

Birch Lake Elementary School



2019-2020 FAMILY HANDBOOK

Mr. Jonathan Luknic, Principal

Welcome to the....

2019-2020 school year at Birch Lake Elementary!

This handbook is a guide and reference for everything you'll need to know for the upcoming year. Please take some time to carefully review the information as a family.

We are always learning and growing at Birch Lake, and we continually strive to enhance the academics, community and safety of our school. Please don't hesitate to let us know how we can make your family's experience the best it can be.

In everything we do at Birch Lake, families are partners in our work for the benefit of all children. It is our firm belief that we all share in the responsibilities and benefits of a caring, positive and safe school community. We look forward to your partnership and engagement throughout the year.

Sincerely,

Mr. Jonathan Luknic, Principal,

Birch Lake Elementary Teachers and Staff



Quick Reference

Birch Lake Elementary

Important Phone Numbers:

Main Office: (651) 653-2776
Attendance Line: (651) 653-2777
Health Office: (651) 653-2624
Fax: (651) 653-2778
School Closings: (651) 407-7540
Extended Day: (651) 653-2784
Transportation: (651) 653-2734



School Hours

School Hours: 9:15 - 3:40
Office Hours: 8:00 - 4:00

Important Websites

School Home Page:
<http://www.isd624.org/birchlake/>

Key Handbook Topics Reference:

Topic	Page(s)
Social-Emotional Learning	5-6
Student Recognitions/Assemblies	7-8
Student Conduct	9-11
Arrival and Dismissal Processes	12-13
Family Involvement and PTA	14-15
Attendance	16
Health Office/Student Illness	17-18
Bus Safety	19

FeePay:
<https://whitebear.feepay.com/>

Technical Support

Email: parenttech-help@isd624.org or call (651) 407-7637

Messages are checked daily. Tech department hours are from 8 am - 4:30 pm most business days.

Core Values Focus

We will continue with our focus on three of the district's core values of Compassion, Integrity and Respect.

We invite families to discuss what these concepts mean and how they relate to both home and school life all year long!



COMPASSION

We will...

- understand the circumstances and viewpoints of others
- develop the capacity to forgive others and ourselves
- celebrate the contributions of others
- promote a peaceful, caring and safe community

INTEGRITY

We will...

- stand up for what we believe
- be honest with ourselves and others
- demonstrate fairness in our judgments and actions
- fulfill commitments and promises

RESPECT

We will...

- believe in the importance and dignity of all people
- celebrate individuality
- value and appreciate diversity
- honor self and others through words and actions

Social-Emotional Learning

Social-emotional learning is fundamental to positive growth in children and research demonstrates a positive impact on academic success. Caring School Community is a curriculum and framework Birch Lake will implement to enhance and guide the social-emotional learning of all our students

Caring School Community Basics-

Relationships are at the core of a successful learning community. Caring School Community helps foster relationships among the students, school staff, and parents that are characterized by genuine warmth and interest. Students and adults spend time getting to know and appreciate one another. They learn about one others' interests, opinions, and ideas, and to treat one another with respect.

The program accomplishes this important work in a variety of ways, including-

- Practice social skills, foster relationships and build a strong community in the classroom and school.
- Daily Morning and Closing Circle activities in which students practice social skills and get to know one another.
- Weekly class meetings in which students address common concerns and current issues.
- Buddies in other grades to build leadership and relationship skills.
- Weekly Home Connection Activities, which help students talk with family members about the social development focus of the week.

Direct Teaching of Social Skills -

The Caring School Community program provides daily lessons for directly teaching children the social skills they need to succeed at school and in life. The social skills addressed in the lessons fall into four categories:

1. Beginning-of-year skills, such as learning and following the classroom and school rules and procedures and learning to look at and greet one another by name.
2. Self-management skills, such as reflecting on their own behavior and asking for help when needed.
3. Interpersonal skills, such as including one another and sharing work fairly.
4. Executive function skills, such as monitoring attention and re-focusing when necessary.
5. Each week's lesson focuses on a theme around student life in the school and community. Over the course of the year, the students have the chance to learn and practice all of the skills multiple times.







