



DISTRICT 196
One District. Infinite Possibilities.

Welcome to KINDERGARTEN 2025



Highland Elementary School

Welcome to Kindergarten 2025

Highland Elementary School

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Apple Valley, MN 55124

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See page 10 for additional attendance information

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952-423-7596

District Website: www.district196.org • School Website: www.district196.org/hl

School Office Hours: 7:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Teacher Hours: 7:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Student Hours: 7:45 a.m. - 2:05 p.m.

Early Childhood Health and Development Screening

If your child has not been through the screening process,
please schedule your appointment using one of the following ways:

Online: www.district196.org/screening

Phone: 651-423-7899

Email: ecscreening@district196.org

School District 196
Early Childhood Health and Development Screening
District Service Center
14301 Diamond Path
Apple Valley, MN 55124

There is no charge for screening.
Screening appointments are available on weekdays, as well as
select evenings and Saturdays each month.

Welcome to Kindergarten at Highland Elementary School

This is indeed an exciting time for both children and families.

We want your child's experience at Highland Elementary School to be positive and rewarding.

We hope this booklet is informative and answers some of your questions regarding kindergarten.
You are also an important part of this process.

We look forward to being part of your child's exciting journey!

Sincerely,
The kindergarten team and Highland Elementary School staff

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EARLY LEARNING PHILOSOPHY

The goal of early learning is to nurture the development of children to be inquisitive, eager to learn, creative, confident, compassionate and self-initiating. Early learning experiences provide opportunities for these qualities to develop and lay the foundation for future learning. Early learning should support cooperative learning, socialization, healthy self-esteem and creativity, and maximize the growth of problem-solving, decision-making and communication skills.

Early learning programming consists of teacher-facilitated, hands-on activities that address the individual child's needs and interests, as well as curriculum frameworks. Children assume increasing personal responsibility and independence as they grow and develop.

Essential connections between home, school and the community are acknowledged and strengthened through early learning programming. Families and teachers work cooperatively to encourage and support children on their unique journey of lifelong learning.

EARLY LEARNING BELIEFS

- Early childhood is a remarkable time of psychological, physical, social and academic development as many pathways of learning are being established.
- Learning is a social process where children learn through play, exploration, inquiry, and explicit instruction. Hands-on experiences foster creativity and problem-solving. Explicit instruction provides targeted guidance, helping children develop foundational skills and knowledge in a structured, supportive environment.
- Families are a child's first and most influential teacher.
- Each child has unique strengths, which benefit and enrich their family, school and community.
- Children thrive in a safe environment where their needs are met through mutual respect, nurturing and consistency.
- Strong family, school and community partnerships help ensure a child's success in school and beyond.

KINDERGARTEN TIMELINE

August 2025

Transportation information sent to households

August 25, 2025

Immunizations due to school nurse

August 27 & 28, 2025

Literacy Assessments

September 2, 2025

First day of school for grades K-5

Welcome to Kindergarten 2025

HOW DO I HELP MY CHILD PREPARE FOR KINDERGARTEN?

Parents are their child's first and most important teachers. From the day your child was born, you have been busy teaching him or her skills, language and an understanding of the world.

Children enjoy learning and parents can help foster a love of learning by:

- Reading together, then discussing the story and pictures
- Talking with adults and other children (listening carefully to others, taking turns talking, asking questions, etc.)
- Making up stories, talking about thoughts, needs or questions
- Explaining how things work
- Playing games together and playing on their own
- Singing and learning songs together, providing opportunities to experience all types of music
- Providing a balance of structured and unstructured playtime
- Exposing your child to new places, things and learning opportunities
- Helping your child to express their needs and teaching them to ask for help when they need it

Parents can also help children build practical skills that support success at school:

- Practicing with zippers, snaps, buttons and shoelaces
- Using a tissue and covering coughs and sneezes
- Saying first and last name
- Recognizing name in print with capital letter at the beginning and the rest lower case
- Using crayons, markers, pencils, glue and scissors
- Helping to put things away after using them

Parents play a key role in their child's school success. We ask that each day parents help their child prepare for school. You can do this by noting the kindergarten calendar for special activities or items needed; and ensuring your child is properly dressed, carries a full-sized backpack and is prompt for school. By encouraging your child to attend school regularly, you will help them develop responsible work habits and demonstrate the value of education.

