



Skillbuilding Opportunities for  
Academic Resiliency  
**Student and Parent Handbook**  
2020-2021

**Chisago Lakes School District**

13750 Lake Blvd  
Lindstrom, MN 55045  
651-213-2071



The SOAR program is hosted by the St. Croix River Education District (SCRED) in partnership with the Chisago Lakes School District.

# Chisago Lakes Education Center

13750 Lake Blvd  
Lindstrom, MN 55045

## **Welcome to the SOAR Program!** **General Information for Students and Parents**

Through child-centered supports, our mission is to provide a safe, engaging, supportive, and structured learning environment that increases independence and enhances quality of life.

### **Our Team**

#### **Program Coordinator**

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#### **Special Education Teacher**

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#### **School Psychologist Intern**

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#### **Administrative Assistant/Health Aid**

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# General Information

**SOAR follows the policies set forth by the Chisago Lakes School District and outlined in detail in the Chisago Lakes Area Schools Student and Parent Handbook**  
(see district website)

## Campus

Our program is located in the Chisago Lakes Education Center, which includes both the SOAR and Pathway to Change programs. Though our building is physically attached to the Chisago Lakes Middle School, we are a separate public school building, and our students will have limited access to the Middle School space. All students should enter through the designated CLEC entrance to the building. Entering the Middle School at any time without staff supervision is prohibited.

## Hours

School hours for each student are determined on an individualized basis by the student's IEP team. The SOAR program strives to ensure each student has a successful school experience, and school hour recommendations are based on each student's individual tolerance for the school setting. Our goal is to build stamina and increase the duration of time at school in a methodical manner that promotes success.

**Office Hours:** 7:00am - 3:00pm

**School Hours:** 7:40am - 2:00pm

## Student Safety

The staff at the SOAR program believe that students must be taught appropriate ways of behaving, and our responses to behavioral incidents reflect this belief. Responses to challenging behavior will follow each student's individualized Behavior Support Plan. In the event of behavioral incidents not outlined in the student's BSP, or those which pose a safety risk, staff will respond in the best interest of the safety, health, and well-being of the student and their peers in accordance with IDEA and the Pupil Fair Dismissal Act. IEP teams are encouraged to meet following any such event.

## Emergency Drills

All classrooms and other school spaces have posted procedures for fire, evacuation, lockdown, and tornado emergencies. Five fire drills, one tornado drill, and five lockdown drills will be conducted during the school year to ensure each student knows what to do in the event of each situation. All SOAR students will receive proactive instruction on these procedures to ensure their safety and success during these practice drills.

## School Visitors

Chisago Lakes Education Center welcomes visitors to our school, however, to ensure the safety and security of our students, the following rules are in place:

- All guests must sign in and out in the CLEC office
- Students are not permitted to bring student visitors to school
- Building tours can be arranged by calling the CLEC office at 651-213-2071
- No former students will be allowed during the school day
- Please make appointments to see staff prior to visiting

# School Cancellations

Cancellation of school takes place only during circumstances such as extreme weather, equipment failure or public crisis. Announcements for school cancellation or late start will be made on WCCO radio AM 830, Channel 4 TV, Channel 5 TV, Channel 9 TV, Channel 11 TV, on the district's website [www.isd2144.org](http://www.isd2144.org), and on the CLEC facebook page (@CLEdCenter). You will also be notified by an automated calling system. This system uses your phone and e-mail information from Synergy, the district's student information system.

## Non-Custodial Parent Access to Students

School must have written evidence that a parent or other adult is prohibited access to a child through a legal document as in the case of divorce, separation, or custody. Such information should be presented to and discussed with the Program Coordinator at Chisago Lakes Education Center.

## Transportation

**School Transportation:** Personal safety and positive behavior are our top priority in transporting students to the SOAR program. We recognize that our students may require accommodations on the bus to encourage positive behaviors. All transportation will follow student's individualized Behavior Support Plans (BSPs) and Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).

**Transportation Contact:** Should your child be absent from school, please notify your resident district transportation office to cancel transportation. In addition, you will also need to notify our school staff (see Attendance Policy for more information).

Chisago Lakes	North Branch	Rush City
4.0 Transportation 651.213.2089	4.0 Transportation 651.674.1030	Renaë Mussetter 320.358.1390
HALO	CST-MN	
763.432.6806	612.808.8868	

## Health Office & Services

Please remember to update your student's emergency information each year to provide school staff with current emergency contact numbers. This can be done online via the ParentVue site or by completing an updated emergency form in the CLEC office. Report any significant health concerns to the health aid.