Social-Emotional Learning

The Zones of Regulation provides a common language and way of recognizing feelings that is reinforced throughout the school. This common language is a foundation on which students learn strategies for understanding and managing their emotional states.

The **ZONES** of Regulation® Reproducible E The Zones of Regulation Visual

The **ZONES** of Regulation®

			
<p>BLUE ZONE</p> <p>Sad Sick Tired Bored Moving Slowly</p>	<p>GREEN ZONE</p> <p>Happy Calm Feeling Okay Focused Ready to Learn</p>	<p>YELLOW ZONE</p> <p>Frustrated Worried Silly/Wiggly Excited Loss of Some Control</p>	<p>RED ZONE</p> <p>Mad/Angry Terrified Yelling/Hitting Elated Out of Control</p>

© 2011 Think Social Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved.
From *The Zones of Regulation*® by Leah M. Kuypers • Available at www.socialthinking.com

Student Recognitions

It is important to recognize the positive contributions students make to the school community. Bear PAW Awards, attendance awards and monthly recognition assemblies are some of the main ways we do this. Returning families please note that we've made a few changes to the Bear PAWs and assemblies this year.

Bear PAW Awards

- Any staff member may give a student a Bear PAW Award for going 'above and beyond' showing Compassion, Integrity and Respect.
- When an award is given, a copy will go home with information about why it was given and the positive impact that was made.
- We encourage families to celebrate these awards and to review at home why they were given in order to reinforce positive behaviors.

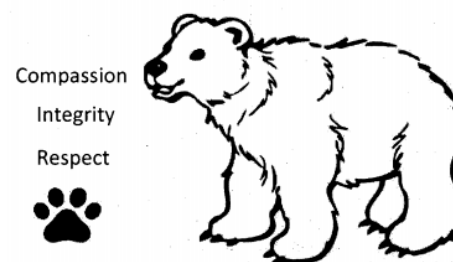
Attendance Awards

- Attendance awards will be given out monthly to promote excellent attendance.
- The awards will include perfect attendance for the month, most improved attendance for the month and other categories that reflect positive trends in attendance among students.

Monthly Recognition Assemblies

- Each teacher may select one student each month to be recognized at the monthly assembly for a Bear PAW Award he/she received (a student may be recognized for Bear PAWs at an assembly only once per year).
- Attendance awardees will also be recognized at each monthly assembly.
- Families of students to be recognized each month will receive an invitation to the assembly.
- There will be a short family reception with light refreshments at the conclusion of each assembly.
- These students will also have "Lunch with the Principal" the month in which they're recognized.

