

# Highland Park Elementary Family/Student Handbook 2025-2026



Highland Park Elementary  
1700 Saunders Avenue  
St. Paul, MN 55116  
651-293-8770 (office phone)  
651-293-8983 (office fax)  
651-696-9600 (transportation after 2:30 p.m.)  
[highlandel.spps.org](http://highlandel.spps.org)

School Hours: 7:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.  
Office Hours: 6:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Kara Kipfmueller, Head Clerk  
Matt Severns, Principal  
TBD, Family Liaison

All school documents can be translated or interpreters made available upon request  
Dhammaan dukumiintiyada iskuulka waa la turjumi karaa ama waxaa la heli karaa turjumaan haddii la codsado  
Todos los documentos pueden ser traducidos o interpretados oralmente si usted lo solicita  
Tej ntaub ntawv tom tsev kawm ntawv uas xa los rau nej, peb yuav pab txhais thiab nrhiav neeg txhais lus rau nej yog nej hais qhia peb

ကိုလံလ်ခဲလက်တံသုကွဲးကျိတ်ထံအီး မုတမုာ် ပျာကတီးကျိတ်ထံတံသုတဖုတ်ကအိတ်ဝဲလါနယုထီတံအဖီခိတ်န့တ်လီ။

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

About Highland Park Elementary	3
Yearly Calendar	3
HPE Staff	4
IB Education	5
Finding Success at HPE	6
Positive School Culture	6
Shared Responsibilities	7
Things Worth Knowing	8-15



## ABOUT HIGHLAND PARK ELEMENTARY

Highland Park Elementary is a designated International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years Programme (PYP) school for grades Pre-K to 5. Our students learn to think and act globally as they explore complex issues, take action to solve problems and reflect on what they've learned.

We offer specialized coursework in Spanish, art, physical education, science, and music; we challenge students to explore science by asking questions and exploring problems. We also provide artist-in-residence programs to inspire students in the visual and performing arts. Other learning activities include EDL, Lego League, Girls on the Run, spelling bee, and special-interest teams and clubs. Our entire school staff takes pride in promoting the success of each student, and provides all students with opportunities to see themselves as members of a local, national, and global community.

Initially authorized in 2003, we were the first school in the Midwest to be designated as a Primary Years Programme School by the prestigious International Baccalaureate organization. This year we are proud to celebrate our 22nd year of programme implementation, and we are extremely proud of how far we have come in the past 22 years. Being an IB school means that our students think globally as they ask questions (inquire), explore issues hands-on, and take action to solve problems. Also important to the Primary Years Programme is the learner profile. We embed the learner profile into the curriculum and the school climate. Students are encouraged to exemplify the learner profile and attitudes on a daily basis in order to become open-minded global citizens.

The small size of our school makes room for lots of personal attention, and we take warm interest and pride in our students.

### **Big-World Focus with Small-School Attention**

We're a school of approximately 425 students, located in the beautiful Highland Park neighborhood of St. Paul. As a St. Paul magnet school for areas D and F, we welcome all our students and love our diverse community of learners. The size of our school allows us to give students true personal attention while bringing a global perspective to education with the IB-PYP curriculum.

## YEARLY CALENDARS



Click here to access the [SPPS district calendar for families](https://spps.org/calendar), or visit [spps.org/calendar](https://spps.org/calendar)

Click here to access the [Highland Park Elementary events calendar](https://spps.org/highlandel), or visit [spps.org/highlandel](https://spps.org/highlandel)

## HPE STAFF

### CLASSROOM TEACHERS

- **EBD III** Clara Stoltz
- **EBD III** Ann Arkell
- **ECSE** Shannon Erickson
- **ECSE** Melissa DeStasio-Anderson
- **Pre-K** Joanie Melichar
- **Pre-K** Teresa Vogelgesang
- **K** Steve Abenth
- **K** Heather Hansen
- **1** Lisa Apel-Christianson
- **1** Emily Cook
- **1** Kaitlynn Mackie
- **2** Crystal Ku
- **2** James Knowland
- **2/3** Jenni Blat
- **3** Lainey Hanson
- **3** Laura Prifrel
- **4** Tani Winther
- **4** Kristen Johnson
- **4/5** Ellen Tronnes
- **5** Aileen Larson
- **5** Mercedes Lee

