



# ALEXANDRIA

## Public Schools

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*Rich tradition. Bright future.*

# Student Handbook

## Middle School

### 2024-2025

<u>Title/Department</u>	<u>Principal/Administrator</u>	<u>Telephone</u>
Principal	Heather Timm	320-762-7900
Asst. Principal/Dean of Students, Gr. 6	Sara Kosters	320-762-7900
Dean of Students, Grade 8	Julie Renaud	320-762-7900
Dean of Students, Grade 7	Rachel Bothun	320-762-7900
Activities Director	Todd Johnson	320-762-7900
Transportation Director	Amie Moos	320-762-3317
Food & Nutrition Svcs. Director	Janeen Peterson	320-762-3315



**Alexandria Public Schools: Mission**

*Our mission is to achieve educational excellence and to inspire a life-long passion for learning.*

**Alexandria Public Schools: Vision**

*Our vision is to be an extraordinary school district that tailors learning for all, by working together.*

**Discovery Middle School: Vision**

*Discovery's mission, as a student-centered school of early adolescence, is to prepare all of our students to be successful learners in a technology-based, complex, changing society. This will be accomplished by providing a safe and caring environment where individuality is encouraged, by assisting students in the development of self-worth and responsibility and by supporting student exploration in academics and recreation.*

Discovery Middle School Daily Schedule			
Period	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
Homebase	8:15 - 8:35	8:15 - 8:35	8:15 - 8:35
1	8:40 - 9:35	8:40 - 9:35	8:40 - 9:35
2	9:40 - 10:35	9:40 - 10:35	9:40 - 10:35
3	<b>Lunch:</b> 10:35 - 11:05	10:40 - 11:35	10:40 - 11:35
4	11:10 - 12:05	<b>Lunch:</b> 11:35 - 12:05	11:40 - 12:35
5	12:10 - 1:05	12:10 - 1:05	<b>Lunch:</b> 12:35 - 1:05
6	1:10 - 2:05	1:10 - 2:05	1:10 - 2:05
7	2:10 - 3:05	2:10 - 3:05	2:10 - 3:05

Discovery Middle School operates on an A/B day system in physical education and fine arts classes. On student schedules, A and B days will be listed to communicate the days of attendance. The Alexandria Public Schools website communicates the cycle day schedule for student and parent reference.

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## **Above & Beyond**

Above & Beyond is an afterschool student academic support offered from October to May, provided on Tuesdays and Thursdays after school, provided there is adequate staffing. Students must have parent permission to attend. The Code of Conduct and Cardinal Way expectations must be followed to assure a productive environment for this beneficial learning support. Additional information about Above & Beyond will be shared on the daily bulletin in September.

## **Activities & Extracurricular**

- Student athletes in Grades 6, 7 and 8 are considered participants in the middle school athletic program. The philosophy guiding this program stresses the value of participation as compared to the more competitive play-to-win philosophy at the high school level. The activities are intended to provide experiences not otherwise provided in the instructional curriculum in the areas of athletics and academics. Families are encouraged to contact the office located at Discovery Middle School for more information about the opportunities available through the programs. You may reference the online list of [athletics and extracurricular activities](#) for students in grades 6, 7, and 8 or obtain a paper copy in the main office or guidance office at Discovery Middle School. ([Policy 655 - Student Activities](#))
- Athletes in 7th through 12th grade programs (Alpine Ski, Nordic Ski, Hockey, Wrestling, Gymnastics, Adapted Bowling, Clay Target) will be considered high school level participants, although they are still subject to Discovery Middle School eligibility guidelines based on academic performance.
- **Eligibility requirements** shall be those set forth by the MSHSL as well as the following:
  - Students absent from school may be denied the right to participate in either practice or activities on that day or night unless the absence was an excused absence for another school function or activity. Consideration will be given for such reasons as medical concerns or family emergencies. To be considered eligible, students must be in school by the beginning of the third hour on the day of the activity.
  - Students must make satisfactory progress in school to be eligible. If a student is ineligible due to failing or incomplete grades, students and families will be informed of the process for regaining eligibility.
  - Students will be eligible based on behavior during the school day and during practice and games. Coaches and/or the athletic director will inform families of behavioral concerns that disrupt or impede practice or event/game

Behavior that results in administrative disciplinary referral will be handled according to Policy 506 – District-Wide Student Discipline. Students may lose the privilege of participating in the extracurricular activity, dependent on the severity of the disciplinary incident.

## **Aerosols/Sprays**

It is requested that anything containing a scented aerosol not be brought to school, as some students and staff are allergic to these sprays or scents. If there is a need for an unscented aerosol deodorant, it may be used in the locker room.

## **Anonymous Tip Line**

Alexandria Public Schools believes it is all of our responsibility to keep our schools safe. To that end, students and parents have access to our anonymous tip app found as a feature in our Alexandria Public Schools app. Reporting negative behavior can be done via the app in an anonymous manner.

## **Asbestos Management Plan**

The school district has developed an asbestos management plan. A copy of this plan is available for public inspection in the District Office during normal business hours. More information can be found in the district [website annual notice content area](#).