Birch Lake Bear Paw

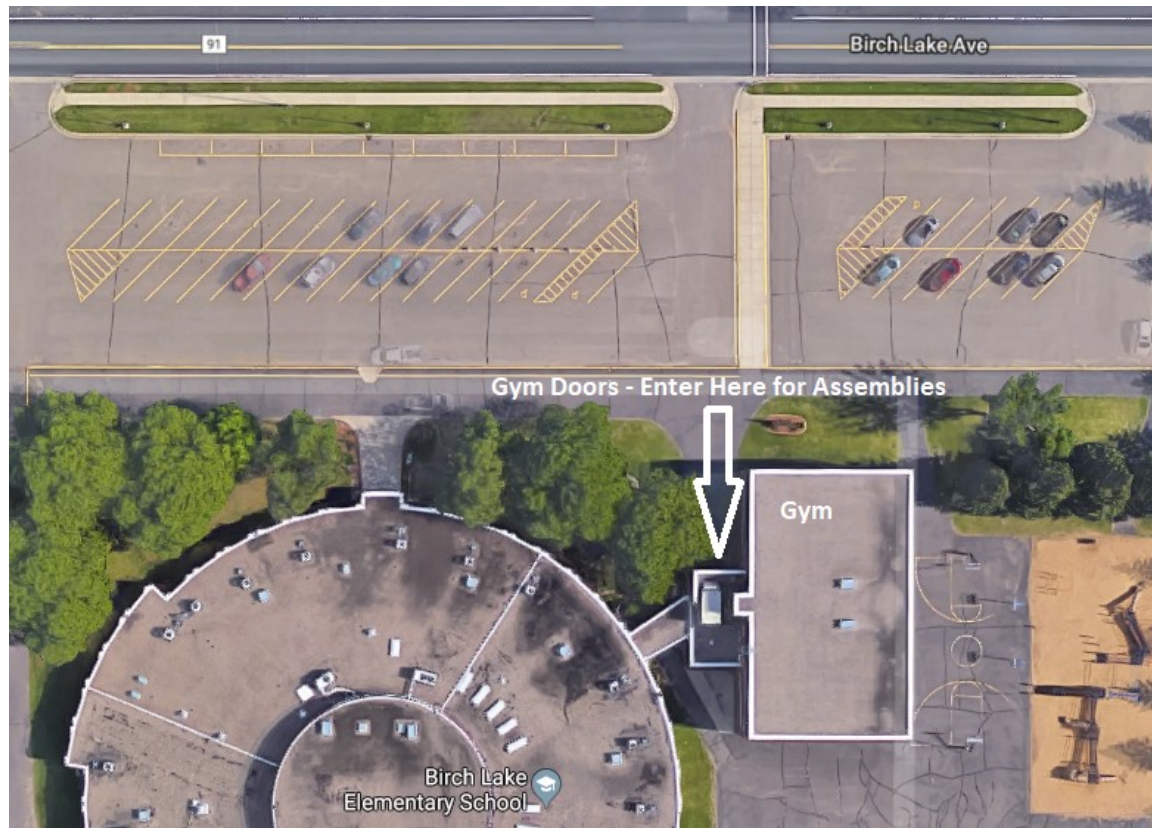


Presented to: _____
For: _____
Teacher: _____
Date: _____

School Assemblies

There will be monthly school assemblies for student Bear PAW and attendance recognitions, and the families of students being recognized will be invited each month. Various performances, PTA functions and other schoolwide events will also take place throughout the year. Specific event information will be provided in each invitation, and here are some general schoolwide event procedures.

- Schoolwide Assemblies take place in the Gymnasium, and we ask that attendees enter through the Gymnasium doors as shown-



- Restrooms and drinking fountains are located in the Gymnasium entry area.
- Please do not proceed into the main school building unless directed by school staff.
- If taking students home after the assembly, they must be signed out with the main school office. (We recommend students complete the school day whenever possible.)
- For classroom visits and events, please continue to check in with the main school office.

Conduct

Having clear and consistent expectations for student conduct is important to maintaining a positive learning environment. Below are the common expectations for students throughout the school. Teachers will also set classroom expectations that will be communicated at the start of the year.

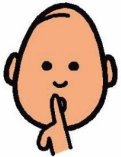
Area	Expectations	Area	Expectations
Playground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take turns • Include all • Safe body • Follow all adult directions the first time • Stay in assigned space • Line up right away when the whistle is blown 	Hallways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walk in 2 straight lines • Walk on the right side of the hallways • Stay together with your class • Code 0 • Keep hands and feet safe and away from walls • Carry a pass if alone in the hallways
Assemblies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on the speaker • 'Give Me 5' means ready to listen • Cheer respectfully • Code 3 - inside voices • Remain seated 	Media Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treat books and space with respect • Code 0 when checking out books • Follow all adult directions the first time • Use shelf markers
Dismissal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay seated in the bus line • Code 2 • Follow all adult directions the first time • Follow all patrol directions the first time • Have things packed and ready to go when bus or ride is there • Pay attention to know when bus or ride is there • Follow all bus safety rules • Walk when it's time to go 	Cafe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sit at a table for your grade level • Stay in the first seat you pick • Remain in your seat until dismissed • 3-4 students per bench seat • Welcome all to sit by not saving seats • Raise your hand if you need help • Code 2
Bathrooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wait patiently outside for your turn • Code 0 • Pick up after yourself and others • Wash hands with soap when finished 		

