



Student, Family and Community Handbook

Highwood Hills Elementary School

2188 Londin Lane, St. Paul, MN 55119

(651) 744-3290 | (651) 293-5296 (Fax) | spps.org/highwoodhills

Dr. Fatima Lawson, Principal

(Revised August 2024)

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HIGHWOOD HILLS COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Our Vision

Highwood Hills works to build strong, positive connections with students, families, and community partners in order to educate, empower, and engage students to succeed in an ever-changing world.

Our Mission

Highwood Hills works in partnership with all stakeholders to facilitate student learning and prepare them to be critical thinkers and productive citizens of the world.



Welcome and Happy Reading!

Welcome Letter

Dear Families,

Welcome to Highwood Hills Elementary School! A place to learn, grow and serve! We are excited about every new beginning and hope that you are too! We are indeed very happy to continue our POLYTECHNIC Program as we introduce new programs, Autism/Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Developmental Cognitive Disorder (DCD) and Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) to our school this year!

Research shows that a very important element for a child's success in school is involvement in hands-on learning and also learning from home. That means that you, the parents/guardians, are our partners and as such, you are extremely important in the educational process. You, like our staff, are teachers too. You are the first, most long-lasting, most important persons in the child's life! By the example you set and the encouragement you give, you demonstrate your value in education and life-long learning. Here at Highwood Hills School, our goal is to work together to provide the best educational experience for every child.

Please note that this handbook is developed as a means of sharing valuable information about our school, policies, procedures, rules, practices, and our educational program. We believe that the information contained herein will acquaint you with school program/standards as well as other pieces of information that will help you to better understand school/district's policies and procedures. *It is the responsibility of every family to read and understand the policies and procedures that are given in this handbook, and we believe that you will work with us to abide by them.*

As your principal, I am always excited to partner with the students, staff and you. Working together as a team, be it during distance learning or in person, we can be productive, happy, and successful! As they say, it takes team work to make the dream work!

This handbook will be updated each year, so let us know what is useful, and/or what is missing in the handbook. Your comments and suggestions are always welcome. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions, concerns, or need clarification.

***Whenever necessary, portions of this handbook may be translated or interpreted in one of the major languages: Somali, Karen, Hmong, and Spanish for further clarification. Please contact our office at **651-744-3290** for assistance. Visit us often and explore our new program focus!
Have a productive school year!

Respectfully,

Dr. Fatima Lawson
Principal

GENERAL INFORMATION

SCHOOL ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBERS

2188 Londin Lane

St. Paul, MN 55119

PHONE: (651) 744-3290 or 293-8875

FAX: (651) 293-5296

SCHOOL HOURS

Kindergarten - Grade 5 7:30 A.M. – 2:00 P.M.

Pre-Kindergarten (Full Day) 7:30 A.M. – 2:00 P.M.

SCHOOL OFFICE HOURS DURING FACE-TO-FACE INSTRUCTION TIME.

6:30 A.M. to 3:00 P.M.

Please note that the office is very busy around student arrival and dismissal times. It is important to minimize your general inquiries during these designated periods. Due to the limited phone lines in the school office, try your call again in a few minutes if you do not get a response. Your calls are important to us, so we will do our best to return them in a timely manner, all things being equal. We appreciate your patience and understanding.

SCHOOL HOURS **DURING DISTANCE LEARNING** TIME WILL VARY. PLEASE CONNECT WITH YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER FOR MORE DETAILS. THANK YOU!

SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES DURING CRITICAL TIMES

- **Districtwide Parent Help Line 651-767-8347 or email family.engagement@spps.org.**
- **Technology Help Desk 651-603-4348, email familysupport@spps.org**
- **Child Care Resources**
 - **Child Care Aware referral line at 1.888.291.9811**
 - **Children's Defense Fund [Minnesota's Bridge to Benefits screening tool](#)**
 - **MN Dept of Human Services [Child Care Assistance](#)**

SCHOOL STAFF

Staff Member

Position

Administration

Dr. Fatima Lawson
Ms. Jessica Rehr
Mrs. Stephanie Schwarz-Johnson

Principal
Lead Clerk
Content Coach

Health Office

Teresa Smith
Luul Abdiraxiim

Nurse
Health Assistant

Pre-K

Michou Tchoffo
Kaley Courteau

Teacher
Teacher

Kindergarten

Ashlee Briese
Christan Sanocki

Teacher
Teacher

Elementary (Grades 1 - 5):

Khadra Ali
Jordan Biros
Mya Matz
Pa Dra Lor
Brent Vyvyan
Rebecca Tsai

Teacher – 1st
Teacher – 1st
Teacher – 2nd
Teacher – 2nd
Teacher – 3rd
Teacher – 3rd