## **Attendance**

The Board of Education believes that regular school attendance is directly related to success in academic work, benefits students socially, provides opportunities for important communications between teachers and students and establishes regular habits of dependability important to the future of the student. The purpose of this policy is to encourage regular school attendance. It is intended to be positive and not punitive. This policy also recognizes that class attendance is a joint responsibility to be shared by the student, parent or guardian, teacher and administration. This policy will assist students in attending class. ([Policy 503 - Student Attendance](#))

### **PRE-ARRANGED ABSENCE**

Please communicate prearranged absences to your child's teachers and the attendance secretary.

### **ATTENDANCE LETTERS**

Attendance letters are mailed to families when there are concerns relating to a student missing ten percent or more school days. While a student may or may not have excused reasons for absence, this communication is intended to encourage improved student attendance.

### **TRUANCY/UNEXCUSED ABSENCES**

An unexcused absence indicates that the student is absent from school or class without the consent of the parent(s)/guardian(s). Make-up work is required.

An attendance intervention may be set up with recurrent unexcused absences to support class attendance. This will include a team meeting that includes a parent/guardian.

If a student is deemed habitually truant/unexcused, a letter will be filed with the Douglas County Attorney's Office stating that this child is in need of protective services.

### **TARDINESS**

Tardiness is late arrival to school or entering a class hour. Tardiness is classified as excused and unexcused. Some examples are as follows:

Excused: Illness, medical/dental appointments, family emergencies, building pass from school personnel, family emergency, school activity, vacation

Unexcused: Oversleeping, missing the bus, truancy, school office uninformed (no parent/guardian communication), arriving late to class without pass to excuse being late

Recurrent unexcused tardiness will be addressed by the student's grade level dean, grade level team and a social worker. Beginning at the fourth unexcused tardy in the same class period within a quarter, an intervention will be put in place.

The intervention planning may include: a passing time plan, an hour after school session of class make-up time and/or a parent meeting.

## **Backpacks/Belongings**

Students may carry backpacks to and from school. Students place backpacks, coats and valuables in their lockers upon arrival, using their school-purchased locks to keep items secure.

## **Before/After School**

In the interest of safety and security, it is requested students arrive at school between 7:45 am and 8:10 am when possible. At 7:30 am, supervision is available for students in the cafeteria. Students wait in the cafeteria until dismissed to their grade level areas. At 7:45 am, students are able to visit with friends in grade level areas, may work with teachers to obtain support with their learning or go to breakfast. Physical Education lockers are available at 8:05 for delivery of physical education clothing. Prior to this time, locker rooms may be locked from use due to limited supervision. At the end of the school day, students who are not in an after-school activity are expected to ride the bus home or have their ride pick them up by 3:30 pm, unless an arrangement has been made with a Discovery staff member. There is no adult supervision available for students who are not in pre-planned after-school activities.

## **Bikes/Longboarding/Skateboarding/Rollerblading**

Bikes should be placed in available bike racks provided on school grounds. Safely locking bikes to the rack is recommended. Use of longboards, rollerblades or "skate shoes with wheels" are not allowed on school grounds. Students are allowed to use these items as a means of transportation to and from school. Once students arrive at school, the transportation item must be placed into the student's locker to be stored appropriately.

## **Bullying Prohibition Policy & Reporting**

A safe and civil environment is needed for students to learn and attain high academic standards and to promote healthy human relationships. An act of bullying, by either an individual student or a group of students, is expressly prohibited on school premises, on school district property at school functions or activities, on school transportation or by misuse of technology. For complete information on bullying prohibition, please refer to District Policy. ([Policy 514 - Bullying Prohibition](#))

Options for reporting bullying or harassment:

- Tell a trusted school adult. All adults within Discovery Middle School are responsible for responding to and reporting any bullying or harassment concern.
- Complete a bullying/harassment form in the guidance office to report the incident.



- Parents may contact an adult at school to inform of concern, such as a teacher, a Dean of Students, the Assistant Principal or the Principal.
- The Anonymous Tip Line may be used to report the concern.

Deans of Students, the Assistant Principal and the Principal are the assigned designees responsible for fully investigating the report.

## **Bus Information**

See 'Transportation'

## **Buses – Conduct on School Buses and Consequences for Misbehavior**

Riding the school bus is a privilege, not a right. The school district's general student behavior rules are in effect for all students on school buses, including nonpublic and charter school students. The school district will not provide transportation for students whose transportation privileges have been revoked.

The school district is committed to transporting students in a safe and orderly manner. To accomplish this, student riders are expected to follow school district rules for waiting at a school bus stop and for riding on a school bus.

While waiting for the bus or after being dropped off at a school stop, all students must comply with the following rules:

- Get to the bus stop five minutes before your scheduled pick up time. The school bus driver will not wait for late students.
- Respect the property of others while waiting at the bus stop.
- Keep your arms, legs and belongings to yourself.
- Use appropriate language.
- Stay away from the street, road or highway when waiting for the bus.
- Wait until the bus stops before approaching the bus.
- After getting off the bus, move away from the bus.
- If you must cross the street, always cross in front of the bus where the driver can see you. Wait for the driver to signal to you before crossing the street.
- No fighting, harassment, intimidation or horseplay.
- No use of alcohol, tobacco or drugs.