### SPECIALIST TEACHERS

- **Art** Philip Sinn
- **PE** Peggy Russell
- **Science** Amanda Rao
- **Spanish** Melisa Ortiz-Rivera
- **Music** Jared Grabko

### SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS

- **I/II** Nicholle Brokke
- **I/II** Jane Benson
- **I/II** Tori Lee
- **OT** Diedra Holland
- **Pre-K/K** Lauren Nordahl
- **SLP** Kim Smith
- **SLP** Leah Geier
- **SLP** Mallory Bauer
- **PSYCH** Alicia Owens

### MULTILINGUAL LEARNER TEACHERS

- **MLL** Sarah Boyd
- **MLL** Bobbi Nguyen
- **MLL** Shawna Nelson

### STUDENT SUPPORT STAFF

- **Counselor** Tyler Ulsby
- **Counselor** Jen Wegwerth
- **Social Worker** Jim Schaldach
- **Social Worker** Megan Ruhland
- **Intervention Spec.** Reginald Moore
- **Intervention Spec.** Malia Schroeder

### OFFICE STAFF

- **Principal** Matt Severns
- **Clerk** Kara Kipfmueller
- **Family Liaison** TBD
- **Disc. Club** Hanna Lam
- **ECFE** Leah Dunbar

### HEALTH OFFICE STAFF

- **Nurse** Terri Smith
- **Health Asst.** Kelsey Boyce

### SUPPORT TEACHERS

- **WINN/SIPPS** Colleen Kelley
- **PYP Coordinator** Michelle Strecker

### PARAPROFESSIONALS

- **EA EBD III** Matthew Celeste
- **TA EBD III** Michele Turner
- **TA EBD III** Nicole Gentry
- **TA EBD III** Paul Curtis
- **TA EBD III** Paris Henderson
- **EA ECSE** Kathleen Baughman
- **TA ECSE** Tatayana Smith
- **TA ECSE** Juanita Crosby
- **TA ECSE** Shamaria Harrison
- **TA ECSE** Diamond Allen
- **TA Pre-K** Rick Logan
- **TA Pre-K** Kayla Jakes
- **TA Pre-K/ECSE** Jo Perry
- **TA** Elizabeth Vega-Lee
- **TA** Zha'Drena Smith
- **TA** Ariana Wentzel
- **TA** Natalie Wareham
- **EA MLL** Fadumo Adle
- **TA Library** Susan Watson

# IB EDUCATION

At Highland Park Elementary IB World School, we organize our teaching and learning around six global themes that incorporate all the different subject areas, the Minnesota State Standards, and the St. Paul Schools scope and sequence.

We create units of inquiry that explore big ideas and concepts that are relevant and global. The students learn and acquire knowledge by asking questions, observing, investigating, and researching.



The PYP program strives to develop respectful learners who are...

- Inquirers
- Knowledgeable
- Thinkers
- Communicators
- Principled
- Open-minded
- Caring
- Risk-takers
- Balanced
- Reflective

These Learner Profile attributes are the heart of our PYP program. Each attribute is specifically taught, practiced and acknowledged.

Students ask lots of questions at HPE. The teachers help students organize their questions with the key concepts. Because of this, our units of inquiry look somewhat different from year to year, because the lessons and learning are driven by students' questions, background knowledge, and interests.