Conduct

There are also clear expectations for student volume levels at different times. We continue to use 'Codes 0-4' as a consistent way to communicate this. Again, teachers may communicate additional signals and phrases to students to let them know how to participate appropriately in the classroom.

Code 0

No Talking



Code 1

1 Person Talking



Code 2

Talking with Partner



Code 3

Talking with a Group



Code 4

Talking and Playing



Conduct

While social-emotional learning and clear expectations are intended to reduce discipline issues, there is also a process for responding to concerns. The intent of this discipline process is to help students grow over time and become more able to meet the expectations going forward, rather than simply being punitive.

Major and Minor Discipline Concerns

- Minor concerns, like classroom disruptions and talking out of turn, are typically addressed within the classroom setting by the teacher.
- Major concerns, like physical aggression and destroying property, are typically addressed outside the classroom by behavior support staff or the Principal.
- Minor concerns that are repeated may also result in a referral out of the classroom.

Discipline Process

The following are the progressive steps for addressing discipline concerns. Note that major concerns may be addressed outside of the classroom immediately.

1. Take a break - student asked to move briefly away from the classroom activity to a designated spot.
2. Partner room - student asked to go to a nearby designated classroom for more extended reflection. Student completes a 'Stop and Think' sheet with the teacher, and a copy is sent home.
3. Referral - student asked to work with another adult to reflect. Student completes a 'Stop and Think' sheet with referral staff, and a copy is sent home along with the referral information.

Consequences for Discipline Concerns

The consequences following an out-of-classroom referral are designed to be learning experiences for the student and to be fitting to the situation. Some of these responses include:

- Written reflections/apologies
- Loss of a privilege
- Time in the office (sit out of preferred activity)
- Conference or mediation
- Make restitution (do something to make the situation 'right')
- Out-of-school suspension

Behavior Contracts

Students with more than one out-of-class referral during a month will have a behavior contract in place. This contract will be created in collaboration with the family and school team. A follow up meeting will be scheduled to check in on progress with the contract.

Bus Conduct

All school rules apply to the school bus and field trip destinations. Students may be subject to assigned seats or bus suspensions due to bus conduct issues.

Arrival Process



Student safety is our top priority as a school staff, and we share this responsibility with students, families and the entire community. Please review the following procedures for arrival and dismissal carefully as there have been changes from last year.

- Students may arrive at school between 9:00-9:15 AM each morning.
- Note that the school is not open and there is **no supervision for students prior to 9:00 AM, and students may not arrive before that time.**
- If students arrive after 9:15 am, they must be signed in by a parent in the office.
- The map shows the designated area to drop off students by car. Never drop students off at arrival time in the parking lot designated for buses.
- **If dropping off students curbside:**
 - Watch for people crossing at the two marked crossing zones.
 - Pull all the way forward to allow room for others.
 - Assist children in safely exiting the car but do not leave cars parked in the drop-off area.

If walking students to the school door:



- Park in a marked parking stall.
- Cross at one of the marked crossing zones.
- Do not leave unattended cars parked in the student drop-off zone or the perimeter of the lot.



Dismissal Process



Student safety is our top priority as a school staff, and we share this responsibility with students, families and the entire community. Please review the following procedures for arrival and dismissal carefully as there have been changes from last year.