While riding a school bus, all riders must comply with the following rules:

- Follow the driver's directions at all times.
- Remain seated facing forward while the bus is in motion.
- Talk quietly and use appropriate language.
- Keep all parts of your body inside the bus.
- Keep arms, legs and belongings to yourself and out of the aisle.
- No fighting, harassment, intimidation or horseplay.
- Do not throw any object.
- No eating, drinking or use of alcohol, tobacco or drugs.
- Do not bring any weapons or dangerous objects on the school bus.

- Do not damage the school bus.

Consequences for school bus/bus stop misconduct will be imposed by the school district under administrative discipline procedures. All school bus/bus stop misconduct will be reported to the school district's transportation safety director. Serious misconduct may be reported to local law enforcement. For complete information on bus conduct and consequences for misbehavior, please refer to District Policy. ([Policy 709 – Student Transportation Safety](#))

## **Calendar**

The school calendar may be accessed online or a paper copy may be picked up at the guidance office. This calendar includes dates when school is not in session, including conference dates and two-hour late starts.

## **Celebrations**

All Discovery Middle School sponsored after school activities, including school dances or celebrations, are exclusively for Discovery Middle School students. Student visitors are not allowed to attend these school-related functions. These celebrations are considered an extension of the school and all school policies/behavioral expectations are maintained.

## **Cell Phones/Electronic Devices**

Discovery Middle School holds high expectations for student behavior, academic integrity and responsible use of cell phones/electronic devices. Students who possess cell phones/electronic devices at school must do so with the greatest respect for the educational environment and the rights and privacy of all individuals within the school community.

Use of electronic devices are for educational purposes only. Students are not to take pictures or record information during school hours for non-educational purposes.

Students are prohibited from using a cell phone or other electronic communication device to engage in conduct prohibited by school district policies including, but not limited to, cheating, bullying, harassment and malicious and sadistic conduct. If the school district has a reasonable suspicion that a student has violated a school rule or law by use of a cell phone or other electronic communication device, the school district may search the device. The search of the device will be reasonably related in scope to the circumstances justifying the search.

Locking personal cell phones in student grade level lockers is recommended. If students carry their cell phones during school hours (8:15-3:05 p.m.), student cell phones are to be put away when students are in the following locations: cafeteria, indoor or outdoor learning spaces, bathrooms and locker rooms, unless given staff permission to use cell phones.

Parents/Guardians are encouraged to communicate through the main office. If needed, students are permitted to check cell phones within the 5-minute passing time between class times at lockers or in hallways.

In the case of an individualized student need, a formalized individual plan will be developed by a dean or administrator.

If students are not following cell phone procedures:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Incident: A staff member will direct the student to place the cell phone into the student's locker or a designated classroom space. If the phone is in a designated classroom space, the cell phone will be returned to the student at the end of the class period.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Incident: The student will be referred to the office with the cell phone/personal electronic device. Parents will be notified and the device will be kept in the office and returned to the student at the end of the school day.
- Recurrent Incidents: A cell phone/electronic device plan will be developed for the student.

## **Census Information**

If you are new to town or your family has a change of address, phone number, number of children in the family, marital status or other pertinent information, please notify the District Office at 320-762-2141 or the individual school office so that our student records are kept up-to-date.

## **Chemical Use and Abuse**

Use of controlled substances or look-alike substances, toxic substances and alcohol is prohibited in the school setting. Disciplinary action will occur for any violations. The entire District-Wide Student Discipline policy ([Policy 506 - District-Wide Student Discipline](#)) can also be viewed on the District website.

## **Child Abuse/Mandated Reporters**

Minnesota State Law requires that school employees, as mandated reporters, report to the county Social Services department any suspected cases of child abuse or neglect. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in prosecution of the school employee.

Once a report has been made, official representatives of the county Social Services department have the right to come to the school to interview the child. The department need not obtain parent/guardian permission.

**Interviewing of Students by Outside Agencies** - Students may not be interviewed during the school day by persons other than the student's parents, school district officials, employees and/or agents except as otherwise provided by law.

## **Code of Conduct & Cardinal Way**

Discovery Middle School is committed to creating and maintaining a positive and safe learning environment. We utilize Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports proactively to teach desired behaviors. This school-wide approach focuses on three core **Cardinal Way** behavior expectations:

- Be Ready
- Be Respectful
- Be Responsible

The **Cardinal Way** also incorporates the district-wide Code of Conduct:

- **Respect:** Be considerate of self, others, their beliefs and property

- **Honesty:** Be truthful
- **Kindness:** Be caring, friendly and helpful
- **Responsibility:** Be dependable and accountable
- **Fairness:** Be committed to the just treatment of others

## **Custody**

If custody changes after enrollment, documents should be provided to the school as soon as possible after the change. The school will follow court orders that specifically authorize or direct custody or related custodial issues. The school system will give non-custodial parents, upon request, duplicate school information about their child unless prohibited by court order. A certified copy of that order must be on file at the school. The school should also be made aware of any unusual situations that might require a heightened need for greater security for your child.