Another difference you will notice about Highland Park is not only students asking questions, observing and inquiry skills, but also our emphasis on students showing action. This is a way for students to communicate their learning. It can be as small as bringing something in from home that relates to what they are learning in class, or something a bit larger, like connecting with a local or global cause that is relevant to the students and coming up with a plan to make a difference. We have had students share interests and hobbies, students put up posters and bulletin boards to raise awareness of topics, students have organized fundraisers for organizations that they are passionate about, and many students have researched intriguing questions, and then shared their new knowledge and findings with others.

It is exciting to have grade-level traditions for students to look forward to, like every year, the second graders make an edible landfill, but it is also fun to discover new knowledge differently than the students of the past. It gives our families with multiple children opportunities to share their learning and new experiences while reminiscing about activities from the past.

HPE has a strong history of students being immersed in engaging and relevant learning experiences.



---

## FINDING SUCCESS AT HPE

At Highland Park Elementary, we believe that being a learner means being safe, being respectful, being responsible, and being focused on learning.

As an IB-PYP school, we work to create essential agreements to support these ends. With our students, we have conversations about our values and explore how those values look in action. From there, we teach and reteach expectations, connecting often with our values and our shared commitment to ourselves.



---

## POSITIVE SCHOOL CULTURE



### **Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)**

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is an educational, preventative, and restorative approach to behavior. This approach helps schools create and sustain effective and culturally-inclusive environments that support academic and social success for all students. All Saint Paul Public Schools use PBIS to teach schoolwide expectations to all students and recognize students who meet those expectations. Small group and individualized supports are also provided in this approach.

- Highland Park Elementary creates clear and consistent expectations school wide and in the classroom to promote positive behavior. These expectations, which reflect our community and culture are defined, taught, modeled, reinforced, and (when necessary) retaught).
- Highland Park Elementary works to identify students in need of additional support and match them to the appropriate level of intervention and support.
- Highland Park Elementary aims to be a positive and equitable place behaviorally, socially, and academically.



### **Social-Emotional Learning**

Social and Emotional Learning is how we learn to manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. At Highland Park Elementary, we support and promote social-emotional learning.



## Mental Health and Wellness

Mental Health and Wellness refers to the continuum of emotional supports available to students and staff. These supports strive to create a safe learning environment, maximize collaboration between students and adults, provide students with choices, create trusting relationships, and empower students to do their best.

### SHARED RESPONSIBILITIES

	Students	Families	Staff
<b>Beliefs</b>	Believe that you have the capacity to be your best self, achieve your dreams and change the world.	Believe your child has the capacity to be their best self, achieve their dreams and change the world.	Believe staff have the capacity to support students in being their best selves, achieving their dreams and changing the world.
<b>Positive Relationships</b>	Build and maintain positive relationships with all staff. Try to identify an adult in the building you feel comfortable going to with questions and concerns.	Build and maintain a positive relationship with staff at the school.	Build and maintain positive relationships with all students and their families.
<b>Respect</b>	Respect yourself, the learning environment, other students, their parents/ guardians, families and all staff.	Respect and support the learning environment and emphasize the importance of being prepared for school.	Develop a learning community and a respectful environment that supports social-emotional and academic success.
<b>Support</b>	Ask for and accept help when you need assistance.	Ask for help when you need assistance. Advocate for your child through regular communication with school staff.	Regularly communicate with students and families. Support them when they ask for assistance.
<b>Attendance</b>	Go to school every day on time, ready to learn and give your best effort.	Make sure your child arrives at school every day on time and prepared to learn.	Create a welcoming environment. Have high expectations for all students.
<b>Expectations and Procedures</b>	Learn and follow school expectations and procedures.	Learn and talk with your child about the expectations and procedures at their school.	Teach, model and reinforce school expectations and procedures. Follow the school-wide discipline plan.
<b>Technology Use</b>	Use technology and equipment in a responsible way.	Review the technology agreement with your child.	Tailor instruction for student voice and choice within a technology rich learning environment.
<b>Learning</b>	Personalize your learning by bringing your creativity to your assignments.	Encourage your child's passion to learn and grow toward their own goals for college and career.	Provide personalized, engaging and academically appropriate instruction, including culturally responsive teaching that represents and invites students' identities.
<b>Safety</b>	Conduct yourself in a manner to ensure your safety and the safety of others.	Contact your child's school if you observe or are aware of potentially unsafe activities or conditions.	Create and monitor safe conditions in the school environment.