Julie Ryberg
Paul Anderson
Nicole Schilling

Teacher – 4/5th
Teacher – 4th
Teacher – 5th

Specialists:

Khalid El-Amin
Brenda Allal
Lydia Warren-Paul
Carolyn Chisolm

Physical Education
Science
Counselor
Teacher-Academic Support-
Polytechnic coordinator
Teacher – SIPPS (Grades 3-4)
Intervention Specialist

Leah Stern
Taylor Vang

Special Education:

Salma Siddiqui
Laurie Durkin
Haley Haberman
Grace Deavan
Jon Ruger
Jane Barholtz
Krista Koch
Caryn Gontarek
Tony Linbo
Krista Koch
Amy Olund
Cheyanne Chapin

Specific Learning Disabilities/EBD
Speech/Language Pathologist
Speech/Language Pathologist
Social Worker
Psychologist
Occupational Therapist
Physical Therapist
Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Adaptive Physical Education
Physical Therapist
Audiologist
Music Therapist

English Language Learner (ELL):

Ahmed Ali
Tina Woods
Casey Seeling
Eunsil Kang
Meredith Wardlaw Rodriguez

Teacher
Teacher
Teacher
Teacher
Teacher (LCD)

Paraprofessionals:

Innocent Murwanashyaka
Christophe Yang
Sundus Waadi
Joel Merfeld
Irma Rodriguez Merfeld
TBD
Denise Alexander
Henry Fernando Murillo Corea
Fartun Abdule
Ayub Ali
Mya Kemery
Suzanne Bernet
Karen Olson
Jakayla Williams
grades)

Educational Assistant 1 (SpEd)
Educational Assistant 1 (SpEd)
Teaching Assistant 2 (Autism)
Teaching Assistant 2 (ECSE)
Teaching Assistant 2 (DCD)
Teaching Assistant 2 (DCD)
Teaching Assistant 2 (ECSE)
Teaching Assistant 2 (ECSE)
Teaching Assistant 2 (Inclusion)
Teaching Assistant 2 (ASD/DCD)
Teaching Assistant 1 (Pre-K)
Teaching Assistant 1 (Pre-K)
Teaching Assistant 1 (K/1st Grade)
Teaching Assistant 1 (2nd/3rd)

Bi-Lingual Educational Assistants

Yasmin Muridi (Somali)
Wah Kpaw (Karen)
Lourdes Durkin (Spanish)

Ed. Assistant ELL/Parent/APTT
Ed. Assistant ELL
Ed. Assistant ELL/Parent Liaison

District Coaches/Support:

Carolyn Cherry
Chantanita Wilson
Leah Unger

Special Education Supervisor
Coach – Special Ed.
Pre-K and K Coach

Technology (Field Technician)

Kaw Doh

Technology Support

Nutrition Services:

Kim Beisang,
Amy Bollman
Ms. Li

Nutrition Services Supervisor
Nutrition Services Assistant
Nutrition Services Assistant

Building Engineers:

Tom Hill
Derrich Love
Fong Yang

Lead Engineer
Evening Engineer
Day/Afternoon Engineer

Accidents

In the event of a serious accident at school, the parents are called; if necessary, the emergency number on the registration form will be called. In case no contacts can be reached, school authorities will attempt to take necessary steps to assure the welfare of the child. Students are encouraged to immediately report to their teachers all cases of injury, no matter how minor.

Announcements and Notices

All announcements and notices must receive the principal's approval prior to distribution and posting of the information. Announcements made over the intercom system is limited during classroom instruction time. No notices should be posted on school's main door(s) without prior approval.

Attendance Policy

Regular school attendance is important because academic skills are presented in sequence. Excessive absence creates gaps which can be difficult to overcome. Students should remain at home when genuinely ill. Missing school for less urgent matters would not be in the best interest of the student. Absences will be indicated as excused or unexcused based on district guidelines.

When students are absent for any reason, parents must call the school office and/or leave a voicemail at 651-744-3290. Absences must be reported by 7:00 a.m. to ensure the safety and responsibility of all students. **Students with 5 or more days** of absence may be referred to the Family Truancy Intervention Program (FTIP) that is managed by the county as is required by law. Students with 15 consecutive unexcused absences will be dropped from the school's roster.