- Students are **dismissed from school starting at 3:40 pm** each day.
- The map shows the designated area to pick up students by car curbside.
- **If picking up students curbside:**
 - Watch for people crossing at the two marked crossing zones.
 - Pull all the way forward to allow room for others.
 - Display the pick-up tag provided by the school on your mirror or have an ID ready.
 - Wait for the attendant to assist you.
 - The attendant will radio into the school to have your child(ren) dismissed from the gym.
 - Please remain in your car and do not leave unattended cars in the student pick-up area.



If your student is going home a different way than usual:

- Send a written note to the teacher on the day of the change or before, **or**
- Send an email to: Birchdismissalrequest@isd624.org by noon the day of the change.
- Emergency contacts, family friends, relatives or others can not pick up students without prior notification from a legal guardian.
- **School staff may ask for identification of anyone picking up students.**



Involvement & Communications

Family involvement is welcomed and encouraged, and there are many ways to become involved at Birch Lake! The following is an overview about how to stay involved and connected.

School Communications

There are multiples ways in which the school communicates important information to families:

- Monthly all-school newsletter
- Classroom weekly newsletter
- School Facebook page
- Mass calls and emails
- See-Saw (online sharing app)
 - Teachers will provide login information
- School Website:
<http://www.whitebear.k12.mn.us/BirchLake/>

Volunteer Opportunities

- Family members are welcome to help out in the classroom, on field trips and preparing materials.
- Based on your interest and availability, we can help match you to a fitting opportunity.
- Call Laura at 651-653-2776 or your child's teacher to discuss volunteer opportunities.
- Opportunities that include working with students require a background check through the district.

Cell Phones

- Cell phones may not be used at school unless approved by school staff.

School/Classroom Visits

- Always check in at the school office to sign in and get a visitor's pass.
- Office staff may ask for identification from visitors.
- Arrange classroom visits in advance with the teacher so that we can best meet your needs.
- If an urgent need arises, office staff will be happy to assist with a solution.

Birthday Celebrations

- Due to allergies and other dietary concerns, **we ask that families do not provide food/treats for student birthdays.**
- This is a change in practice from past years and long-standing traditions, so we appreciate your co-operation.

Phone Calls and Messages

- The main office can direct any phone calls for teachers and students during the day.
- If teaching is in progress, office staff will take a message or transfer to the classroom voicemail.
- Students may use school phones only in urgent situations under the direction of staff.

Parent Teacher Association

The PTA is one of the main ways families can collaborate with staff and with each other to enhance the school experience for all. There are many ways to get involved, including:

- Becoming a PTA member and attending monthly meetings.
- Becoming a “class parent” who serves as the contact between the PTA and a specific classroom.
- Attending or volunteering at school events and fundraisers.
- Signing up for the Family Directory so that other families may connect with you and the PTA can send you updates.

Contact: birchlakeelementarypta@gmail.com

PTA President: Susie Fisher

Major PTA Activities:

September:
Bounce back to school

October:
Fundraiser - Heggie's Pizza Sale and Box Tops
Pancake Dinner, Books and Bingo

November:
Movie Night

December:
Holiday Store for Students

January:
Donuts with Dad or Special Friend

February:
Fundraiser - Box Tops

March:
Fundraiser - Raffle Baskets
Family Dance

April:
Grandparents and Special Friends Day

May:
Fundraiser - Box Tops
Teacher Appreciation Week
Morning with Mom or Special Friend

June:
Color Run



Attendance

One of the most important ways you can support your child to be successful in school is also one of the most basic: make sure they come to school every day on time. While it may seem like common sense, research shows how big of an impact regular school attendance has.

In fact, **if a student misses just 2 days of school a month, he/she is much more likely to fall behind** academically. Research has shown specifically that students missing this much school are more likely to lag behind on critical educational milestones, such as reading proficiently by 3rd grade and graduating high school on time.

While missing school for any reason can have a negative impact if it happens too often, there may be times when it is unavoidable. See below for district policies regarding attendance, including when an absence can be excused.