The complete Rights and Responsibilities Handbook can be found at

[https://www.spps.org/rights\\_and\\_responsibilities](https://www.spps.org/rights_and_responsibilities)

## THINGS WORTH KNOWING

### Arrival and Dismissal

School hours are 7:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Students will not be allowed to enter the building before 7:15 a.m. Because there is no supervision either inside or outside the building prior to 7:15 a.m., students should not be on school grounds unsupervised. All students must be picked up no later than 2:15 p.m. on Saunders Ave. We invite families to walk their students to the door, but we ask that students work with staff and themselves to get from the entry to their classroom.

### Attendance

School attendance is a proven factor of academic success. Saint Paul Public Schools has an attendance policy that will be strictly adhered to by Highland Park. A student who is not in his/her classroom by 7:30 is tardy. Any student who arrives at school after the 7:30 bell must report to the office for an admit pass. If your child is tardy or absent, you must call the school or send a note with your child regarding the reason for tardiness or absence. If we do not receive a call or a note prior to the absence, your child will be marked unexcused.

After 3 unexcused absences, an alert letter will be sent home. Then after 2 more unexcused absences, you will receive a phone call from the school. If there is more than one additional unexcused absence, the family will be referred to the Family Truancy Intervention Program (FTIP) and then it is turned over to Ramsey County. To avoid these consequences, please call the attendance line at 651-744-2583 and report the reason for the absence every time your child is absent from school.

#### Excused Absences

Illness  
Medical treatment  
Religious observances  
Extreme family emergency (home, fire, injury)  
Funeral

#### Unexcused Absences

Truancy  
Family vacation  
Babysitting  
Overslept  
Missed the bus or suspended from the bus  
Weather

### Back-to-School Forms

iUpdate was the district's online family and student information database. It is now known as Back-to-School Forms. All families must fill out the information in the forms for each child in the family. [Back-to-School Forms](https://www.spps.org/families/campus-parent-portal-onestop) can be found online at <https://www.spps.org/families/campus-parent-portal-onestop>. If you do not know your username or password, please call the office at 651-293-8770.

## **Behavior Expectations**

HPE teachers and principal have set expectations for student conduct that are in accordance with Saint Paul Public Schools rights and responsibilities. All students have a right to a safe learning environment, and we will strictly enforce safe behavior on the part of all students. All classrooms have Essential Agreements to which students collaboratively agree to adhere. Our goal is to have all students in class learning, and we will give students every opportunity to stay in class and return to class after a short break.

## **Breakfast**

All students at Highland Park Elementary are entitled to a free breakfast. Breakfast is served from 7:15 a.m. to 7:30 a.m. every day. Students arriving late may get breakfast until 8:30 a.m.

## **Bus Behavior Expectations**

Each transported student has the right to a safe and enjoyable ride to and from school that is free from intimidation, threat, or harassment. Good conduct of all transported students while waiting for the school bus and while traveling to and from school is primary to a safe and enjoyable ride for all students. Transportation is a privilege and not a right. Below are some of the bus behavior expectations we hold at Highland Park Elementary:

- Sit in your assigned seat, face forward with your back against the seat and feet directly in front of you.
- Remain seated until the bus stops at school or at your stop.
- Use a level 1 (quiet) voice
- Keep your hands, feet, and body to yourself
- Keep food and drink away while on the bus
- Respect the driver.

When a student is not riding safely and/or respectfully, the driver sends a behavior report directly to the principal. Each time the principal receives a behavior report there is a consequence. The consequences are outlined in the district's [Rights and Responsibilities Handbook](https://www.spps.org/rights_and_responsibilities) ([https://www.spps.org/rights\\_and\\_responsibilities](https://www.spps.org/rights_and_responsibilities)), which is attached to this sheet for your reference. After three referrals, students will begin having their bus privileges suspended.