Arrival and Dismissal

The following are procedures for safety and success for all:

Arrival Procedure: Students are able to enter the building at 7:00 a.m. They will go directly from the buses/car drop-offs to the cafeteria to select their *Breakfast To Go* and go to their classroom once the 7:15 bell rings. **Dismissal Procedure:** Students will be dismissed at 1:50 p.m. to board buses and if parent pick-up, students must be picked up **no later than 2:10 p.m.** Pick-up location is at the East Wing side of the building. Please do not pick up your child from the classroom during dismissal time, as this is disruptive for the class and hard for the teacher to keep track of which student has left and with whom. We appreciate it if parents would wait for their child's class either inside the building at the front entrance or outside by the flag pole.

Parking: Parents, please remember "safety first " as you pick up and drop off your students each day. Car traffic ONLY will be allowed through the parking lot. Traffic will flow one-way (please follow the white arrows). Please do not remain in your car and beckon your child to join you. This is very dangerous as the student may run to you oblivious of the parked buses or oncoming cars. ALSO, PLEASE DO NOT PARK YOUR CAR IN THE DRIVE WAY OF THE PARKING LOT. This blocks the flow of traffic and prevent others from moving on or parking in their spots. If you want to escort your child to the door, park in the spot marked "Visitors." If all the visitors' spots are full, find a free spot and park. Thank you in advance for your flexibility with our procedures, and for helping to make Highwood Hills to be a safer school for our great students. Parents should use the parking lot entrance to **DROP OFF** students **ONLY!** When dropping your child/children off be considerate and aware to **NOT BLOCK THE HANDICAP/WHEELCHAIR ACCESS** to the building. If you wish to come into the building with your child/children, please park in the parking lot. **NO DOUBLE PARKING.** Also, NO PARKING is allowed along the yellow curbs on the east side and the front of the school. **PLEASE NOTE THAT WE STILL REQUIRE LIMITED VISTOR PRESENCE IN THE BUILDING DUE TO CONTINUED SAFETY REASONS!**

Classroom Observations/Visits

The school welcomes parents visiting their child(ren) during the school day and anyone interested in learning more about the school's wonderful programs is welcome. We ask that you schedule an observation or visit appointment by calling the main office, and also to follow any safety protocols that are put in place. Since school tours and classroom observations take place during the school day, we respectfully request that only adults attend observations. To observe in your child's classroom, contact his/her teacher directly. In as much as you can visit at any time, it is advisable to plan your visits around lunch times (specific schedules available from teachers and office) when the student is not engaged in classroom structured activities. More importantly, students seem to enjoy getting visitors in a more relaxed atmosphere. Sharing a meal with their parents and friends makes them feel even more special! However, if you must visit during class, prior notice to the teacher is not only courteous, but will help to make the visit more effective. Further, in order to maintain the flow of the classroom, please limit your stay to no longer than **15-20** minutes.

Cold Weather and Inside Recess

When the outside temperature is **zero degree or lower** and/or the wind chill is **-10 degrees or lower**, students will stay inside for recess. Teachers will have activities for students when inside recess is necessary.

Community Events and After School Activities

The school is open for parents and community members to hold events after school hours. Please note that a building use permit is required before any event could be held. Please contact the school office for further information.

Conflict Resolution

As is the case with any human organization, conflicts are bound to happen from time to time. In concert with our safe school environment, the school will adopt a progressive approach to conflict resolution. When a situation arises that warrants a resolution, please start with the person with whom you have the conflict, for example, the classroom teacher. If that is not resolved, then address it with the building principal, and so on. When students are the subjects of the conflicts, the counselor will be available and proper conflict resolution procedure will be used (when appropriate) as a way of helping students to handle their differences before they result in something bigger or a disciplinary action. Whenever necessary, restorative practices will be applied as well.

Conflict and Parental Involvement

It is not uncommon for students to engage in conflict situations that may involve parents. Please when such situations arise, DO NOT approach or reprimand another student. It is prohibited. Start by bringing the concern to the classroom teacher who will use every resource available to solve the problem. If the dispute is about something that happens outside of school, it is hoped that parents of the students concerned will find a cordial and respectful way to solve the problem outside of school.

Dress and Grooming

Positive attitudes and behavior are directly related to appropriate dress and good grooming. Appearance and dress are to be in good taste at all times. Students must wear shoes at all times while in school. For health and safety reasons as well as community standards, proper school dress will be enforced. Attire should not be promiscuous, revealing, make derogatory comments or state religious or political positions and should be neat, clean and professional. If your supervisor determines that your attire and/or grooming is not suitable, you may be asked to leave the workplace (unpaid) until you are properly attired and/or groomed. Please keep in mind the following guidelines:

1. We expect students to be responsible citizens by refraining from wearing clothing, jewelry, and excessive makeup that will distract from normal classroom procedures.
2. We expect students to attend school clean and neatly groomed.
3. We expect students will select appropriate uniform and attire for the weather and school activities.
4. Religious or cultural attire are permitted.

