester 1/19	5	
	29	30	31						3	
									20	
February				1	2	3			2	
	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		5	
	11	12	13	14	15	16	17		5	
	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	No School - President's Day 2/19	4	
	25	26	27	28	29				4	
									20	
March					1	2		No School - Inservice Day 3/1	0	1
	3	4	5	6	7	8	9		5	
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	No School - Spring Break 3/11-15	0	
	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	School Resumes 3/18	5	
	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	No School - Spring Holiday 3/29	4	
	31								14	
April										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	No School - Inservice Day 4/1	4	1
	8	9	10	11	12	13	14		5	
	15	16	17	18	19	20	21		5	
	22	23	24	25	26	27	28		5	
	29	30							2	
									21	
May				1	2	3	4		3	
	5	6	7	8	9	10	11		5	
	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	Last Preschool Day 5/24	5	
	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	No School - Memorial Day 5/27	5	
	26	27	28	29	30	31		KinderFriend Day 5/30	3	
								End of 2nd Semester	21	
June							1	Last Student Day (1-6) 5/31		
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Teacher Workshop 6/3	0	1
									169	11

Board Work Session Dates	
9/7/2023	2/1/2024
10/5/2023	3/7/2024
11/2/2023	4/4/2024
1/4/2024	5/2/2024

Board Meeting Dates	
7/31/2023	1/11/2024
Aug-None	2/8/2024
9/14/2023	3/21/2024
10/12/2023	4/11/2024
11/9/2023	5/9/2024
12/14/2023	6/13/2024

Testing Calendar			
	Fall	Winter	Spring
STAR/AR1 Testing	Sept 11th-22nd	January 8th-26th	May 6th-17th
MCA Rd & M	NA	NA	April 2nd-30th
MCA Sp	NA	NA	May 6th-10th
MTAS	NA	NA	April 2nd-30th

School Staff Roster

Administration

Kristi Crocker, Director, office@discoverywoods.com

Kara DeVriendt, ELA Specialist/Interventionist, kdevriendt@discoverywoods.com

Taylor Crocker, Business Manager, tcrocker@discoverywoods.com

Lauren Matich, Administrative Assistant

Teaching Staff

Shawna Sachs, Upper Level Teacher (5th- 6th grade)

Emily Sipprell, Middle Level Teacher (3rd-4th grade)

Rachel Hanford, Middle Level Teacher (3rd-4th grade)

Kiersten Kralovetz, Lower Level Teacher (1st-2nd grade)

Ashley Gangestad, Lower Level Teacher (1st-2nd grade)

Renee Huberty, Children's House Teacher (Preschool-Kindergarten)

Chasidi Grant, Children's House Teacher (Preschool-Kindergarten)

Cora Collins, Preschool Lead Teacher (Preschool-Kindergarten)

Amanda Bell, Children's House Assistant (Preschool-Kindergarten)

Additional Support

Kayla Huether, Physical Education Teacher

Dawn Snook, Special Education Teacher

Nick Forbes, Special Education Teacher

Tom Lytle, Behavior Interventionist

Alyssa Marvin, Behavior Aide/Speech Language Aide

Vanessa Ballinger, eLuma - Speech Language

Kara DeVriendt, Title I Teacher

Ann Weber, ELA/Reading Assistant

Michael Knakmuhs, Boiler Technician

Mark Morris, Janitor

Educational Assistants

Catherine McGuire

Sara Prettyman

Lillian Kujala

Hannah Reynolds

Jordan Buckles

Meghan Smith

Americorp Tutors

Mary Morris, K3 Math Corps

Jody Blowers, Math Corps 4-6

Emily Jolie, Reading Corp

Maddie Anderson, Reading Corps

Terry Ely, Reading Corps

Mission, Vision and Goals of Discovery Woods

Mission: 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.

Vision: 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.

Goals:

- To increase learning opportunities and achievement for pupils
- To deliver standards based instruction using a variety of effective teaching strategies
- To provide a Montessori inspired education
- To emphasize environmental education throughout grade levels and content areas.

Our Commitments as to Your Choice for a Quality Charter School

DW is committed to joyful learning at each stage of development. Education begins at birth and every component of a DW education - preschool and elementary school is intentionally designed to meet the unique needs of each stage of development. These components work together to create learners who are internally motivated, who love to learn, and who are able to be active members of a community.

