

River Bend Education Center
2023-2024 Student & Family Handbook



1510 Glenwood Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 55405

612-668-2884

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WELCOME TO THE 2023-24 SCHOOL YEAR!

Dear Students, Parents, and Guardians:

Welcome to the 2023-2024 school year! We look forward to working with you and your child as we begin a new school year at River Bend Education Center -- home of the Mighty Monarchs. Your collaboration with the school is an important factor in your child's education and we appreciate your support. With a strong partnership between home and school, I am confident that your child will have a wonderful and productive year.

The information in this handbook provides information regarding schedules, policies, procedures and expectations at River Bend. These school policies and procedures are designed to provide a very safe and structured environment for learning. Students at River Bend will be expected to know and follow the rules and procedures, and be accountable for the choices they make during the day at school. Please read and discuss this handbook with your child, then keep it in a convenient place for future reference during the school year.

The staff at River Bend looks forward to working with all of our students and families throughout the school year. Please do not hesitate to ask for assistance whenever needed!

We are looking forward to a wonderful year!

Sincerely,



Clint Whisler
Principal

River Bend Vision and Mission

At River Bend we strive to be our best - be kind, be responsible, be leaders. River Bend provides a safe and supportive learning environment to help students reach their full potential.

At River Bend, we provide an engaging, safe and nurturing learning environment that honors student voice and helps prepare and support students for their next educational setting by providing positive/proactive student focused systems and interventions. River Bend is composed of collaborative teams of staff who hold themselves, their peers and students accountable by honoring shared agreements and who support students and each other by engaging in courageous conversations and demonstrating positive intent.

Important Phone Numbers

Main Office & Attendance Line		612-668-2884
Fax		612-668-2880
Principal	Clint Whisler	612-668-2871
Assistant Principal	Lori Proulx	612-668-2889
School Secretary	Angela Zeman	612-668-2884
Placement Coordinator	Colleen Bergh	612-668-2875
School Nurse		612-668-2879
Social Worker	Hannah Franc	612-668-2892
Social Worker	Gina Misiewicz	612-668-2883
Social Worker	Tina Welke	612-668-2898
School Psychologist	Emily Hogan	612-668-2886
Classroom Teachers & Staff		612-668-2884
Transportation		612-668-2300

MPS District Contact Information

District Offices Address: 1250 W. Broadway Ave., Minneapolis, MN 55411

District Phone Number: 612-668-0000

MPS District Website: mpls.k12.mn.us

District Email Address: answers@mpls.k12.mn.us

General School Information

School Hours

Student Hours: 7:15am-1:40pm

Main Office Hours: 6:30am-3:00pm

Emergency Card

When your child enrolls at River Bend and at the start of each school year, you will be asked to complete an Emergency Card. It is crucial that a student's Emergency Card be completed and returned to the school office prior to their first day of school. This information will be used to reach you if your child is sick or in case of an emergency. Please remember to put the first and last name as well as a telephone number of a person who can be contacted in case the main contact person cannot be reached. The information supplied is essential to the safety of your child! It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to keep an accurate Emergency Card on file with the school secretary. If any contact information changes, please request a new Emergency Card from the school.

Community Trips

During the course of the school year, students may have the opportunity to visit various places outside of the school. These Community-Based Instruction trips are meant to enrich and extend the learning experiences of students. According to MPS policy, parent/guardian permission is required in order for students to participate in any community trip. Parents/guardians can sign a blanket community trip permission slip at the beginning of the year to cover trips for that school year. In addition to having a signed permission slip, students must also meet the predetermined behavior criteria. Even with a signed permission slip, students who demonstrate unsafe or inappropriate behavior will not be allowed to participate in the community trip.

Attendance Policy

Regular attendance is critical to the school success for our students! It is our goal to work with students and families to support daily school attendance. The MPS attendance policy emphasizes 95% attendance for all students, which equals 8 or fewer absences per school year. The full District Attendance Policy is available in the "District Policies, Information and Notices Packet Attached" section of this handbook.