We encourage parents to visit our school. Please contact your child's teacher for visiting/volunteering times. If you would like to volunteer but are unable to come to school, there are also ways that you can help at home. Again, please contact your child's teacher.

There are times throughout the year when parents have questions or concerns about their child's progress or the kindergarten program. Please feel free to call or contact your child's teacher regarding any concerns or questions you may have.

Set aside a special time each day for your child to share their kindergarten day. Encourage your child to tell about a favorite activity and share items brought home in their school backpack. Please take the time to read school communications such as newsletters, calendars and other notes sent home. These will help keep you informed of classroom and school wide activities.

It is important for parents to reinforce skills and concepts presented to children at school. Reading aloud at home is a key factor in your child's future reading success. Provide a supportive environment for your child by applauding their efforts and success at school.

Labeling

Please clearly label your child's belongings, including boots, mittens, coats, hats, shoes and other personal items.

Federal Summer Food Service Program

Federal Summer Food Service Program provides free meals for anyone 18 and under. To find the closest school offering this service please go to <http://www.district196.org/services/food-and-nutrition-services>. *Locations will be added to webpage in May.*

PERSONAL SAFETY – GETTING TO AND FROM SCHOOL

It is important to your child's safety that they know the following:

- Their name, phone number, street and house number
- Students should accept rides only with parents or other drivers approved by the school or parents

If your child walks to school, please be sure they are aware of the following:

- The safest place to walk is on the sidewalk
- How to cross the street
- The meaning of traffic signals
- The importance of crossing streets only at crosswalks under the supervision of the crossing guard or school patrol
- The most direct and safest route to school
- That they should not make any unscheduled stops or visits on their way to or from school

If your child rides the bus to school, they should know:

- They should wait for the bus off the street
- They should be careful boarding and leaving the bus
- That school bus patrols are organized for safety, to help students cross the street and to leave and enter the bus at busy intersections
- To go directly to the bus stop in the morning and directly home after end of day drop off
- The majority of our kindergarten students walk home safely from the bus stop unsupervised each day. If you choose to meet your child(ren) at the bus stop you must arrive five minutes before the scheduled drop off time. If you regularly meet your child(ren) at the bus stop and are running late, please call Transportation at 651-423-7685.

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HEALTH INFORMATION

Good health is basic to sound and productive living. The purpose of the school health program is to maintain, improve and promote the health of the school-age child and reduce barriers to education.

A licensed school nurse (LSN) is available during the school day to assist you and your child with health related concerns and questions. The LSN is a four-year registered nurse with a public health nurse certificate. Advise the nurse of chronic health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, seizure disorders, severe allergies or other health events that may interfere with your child's ability to be at or participate in school.

For more information on District 196 health policies and regulations, visit <https://www.district196.org/about/districtpolicies>

Report an absence

In addition to contacting your child's school directly, school absence notification can also be done through a mobile web form. To report an absence from your mobile phone or desktop computer navigate to your child's school website and click on **Parent Tools** in the top navigation bar at the top of the screen; then choose **Report an Absence**.

Emergency contact information

Emergency information is required prior to the start of each school year and should be promptly updated with any changes. You will be notified in the event your child experiences an accident or sudden illness and remaining in school is inadvisable. It is your responsibility as a parent or guardian to make arrangements for proper care of your child.

The student emergency information will be collected through Campus Parent Portal. A Campus Parent Portal activation key will be given to you during August assessments, if you don't already have a Campus account for other District 196 students in your household. Once you have an access code, steps to set up your account can be found at <https://www.district196.org/community/families>

Physical examination

It is strongly recommended that each child have a physical examination within 12 months prior to starting kindergarten to identify and address any health concerns, receive necessary immunizations, and provide updated information to your school nurse. It is advisable that you make an appointment as soon as possible.