## **Discipline**

The District-Wide Student Discipline Policy provides expectations for student conduct. Abiding by these expectations will enhance the school district's ability to maintain discipline and ensure a quality educational experience. The school district will take appropriate disciplinary action when students fail to adhere to acceptable behavior standards established by this policy and its guidelines and/or appendices. For complete information on district-wide student discipline, please refer to District Policy. ([Policy 506 - District-Wide Student Discipline](#))

### **DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

The general policy of the school district is to utilize progressive discipline to the extent reasonable and appropriate based upon the specific facts and circumstances of student misconduct.

The goal of progressive discipline is preventing recurrence of negative behavior by helping students learn from mistakes. Essential to the implementation of progressive discipline is assisting students who have engaged in unacceptable behavior to:

- Understand why the behavior is unacceptable and the harm it caused;
- Understand what they could have done differently in the same situation;
- Take responsibility for their actions;
- Learn pro-social strategies and skills to use in the future;
- Understand the progression of consequences with recurring behavior.

Reasonable effort will be made to correct student behavior through school-based interventions. At a minimum, violation of school district rules, regulations, policies or procedures will result in instruction and discussion of the violation. The school district shall, however, impose more severe disciplinary sanctions for any violation, including exclusion or expulsion, if warranted by the student's misconduct, as determined by the school district as outlined in the District-Wide Student Discipline Policy.

## **Distribution of Non-School Sponsored Materials**

The school district recognizes that students and employees have the right to express themselves on school property. This protection includes distributing nonschool-sponsored material, subject to school district regulations and procedures, at a reasonable time and place and in a reasonable manner. For

complete information on distribution of nonschool-sponsored materials, please refer to District Policy. (Policy 505 – Distribution of Nonschool-Sponsored Materials on School Premises by Students and Employees).

## **Dress and Appearance Policy**

Students are encouraged to dress appropriately for school and in keeping with community standards. This responsibility belongs to both the student and parent/guardian. Specific expectations are outlined in district policy. ([Policy 567 - Student Dress and Appearance](#))

## **Drills: School Safety**

As per Minnesota State Law, there will be:

- **Fire:** Five fire drills must occur each school year. Students practice evacuation of the school and are led to areas designated as safe on the school grounds.
  - Charges may be filed through the State Fire Marshall's Office and Law Enforcement against any student who falsely pulls a school fire alarm. ([Policy 806 - Crisis Management](#))
- **Tornado/Severe Weather:** One tornado drill is practiced in the spring. The school conducts a tornado drill in conjunction with the State of Minnesota's Severe Weather Awareness Week. Students are led to designated areas inside the school.
- **Lockdown:** Five lockdown drills occur during the year. During these drills, an audio announcement will be made by an administrator (building principal or designee) directing the lockdown procedure.
- Staff and students will base lockdown decisions on Run, Hide, Fight training to stay in the classroom or leave the area if the area is secured.
- Families will receive school communication about Run, Hide, Fight training, along with information about school-wide Run, Hide, Fight lockdown drills.

## **Employment Background Checks**

The school district will seek criminal history background checks for all applicants who receive an offer of employment with the school district. For complete information regarding employment background checks, please visit the district [website annual notice content area](#).

## **Fees and Financial Obligations**

Public education in Minnesota is free to all residents. However, fees may be charged under some circumstances. For complete information regarding fees and financial obligations, please visit the district website annual notice content area.

## **Field Trips**

The district supports and approves student field trips and travel beyond the classroom and area of competition that are properly planned, well organized and carefully supervised. Students participating in approved field trips and travel will be permitted to prepare assignments in advance or make up work missed in classes from which they are absent. All trips and travel require parent/guardian authorization. ([Policy 538 - Student Travel](#))

## **Food & Beverages**

In order to maintain a clean and sanitary environment, food and beverages will not be allowed in any academic area of the building unless permitted by the classroom instructor. Students are permitted to bring water bottles to class to remain hydrated.

## **Food Service**

Alexandria Public Schools recognizes the role proper nutrition has in student learning. Alexandria Public Schools is committed to providing appropriate school breakfast programs, school lunch programs and other related food service programming. The food service program will follow state and federal guidelines when providing school breakfast and school lunch programs. ([Policy 730 - Food and Nutrition Services Program](#))

## **Harassment and Violence Policy**

The purpose of this policy is to maintain a learning environment that is free from harassment and violence on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity, age, marital status, familial status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation or disability. The school district prohibits any form of harassment or violence on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity, age, marital status, familial status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation or disability. For complete information on harassment and violence, please refer to District Policy. ([Policy 413 - Harassment and Violence](#))

## **Hazing Prohibition Policy**

The purpose of this policy is to maintain a safe learning environment for students and staff that is free from hazing. Hazing activities of any type are inconsistent with the educational goals of the school district and are prohibited at all times. Students who violate this rule will be subject to disciplinary action pursuant to the school district's student discipline policy. For complete information on hazing prohibition, please refer to District Policy. ([Policy 526 - Hazing Prohibition](#))

## **Headphones & Wireless Speakers**

Headphones are to be used for educational purposes within learning spaces. Families will be contacted by the teacher if headphones are interfering with an individual student's learning or instruction. If there are recurrent concerns, a plan for headphone usage will be made with staff, parents/guardians and students. Wireless speakers should remain at home.