If your child is going to be absent or late for any reason, call the River Bend Main Office at (612) 668-2884, press 1 for the attendance line, and leave a message with the following information: your name, your child's first and last name, and the reason for the absence. If your student arrives late to school (after 7:45 am), they will be marked as tardy for that day.

If a call is not made to the school to excuse the absence, you will receive an automated call notifying you of your child's absence. After 3 unexcused absences, an attendance letter will be sent home. Students who reach 6 days of unexcused absences may be referred by school staff to the Hennepin County "Be@School Program," which is designed to improve student attendance. If a student leaves school property without permission, they will be considered truant for the rest of the day and not allowed back into the building. Parents/Guardians will be notified if this occurs.

Reasons for excused absences include:

- **Illness:** Students are allowed up to 8 excused absences per school year (or 3 days in a row) due to illness. A doctor's note must be provided if your child is gone from school more than 3 days in a row or 8 total days in a school year.
- **Health Care Appointments:** Please try to schedule appointments outside of school hours whenever possible. A written note from the health care provider is required in order to excuse the absence.
- **Family emergency:** Students may be excused up to 3 days a year for family emergencies. If additional time is needed, please speak with your child's social worker or the principal.
- **Funeral:** Students may be excused up to 4 days per school year for funerals. If additional time is needed, please speak with your child's social worker or the principal.
- **Transportation problems:** When a scheduled bus stop was not made, or was made late, or the bus experienced mechanical failure.
- **Transportation interruption:** When a student has moved but transportation is not yet available.
- **Extreme weather conditions:** The parent may determine if the weather is too extreme for their child to attend school.
- **Religious and cultural observances:** Prior notification is required; please notify the school in advance of your child's absence.
- **Approved family activity:** Prior notification is required; please notify the school in advance of your child's absence. Students may be excused up to 5 days a year for family activities.

Student Release

Students will only be released to their custodial parent or guardian or the person(s) listed on their Emergency Card. MPS district policy mandates that written permission from the custodial parent is required in order to release a student to anyone other than the custodial parent. If any person other than the custodial parent/guardian or the person(s) listed on the Emergency Card is to pick up a student, the school must have a written statement from the custodial parent/guardian documenting this, and that person will be required to provide identification.

Unscheduled School Closings

Occasionally school may be canceled or students may be dismissed early due to bad weather or emergencies. Families will be notified of weather-related closings by 6pm the day before, or 5:30am the day of the cancellation by phone, texts, MPS website, Facebook, Twitter, radio and TV. WCCO is the official school dismissal announcement station. Your child should understand what they are expected to do in the event of a school cancellation or early dismissal.

Truancy

Middle school students who are present in the building but do not attend class for more than half of the class period will be marked as truant for that class period. 7 truant class periods is equal to 1 full day of absence. If a student leaves school property without permission, they will be considered truant for the rest of the day and not allowed back into the building. Parents/Guardians will be notified if this occurs.

River Bend Health Office

River Bend has both a Registered Nurse and a Health Service Assistant in the building five days a week, bell-to-bell. Services include evaluation of minor injuries, notification of parent/guardian in case of illness, vision screening in grades K, 1, 3, and 5, verification and notification of infectious conditions (i.e. chicken pox, lice, strep throat).

- Please keep your child at home if they show any symptoms of illness such as nausea, fever, diarrhea, sore throat, rash, etc. until you can determine how serious the condition may be. This will help reduce the spread of infections throughout the school.

Students will not be sent home without permission from a parent or guardian no matter how ill they are. It is the parent or guardian's responsibility to provide transportation home from school in cases of illness or emergency. The school can only release a student to a person noted on their emergency information sheet. It is important that the school has an up-to-date Emergency Information Sheet on file.

- The Health Office should be notified of students having any health conditions that may affect their school performance or safety so that appropriate measures can be taken to meet any special needs.

Emergency Card Information Form

Parents/guardians must complete this form and return it to school immediately. This information is absolutely necessary when dealing with medical emergencies. It is critical that we have updated information on file where we can contact you in the event of an emergency.