Immunizations

Immunizations protect students from childhood communicable diseases; thereby reducing illness, absenteeism, and permanent health conditions that may impact the ability to learn. Minnesota Statute 121A.15 requires all students in public schools must be fully immunized or have an appropriate exemption on file while enrolled in school.

Parents/guardians are responsible for providing updated immunization records to their child's school. School nurses can also access Minnestat Immunization Information Connection (MIIC). MIIC is a statewide system that stores electronic immunization records for Minnesota health service providers and for the public. It is important that you work with the school nurse to maintain immunization compliance according to District 196 requirements to avoid your child's exclusion from school.

Immunization Resources:

- District 196 requirements for student immunizations can be found in Regulation 501.5AR: <https://www.district196.org/about/districtpolicies/policy/~board/policies/post/5015ar-student-immunizations>
- Immunization Form (complete side 2 for exemptions listed above): <https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/immunize/basics/readyk12.pdf>
- Where to get vaccinated: <https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/immunize/basics/vaxfinder.html>
- Dakota County Vaccine Clinics: <https://www.co.dakota.mn.us/HealthFamily/HealthServices/ImmunizationClinics/Pages/default.aspx>
- Find a notary (required for immunizations against your beliefs): <https://notary.sos.state.mn.us/search/searchfornotary>

Establish healthy habits early to ensure your child's success

Instilling healthy habits and routines, like adequate sleep and good nutrition, along with consistent attendance ensures a student's success in school even as early as kindergarten. It is important to start these habits early. We know that frequent absences or tardies, can cause children to fall behind both academically and socially.

Guidelines for whether or not to send your child to school

Children should stay home from school for the following reasons:

- Fever of 100.4 or higher - can return when fever free for 20 hours without fever reducing medication.
- Strep throat - can return after 12 hours of antibiotics and fever free for 20 hours without fever reducing medication.
- Vomiting or diarrhea (without a known reason) - can return 20 hours after last episode.
- Rash (without a known reason) with behavior change or fever of 100.4 or greater.
- Excessive coughing that persists and makes it difficult to participate in school.
- Not healthy enough to participate in routine school activities.

The school district will follow guidelines from the Minnesota Department of Health for reportable vaccine-preventable diseases (i.e. measles, chicken pox, pertussis, etc. and COVID-19).

More information on our illness guidelines including guidance on pink eye and head lice can be found on the District 196 Health Services webpage at <https://www.district196.org/services/health-services>

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Medication

The school nurse will administer medication at school when:

- A completed Authorization for Administration of Medication at School ([District Procedure 506.2.2.1P](#)) form signed by a student's parent or guardian is provided to the school nurse.
- Medication is provided in a prescription bottle or original container.

Medication Resources:

- District 196 Procedure 506.2.2.1P: Authorization for Administration of Medication at School: <https://www.district196.org/about/districtpolicies/policy/%7Eboard/policies/post/506221p>
- District 196 Regulation 506.2.2AR: Authorization of Medication and Access to Telehealth Services: <https://www.district196.org/about/districtpolicies/policy/~board/policies/post/50622ar>

Reach out to your school nurse with any changes to your child's medication, changes in health status or with any health procedures (i.e. tube feedings, antibiotics, catheterizations) that may be required while your child is at school.

Food allergies

Please notify your school nurse about any allergies your child has, especially life-threatening allergies, so they can work with you to obtain emergency medication for use at school.

While we can't eliminate allergens from school completely, our school nurses can reduce risk and harm by collaborating with staff to educate and create awareness. The school nurse shares information and provides training regarding your child's severe allergy and emergency medication on a need-to-know basis with additional school staff such as teachers, clerical staff, bus drivers and other support personnel. It is, however, very helpful for you to also make contact with your child's teachers at the start of each school year to inform them of your child's severe allergy and to answer any specific questions and address any concerns they may have.