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

Excused Absences: To be considered an excused absence, the student's parent or legal guardian may be asked to verify, in writing, the reason for the student's absence from school. A note from a physician or a licensed mental health professional stating that the student cannot attend school is a valid excuse.

Excused Absences Include:

- Illness
- Medical appointments (try to make outside of the school day)
- Religious holidays
- Extreme family emergency



Vacations must be pre-approved by the Principal and may only be excused up to 5 days cumulatively per year. The form for vacation approval is in the Health Office and should be filled out 2 weeks in advance. Academic progress and overall attendance will be considered when making vacation approval decisions.

Call the Birch Lake Attendance Line if a student is absent before 9:30 am at 651-653-2777.

Please also note that if a child has more than 4 unexcused absences, it is reported to the county. Guardians will receive a letter in the mail, and in some instances if the absences continue, may be required to go to court.

Health Office Information

The Health Office provides necessary health services for a variety of medical conditions for all Birch Lake children. From colds and scraped knees, to allergic reactions and more serious injuries, the Health Office staff treats each child with care, urgency and professionalism.

Basic Information

Hours - 8:00 am - 4:00 pm on school days

Staff -

- Angela Mullen, R.N.: 651-653-2625
- Jeannie Bendel, Health Aide: 651-653-2624

Treating Injuries and Acute Illness

- A student will be cared for by Health Office staff to render first aid treatment.
- If emergency medical treatment is needed, guardians will be contacted immediately.
- If guardians or emergency contacts cannot be reached, the student may be transported to a hospital at the direction of school staff.

Be sure to keep emergency contacts updated with the Health Office, including people who can be responsive on short notice during the school day!

Medication

- Medications, including any over-the-counter medicines like Tylenol or cough drops, require a physician's signature to be administered at school.
- Forms to authorize medications at school are available in the Health Office.
- Medications should be brought to the Health Office directly by an adult, as children may not transport them to school on their own.

Communication with Families

- Please inform the Health Office and the teacher of any allergies or significant health and dietary information about your child.
- When a child is seen in the Health Office, staff will determine needed follow up based on how serious the concern may be.
- Guardians will always be contacted in cases of more serious injury or illness.
- Less serious injuries or illnesses are treated, and the student is sent back to class when ready.
- A record is kept of each visit to the Health Office for reference.



Student Illness

It can be a difficult decision as to when to keep a child home from school. Please use the following district policies to guide your decision, and call the school health office if you're unsure.

Call the attendance line at 651-653-2777 each and every day a student is out for illness.

Is My Child Well Enough to Go to School?

Keep your child home if:

They have a fever of 100° or more.

- Student must be home for 24 hours without the aid of fever reducing medicine prior to returning.

They are vomiting (two or more episodes)

- Student must stay home for 24 hours after last episode.

They have any rash that may be disease-related, or the cause is unknown.

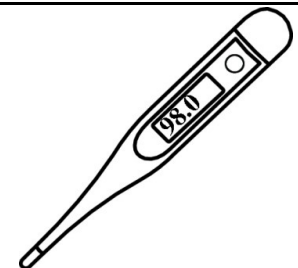
- Check with your child's physician before returning to school.

They have episodes of diarrhea.

- Early childhood/preschool: Student must stay home for 24 hours after last episode.
- K-5: Student may attend unless not feeling well and/or needs to use the bathroom frequently.