## **Calendars**

As events are planned throughout the year, we will add them to our website's building calendar. Our weekly newsletter will also include information about upcoming events. The [district calendar](https://resources.finalsite.net/images/v1751312031/sppsorg/xqmkliiygo0nqacx6sv7/English2025-26SPPSCalendar.pdf) (<https://resources.finalsite.net/images/v1751312031/sppsorg/xqmkliiygo0nqacx6sv7/English2025-26SPPSCalendar.pdf>), which includes an overview of all holidays and days off, can be found here.

## **Cell Phones**

When possible, please support us in keeping cell phones at home. If you send your student to school with a cell phone, they will be asked to keep them away in their backpacks during the school day. Highland Park Elementary will not be responsible for items that are lost, broken, stolen, loaned, or traded. If your student is using their cell phone during the day, we may ask to meet with you and your student at our site to discuss a plan for staying engaged in learning.

### **Clothing and Dress**

Students have the right to choose their manner of dress and personal grooming unless it presents a clear danger to the student's health or safety, causes an interference with school work or creates classroom or school disorder. Clothing should be comfortable and students should wear shoes in which they can easily walk and run. Students will go out for recess unless the weather is very wet or severely cold. Warm coats, snow pants, gloves or mittens, hats and boots are a must in the winter. On days when students have physical education, court shoes are required. Clothing that is associated with guns, weapons, drugs, or alcohol is prohibited.

### **Communication**

Communication between our school and families is crucial. We have several modes of communication that should keep you on top of everything related to Highland Park Elementary including a weekly newsletter through email, regular communication from your teachers, updated information on our website, and text messages and automated calls for urgent happenings. Please ensure that your information remains current by notifying our office (651-293-8770) if contact information changes and by completing [Back-to-School Forms](https://www.spps.org/families/campus-parent-portal-onestop) (<https://www.spps.org/families/campus-parent-portal-onestop>) annually.

### **Dismissal Procedures**

Students are dismissed at 2:00 p.m. Students who are assigned to ride a bus are expected to ride their assigned bus on a daily basis. Unless we have documented notice from a guardian, students who ride the bus will be put on the bus at the end of the day. Students who walk will be assigned a patrol line and will meet the patrols at 2:00 every day unless we have documented notice from a guardian. The office will not be able to process changes to dismissal after 1:00 p.m. daily. Students must be picked up by 2:15 p.m. on Saunders Avenue.

### **Drop-Off and Pick-Up Sites**

Drop-off and pick-up is on the South side of Saunders Avenue only. Do not drop off or pick up students on Rome Avenue, in the parking lots, or on the North side of Saunders. Rome Avenue is for buses only. All drop-off and pick-up traffic should drive up Saunders, heading East.

### **Discovery Club**

Highland Park Elementary is a Discovery Club hub for SPPS. Discovery Club is a fee-based program that offers students academic, recreational, and cultural activities to support learning and social development before and after school. Students at Highland Park Elementary have access to after-school Discovery Club only, daily from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. To enroll or learn more, visit the [SPPS Discovery Club webpage](http://www.spps.org/discoveryclub) ([www.spps.org/discoveryclub](http://www.spps.org/discoveryclub)).

### **Extended Day Learning (EDL)**

EDL provides enrichment opportunities for students in grades 3, 4, and 5 after school from 2:00 p.m. - 3:45 p.m. on Mondays and Wednesdays. To sign up for EDL, enter it in the [Back-to-School Forms](https://www.spps.org/families/campus-parent-portal-onestop) (<https://www.spps.org/families/campus-parent-portal-onestop>) or pick up a form in the office.

### **Emergency Information**

It is very important that the school clerk has the most current information for how to contact families in an emergency. Please inform the secretary of any changes in phone numbers or addresses during the year.