Reasonable meal substitutions are considered on a case-by-case basis for students who are considered to have a disability that restricts their diet. Review District 196 Regulation 710.2.4AR Meal Substitution Requests for more information at: <https://www.district196.org/about/districtpolicies/policy/~board/policies/post/71024ar-meal-substitution-requests>.

A signed special diet statement must be completed by the parent/guardian and health care provider and submitted to the school nurse for meal substitutions to be considered. Procedure 710.2.4P Special Diet Statement can be found at <https://www.district196.org/about/districtpolicies/policy/~board/policies/post/71024p-special-diet-statement>.

Plan to meet with your school nurse and connect with the Nutrition Services Manager in your child's school to discuss your child's special dietary needs. Review appropriate menu item selections with your child.

For parents who have children with a health concern:

- Make sure your child's health concerns are shared with the school and their school nurse.
- Introduce yourself and your child to the school nurse.
- Work with your school nurse to obtain any healthcare provider orders or other necessary documentation.

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- Keep parent/guardian contact information updated in the Campus Parent Portal.
- Notify the school nurse with any changes in your child's health status as soon as possible.

Starting school checklists

For All Parents and Students:

- Make sure immunizations are up to date.
- Review hygiene tips to prevent the spread of infections (wash hands often and cough/sneeze into your elbow).
- Establish a bedtime and wake-up time to ensure adequate and consistent sleep.
- Develop a routine for homework and after-school activities.
- Eat breakfast each day at home or at school.
- Help make appropriate clothing choices, for example, wear comfortable and safe shoes. We strongly discourage flip flops at school.
- Keep an open line of communication with your child to ensure that he/she feels safe at school. If a concern arises, contact the teacher or principal immediately.
- Get involved! Sign up for the parent organization (PTA/PTO), and mark events such as a back-to-school night and parent/teacher meetings on your calendar.
- Apply for the annual educational benefits program beginning July 15th. Please note that a new application must be submitted each year, one per household. Go to www.district196.org/services/food-and-nutrition-services to apply. If you prefer a paper application, you can obtain one from the front office at your child's school. If you have questions, please contact Nutrition@district196.org or call 651-683-6959. Students and families may also be eligible for reduced prices on the items listed below, lowering barriers to participation in educational opportunities and programs.
 - Discounted iPad Protection Plan fee
 - Discounted transportation fee-for-service fees
 - Discounted athletic participation fees
 - Discounted Community Education course fees
 - Discounted academic testing fees (ACT, AP, PSAT, SAT)
 - Discounted college application fees
 - Additional funding for your school
 - Additional funds for increased access to technology resources
 - Family benefits may include free or discounted fees for cable and internet services

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Nutrition Services www.district196.org/services/food-and-nutrition-services

Nutrition Services supports academic achievement by providing students with nutritious meals and exceptional customer service. We know that students are able to learn better when they have access to nutritious meals!

- Universal Personal Identification Number (PIN). This PIN will remain with the students K-12th grade and will be utilized for multiple purposes within our school district; such as for setting up iPads, library and transportation needs.
- Schools use either a keypad for students to enter in their PIN or scan the barcode on their Meal ID card when selecting their meals.
- All students are eligible to receive one breakfast and one lunch free of charge each day at school.
- To view menus and other information please visit our Nutrition Services website at www.district196.org/services/food-and-nutrition-services

A TYPICAL DAY OF KINDERGARTEN

(6 hours and 20 minutes)

Opening/Morning Meeting

Foundation Literacy Skills

Building language, phonemic awareness, phonics, concepts about print & habits of being a reader and writer.

Knowledge Building Literacy

Building background knowledge, vocabulary, comprehension and discussion skills through rich text experiences facilitated by the teacher.

Lunch and Recess

Music/Gym/Art

Number Corner

Opening

Opening includes announcements, attendance, morning meeting, calendar, sharing and community building activities.