## **Health Services**

Students who become ill during the school day may go to the health office. Alexandria Public Schools employs one school nurse district-wide. A school health paraprofessional (SHP) or a building secretary will be responsible for your child's health needs when the nurse is not available.

- **Emergency Health Situations and District Insurance Limitations:** The district does not purchase medical, health or accident insurance for your child. If your child has an accident, is ill or is injured while at school or participating in district-sponsored activities, families will need to

access their own insurance plans to cover any associated costs (e.g. medical care, emergency transportation, etc.). The district cannot pay these associated costs.

- **Immunization Requirements:** Students are required to provide proof of immunization or appropriate documentation exempting the student from immunizations and other data necessary to ensure that the student is free from any communicable diseases, as a condition of enrollment. ([Policy 530 - Immunization requirements](#))
- **Injuries:** If a student sustains an injury at any time during school or while participating in any school-sponsored activity, he/she must immediately report the injury to the supervisor, school nurse or an administrator. If the injury appears to be serious, every effort will be made to contact parents/guardians. If the school is unable to contact the parents/guardians, a judgment may be made to call an ambulance.
- **Medication:** The district acknowledges that students may require prescription and nonprescription medication during the school day. In such cases, medication may be administered only by the licensed school nurse or other trained school employees. The district strongly discourages students from possessing and self-administering nonprescription medication without written authorization from the student's parent or guardian on file in the health office. ([Policy 516 - Student Medication and Telehealth](#))
- **Students with Communicable Diseases and Infectious Conditions:** Students with communicable diseases are not to be excluded from attending school in their daily attendance setting so long as their health permits and their attendance does not create a significant risk of the transmission of illness to students or employees. ([Policy 420/540 - Student and Employees with Sexually Transmitted Infections and Diseases and Certain Other Communicable Diseases and Infectious Conditions](#))

## **Honesty, Cheating and Learning**

Learning requires effort, diligence and dedication; therefore, achievement in the pursuit of knowledge is commendable. When students succeed academically, they are wisely preparing for the future and should be very proud of their accomplishments. Anything that jeopardizes or thwarts this important, meaningful process of learning must not be tolerated and educators have a professional obligation to prevent disruptions while supporting and reinforcing learning. Each teacher will discuss the ramifications of cheating in his/her class and determine the consequence if cheating does occur, which may include a "zero" or "no credit" for the assignment/test.

## **Internet User & Computer Use Rules**

Students may access online resources from their classrooms via the Internet. Procedures and guidelines have been established for access to the district's networks and acceptable and safe use of the Internet. The administration will supervise the guidelines. Specific expectations, including the *Online Code of Ethics*, are outlined in School Board policies.

Staff will inform families of concerns relating to Chromebook usage. Non-educational Chrome Extensions added by students to district-owned Chromebooks can be removed by staff members (example: non-educational games).

Parents or guardians must give approval for their child(ren) to access Internet resources and students must agree to follow the acceptable use procedures. Yearly, consent forms are required for students. The form is available from school media centers and on the website. ([Policy 524/453 – Internet, Technology and Cell Phone Acceptable Use and Safety](#))

## **K-9 Use/Dogs on Campus**

From time to time, we partner with local law enforcement to conduct sweeps of our campus to seek a drug free environment. These are conducted at random and consist of walk-throughs of our buildings and parking lots.

## **Library and Media Center**

Libraries and Media Centers exist to provide materials and resources to meet the educational needs of all students in the district. For complete information regarding Libraries and Media Centers, please refer to District Policy. ([Policy 606.5 – Library Materials](#))

## **Lockers and Locks**

All students will be assigned a locker based on their homebase. It is expected that students use assigned lockers to store coats, hats, personal belongings and academic material not in use.

All students must use padlocks purchased at Discovery Middle School to secure assigned hallway lockers. (Students are advised not to share locker combinations with friends. If students do not secure lockers with padlocks, they are responsible for the contents and risk loss of items.) For safety and security reasons, no personal locks will be allowed on hallway lockers. Non-school locks will be removed. Students may not handle, remove or take another student's padlock.

Students will be assigned a locker in the locker room with its combination for locking. It is the responsibility of students to assure belongings are placed into the locker while in physical education class or after school activities. Unlocked items are at risk of being lost or stolen.

School lockers are the property of the district. The district maintains exclusive control of lockers provided for the convenience of students. Inspection of the interior of lockers may be conducted by school employees for any reason at any time, without notice, without student consent and without a search warrant.