5. Please note that there are students with some medical conditions that may be triggered by some types of perfumes, and equally, there are students with medical conditions that may require them to wear perfumes. The school will do its best to accommodate such needs as may be necessary.

Emergency Contact Information

Parents are required to update student information on the district's new tool, Back to School Forms (formerly iUpdate) or report to the main office any changes in contact information if not connected electronically. We must be able to contact all families regarding the student and the school at all times. IT IS THE LAW!

Emergency and Drills

We are required by law to complete a specific number of fire, tornado, and lockdown drills during the school year. In the event of a real emergency, parents will be notified for early dismissal. In the event of severe weather or mechanical breakdown, the school start time may be delayed or the entire school system may be closed. Official announcements will be made over radio station WCCO (8:30AM), and most other local television and radio stations, between 6:00AM and 7:30 AM. Parents should be alert to these stations to receive information on school closings/delays. **If there is no report, school is in session.**

Field Trips

In order for a student to participate in any field trip, a Field Trip Permission Form must be completed. Students who do not return the permission slip will remain at school and will join another class for the duration of their class' field trip. Parent chaperones are welcome, but a Volunteer Application and Background Investigation Permission and Release Form will need to be successfully completed before volunteers are able to begin providing service at the school. Please stop in the Office for these forms. Contact your child's teacher if you are interested in volunteering. Some field trips may require a donation/fee. Scholarships are available on an "as needed" basis...

Health Care Services/Nurse

The school nurse must be made aware of medical conditions that may impact the student's full participation in the school environment.

Health Screening

Periodic health screening will be conducted by the school nurse. The screening includes measuring height and weight, and screening vision and hearing. The nurse will contact the parent or guardian if a problem or impairment is suspected.

Illness

Students are not to come to school ill. Any student with illness symptoms and running a temperature of **100 degrees or** above may be released at the discretion of the nurse or other authorized school personnel. A student will be released if he/she vomits or becomes ill during school time, even if the ailment is minor. It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to pick up the child shortly after notification, and seek medication attention.

Internet Use and Digital Citizenship

In Saint Paul Public Schools, we want our students to make good decisions so they can take advantage of the powerful technology that fills their lives both at school and at home. But in order to make good choices, students must know how the digital world works. The stakes are high because our kids' technological abilities can be greater than their maturity and judgment. Having unrestricted access to information and people can result in gaining a wealth of information and experiences, but it can also mean exposure to inappropriate content and risks. Instruction in digital citizenship is part of the curriculum in Saint Paul Public schools in order to help students learn to safely navigate this digital environment. Students' use may be restricted or denied until this is accomplished. Inappropriate use of technology may result in withdrawal of the privilege to use it. Students may also be asked to pay for the replacement cost of their device if damaged due to negligence.

Medications

A statement from a physician is required for medications to be dispensed at school. The parent or guardian must also sign a release giving school personnel permission to administer the medication. If your child has a chronic health condition requiring daily medication or monitoring, please contact the school nurse and arrange a meeting to discuss your child's medical needs.

Medication is kept in the office and may not be given by the classroom teacher unless assigned by the nurse and/or principal. All medication should contain a pharmaceutical label. Over the counter medication (including Tylenol and aspirin to be given for two weeks or less) must be sent in the original container, with a note from the parent and a doctor's prescription.

No student may take medication unsupervised.

Holy Days

It is our school's philosophy to cooperate with the religious obligations of families being served. Every effort will be made to accommodate students in meeting these obligations outside of school time. A note from parents indicating the need for students to be dismissed for religious sessions must be submitted to the principal in advance.

ARRIVAL at SCHOOL – Early arrival/Late Arrival/Early Dismissal for Appointments

Please note that school starts at 7:30 AM for students. However, we understand that some students arrive much earlier. Please be aware that THERE IS NO SUPERVISION for students arriving earlier than 7:00 AM. As a gesture of good faith, the school will try to provide supervision starting from 7:00 AM, so that students may gain access to the building. We hope that you will work with us and not send your students to school earlier than 7:00 AM for both their safety and health, especially in inclement weather.

Tardiness/Early Dismissal: Except in cases of late bus arrivals, students who arrive after 7:35 a.m. will be considered tardy. **Students must see the Lead Clerk or attendance Assistant in the office to get a tardy slip before going to the classroom. When a student is leaving the building early and before dismissal, parents must sign them out, and sign them in when and if they return before the end of the school day.** Because of the effect upon the child's learning progress, we encourage you to schedule medical appointments outside of the school hours when possible. It is the responsibility of the parent to ensure that the child attends school daily and promptly.