**Illness:** Students who become ill during the school day will be seen by the health aid for care and determination of dismissal due to illness. The student will be excused for the remainder of the school day, and the following day for fever above 100°, and for vomiting and diarrhea until symptoms have resolved. Students must be fever, vomiting, or diarrhea free for 24 hours before returning to school. It is important to know that the health aid is not able to diagnose illness or injury. Parents who are in doubt of their child's condition are encouraged to consult with their doctor or clinic.

**Medications:** Prescription and non-prescription medications taken during the school day must be dispensed through the health office. Medications must come in the original container accompanied by written permission from the parent **and** physician. Medication authorization forms are available from our school

health office. **Note:** *When getting prescriptions filled, ask the pharmacist for two bottles or two inhalers (one for school and one for home).*

**Immunizations:** State law requires all students enrolling in early childhood programs, elementary school, or secondary school to show evidence of immunization or properly documented exemptions. Parent/Guardians with students transferring into the district have 30 days to submit proper documentation. Student immunization forms are available on the district website or at the CLEC office.

## Food Service

Breakfast and lunch items are delivered to Chisago Lakes Education Center by the CL school district. *Due to the nature of our lunch program, if your student is going to be arriving late to school and you would like them to eat a school lunch, you must call CLEC at 213-2071 before 8:30 a.m. to place an order.*

**Accounts:** The Chisago Lakes Education Center follows CL district processes for lunch accounts and payment. Checks as well as electronic payment through PayPAMS ([www.paypams.com](http://www.paypams.com)) will be accepted. Households will be notified by an automatic calling system when a student's balance is low.

**Menus:** The district lunch menu is on a five week cycle. Copies will be available at the school, on the school district's website, and sent home monthly upon request. Due to the nature of our lunch program, student menu choices (school vs. home lunch) will need to be determined in advance. Please keep in mind that menus are subject to change, as need may arise. Hot and cold breakfast items will both be offered daily. Please contact the Food Service Office at 651-213-2506 if you have any questions regarding special needs diets or with any questions or concerns you have regarding the program.

**Free/Reduced Price Meal Benefits:** Families must complete a new application each school year. Application forms are sent out at the beginning of each school year, provided upon enrollment, and available upon request from the CLEC office. Completed applications may be returned to CLEC, or sent directly to the Chisago Lakes District Office Food Service Department, 13750 Lake Blvd, Lindstrom, MN 55045. Benefits may be applied for any time during the school year.

**Food Treats:** Due to our district policy which requires all food served be commercially prepared and packaged, we do not allow the distribution of food items, including "treats," which are prepared in individual homes. This does not include food brought to school for a student's individual snack or lunch.

## Dress and Appearance

Students are expected to dress respectfully and responsibly. A student's dress and appearance must be in the best interest of the school with respect to the health, welfare, and safety of the individual and the student body. Parents/Guardians of SOAR students are encouraged to pack an extra set of preferred clothing for their child to keep at school in case a change of clothing is necessary or requested by the student (at staff discretion).

- **Appropriate clothing includes:**
  - Clothing for the weather
  - Clothing that promotes student comfort through sensory preferences
  - Clothing that does not create a health or safety hazard
  - Clothing appropriate for the activities for physical education or the classroom
  
- **Unless there is an accommodation in students' IEPs, the following are not permitted:**
  - Outerwear (inside the classroom during school hours)
  - Hats, hoods, bandanas, or other headgear

- Exposed undergarments, bare backs, and/or midriffs
- **Students must NOT wear clothing that:**
  - Bears a message that is lewd, vulgar, obscene, or inappropriate
  - Creates a disruption in the classroom
  - Creates a health or safety concern
  - Causes building or maintenance issues

## Technology/Electronics

The school district supplies computers, tablets, internet access, and other technology supports to enhance your student's education. These supports are for educational purposes only and users have limited expectation of privacy in the contents of their personal files, communication files, and record of web research. SOAR students are thoroughly monitored to ensure their technology usage is educationally and developmentally appropriate and does not violate district policy.

## Photography and Video/Audio Recording

Parents are permitted to record or photograph students at public events on school property, however, in accordance with the MN Government Data Practices Act, parents may not film or photograph students during routine activities occurring within a typical school day (e.g. classroom instruction, lunch, physical education classes, recess, etc.). Other situations not listed need prior approval by the Program Coordinator and classroom teacher.

## Attendance Policy

Attendance and promptness are important life skills. Time loss from school cannot be regained and absences will result in the loss of valuable opportunities to learn and establish important school routines. The SOAR program supports and follows the Chisago Lakes District attendance policy. We respect the needs of our students and recognize that students may require therapies outside of school. Parents are expected to share any absences related for therapies with school ahead of time (see below).

**Absence from School:** Please advise school staff as soon as possible of your student's absence by calling the CLEC main office line at 651-213-2071. All absences not excused by note, phone, or email within 3 school days of the absence will be recorded as unexcused and will be marked truant. The school will attempt to call parents to verify absences.