## **Entrances to School**

The main entrance on Saunders is the only one entrance to HPE during operating hours. Students must be buzzed in during school hours, and families will be required to sign in and to have arranged visits with teachers prior to entry.

## **Family Engagement Plan**

Our Family Engagement Plan outlines our commitment to families during the year. It serves as a guide to help families navigate family involvement at HPE. A link to our Family Engagement Plan is on our website.

## **Family-School Compact for Achievement**

A family-school compact for achievement is an agreement that parents, students, and teachers develop together. It explains how parents and teachers will work together to make sure all students get the individual support they need to reach and exceed grade-level standards. Links to our compacts are on the website.

## **Food Services**

All families should fill out a form for educational benefits (free lunch) even if you do not believe you qualify. Breakfast and lunch will be free for all students this year.

## **Field Trips**

We love parent chaperones and parents are always welcome to accompany their child and the class on a field trip. However, you must contact the teacher at least two days in advance to let them know that you plan on joining the class, so that the teacher can plan accordingly. All students must have field trip permission included in the [Back-to-School Forms](https://www.spps.org/families/campus-parent-portal-onestop) (<https://www.spps.org/families/campus-parent-portal-onestop>).

## **Goodies and Treats**

Students may have snacks for themselves to be consumed during lunch, but snacks should be for individual consumption only. If families wish to share treats with their student's class, they must arrange it in advance with teacher. All snacks must be individually wrapped and free of common allergens.

## **Health Services and Medication**

Families of students who need to have medication administered during the school day must speak with the nurse and fill out the appropriate forms. Students may not take prescription or over-the-counter medications on their own, and may not carry them or store them in a desk or locker. All medications must be labeled and be kept in the nurse's office. The nurse's direct phone number is 651-888-7632.

## **Homework Policy**

Teachers will communicate their homework policies to parents, and homework assignments for students in grades 1-5 are written in the student's planner or in homework folders. We always suggest a minimum of 20 minutes of reading, either independently or with a parent, per night regardless of grade.

## **Illness**

Let's help everyone stay healthy! Please keep your child home with the following conditions:

- Fever
- Vomiting/diarrhea
- Strep throat
- Other contagious diseases

Students must be free of symptoms or be on antibiotics for at least 24 hours before returning to school.

## **Interpreters**

If you need an interpreter for family conferences or any other reason related to your child's education, please let us know and we will arrange for one.

## **Leaving School Early**

If a student needs to leave school early for any reason, a guardian must notify the school of the need to leave early. Upon arrival, the parent or guardian must come directly to the office to notify the clerk and sign the student out. The clerk will call the student's classroom and ask that the student be sent to the office. Families may not go directly to the classroom to pick up a child. Please notify the office no later than 1:00 p.m.

## **Library Books**

The library has a great selection of books for students in all grades. Kindergarten students are able to check out one book at a time for a week. Students in grades one through five can check out two books for a period of two weeks. Students will receive reminders about overdue books. Please help keep books clean and dry - no food or liquids near books. If a book is beyond repair or lost, the student and family are responsible for paying for the book. LibraryGO is an excellent option for checking out books this year. All students have LibraryGO accounts. You can sign up for LibraryGO in the back-to-school forms.

## **Lost and Found**

The lost and found is located by the Rome Avenue bus doors near the gym. Please check the lost and found periodically for items that might belong to your child(ren). All items left in the lost and found are donated to Goodwill several times during the year. Please put your child's name on all outerwear, including sweatshirts and lunch boxes.

## **Lunch Times**

- Pre-K 10:50-11:20
- Kindergarten: 10:50-11:20
- Grade 1: 10:05-10:35
- Grade 2: 10:15-10:45
- Grade 3: 11:00-11:30
- Grade 4: 11:35-12:05
- Grade 5: 11:45-12:15

## **Media Release Forms**

Media releases are included in the [Back-to-School Forms](https://www.spps.org/families/campus-parent-portal-onestop) (https://www.spps.org/families/campus-parent-portal-onestop). If you prefer that your child not be photographed, please inform your child of that decision so that they will understand we cannot include them in photos randomly taken at school. This does not include picture day.