Library

Classes are scheduled to visit the library every week for 25 to 30 minutes. Library time is for leisure reading, library skills, research, and material checkout. **There are no overdue fines!** Students are entitled to check out two books each week. If a student has any books overdue, no other materials can be checked out until it is returned or renewed. Students can only check out one book if one is overdue, and no books if two books are overdue. If library materials are lost or damaged, a replacement cost will be charged. Money is refunded if the lost item is found during the school year.

Loitering

Students are expected to go home immediately after school or extracurricular activities for safety and security reasons.

Lost and Found

Lost articles of clothing are to be deposited in the **lost and found** cabinet by the library between rooms 1101 and 1102. Students and parents should check the cabinet periodically. Valuables will be checked in with the school's lead secretary. All unclaimed articles will be donated to charities and/or agencies as the cabinet becomes overloaded. The following guidelines should be maintained to minimize losses:

- Students are responsible for their personal belongings.
- All belongings are labeled as appropriate.
- Toys, cell phones, game cards, and other valuables may not be brought to school. If these items were brought to school, and are stolen or damaged, ***please be advised that the school will not address any issues concerning stolen or damaged items that are already prohibited in school.***
- Lunch money where applicable, should be given to the cafeteria supervisor immediately upon arrival.

Meals

Breakfast is served from 7:15 a.m. to 7:30 a.m. each morning. Meals at school are available free to all families at Highwood Hills. Applications for free or reduced lunch are available, and please make sure that you fill one up each school year, even if you think that you qualify or not. Students are assigned an individual PIN number. The price of the meal is automatically deducted from the child's account for each meal. See payment and prices online at sppscafe.org and go to FAQs on nutrition.spps.org.

Only if applicable: The lead Nutrition Services staff will issue a reminder notice for students when their account has a low balance where applicable. Make checks payable to SPPS Nutrition Services. Include the following information on each payment envelope: Student's name, teacher's name and dollar amount (Avoid sending cash whenever possible). **If you have more than one child attending this school, and you are sending one check, please include complete information for each child on the envelope.**

Although breakfast and lunch will be free for students at Highwood Hills, families still have to apply for Free/Reduced Priced lunch. Please complete an [application for free and reduced-price meals](#).

If you are requesting changes to your delivery or want to update your contact information, there is a form to fill out in addition to updating your information on iUpdate.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parents are always welcome to discuss their child's progress in school. Regular Parent/Teacher This year **in-person** conferences are arranged for fall and spring. Dates and times of conferences will be sent home with each student. Report cards will be available and discussed at both conferences. The year end progress report is sent to parents in June. Additional conferences between the parents and teacher may be arranged at any time at the request of either during the school year.

Passes

Each classroom has bathroom passes, and passes for students who have reason/permission to be outside the classroom. No student may be outside the classroom without a pass for safety and accountability reasons. The use of passes will be different this year, as students **will not** be using common passes. Please check with your child's teacher for more information.

Phone Calls

For safety and security reasons, students **must use** the phone in the main office. Phone calls will be kept to a minimum. All necessary phone calls must be completed via the school phone lines with permission from a staff member. Phone calls are usually limited to parents/guardian only. Again, the use of personal cell phone is not permitted during school hours.

Instructional time is important for all students and teachers. If you need to contact your child's teacher, the best times are 7:15 a.m. to 7:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. to 2:15 p.m. In cases of emergency, phone calls will be transferred to the classroom immediately.

Physical Education

Every student is required to participate in physical education classes and appropriate attire must be worn during class. Excuse from participation in physical education class requires a parental written statement. A written doctor's statement is required to excuse a student for two or more class sessions.

Pledge of Allegiance now required in schools

A new law passed by the Minnesota Legislature requires all public schools across the state to have their students say the Pledge of Allegiance at least once a week. Taking part is voluntary for individual students and staff. The specifics of how students or staff members opt out of reciting the pledge will be handled by the school on a case-by-case basis.

The laws states that:

1. The Pledge of Allegiance be recited at least once a week.
2. The Pledge of Allegiance be led by individual classroom teachers (or designee) or be recited over a school's intercom system.
3. Any student or teacher may decline to participate in reciting the pledge.

IMPORTANT!

Anyone who does not wish to participate in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance for any reason may choose not to do so, and staff/students must respect another person's right to that choice.

Our school's pledge procedures will meet the requirements of the law as outlined above.

Programs and Services at the School

A Polytechnic Program

Highwood Hills is proud to offer a polytechnic program for its elementary students. This model specializes in technical and career-related fields. It exposes students to technical fields using age-appropriate lessons and curricula. It explores student interests, more voice and choice including partnership with industries and other organizations, as they build on their skills and prepare their portfolio for future college or career-oriented fields.