Literacy

Students begin their kindergarten year by building community through learning about themselves and others. Reading, writing, phonological awareness, phonics, research and critical thinking, problem solving, building language and listening skills are foundational to our literacy program. Taking into account the unique needs of each child, we work hard to nurture the development of independence, agency, and curiosity.

Math

The elementary mathematics curriculum builds on students' math understanding, skills and proficiency at each grade level. It integrates concepts such as number and operations, patterns, geometry and measurement. Visual models and student conversations are used to help students construct and create understanding of mathematics. Students engage in problem solving, reasoning and communicating ideas while making connections to the world around them.

Art

Art for the kindergarten child is more about the process rather than the product of the artistic experience. Through experimentation with a wide variety of media, the child has opportunities to explore the artistic elements of line, shape, color, texture, value and space.

Music

Our music program focuses on making music and listening to and responding to music others have produced. Students sing, play instruments, move and create music.

Physical education

The physical education activities, as well as those provided in the classroom and on the playground, will help children develop large and small muscle skills, as well as cooperative play and sportsmanship. Children participate in activities using equipment such as bean bags, balls, the parachute and scooters.

We will go outdoors for games, movement or play. Keep this in mind, so that shoes for active play and work might be worn daily. Sandals, clogs and flip flops are not recommended due to concerns for student safety.

Health

Our health curriculum is a comprehensive program designed to provide students with knowledge, life skills, consumer skills and thinking skills they need to maintain and achieve good health.