DW is committed to the implementation of a hybrid Montessori methodology and environment. We adhere to the Montessori principles of the prepared environment, multi-age classes, and morning work periods including at least one three-hour work period for elementary students

DW is committed to working in partnership with parents/guardians. Parents are a child's first and most powerful teachers. We know that education takes place both at home and at school. Children will receive the best possible education only when parents and the school work together.

DW is committed to environmental stewardship. Care of the natural world is a logical extension of the Montessori philosophy concerning care for the environment. All classes have nature-based and environmental projects and themes throughout the school year. Discovery Woods teachers use accessible outdoor spaces as an extension of our indoor classrooms.

DW is committed to diversity. A Montessori education prepares children for life. In today's global community, children must learn to live and work with people and ideas drawn from multiple sources, backgrounds and cultures. We welcome families with non-traditional structures.

DW is committed to offering a high-quality preschool program. We know that high quality early education leads to many individual and community benefits such as less criminal and drug activity, fewer teen pregnancies, and higher rates of graduation from high school and college.

Communication between DW and Parents/Guardians

At DW, we are all here for the well-being of the students. Families are expected to work together with the staff to assure that each child is well cared for and is able to reach their full potential within the school. We will ask families to give us all relevant information that will help us in working with children. We want to support the work of the parents or guardians, and we ask to be supported as educators.

Our school provides several ways for parents to stay connected and updated about their children and school events throughout the year including:

Parent / teacher / student conferences

- Conferences allow the opportunity of 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 there are certain times of the year that conferences typically occur, 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.

Progress reports/Report Cards

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

School Newsletters

- DW will send out periodic newsletters highlighting events and giving information such as the lunch menu and reminders of closings.

Classroom Newsletters

- The frequency of classroom newsletters depends on the age level of your child. Teachers use these to give specific classroom information outside of the school newsletter.

Parent/student education events

- Throughout the year DW will schedule specific events for parents and students to learn together; for example, school literacy nights are geared towards reading activities and ideas that can be used at home.

Board meetings

- As a charter school, DW holds monthly board meetings to discuss the on-goings 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.

Student Drop-off and Pick-up Including Early Release Days

Procedures for Morning Drop-off

- School starts at **8:00 am**
- Students may be dropped off as early as 7:35am. Students should not be in the building before 7:35am.
- Elementary school is an excellent time to begin teaching your child the importance of being on time. Please encourage them to be on time by arriving between 7:35 and 7:50 a.m. so that they can take care of unpacking their belongings and getting settled in their classrooms, ready to begin the school day at 8:00.
- When dropping a student off at school in the morning you may pull up in the front of the building on our 7th street entrance. Drop off is between 7:35 - 7:55am.
- It is preferred for parents to drop students off at the main door. If you must pass the front door, please stop into the office to sign in and receive a visitor's pass so that you may be identified as a "safe" adult. Sign out before leaving the building.

Procedures for Afternoon Dismissal

- School ends at **2:50 pm**
- Please do not pick up your child before 2:50 unless you have contacted the office prior to pick-up time.
- Buses line up on the south side of the school between 2:50-2:55 pm and students utilizing the bus will be dismissed first. Please do not park in the bus lane.
- Children wait in their designated area until they are called for pickup.
- Please wait in your vehicle at the front entrance or use the 7th Street entrance along the front sidewalk, taking your place in the line of cars.
- Your child(ren) will be dismissed when your car pulls along the sidewalk near the front

door and garden. We do this for safety so that we can clearly see that children make it into cars.

- Dismissal will be more efficient if cars pull up as far as possible along the sidewalk so that multiple cars can load children at the same time. If you are coming to the doors of the building to pick up your child(ren), please park farther from the front doors or on the opposite side of the street to allow the flow of traffic.
- Students may only be released to parents/guardians who are included on the Emergency forms.
- You must have identification present to pick up a child.
- Parents/guardians will need to contact the school if anyone other than someone approved for pick-up will be picking up your child. Make sure anyone who picks up your child has identification in order for your child 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 your child uses After Care.