The personal possessions of students within a school locker or on a student's person may be searched only when school employees have a reasonable suspicion that the search will uncover evidence of a violation of law or school rules. As soon as practical after the search of a student's personal possessions within a locker, a school employee will notify the student whose personal possessions within a locker were searched, unless disclosure would impede an ongoing investigation by policy or school employees. ([Policy 502 - Search of Student Lockers, Desks, Personal Possessions and Student's Person](#))

## **Lunch**

Discovery Middle School offers several choices for lunch. Students may purchase a school lunch or bring lunch from home. In addition, students may purchase additional snack items from the school store.

The lunchroom should be a place which is pleasant, relaxed and clean. To maintain a welcoming environment, students are taught the behavioral expectations linked to *The Cardinal Way*. If students are not meeting expectations in the cafeteria, consequences may include one or more of the following:



- Warning and reteaching of expectations
- Lunch detention (number of days determined by severity or recurrence of the behavior)
- School Service: if the student makes a mess, he/she is expected to clear up the mess or assist in cleaning it up with an adult
- An individual behavior plan will be developed for recurring issues

Students should bring their scan card daily, as it helps students efficiently get through the line.

**Confidentiality of Free and Reduced Meal Eligibilities:** Free and reduced meal forms are available through the principal's office, the District Food & Nutrition Services Department or online on the [district website](#). We would encourage you to fill these forms out to find out if you qualify, as many of our school programs are funded based on the information we receive from these forms. The district has policies and procedures to ensure a student's free and reduced meal eligibility status is confidential. The school district may identify specific district employees to be aware of a student's eligibility status to improve a student's performance in accordance with the federal law.

## **Nondiscrimination**

The school district is committed to inclusive education and providing an equal educational opportunity for all students. The school district does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, parental status, status with regard to public assistance, disability, sexual orientation, including gender identity and expression or age in its programs and activities. The school board has designated Jessie Hjelle, Director of Human Resources, 1410 S. McKay Ave., Ste. 201, Alexandria, 320-762-2141, as the district's human rights officer to handle inquiries regarding nondiscrimination. For complete information regarding nondiscrimination, please visit the district [website annual notice content area](#).

## **Notice of Violent Behavior by Students**

The school district will give notice to teachers and other appropriate school district staff before students with a history of violent behavior are placed in their classrooms. For complete information regarding notices of violent behavior, please visit the district [website annual notice content area](#).

## **Parent Involvement**

Parent involvement opportunities will be communicated throughout the school year. Parents are invited and encouraged to team with school staff in working together for the betterment of the school and its students.

Email is the main method of communication between school and parents. We also have an emergency notification system that we use for critical updates (weather, emergency, etc.). Schools will also send a text with a prompt for parents to check email. Engaged parents are essential to students' success.

### **PARENT PRINCIPAL CONNECT**

Parent Principal Connect meetings are facilitated by Principal Heather Timm, along with Assistant Principal Sara Kosters. Families are notified of meeting dates and times.

The goal of these meetings is to foster partnership between school and home, increasing opportunities for family engagement at the middle school level.

## **CONFERENCES**

Parent-Teacher-Student conferences are available twice a year. Parent/guardian participation at conferences is very important so student progress can be discussed and goals set. So that the teacher and the parent/guardian(s) can give their full attention to the student, we encourage you to make arrangements for the care of the student's siblings outside of your child's classroom when attending a conference. **Due to limited allocation of time, teachers will only schedule one conference per student.**

## **Parent Right to Know**

If a parent requests it, the school district will provide information regarding the professional qualifications of his/her child's classroom teachers, including, at a minimum, the following:

- whether the teacher has met state qualifications and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction;
- whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or other provisional licensing status through which state qualification or licensing criteria have been waived;
- the baccalaureate degree major of the teacher and any other graduate certification or degree held by the teacher, and the field of discipline of the certification or degree;
- whether the student is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

In addition, the school district will provide parents with information as to the level of achievement of their child in each of the state academic assessments. The school district will provide notice to parents if their child has been assigned to, or taught for four or more consecutive weeks by, a teacher who is not highly qualified.

## **ParentVue**

Parents have access to their child's grades and attendance at all times through ParentVue, which can be accessed on the Alexandria Public Schools website.

## **Passes**

Any student who is out of a class must have a signed pass and is required to display it to any school employee upon request.

## **Pesticide Application Notice**

The school district may plan to apply pesticide(s) on school property. To the extent the school district applies certain pesticides, the school district will provide a notice by September 15 as to the school district's plan to use these pesticides. For complete information regarding pesticide application, please visit the district [website annual notice content area](#).