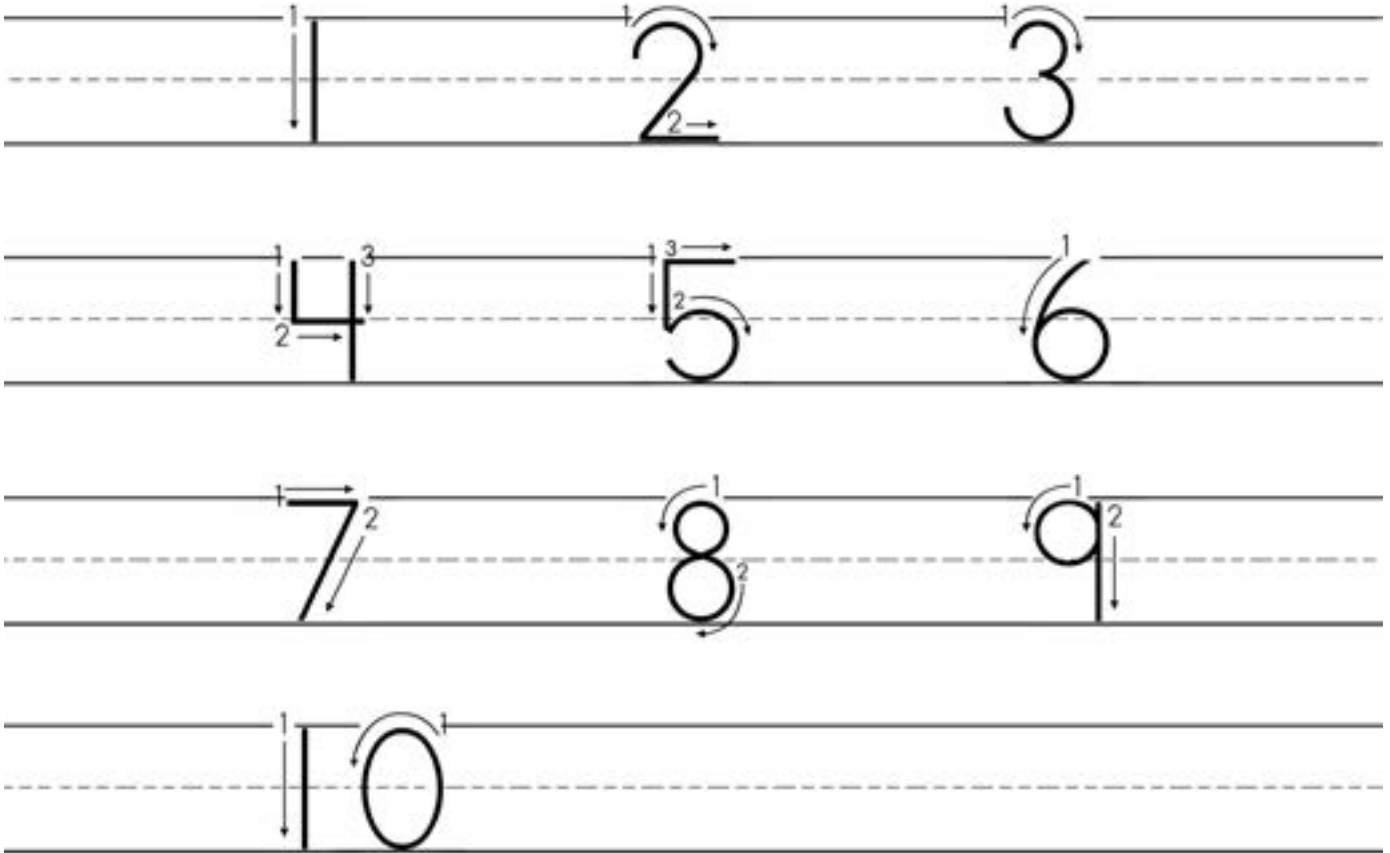
Digital information and technology

Children are introduced to computer instruction in kindergarten. Each class is exposed to computer activities both in our school computer lab and in each classroom. Digital citizenship and making positive choices when working with technology are also part of these learning opportunities.

NAME WRITING AND EXPLORING WORDS

We have students write their names using an uppercase letter at the beginning and the remaining letters in lowercase. Helping your child practice their name with the initial capital letter and the rest lowercase letters would be helpful as they learn to take on print.

NUMBERS



Cart. Serv. Library/Handwriting/BC/Numbers
District 146 Graphics 8/30/2008

The Alphabet

Aa



apple

Bb



bat

Cc



cat

Dd



dog

Ee



edge

Ff



fish

Gg



gate

Hh



horse

Ii



itch

Jj



jump

Kk



kite

Ll



leaf

Mm



mouse

Nn



nest

Oo



octopus

Pp



pig

Qq



queen

Rr



rabbit

Ss



sun

Tt



turtle

Uu



up

Vv



volcano

Ww



wagon

Xx



fox

Yy



yo-yo

Zz



zebra



Functional
Phonics
+ Morphology

FUNCTIONAL PHONICS
KINDERGARTEN HEART WORD LIST

I	like	the	and
see	is	a	to
was	with	of	my
they	you	for	are
by	from	all	love
now	what	said	only
here	how	when	into
do	don't	one	have



DISTRICT196

One District. Infinite Possibilities.

District 196 School Board

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As required by Title IX and other state and federal nondiscrimination laws, District 196 does not discriminate in employment or in any of its education programs and activities, including vocational opportunities, on the basis of sex, race, religion, color, creed, national origin, marital status, familial status,* disability, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, membership or activity in a local human rights commission,* age or genetic information.* District 196 provides equal access to designated youth groups.

The Director of Human Resources, Shelly Monson (651-423-7859 – shelly.monson@district196.org) is the designated Title IX Coordinator and has also been designated to respond to employment-related inquiries regarding the district's non-discrimination policies. The Director of Elementary Education, Jeremy Sorenson (651-423-7782 – jeremy.sorenson@district196.org) and the Director of Secondary Education, Eric Hansen (651-423-7712 – eric.hansen@district196.org) have been designated to respond to student-related inquiries regarding the district's non-discrimination policies. The Director of Special Education, Janet Fimmen (651-423-7629 – janet.fimmen@district196.org) has been designated to respond to inquiries concerning the rights of a student with a disability. The mailing address for all directors is 3455 153rd Street W, Rosemount, MN 55068. Title IX inquiries may also be referred to the Assistant Secretary of the US Office for Civil Rights (OCR).

*Asterisked categories are limited to employment-related discrimination and harassment.