Safety and Student Pick-up Policy

In an effort to keep all students safe, we have had all parents sign emergency forms listing who may or may not pick up their child. Whenever someone comes to pick up a child the list/card is checked to make sure that person is listed as someone who may pick up the student. We also have the right to ask for proper identification from anyone we do not recognize.

Please remember to keep us informed about any changes to the list of names, phone numbers, etc. It is your responsibility to inform the office of all changes in a timely manner. If at any time you need to add someone to your pick up list, please do so in person. We cannot make changes to your list with a phone call to the office. **If you have a court order denying someone contact with your child, provide a copy to the office.**

Safety in the Driveway and Parking Lot

At Discovery Woods we are making an effort to create a learning environment that is safe for every child, family member, staff member and guest. We need your help in several areas to help maintain safety:

- Remember to park in designated parking areas
- Reduce speed when driving through the parking lot/school zone and watch for children
- Make sure children do not open 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
- Be aware buses use the south side of the building, do not park or drop off students on that side

Attendance Policies

Attendance Absences and Tardies

Regular school attendance is one of the most important ingredients in achieving a successful education. Minnesota law requires students to attend school. Important times and procedures involving attendance include:

- School starts at 8:00am and ends at 2:50 (see above section for pick-up and dismissal procedure). **Students not in the classroom at 8:00am will be counted as tardy.** Students may be dropped off as early as 7:35am. Students should not be in the building before 7:35am.

Elementary school is an excellent time to begin teaching your child the importance of being on time. Please encourage them to be on time by arriving between 7:35 and 7:50 a.m. so that they can take care of unpacking their belongings and getting settled in their classrooms, ready to begin the school day at 8:00am.

- Students arriving to their classroom after 8:00am are counted as tardy. Students arriving after this time must report to the office with their guardian in order to sign them in before heading to class.
- Please contact the office between 7:30am and 8:00am if your child will be absent or tardy.
- Call the office at (218) 828-8200 if your child will be late. Leave a voicemail if no one answers.
 - Do not email or send this information with a sibling.
 - Do not call the classroom teacher.
- If your child will be late and will need a school lunch, you must call the office before 8:30am. We order our school lunch everyday; therefore, your child may not receive lunch if it is not ordered by 8:30am.
- If we do not hear from you by 9:00am., we will contact you or your emergency contact at home or work to verify your child's absence. If your child becomes ill or injured during the day, the school will contact you at one of the numbers you have provided on the **emergency form**. We do require that families provide an additional emergency contact person in the event that the parent cannot be reached.

Excused Absences Include

- Student Illness
 - A doctor's note must be provided after 2 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.
- Removal of a student pursuant to a suspension.

Unexcused Absences Include

- Any time parents/guardians do not call the office to report their child's absence or fail 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 - contact by phone informing parent of policy

3 days - first letter to parent and a copy is given to the classroom teacher

5 days- letter to parent requesting a doctor's note for any further absence

6 days - conference request with parent, director and classroom teacher

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

Excused Absences:

5 days of excused absences - a letter will be sent to the parent, on a case by case basis. A copy of the letter will be given to the classroom teacher.

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

Tardies:

3 tardies - phone call to parent about our concerns

5 tardies - letter to parent

Excessive tardiness may lead to a truancy referral or other consequences, 5 unexcused tardies will equal 1 unexcused absence.

Student Illness and Medication

Student Illness

In the event that your child becomes ill and misses school please make sure to do the following:

- Call the office and speak with someone or leave a voicemail.
 - Do not email this information.
 - Do not contact the classroom teacher about the illness, contact the office.
 - Failure to call the office results in an unexcused absence.
- Call the office each day your child is home ill.
- Do not send illness information with a sibling.
- 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 your 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.
- 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 parent stating the name of the medication, dosage requirement and student's name.
- The medication must be in the original unopened container. Plastic bag or mixed medications will be returned.
- Will be given according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Visiting/Volunteering the School /Contacting Your Child During School Day

Visitor Sign-In

DW welcomes visitors throughout the school day but as a school safety measure, all visitors to classrooms must be pre-approved by office staff and the classroom teacher, with a preferred minimum of 24 hours notice. When you arrive at school, you are required to check in at the office before entering the rest of the building. This will allow our office personnel to be aware of your visit. You will be asked to sign in and wear a "visitor's badge" for the safety and protection of everyone in the school.