School Criteria for Common Childhood Illnesses

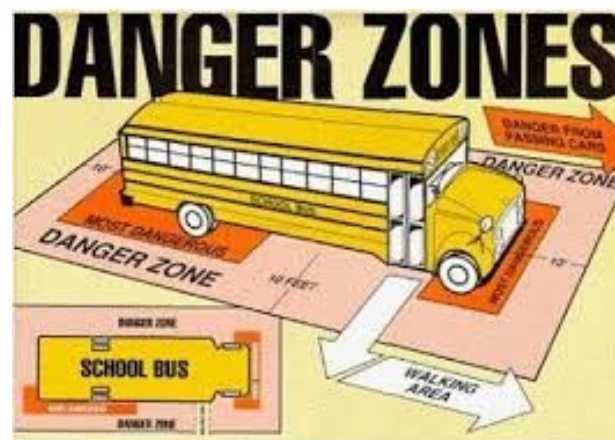
Illness	School Criteria to Attend
Chicken Pox	Keep student home until all blisters have dried into scabs; usually by day 6 after the rash began.
Common Cold	Keep student home until child is well enough to participate in routine activities; and if a fever, until 24 hours fever-free without fever-reducing medicine.
Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)	Purulent: Keep student home until examined by health care provider. Non-purulent: Student may attend.
Fifth Disease	Student may attend if health care provider rules out other rash-causing illnesses.



Bus Safety

As a vital member of the "School Bus Safety Team", the parent or guardian can help provide a safe and pleasant experience. One of the primary ways in which you may help is by reviewing "Safety Dave's" Top 10 Safety Tips with your child. Bus safety training will also be provided to each student.

1. Always stay out of the danger zone around the school bus. The danger zone is in front of the bus, behind the bus, and on both sides of the bus. The danger zone is 10 feet all the way around the bus.
2. Before crossing the street, wait for the bus driver to give you the signal. If you have to cross the street to get on or off the school bus, cross in front of the bus. Make sure you see the driver and that he sees you. Never cross in front of the school bus until the driver gives you the signal, and always look both ways to see if cars are coming before you cross.
3. Use the buddy system when crossing the street. It's usually safer to cross the street in a group than it is to cross the street alone.
4. Whenever possible, stay out of the last three seats of the school bus. Remember the driver can usually adjust to what's going on in front of, and on the side of the school bus, but has no idea of what the driver is doing behind him.
5. Younger students should always sit toward the front of the school bus. This helps the school bus driver to keep track of them so that they get off at their proper destination.
6. If you drop something when getting on or off the school bus, leave it. Tell the bus driver, your teacher, or your parents about whatever you dropped. Remember we can replace everything, but we can't replace you.
7. Never approach a moving school bus. Stand 10 feet back, away from the curb. No pushing or shoving and always wait for the school bus to make a complete stop before trying to get on the school bus.
8. Never stand up on a moving bus. If your driver had to make a sudden stop you could fall and get hurt.
9. Tell someone if there's trouble. If something happens to you on the school bus tell your bus driver, teacher, principal, or parents about it. Everyone should have a safe and comfortable ride on the school bus. A safe ride is a happy ride.
10. Never talk to strangers (STRANGER DANGER). If someone approaches you that you don't know and tries to talk to you, go away from them and tell an adult you can trust.



Title I Parent Rights

Birch Lake Elementary receives federal Title I funding to provide extra academic assistance and family events. In receiving this funding, we are required to inform parents of certain rights they have to know about the qualifications of teachers and other staff.

As a parent of a student enrolled at Birch Lake Elementary, you have the right to know the professional qualifications of your child's teacher(s) and paraprofessional(s). A paraprofessional provides academic or other support for students under the direct supervision of a teacher.

Federal law allows you to request the following information about your child's teacher(s) and paraprofessional(s) and requires the District to give you this information in a timely manner:

- whether the teacher has met State certification and licensing requirements to teach the subject(s) and/or grade level(s) the teacher is teaching,
- whether the teacher's certificate has been waived (is not being required at this time) under emergency or other temporary status.

Our staff is committed to helping your child develop the social, academic, and critical thinking he or she needs to succeed in school and beyond. That commitment includes making sure all our teachers and paraprofessionals are prepared to give your child a high-quality education.

If you would like to request information about your child's teacher(s) or paraprofessional(s), please contact Jonathan Luknic, principal at Birch Lake Elementary.

jonathan.luknic@isd624.org
651-653-2779