Medications

According to the Minneapolis Public Schools policy, medication will only be administered at school with written consent from the health care provider and parent/guardian. Updated medication consent needs to be provided every school year. Medication must be sent to school in the original prescription (or over the counter) bottle/container indicating the student's name and correct instructions for medication administration. In order to be least disruptive to the student's time in the classroom, families are encouraged to space medication doses outside of the school day whenever possible. Short-term medications such as antibiotics can usually be taken before and after school. Medication consent forms are available from the health office.

Asthma Medications

Students with Asthma are encouraged to keep Asthma reliever medication at school so that it is available if Asthma concerns arise and/or if Asthma medication is required prior to exercise (the above noted medication policy applies to Asthma medication as well). If your health provider has given you an "Asthma Action Plan", please send a copy of this to school. Asthma Action Plans that are less than a year old and signed by the health care provider and parent/guardian are considered written consent for administering Asthma medication at school.

Immunizations

Minnesota laws require proof of immunizations for all school children. Parents/guardians are asked to provide immunization records upon school registration. If you have questions regarding immunization requirements, contact your health care provider or school health office staff.

Food Allergies

If your child has sensitivities to specific foods, please include this on their health form, notify the teacher and health office staff, and make sure your child is aware of which foods they need to avoid.

Family Involvement

IEPs, Progress Reports, and Grades

All students at River Bend have an Individualized Education Program (IEP). An IEP is a specialized plan that outlines the special education instruction, services, and accommodations that a student needs in order to make progress at school. Parents/guardians are an essential member of the IEP team! We encourage all parents/guardians and students to attend IEP meetings. Each IEP team will meet at least once per year, but teams may meet more often as needed. Annual IEP team meetings will be scheduled by River Bend staff. If you would like to request an IEP team meeting, please contact your child's teacher and/or social worker.

IEP Progress Reports will be mailed home according to your child's IEP (typically 4 times per

school year). The IEP Progress Report will review your child's IEP goals and the progress they have made towards meeting those goals during that reporting period.

Report cards will also be mailed home at the end of each quarter.

Visitors

Parents and guardians are always welcome in our school. District policy requires that all visitors sign in at the main office upon entering River Bend. Parents/visitors must provide a form of identification (e.g., Driver's License, State ID, Military ID, Passport, or other picture ID) to sign in and will then be issued a MPS Visitor badge. (For parents and guardians only, a copy of their child's Emergency Contact Sheet will also be accepted as identification.) When leaving the building, parents/visitors are asked to sign out in the main office, return the visitor badge, and pick up their identification.

Classroom Observations/Visits

Classroom visits require prior arrangements with both the principal and the classroom teacher. Due to data privacy concerns, information pertaining to other students in the classroom cannot be recorded or discussed with others.

Employees of approved community providers may occasionally spend time in classrooms at River Bend. These visits are time-limited and require prior arrangements with administration, social worker, and the classroom teacher.

Nutrition Services

Nutritious breakfasts and lunches are served every school day by the Nutrition Center. Free breakfast, lunch and snack (starting Oct. 1) is available for all students. For funding purposes, we still request that all parents/guardians complete a free/reduced lunch application each year. Applications are mailed home during August, but are also available at the beginning of the school year or during the intake process for new Minneapolis Public School students. Please complete these forms and return them to school as soon as possible.

River Bend students will be able to eat lunch with their class and/or participate in a customized lunch environment based on their Individual Education Program (IEP) and Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP). Should an emergency situation arise that involves the safety of the student or others, a customized lunch environment may also be used until the emergency situation is resolved. Students may also have lunch in an alternative space due to the consequences of their behavior.

No refrigeration or microwave is available for student lunches brought from home. Students cannot share food brought from home with peers.

Breakfast ends at 8:30. If students arrive between 8:30 and 9:30 some breakfast items may be provided.

TRANSPORTATION

The school is available to assist with transportation concerns.

If your address changes or you have other busing needs/changes, please contact Colleen Bergh at 612-668-2875 or work with your school social worker. Transportation changes may take up to 5 school days to take effect. The school will notify the family of the changed pick-up and drop-off times.