Visitor Meals

It is possible for parents and grandparents to come and eat lunch with a student, as long as you have made arrangements with the office **prior to 8:30 a.m.** on the day that they will be visiting. You will need to inform the office how many extra lunches to order, and if they will be adult or child, and with whom you will be eating. The cost of an adult meal is \$4.10 and can be paid in the office. Please try to have the correct amount of money or pay by check. Remember to sign in at the office and obtain a visitor badge.

Messages for Your Child

We understand there may be times that it will be necessary for you to call the school office to leave a message for your child. Due to the number of calls we receive on a daily basis, we expect you to adhere to the following procedure regarding phone calls with messages for students. Please read them carefully.

- When it is necessary for you to call and leave specific instructions for your child, the message will be taken in the office. Your message will be sent to the classroom. Please, remember to call as early as possible as oftentimes the class is out of the classroom in the afternoon.
- Call prior to 12:00 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 Your Child

Students will not be allowed to call home from school to make changes for social arrangements they want to make with their friends after school. They must make these plans with you and other families before the school day begins.

Parent Contact Information

The school makes every effort to try to keep student files current for emergencies, but we ask for your 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, make sure to speak with someone in the office so it is ensured we have your information 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.)

Field Trips

Parents or guardians must sign a permission form when a child is enrolled for children to take walks from the school to Gregory Park, ice rink, or to other nearby locations. If a class is to take a field trip, information and permission slips will go out to families a week before the trip. The permission slip must be signed and returned to school in order for children to attend the field trip. Transportation for a field trip will always be in accordance with state regulations regarding transporting children. Students will only go on a city, school bus, or an appropriately equipped vehicle. The entire class may also go on a trip for a special occasion. At times, teachers need parent volunteers to chaperone field trips. In order to attend a field trip as a chaperone you should have volunteered within the school in some other capacity. This gives the staff and students the opportunity to get to know the chaperone before attending an off-site event. 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.

Inclement Weather Policy and Procedure

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, DW will start late or close any time the Brainerd School District 181 does.
- If 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.

Community Guidelines for Conduct, Discipline and Dress

Conduct

It is our expectation that students at *Discovery Woods* consistently behave in a manner that is safe and respectful. We acknowledge that each child is responsible for his/her own behavior. We will make an effort to help each child assume responsibility for his/her own behavior by establishing expectations that are clear and consistent.

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 for the right behavior. The parent/guardian will be contacted after the second infraction, unless a child's safety is in concern. In that case, the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be contacted immediately.

Behavioral Guidance Policies and Procedure

We expect all children and adults to observe these four rules of respect in their 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.

The staff of DW exemplifies appropriate behavior with the children and with each other. In this way a positive model is provided for the children. Staff model respect, kindness, and encouragement. Children are encouraged to be kind and respectful in turn, but they are also acknowledged for who they are. Appropriate channeling of anger is fostered. Teachers and staff may use a variety of positive guidance techniques that include but are not limited to:

- Clear and consistent rules
- Allowing children to try and resolve conflicts that are not violent (i.e. using the peace corner)
- Redirection from conflicts toward constructive activity
- Anticipation of problems before they occur
- Encouragement and avoidance of criticism
- Offering children alternatives to aggressive behavior, such as walking away, ignoring, or talking through a problem

Behavior Policy

DW is working with the Caring School Community which is a research-based social and emotional learning (SEL) program that builds school-wide community, develops students' social skills and SEL competencies, and enables a transformative stance on discipline.

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 specific child. If the misbehavior is violent the parents are 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.

DW handles misbehavior on an individual basis without compromising the safety and security of all students.

Pupil Fair Dismissal Act

Public schools, which includes elementary 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 to the school. Also, further information about this law is available on the Minnesota Department of Education website.

Dress Code

Students should wear clothes that are:

- Comfortable
- Appropriate for indoor and outdoor activities
- Able to be managed by the child
- Appropriate for the type of weather

We do not require a uniform and understand that clothes can be a reflection of a child's personality and interests. As an environmentally focused school, we want children to be comfortable and prepared for fun outdoor adventures in a variety of weather. Students go outside unless the temperature is below zero, and/or the wind chill is more than 10 degrees below zero. Students are not permitted to wear clothing that depict hate speech, illegal items, or profanity; clothes that reveal undergarments (aside from visible straps or waistbands); and accessories that could be considered dangerous.