Emotional/Behavioral Disorder (EBD) - This service is provided to students who have an inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors. This also includes an inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers, and may exhibit inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances. The majority of their day is spent in the classroom and may be removed for some specialized services as appropriate.

English Language Learners (ELL) - This program is for students who are learning English as a second language and have been identified as needing language enrichment. Students spend the majority of their day in their regular classroom with special instruction from an ELL teacher. On occasion students may participate in a small group setting with the ELL teacher.

Extended Day for Learning (EDL)

It is our pleasure to announce that our school's Extended Day for Learning (EDL) is back and truly extended with the **EDL Plus** model. More days of learning and fun! After school instructional help will happen on Mondays and Wednesdays this year from 2:00 PM to 3:45 PM. We are exploring a different approach and model that is more relevant and culturally affirming while at the same time, increasing learning opportunities for our students with the incorporation of enrichment activities.

Gifted/Talented Services (GT) /E-STEM – Now called Talent Development and Accelerated Services (TDAS) This program is for students who have been identified through the CogAt Assessment, to have some special talents or gifts and would need some accelerated curriculum, instruction, and assessment strategies that make differentiation both practical and do-able. This may also involve some design of differentiated tasks specific to the needs of the student. Strategies may include, but not limited to curriculum compacting, inquiry-based learning, investigations, literacy circles, computer programming, etc. which for the most part will be done within the regular classroom. **New this year is also our E-Stem class to better prepare our students for success in the next level, and for admission into the E-Stem Middle School.**

Girls on the Run (GOTR)

This program is for girls in grades 3 - 5 that inspires them to be joyful, healthy and confident using a fun, experience-based curriculum which creatively integrates running. Girls on the Run (GOTR) is a 10 week after-school program that is led by two staff members, and two GOTR volunteers. GOTR is not just a running program, it also encourages positive emotional, social, mental and physical development. Each practice includes a healthy snack, a social/emotional learning lesson, and a fun, non-competitive workout. At the end of the 10-week program, the girls participate in a non-competitive 5K (3.1 mile) event. It is a celebration of their hard work and teamwork. Practices are usually from 2:00-3:30 PM twice a week at Highwood Hills. Each participant must have a ride at the end of practice.

Homework Help – The school provides limited homework help sessions two days a week. We are also trying to coordinate with our community partners to extend this service to an apartment complex where the majority of our Karen families live. The students ride the bus to and from school, and families are unable to provide transportation for them to participate in this after school program.

Language and Culture Program – In partnership with the district's Multi Lingual Learning Program and a grant from the state, the school provides additional support and opportunity for students to connect with and expand their knowledge of culture while enhancing their literacy and math skills.

Recreation Center (REC CENTER)

Highwood Hills is very fortunate to have a recreation Center attached to its building. This center is for you and for your child, so please take advantage of the resources and opportunities that it offers. The center is open **Monday through Thursday from 2:00 PM to 9 PM**, and from **2:00 PM to 6:00 PM on Fridays**. Please remember to enroll your child, as this is an extension of their learning in addition to the physical and motor-skill building activities that they offer. For more information, please contact your child's teacher, the main office at 651-744-3290 or the **Mr. Guled Hassan**, Highwood Hills Rec Center at **651-266-6391**

Roaming Rec – This is a program that is offered two days a week, and in partnership with the city's Parks and Recreation Department. Students are given the opportunity for additional physical and socio-cultural support through sports and movement.

Specific Learning Disabilities Program (SLD) - This program is for students who have been identified with special learning needs. Students spend the majority of their day in the regular classroom and go to the LD resource room for special instruction.

Speech/Language - This service is provided to students who have been identified with a communication disorder such as: articulation, language disability, voice, and fluency/stuttering disorders.

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) - This service is new to Highwood Hills and is provided to students who have been identified as having autism on a spectrum. The school supports the students by teaching them communication, social and collaborative skills that will help them relate better to their peers and others among other things.

Developmental Cognitive Disability (DCD) - Developmental Cognitive Disability (DCD) is defined as a condition that results in intellectual functioning significantly below average and is associated with concurrent deficits in adaptive behavior that require special education and related services. The school provide this service to help students with such disability to develop the skills that will help them to have control over their lives, making own choices and contributing to the communities in which they belong.

Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) - Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) programs provide supports and services to infants, toddlers, and preschool children with disabilities and their families. The services are specially designed for young children up to the age of five who need structured and carefully constructed educational programs that will help to prepare them for success in their educational journey.