If your child has a change in transportation needs for the day, please call the school office at 612-668-2884. Make sure to talk to a school staff directly about the change, **do not leave a message about same-day transportation needs/changes**. Please contact the school by 12pm/noon on the day of the change.

If your child's bus is late or does not show up at your stop, please report this to dispatch at 612-668-2300.

If your child misses the bus, or for any other reason does not get on the bus in the morning for 10 consecutive days, you must call the transportation department at 612-668-2300 to request a re-start of bus service.

Many of our bus routes will have a bus aide. For the 2022-2023 school year, students will have assigned seats on the bus.

Student Expectations on the bus:

- Wear a face covering at all times
- Inside voice
- Nice words
- Hands and feet to self
- Stay in your seat
- Buckle up
- Keep track of your things
- Follow bus rules
- Keep the bus clean
- Help the driver

The school bus ride is part of the school day. Students are expected to follow the bus safety rules and student expectations listed above. If students are engaging in behavior that interferes with the safe operation of the bus, the bus aide and/or bus driver will submit conduct reports about the incident. The school site will be notified of the conduct report, and the incident/behavior will be processed with both student and staff. Parents/guardians will also be contacted.

Parents/guardians are reminded that only students and staff assigned to the bus by school authority may be transported. Contact the District Transportation Department at 612-668-2300 with any questions.

Here Comes the Bus (HCTB)

Families are encouraged to use the [Here Comes The Bus](#) app, which allows families to view the location of their child's school bus on a computer, tablet or smartphone. Here Comes The Bus is a website and mobile device app. Parents and caregivers are able to view the location of their child's school bus, in addition to receiving email alerts and push notifications when the bus enters a notification radius as set by the parent. The app is available in English, Spanish and French. Please remember, Here Comes The Bus tracks buses, not students. *The Minneapolis Public Schools' district code for Here Comes The Bus is 87018.* You will need this to set up an account for your child/children.

School Expectations

Our school has rules everyone is expected to follow. At the beginning of the year, each student will sign and return to school a Citywide Discipline Policy form that states they agreed to follow these expectations. When we all follow the rules, everyone can feel safe and respected and we can all learn. Here are some of the behaviors that will help you be successful at school:

- Come to school every day, on time, ready to learn
- Dress for learning
- Take responsibility for your own behavior
- Work to achieve at your highest level
- Talk to your family about what is happening in school
- Help others understand your culture and learn about the culture of others
- Follow directions
- Follow school and classroom rules
- Treat yourself and others with respect

There are some things you **cannot** do at school. These behaviors will result in consequences, which may include suspension:

- Weapons - You may not bring any weapon to school or on the bus, even if it is a toy
- Attacking or assaulting another person
- Having alcohol, drugs, or tobacco
- Making a threat to bring a bomb or other terroristic threats
- Fighting, "playfighting", being physically aggressive, or making threats
- Engaging in inappropriate physical contact

- Bullying or harassment of others
- Stealing, vandalism, or trespassing
- Opening locked doors to allow other people to come in
- Pulling a false fire alarm
- Going out of the Emergency door on the bus without permission

At River Bend, we strive to follow the “Monarch Way”:

Be Kind

Be Responsible

Be a Leader

Be Your Best!

Staff teach these principles to students throughout the school year, and positively reinforce students for demonstrating these behaviors.

Designated Area

Students are expected to stay with staff at all times. If a student needs to leave their designated area, a staff escort is required unless approved by their case manager. If a student wants to access an alternate space within the building (e.g., calming room, motor room, hallway) they must make arrangements with their staff. Walking out of a room, opening locked doors without permission, or leaving the school building without permission may result in a loss of privileges due to potential safety issues. If a student walks out of their classroom without permission, they may rejoin the class after processing with staff or at the discretion of staff. If a student leaves the building without permission, they will be required to participate in the building entry screening process again.