Emergency Procedures and Drills

Students practice fire drills once a month during warmer weather so they may practice how to exit the building in a safe manner. There are maps and exit plans in each room of the school to facilitate the rapid exiting 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 in what to do during a tornado. We also have drills for intruders in or outside the building. This is a situation where children may not go outside because there may be suspicious activity, or depending on the situation would enter a room that would be safe during a tornado or would be able to be secured.

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 assure 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 their grievance with the director. The director will schedule a meeting with the parent within a 24-hour period. 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 DW Board of Directors. The meeting will take place within 5 days of the contact. 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.

It is our hope that we will be able to effectively address any concerns that should arise with parents or families, as you trust us to care for your children. We take all concerns seriously and will work diligently toward resolution that is acceptable to all parties involved.

Classroom Pets and Animal Visitation

DW does have pets in classrooms and they are living as humanely as possible. Children are instructed on how to observe and handle each pet, if it is a pet that can be handled. We try to keep pets that are hypoallergenic, but parents should inform teachers if their child happens to be allergic to various types of animals. Since many students have allergies or fears, it is not appropriate to bring animals inside of the building unless they are a registered service animal.

Electronic Games and Cell Phone Policy

We understand 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. 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 situation to use their phone in the office. Students and parents should understand that student hall cubbies are not able to be locked; therefore, in the event that an electronic device becomes missing, the school is not responsible for theft or loss of student personal property.

Food and Nutrition

Milk Account

For those students who bring lunch from home, but would like to purchase milk from school, the cost per carton is 35 cents (\$0.35). We prefer that you purchase the milk in increments of 10 containers. This milk account is for milk with lunch only and should not be confused with any other account. Money sent to school should be labeled with the student's name and designated "milk money".

Student Breakfast

DW students have an opportunity to eat breakfast between 7:35-8:00. Students may order a school breakfast or bring a snack to school. Please remember we are a Wellness school, snacks are to be healthy and low in sugar and salt. Fresh fruits or vegetables are best, cheese, yogurt, hummus and wheat crackers are examples of appropriate snacks.

Allergen Information

Children requiring a milk or food substitute will have that option. Please contact the school in writing and include the doctor's note if your child requires a milk or food substitute due to allergies.

Student Lunch

Lunch is provided on site through a contract with 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 so we may call our lunch provider and tell them how many meals to deliver each day. It is vital that your student arrives at school on time to order hot lunch. You may call in a hot lunch if you know your child will be late to school.

Please fill out the Educational Benefits application for free and reduced lunches. Students will be receiving free breakfasts and lunches. Every family who has children that attend DW must fill out this Application for Educational Benefits and send it to ISD 181. Any time you have a question about your child's breakfast/lunch account or to make a payment, please call Sandy at ISD 181 (218) 454-6939. When leaving a message, please include your name and number.

Birthdays

We love to celebrate birthdays and recognize children 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 our students, we ask that parents **do not** send birthday cakes or sweet snacks. Birthdays can still be celebrated without sweets and sometimes without food at all. Some ideas of how to celebrate at our school 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; having the class decorate a banner with special messages.

State Academic Testing

Please refer to the school website for the school testing calendar. The Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) tests are given to all public school students starting in 3rd grade. This is a very important time for your older elementary child and the school. You can make this time easier on your child if you assure that they get plenty of rest and have healthy breakfasts and lunches *every school day*.

The United States Flag and Pledge

DW adheres to the Minnesota State Statute (121A.11), which requires the proper display of an United States flag while school is in session. Furthermore, we follow the statute that 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.

Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedure

As required by law, DW has a comprehensive anti-bullying policy. Due to the length of the document you can request a copy from the office.

Discovery Woods Computer Use Policy

In order to use school laptops and network resources, students must understand and agree to the conditions in this policy. Students and their parent(s)/guardian(s) must sign this form to acknowledge that they accept these terms before they will be allowed to use *Discovery Woods* laptops and tablets. 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.
- 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 cost necessary for repair or replacement of the item, as well as potential legal consequences.