## **Pledge of Allegiance**

Students shall recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States of America one or more times each week. Anyone who does not wish to participate in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance for any personal reasons may elect not to participate. Students and school employees must respect another

person's right to make that choice. Students will also receive instruction in the proper etiquette toward, correct display of and respect for the flag. For complete information regarding the Pledge of Allegiance, please refer to District Policy. ([Policy 531 - The Pledge of Allegiance](#))

## **Printing**

Students are able to print assignments for their classes on the printer that is located in the media center with their unique pin. Students are asked to conserve paper by printing only what is needed or required. Misuse of printing for unauthorized purposes may result in loss of printing privileges and/or charges for excessive ink usage.

## **Scan Cards**

Student scan cards are used for multiple purposes. During the school day, these cards are used to check out library books, print assignments and help students get through the line more quickly at lunch. This year, students will also be able to use scan cards to check out board games during lunch. Replacement cards are \$5.00.

## **Schedule**

The daily schedule has been included in the student handbook. Special schedules will be communicated in the daily bulletin and will be posted on the website.

## **School Cancellation**

Throughout the year, there may be times when school will be delayed or called off due to inclement weather or some emergency. Official announcements for school closings may be heard over radio - KXRA (1490AM), KX92 (92.3FM), KIKV (100.7FM), Z99 (99.3FM) and KSAX/KRWF-TV. Weather related announcements are also posted on the Alexandria Public Schools website at [www.alexschools.org](http://www.alexschools.org). Parents that have current phone numbers on file with the District will also receive a phone call and text from our automated calling system.

## **School Resource Officer**

Alexandria Public Schools partners with the Alexandria Police Department to provide an onsite School Resource Officer. Such a school resource officer shall be a licensed police officer and shall not be an employee of the school district. While it is the hope of the school district and Alexandria Police Department the presence of a school resource officer will deter discipline problems and serve as a beneficial role model for the students, it is also recognized that the school resource officer may have a role in the disciplinary process.

## **Search of Lockers, Desks, Possessions and Persons**

Under Minnesota law, school lockers are school district property. At no time does the school district relinquish its exclusive control of lockers provided for students' convenience. School officials may inspect the interior of lockers for any reason at any time, without notice, without student consent and without a search warrant.

Students' personal possessions within a school locker, vehicle or on a student's person may be searched only when school officials have a reasonable suspicion that the search will uncover evidence of a violation of law or school rules. As soon as practicable after the search of a student's personal possessions within a locker, the school officials will provide notice of the search to students whose lockers were searched, unless disclosure would impede an ongoing investigation by police or school officials. ([Policy 502 - Search of Student Lockers, Desks, Personal Possessions and Student's Person](#))

## **Statewide Testing**

The statewide assessments in mathematics, reading and science (MCA) are used to measure whether students and their school and district are meeting the Minnesota Academic Standards. Statewide assessments are one measure of how well students are doing on the content that is part of their daily instruction. It is also a measure of how well schools and districts are doing in aligning their curriculum and teaching the standards. Additional information and the refusal process can be found in Appendix A. The "Statewide Assessment: Parent/Guardian Decision Not to Participate" form must be provided to the school prior to the test being administered.

## **Student Grading and Assessment**

The purpose of the Student Grading and Assessment Policy is to provide a structure and framework for grading student learning in Alexandria Public Schools. ([Policy 550 - Student Grading and Assessment](#))

Students will receive letter grades. They will be graded on grade-level academic standards with all staff using a common grading scale, based on percentages. Grades will be weighted most heavily on student assessment of learning, rather than student practice. "Academic practice" includes assignments that help students practice toward mastery of a given standard, often referenced as "homework."

Assessment will be **at least 80% of the student grade**, and **up to 20%** may be weighted based on practice completion. "Academic practice" includes assignments that help students practice toward mastery of a given standard.

<b>GRADE</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
<b>A</b>	93 - 100%
<b>A-</b>	90 - 92.9%
<b>B+</b>	87 - 89.9%
<b>B</b>	83 - 86.9%
<b>B-</b>	80 - 82.9%
<b>C+</b>	77 - 79.9%
<b>C</b>	73 - 76.9%
<b>C-</b>	70 - 72.9%
<b>D+</b>	67 - 69.9%
<b>D</b>	63 - 66.9%
<b>D-</b>	60 - 62.9%
<b>F</b>	59.9% or lower

A grade of "No Evidence" = The student **provided no evidence** of their learning to measure mastery of standards.

\*\*\*Non-academic factors like behavior, attitude and classroom participation are not included in the **academic** grade and will be reported through the Cardinal Way behavior rubric. Within each course, a rubric score for the areas of “Be Ready,” “Be Responsible” and “Be Respectful” will be included. While this will not have a weighted grade impacting the academic grade, it will provide students and families with information related to these behavioral areas.

## **Student Photographs and Names**

Student pictures and identifying names will be printed in the school yearbook and school paper and given to the local news media on occasions when warranted. If the student is under the age of 18, any student’s parent/guardian may request that his/her picture NOT be published in the media or the school yearbook. Such a request must be made in writing to the principal of the school. This does not cover pictures taken by the news media of school events. Directory information is public and includes: student’s name, photograph, date of birth, grade level and school activity participation.