Alternative Instruction

Only an administrator will assign a student to Alternative Learning. Staff members will be notified in a timely manner that a student has been assigned to Alternative Learning. Staff members should then gather any necessary class assignments and send them to Room 220 if they know ahead of time that their student will be in Alternative Learning. If a student is assigned to Alternative Learning during the day, staff members will be notified in a timely manner and will gather class assignments when time allows. Assignments should be sent directly to the Alternative Learning room. All students who have Alternative Learning will report to the office as soon as they arrive at school. The student will then be escorted to room 220. All students will have assigned seating and will keep the area clean and graffiti-free. Defacing cubicles, desks and/or walls will not be tolerated. Students placed in the Alternative Learning room will not participate in all extra-curricular activities, including activity time, assemblies, or any other classroom or school activities. This will continue until the Alternative Learning period is completed.

Medication of any kind will be administered by the school nurse or health assistant in the Alternative Learning room.

Upon arrival to Alternative Learning the first time, students will receive a detailed student orientation for the purpose of clearly communicating the Alternative Learning guidelines, consequences for non-compliance and establishing clear expectations while assigned to Alternative Learning. Returning students will be given a review/re-teach of these rules.

Breakfast: Students who participate in the breakfast program will have it delivered from the cafeteria to the Alternative Learning room. Students will eat breakfast at their desk during homeroom. They will not be allowed to visit or have any physical contact during breakfast with other students.

Lunch: Students who do not bring a bag lunch from home will have a lunch delivered from the cafeteria to the Alternative Learning room. Students will eat lunch at their desk during a 30-minute lunch break. They will not be allowed to visit or have any physical contact during lunch with other students.

During the Day:

1. Students will stay on task at all times and follow the In-School Suspension Schedule/Guidelines. The student is expected to remain seated, quiet, awake and working on assignments throughout the day. Sleeping is prohibited. No physical contact of any kind between students. No magazines, drawing or coloring allowed unless approved by the Alternative Learning teacher or it is necessary to complete an assignment.
2. The student is expected to complete each day's assignments for every class according to the directions given. The Alternative Learning supervisor will check that work is completed accurately and acceptably. No credit will be given for incomplete work. Teachers who assign this work will be responsible for grading it.
3. The student will meet with their social worker, a dean and possibly an instructional specialist to help with identifying the source of their actions prior to the displayed behavior. (Must be done!)
4. No food or drinks allowed-unless it is during the scheduled snack/lunch break.
5. The student must complete all assigned days in Alternative Learning in order to qualify for return to regular classes.
6. Respect to others must be shown at all times. No foul language, disruptive behavior or physical contact between students at any time.
7. Computer games will not be permitted in Alternative Learning . Students who should have an assignment that requires the use of the computer will obey the policies set forth in the student Acceptable Use Policy set forth by the District.
8. Dismissal from the Alternative Learning location will be by PA announcement at the conclusion of the school day. Students will be escorted to their bus by staff.
9. All regular school rules apply as set forth in the Discipline Guidelines outlined in the student handbook.

Restorative Practices

River Bend uses Restorative Practices as part of its schoolwide positive behavior program. Restorative Practices promote the development of respectful relationships as a foundation for teaching and learning while providing meaningful opportunities for people to take responsibility for their behavior. At River Bend, students have the opportunity to restore emotional and physical damage caused by their actions. This restoration will be decided upon by the student, case manager, and other people involved in the action.

Crisis Intervention

If a student becomes physically unsafe and presents a danger to self or others, nonviolent physical restraint will be considered as an intervention in a situation deemed an emergency. "Emergency" means a situation in which immediate intervention is necessary to protect the student or another individual from physical injury. The emergency intervention must be the least intrusive intervention possible to reasonably react to the situation. The restraint must be done in a way that is considered safe to students and staff, and when there is not another option available for dealing with the crisis. Minnesota statutes (Section 609.379) indicate that a staff person may use reasonable force to protect themselves, the student, or other students from injury.