Parents and students will be provided with our Discovery Woods 23/24 Chromebook User Agreement to read over and sign prior to receiving a Chromebook to use.

Statewide Assessments: Parent/Guardian Participation Guide and Refusal Information

Your student's participation in statewide assessments is important as it allows your school and district to ensure all students have access to a high-quality education. In the past, students with disabilities and English learners were often excluded from statewide assessments. By requiring that all students take statewide assessments, schools and teachers have more information to see how all students are doing. This helps schools to continuously improve the education they provide and to identify groups, grades, or subjects that may need additional support.

Assessments Connect to Standards

Statewide assessments are based on the [Minnesota Academic Standards](#) or the [WIDA English Language Development Standards](#). These standards define the knowledge and skills students should be learning in K–12 public and charter schools. Minnesota prioritizes high-quality education, and statewide assessments gives educators and leaders an opportunity to evaluate student and school success.

Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA) and Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS)

MCA and MTAS are the annual assessments in reading, mathematics and science that measure a snapshot of student learning of the Minnesota K–12 Academic Standards.

ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS for English Learners

The ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS are the annual assessments for English learners that provide information about their progress in learning academic English based on the WIDA English Language Development Standards.

Statewide Assessments Help Families and Students

Participating in statewide assessments helps families see a snapshot of their student's learning so they can advocate for their success in school. High school students can use MCA results:

- For course placement at a Minnesota State college or university. If students receive a college-ready score, they may not need to take a remedial, noncredit course for that subject.
- For Postsecondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) and College in the Schools programs.

English learners who take the ACCESS or Alternate ACCESS and meet certain requirements have the opportunity to exit from English learner programs.

Taking Statewide Assessments Helps Your Student's School

Statewide assessments provide information to your school and district about how all students are engaging with the content they learn in school. This information helps:

- Educators evaluate their instructional materials.
- Schools and districts identify inequities between groups, explore root causes and implement supports.
- School and district leaders make decisions about how to use money and resources to support all students.

Student Participation in Statewide Assessments

Student participation in state and locally required assessments is a parent/guardian choice. If you choose to have your student not participate in a statewide assessment, please provide a reason for your decision on the form. Contact your student's school to learn more about locally required assessments.

Consequences of Not Participating in Statewide Assessments

- The student will not receive an individual score. For ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS, the student would not have the opportunity to exit their English learner program.
- School and district assessment results will be incomplete, making it more difficult to have an accurate picture of student learning.
- Since all eligible students are included in some calculations even when they do not participate, school and district accountability results are impacted. This may affect the school's ability to be identified for support or recognized for success.

Check with your local school or district to see if there are any other consequences for not participating.



(education.mn.gov > Students and Families > Programs and Initiatives > Statewide Testing)

Additional Information

- On average, students spend less than 1 percent of instructional time taking statewide assessments each year.
- Minnesota statutes limit the total amount of time students can spend taking other district- or school-wide assessments to 11 hours or less each school year, depending on the grade.
- School districts and charter schools are required to publish an assessment calendar on their website by the beginning of each school year. Refer to your district or charter school's website for more information on assessments.

(Note: This form is only applicable for the 20__ to 20__ school year.)



Statewide Assessment: Parent/Guardian Decision Not to Participate

By completing this form, you are acknowledging that your student will not participate in statewide assessments and will not receive individual assessment results. This form must be returned to your student's school before the applicable test administration.

Student Information

First Name: _____ Middle Initial: _____ Last Name: _____

Date of Birth: ____/____/____ Current Grade in School: _____

School: _____ District: _____

Parent/Guardian Name (print): _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Reason for Refusal:

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

MCA/MTAS Reading MCA/MTAS Science

MCA/MTAS Mathematics ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS

Contact your school or district for more information on how to opt out of local assessments.

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DW Student- Parent Handbook Acknowledgement

We ask both students and parents to acknowledge the DW Student- Parent Handbook. **Please read and discuss it together, then sign and return this page.**

As a student at DW, I have read the Student-Parent Handbook. I agree to follow it to the best of my ability.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

As a parent/ guardian of a student at DW, I have read the Student- Parent Handbook. We agree to follow the handbook to the best of our ability, supporting our child(ren)'s education through active engagement.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____