## **Student Records**

Student records are classified as public, private or confidential. State and federal laws protect student records from unauthorized inspection or use and provide parents/guardians and eligible students with certain rights. For the purposes of student records, an “eligible” student is one who is 18 or older or who is enrolled in an institution of post-secondary education. For complete information regarding student records, please refer to District Policy. ([Policy 515 – Protection and Privacy of Pupil Records](#))

## **Student Surveys**

Occasionally, the school district utilizes surveys to obtain student opinions and information about students. For complete information on the rights of parents/guardians and eligible students about conducting surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical examinations, please refer to District Policy. ([Policy 520 – Student Surveys](#))

## **Suicide Prevention Information**

These mobile contacts provide short-term mental health crisis response services to children and adults.

**988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: 988lifeline.org (website)**

**To contact: Text or dial 988**

**Region 4 South: West Central Minnesota Mobile Response Team**

**(701) 364-0431**

24 Hour Immediate Crisis Services for Children & Their Families serving Douglas County, Grant County, Pope County, Stevens County & Traverse County.

## **Textbooks**

All textbooks are furnished free of charge by Alexandria Public Schools. A charge will be made by the individual teachers for any loss of books or for wear beyond normal use. It is recommended that all textbooks be covered. Students will be required to pay the full cost of replacement of any lost book.

## **Tobacco-Free Environment**

School district students and staff have the right to learn and work in an environment that is tobacco free. School policy is violated by any individual's use of tobacco, tobacco-related devices or carrying or using activated electronic delivery devices in a public school, on school grounds, in any school-owned vehicles or at any school events or activities. Students may not possess any type of tobacco, tobacco-related devices or electronic delivery devices in a public school, on school grounds, in any school-owned vehicles or at any school events or activities. Any student who violates this policy is subject to school district discipline. For complete information on a tobacco-free environment, please refer to District Policy. ([Policy 419 – Tobacco-Free Environment; Possession and Use of Tobacco, Tobacco-Related Devices and Electronic Delivery Devices; Vaping Awareness and Prevention Instruction](#))

## **Transportation**

Transportation on any school bus is considered an extension of the school and all school policies will apply to students who are on the bus.

The State of Minnesota declares transportation to be a privilege and not a right. Students must demonstrate mastery of the state competencies for bus safety. When students do not demonstrate mastery of the state competencies for bus safety, they may be denied the privilege of school transportation. If this type of situation occurs, parents/guardians will be notified. Please see the Alexandria Public Schools calendar or reference information regarding transportation on the Alexandria Public Schools website. ([Policy 707 - Transportation of Public School Students](#))

## **Visitors**

All school district visitors are required to adhere to the Minnesota Statute, 609.605 Subd. 5, governing visitors at any school building. Student visitors are not allowed to attend unless for pre-arranged educational purposes. Parents/guardians are always welcome. We request that an appointment be made in advance. ([Policy 903 - Visitors to School District Buildings and Sites](#))

## **Volunteers**

Volunteers will be placed with careful consideration given as to how their presence supports the educational objectives of a class, the curriculum, activity or event. All coaches not regularly employed by the school district and volunteers who work with students will be subject to all standards set forth by policies, including the completion of a criminal background check by those volunteers who will be attending overnight trips or left unsupervised with students. ([Policy 912 – Use of Volunteers in School](#))

## **Weapons, Threats & Violence Prevention**

The purpose of the weapons policy is to assure a safe school environment for students, staff and the public. No student or non-student, including adults and visitors, shall possess, use or distribute a weapon when in a school location except as provided in this policy. The school district will act to enforce this policy and to discipline or take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator, school employee, volunteer or member of the public who violates this policy. ([Policy 501 - School Weapons Policy](#))

The policy of the school district is to act promptly in investigating all acts or complaints of violence and take appropriate disciplinary action against any student or staff member who is found to have violated this policy or any related policy. Any report of possible possession of a weapon is investigated fully. If a student or adult has a reported concern of a weapon or threat, contact should be made to inform building administration immediately.

Students may not make any oral, written or physical threat, sign or act that conveys intent to cause harm or violence.



# APPENDIX A



## Statewide Assessments: Parent/Guardian Participation Guide and Refusal Information

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

### Assessments Connect to Standards

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

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

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

### ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS for English Learners

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

### Statewide Assessments Help Families and Students

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

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

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

### Taking Statewide Assessments Helps Your Student’s School

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

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

### Student Participation in Statewide Assessments

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



### Consequences of Not Participating in Statewide Assessments

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

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



([education.mn.gov](http://education.mn.gov) > Students and Families > Programs and Initiatives > Statewide Testing)

#### Additional Information

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

(Note: This form is only applicable for the 2022\_ to 2023\_ school year.)



### Statewide Assessment: Parent/Guardian Decision Not to Participate

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

#### Student Information

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Middle Initial: \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Current Grade in School: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_ District: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name (print): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for Refusal: \_\_\_\_\_

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

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> MCA/MTAS Reading     | <input type="checkbox"/> MCA/MTAS Science        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> MCA/MTAS Mathematics | <input type="checkbox"/> ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS |

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

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