### I. Classification of Absences

**A. School Authorized Absences:** need to be verified at the time of the absence and include:

- All school approved absences (may include those established by IEP team)
- Official Religious holidays
- Death of immediate family member

**B. Excused Absences:** Please make every attempt to schedule appointments before school, at lunch break or after school. Absences need to be verified at the time of the return to school. Excused absences include:

- Illness verified by parent/guardian
- Family emergencies
- Medical appointments
- Written confirmation of judicial appointment

- Other absences may be verified for authentication if needed

**C. Family vacations:** Due to the number of breaks within a school year, family vacations should coincide with the school calendar. The school believes that vacations scheduled outside of the school calendar distracts from your child's education and should be avoided. Any family vacations taken during the school year must be preapproved by the school 3 days prior to absence.

**D. Unexcused Absences:** All absences not otherwise excused are unexcused. An absence not excused by note or phone call **within 3 school days** of the absence will be recorded as unexcused. An unexcused absence is an absence for reasons that are not recognized by the school authorities as legitimate. Examples of unexcused absence/tardiness include:

- family vacation (not prearranged)
- visiting a family member
- shopping
- overslept
- no call, note, or email from parent/guardian verifying the absence within 3 days
- others as determined by school administration

**II. Notification:** Parents/Guardians will be notified in writing or by phone from the truancy office when attendance is becoming a factor in a student's success.

**III. Pick-up/ Early Release of Students:** If you wish to pick up your child from school when classes are in session or during their lunch break, you are required to sign them out at the CLEC office. If your student returns before the school day ends, he/she must be signed back in at the office. The office should be notified with a note or phone call an hour before the expected time of an early check-out. When picking up your child at the end of the school day, parents are to come into the school lobby to sign out their child and then safely escort him/her to your vehicle.

## Academic Information

### Report Cards

SOAR students will receive progress reports on their IEP goals in place of a formal report card. Parents will receive copies of their student's progress reports as often as report cards are sent home.

### State Assessments

**MTAS:** Your child's Individualized Educational Program (IEP) may indicate a need for specialized instruction in both functional and academic skills. The Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS) is an alternate assessment, designed to measure student progress on academic skills, based on alternate achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. It is part of the Minnesota assessment program. The MTAS measures reading, mathematics, and science skills that are linked to the general education curriculum. These skills represent high expectations for students with significant cognitive disabilities, but tasks to measure these skills are considerably less difficult than the items on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA). The IEP team is responsible for determining how the student participates in statewide testing.

**Opting out of Assessments:** If you wish to opt your child out of state assessments (MTAS), please submit your request in writing to your student's case manager, our School Psychologist, or the Program Coordinator.



A form can be found on the district website or requested at the CLEC office. Though this determination is typically made through IEP team meetings, a written request to opt out of testing will be honored at any time.

## Instructional Supports

The SOAR program has been intentionally designed to support students with functional communication needs and challenging behavior. Because of our student's unique needs, we incorporate a comprehensive "package" of supports to ensure our students become independent learners. We pride ourselves on creating a student-centered, structured environment that fosters the development of functional communication and self-regulation skills. Each student's program is tailored to their individual needs using strategies and supports including:

**Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports:** Each student has an individualized behavior support plan (BSP) with the goal of reducing challenging or "target" behaviors and increasing the use of functionally-equivalent replacement behaviors, to help students get what they want and need more appropriately. Each BSP includes evidence-based strategies for preventing challenging behavior, teaching and reinforcing the use of replacement behaviors, and responding to target behaviors.

**Functional Communication Training:** We use a variety of techniques and technologies to build language skills so students have a means of independently communicating their wants and needs. All SOAR students have access to services provided by a Speech and Language Pathologist as outlined in their IEP.

**Reset Rooms:** Our program space includes two small, individual student rooms designed to foster self-regulation. These "reset rooms" allow students a space to separate from the stimulation of the classroom and calm their bodies to become ready to learn. Student use of these rooms is based on individual need.

**Sensory Rooms:** Our students may need to utilize sensory techniques to help them become ready to learn, and we make all efforts to accommodate these unique needs. All SOAR students have access to two sensory rooms which include a variety of tools including an array of fidgets, trampoline, swing, stability balls, calming music, bean bags, and more. Each student's IEP and BSP will drive what supports the students need and when they use them.

**Visual Supports:** We use a variety of visual supports to help promote flexibility, predictability, and independence. Students have access to individual work spaces, visual work systems, visual schedules, color coded items, and more.

**Related Services:** SOAR students have access to a full range of related services including speech/language therapy, consultation from occupational therapists, assistive technology, group instruction from a school psychologist, developmental adaptive physical education (DAPE), and recreation/leisure/play instruction, as outlined in their IEP.