Safety Patrol Program

Children who live less than a mile from school are “walkers.” To help walkers, there is a Safety Patrol program. Safety Patrols will lead students off the school grounds and hazardous crossing areas right after school. Please watch out for your child shortly after school dismissal times which is between 1:50 PM and 2:00 PM. If your child is a new walker, please call our Lead Clerk or the school’s patrol supervisor, at 651-744-3290 in order to arrange patrol lines.

School Closings

School closings/delays are ordinarily called on WCCO AM 830 and Channel 4 as early as 6:00 a.m. Please see the Emergency and Drills section of this handbook for more information.

Snacks & Treats

Students are encouraged to maintain a healthy diet. Students are NOT to bring candy, gum, pop, etc. to school for snack or lunch. Students ignoring this rule can expect to discard these items. Exceptions will be made for medical reasons provided parents have made special arrangements with the nurse and/or principal. Treats to be shared with classmates for special activities or

events must be store-bought and served according to Saint Paul Public Schools health and wellness guidelines. The school will limit food related celebrations to One per month per classroom for health and safety reasons including minimizing incidents of food allergies.

Special Education & Support Services

Special education programs and support services such as counseling are available to students who qualify in the areas of learning disabilities, speech and language, adaptive physical education, occupational therapy, and emotional/behavioral disorders, etc.

State law provides specific guidelines for the administration of these programs, as well as specific eligibility criteria, which a student must meet. Evaluation of a student for admission into any of these programs is a very complex process requiring professional study and testing. Students are usually referred for assessment by their classroom teacher, once it is determined that the student has significant difficulties with some aspects of the educational/social processes. However, parents may request this testing for their child. To gain access to special education programs and support services, children must first be evaluated by a Child Study Team. Prior to requesting permission for assessment, appropriate interventions within the mainstream classroom must take place for at least 16 weeks.

Standardized Assessments

Each year the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA-II) standardized tests are given to all children grades 3-5. More information and testing dates will be sent home to families as the testing time frame approaches. Available test results are on file at school and may be viewed by parents at any time. ***Important: Keep in mind that no test is perfect and children react differently to certain test situations, therefore, no single test should be taken as an absolute measure of level of achievement or potential.***

Student Rights and Responsibilities

Our philosophy of discipline is based on a proactive approach to conduct management. We follow a restorative approach to repairing the harm that has been done with the goal of starting anew and fresh. To that end, we have incorporated student passes in common spaces to increase awareness of the responsibility that goes with being a member of our school community. These passes help minimize noise and traffic, which interrupts the freedom of some classrooms to work peacefully. We believe that clarity about expectations will help students feel more positive and more peaceful when they are at school. It will also increase student self control because both the choices and consequences are clear. We believe that the consistent application of this policy by all adults will support our primary aim: Every individual deserves to be treated with dignity and respect.

The Saint Paul Public Schools seek to provide an opportunity for all students to develop their full potential of achievement, originality and creativity. This can only take place in an environment where students' rights are protected. Student responsibility must also be a part of this

educational climate in order to provide the framework in which the goals of freedom can be realized. Without discipline in the school, learning cannot occur. A student is responsible for the manner in which his or her individual rights are exercised and must accept the consequences of any actions that are committed outside the boundaries of those rights. Staff, students and parents must work cooperatively if the goal of a democratic society within the school is to be realized.

Families have a significant influence on a child's peaceful nature. With support and encouragement from every family, we can create a peaceful environment for all children at our School.

Our school-wide expectations are simple:

Be safe

Be Respectful

Be Responsible

Student Discipline and Behavior Management

Board Policy # 506.00 re: Discipline:

"It shall be the responsibility of each principal and staff to encourage and maintain an atmosphere of discipline and mutual respect... Rights and Responsibilities Handbook shall govern student behavior and discipline in the elementary and secondary schools of the district."

The Board of Education Policies and the Rights and Responsibilities handbook will be the guideposts for dealing with disciplinary issues and consequences at Highwood Hills. The philosophy is to create a positive learning environment through positive reinforcement of appropriate behavior. We therefore concentrate on teaching students to take responsibility for their learning and behavior in ways that are acceptable and supportive of other learners. Although, we do not anticipate a large number of discipline problems at Highwood Hills, there are issues that may arise from time to time. Problems are addressed initially by the classroom teacher and/or support staff, and administration becomes involved only if the behavior is severe, or if it becomes chronic, and cannot be solved effectively with the staff or classroom teacher of the student(s). Most consequences or interventions are determined by the classroom teachers with support and consultation from the principal.