School Policies

Student Entrance Procedures

All students will be screened by school staff upon entering the building, which includes metal detector screening as well as searches of backpacks and bags. If a student brings any prohibited items (e.g., weapons, look-alike weapons, alcohol, drugs, drug paraphernalia, tobacco, tobacco-related devices, firecrackers, etc.) into the school, those items will be confiscated and will not be returned to the student. No open outside drink will be allowed to go to the classroom. Any liquid in any kind of container will be dumped before students take the container to the classroom. (Water bottles are provided for students in their classroom)

All Students:

Students are discouraged from bringing cell phones, other electronics, toys, snacks, personal grooming items, money, or valuables to school. These items can be disruptive to the teaching and learning environment. River Bend assumes no responsibility for lost or stolen items. Any items that a student brings into school that are not relevant to their learning at school will be collected at the door and stored in the office during the day. Items will be returned to students at the end of the day (with the exception of any prohibited items as described above).

If a student brings an item into the building instead of turning it in upon entry and staff become aware of the item later on, the item will be collected by staff, the parent/guardian will be notified, and the item will be returned at the end of the day. If this happens a second time, the

parent/guardian will be notified and the item will be kept at school for 1 day. The third time it happens, the parent/guardian will be notified and the item will be kept at school for 3 days. If this continues to happen beyond a third time, a parent/guardian may be required to pick up the item from school.

Phone Use

If a student would like to make a phone call to a parent/guardian or other family member during the school day, they must have permission from their case manager, social worker, or administrator. School staff will facilitate the phone call in a private area. Student cell phones cannot be used for making phone calls during the school day. If you need to contact your child during the school day please contact the main office as students do not have access to cell phones at school.

Dress Code

Students are expected to dress appropriately for school and for the weather. If a student's clothing presents an obvious safety hazard or if their clothing detracts from the learning environment, the student will be asked to add/remove something to their outfit or change their clothes. The school has a supply of clothes available if alternative clothing is needed in those situations.

Examples of dress that is not acceptable at school include:

- Hats (only head coverings for religious purposes are allowed in the classroom)
- Visible undergarments
- Exposed midriff/torso or short shorts
- Clothing with obscene, offensive, and/or inappropriate pictures or messages, including messages with products meant for adults, such as:
 - Images depicting weapons, drugs/drug use, smoking, etc.
 - Sexual references, curse words, hate speech, etc.
 - Shirts advertising bars, pubs or anything related to alcohol
 - RIP/Memorial shirts (as these may be triggering to other students)

Outerwear including jackets, coats, hats, caps, and gloves will be placed in the student's locker or cubby upon entering the school and kept there for the school day, unless they are needed for recess or an outdoor learning activity. Students may go outside for recess all year long, with the exception of extremely cold temperatures or pouring rain. Please make sure your child is dressed warmly during the cold and wet months.

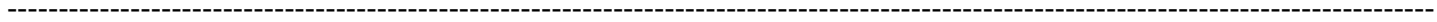
The layers recommended (but not required) for outdoor recess in the winter include: a warm coat, snow pants, snow boots, hat, scarf, and mittens or gloves. River Bend has a limited supply of winter gear to loan to students to use during recess. If you are in need of outdoor clothing for your child, please contact your social worker.

Closed-toe athletic shoes are necessary for participation in gym class. If a student does not have a pair of athletic shoes at school, a spare pair will be provided for the student to use during gym class.

Recess

All elementary school students have access to 30 minutes of recess/activity time with their class every day and/or participate in a customized recess/activity time based on their Individual Education Program (IEP) and Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP). Should an emergency situation arise that involves the safety of the student or others, a customized recess environment may also be utilized until the emergency situation is resolved.

Cut or tear along the line below. Please sign and date and give to River Bend School staff within one week. If you have questions or concerns, please call River Bend at 612-668-2885 and ask to speak to the Principal, Assistant Principal or your child's school social worker.



Students and Parents/Guardians: Your signature acknowledges that you have been informed about district and River Bend program policies and have had the opportunity to ask questions and discuss concerns with a member of the River Bend leadership team.

Student Name: _____ Homeroom Teacher: _____

Student Signature

Date Signed

Parent Signature

Date Signed