Dismissal/Suspension

A **dismissal** is removal from school for up to one day, and a **suspension** is removal from school for two or more days. Please note that decision to dismiss or suspend a student is made by the school's licensed administrator or designee. **When it becomes imperative to dismiss or suspend a student, the administrator does not have to seek permission from the student's parent/guardian before taking such an action.** However, every attempt would be made to notify the parent/guardian of the student who is being dismissed/suspended. Further, after a suspension, a parent/guardian conference with administration may be requested before the

child will be allowed to return to school in some cases. There is a zero tolerance for any type of illicit substance, gun or weapon possession, and we take any form of harassment (verbal or physical), hitting, kicking, poking, terroristic threats, gang activity or bullying very seriously.

A student may be suspended from school for either of two reasons: Consistent violation of school rules, or conduct that endangers the health, safety, and/or property of self and others. The following are considered types of severe behavior: Fighting, assault, disrespectful language, dishonesty, truancy, weapons/harmful devices, pulling down a fire alarm system, or chronic off task behaviors.

The Saint Paul Public Schools Student Rights and Responsibilities Guide provides a detailed description of student behaviors and interventions.

Harassment

Saint Paul Public Schools district is committed to creating an environment that treats all students and staff with dignity and respect, provides everyone with a safe physical and emotional learning environment, and promotes respect, tolerance and cooperation throughout the district.

Prohibition – Harassment is prohibited. Individuals who upon investigation, are determined to have engaged in harassment under the provision of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action. In the case of students, this action will be consistent with our student discipline policy.

Lunch Room Rules

1. Enter the lunchroom in a calm and orderly manner.
2. Talk at your table quietly.
3. Use good table manners.
4. Be seated at your table until you are dismissed.
5. Clean up after yourself.

Recess/Playground Rules

1. Play in the designated playground area.
2. Use playground equipment appropriately.
3. Skateboards and rollerblades are not allowed.
4. Report problems and concerns to the teachers who are on recess duty.
5. Dress appropriately for the weather.
6. Line up immediately when your teacher gives the signal.
7. ALWAYS PLAY SAFELY AND HAVE FUN!!!

A parent note is required if the child must remain indoors during recess. A doctor's note may be required for two or more days.

Technology

All students must have a *Rights and Responsibility* form signed before using computers in school. The use of the computers is a privilege, not a right (see district technology use policy).

Transportation

Bus Transportation

School bus transportation is a service provided by the school district, and is a privilege for all students. Bus safety procedures apply to all passengers and all school sponsored activities. Bus safety regulations is set forth by the transportation department. Parents/guardians are responsible for the actions of their children while walking to and from the school bus stop, getting on or off the bus and while riding the school bus.

1. The driver shall give verbal reminders and re-direct student behavior. Students may be assigned a seat as needed.
2. Continued misconduct will result in a written bus discipline report to the school
3. If misconduct persists, a second bus discipline report will be issued. Parents will be notified.
4. A third bus discipline report will result in a parent conference with the principal. Violations of bus safety rules may result in suspension of bus service, bus safety class, and/or a referral to the district administrator for consideration of expulsion from bus service.
5. A single incident of a very serious nature, which threatens the health, safety, or welfare of any individual may be referred directly to the principal or district administrator for action and/or hearing.

*Students may not get on or off any school bus other than their own assigned route/stop.

**Call the school secretary regarding all bus transportation routes.

The above information is a summary of bus rider rules and responsibilities. Complete bus safety information is available from the transportation department.

Route Changes and Changes in Dismissal plans

When there is a change to a student's regular transportation, a parent must submit a written note to the classroom teacher. For safety reasons, we cannot honor changes based on a student's request. Parents must contact the secretary/clerk in the office **no later than 12:00 p.m.** if a change arises during the school day. Avoid calling at dismissal time. It is extremely difficult for the office to deliver messages to students at dismissal time. ***Important: Students will be released only to a parent/guardian. Any special circumstances and permission must be submitted in writing to the principal.***

Uniform Policy

Highwood Hills NO LONGER REQUIRE UNIFORMS. If, however you still want them to dress in school colors or continue to wear their uniforms, you are welcome to do so with the understanding that it is no longer enforced. Either way, we still expect students to be properly groomed for school.

Volunteers

We welcome parents to volunteer in their child's classroom or in the school. If you are going to volunteer in the classroom, please contact your child's teacher and see what area he/she needs help. When working directly with students and not being supervised by a licensed personnel or teacher, a background check is required per district policy. A district volunteer application is available on the district website at www.spps.org. There is also a hard copy and other necessary information in the office. To ensure the safety and security of our students, families, employees, the Saint Paul Public School district reserves the right to conduct criminal background checks on *any* volunteer.

Again, parents and community members are welcome to help as needed in classrooms. In order to have a productive experience, contact the teacher in advance. Sign in and sign out at the office and wear a Visitor or Volunteer badge at all times while in the building.

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