## **Minnesota Report Card**

The Minnesota Report Card gives you easy access to understandable district and school data. This tool is designed to provide parents, educators, schools, districts, and citizens with easy access to district and school information, test results, demographic information and other critical data in a centralized location. Choose from several reports to learn more about the state of education in a specific school, your local district, or the state as a whole.

## **No School Dates**

All no school dates are listed on the [district calendar](#)

(<https://resources.finalsite.net/images/v1751312031/sppsorg/xqmkliyygo0nqacx6sv7/English2025-26SPPSCalendar.pdf>). We do not send home additional notices of no school during the year.

## **Office Hours and Numbers**

Office hours at Highland Park Elementary are 6:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. Monday through Friday

- Office phone: 651-293-8770
- Attendance line (available 24 hours a day): 651-744-2583
- Fax: 651-293-8983

## **Parent's Right to Know Teacher and Paraprofessional Qualifications**

Under the Every Student Succeeds Act, parents have the right to request information regarding the professional qualifications of their student's classroom teachers and paraprofessionals. Parents who would like to receive this information should write to the Human Resource Department, Attn: ESSA Teacher Qualifications, Saint Paul Public Schools, 360 Colborne Street, Saint Paul, MN 55102-3299. You have the right to ask for the following information about each of your child's classroom teacher(s).

- Information about whether the teacher has met state qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction;
- Information about whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which state qualification or licensing criteria have been waived;
- Information about whether the teacher is teaching (subjects or content) in which proper certification is held by the teacher;
- Information about whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

## **Parent-Teacher Association (PTA)**

The PTA sponsors and supports events and activities throughout the year that enrich our students' lives, provide them with learning opportunities, artists-in-residence experiences, evening events, and fundraising. The PTA meets virtually monthly and is open to all parents. Free child care is provided for all in-person meetings. The dates are listed on the school calendar. For more information, email to: [highlandparkel.pta@gmail.com](mailto:highlandparkel.pta@gmail.com).

## **Primary Years Programme (PYP)**

Highland Park Elementary is an accredited IB International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme (IB PYP) world school. Our Primary Years Programme focuses on the development of the whole child, in the classroom and in the world outside, and through other environments where children learn. It offers a framework that meets children's academic, social, physical, emotional, and cultural needs. It does so through the development and reinforcement of a set of student profiles and attitudes. At Highland Park Elementary, students are supported in becoming, caring, communicators, inquirers, knowledgeable, open-minded, principled, reflective, risk-takers, and thinkers.

## **Questions**

If you have questions regarding any aspect of your child's education at Highland Park Elementary, do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher. The best way to reach a teacher is by email. All Highland Park Elementary staff email addresses are listed on the website.

### **Safety and Security**

For the safety of everyone in the school, all doors are locked during school hours. To gain entrance, use the main entrance on Saunders Avenue during school hours. Discovery Club enters through door 12, adjacent to the parking lot. During major school events, the main doors will be open. During school hours, all visitors, including parents, must come directly to the office. All classroom visits must be arranged with the teacher prior to entry. All visitors must sign out and return the badge when leaving.

### **School Continuous Improvement Plan (SCIP)**

Our SCIP this year focuses on student climate and culture, attendance, math outcomes, and reading outcomes. A family-friendly copy of our plan can be found on our website.

### **School Events**

All families are encouraged to attend school events. The calendar of events is included on our website. If you need transportation to any of the events, please call the school at 293-8770 to arrange for cab service.

### **School Closing and Procedures**

School will never have a delayed opening or close early due to weather. If school is going to be closed for the day due to weather, you will receive an automated call, email, and/or text from the district and information about digital learning for that day. Closings are also broadcast on the major local television stations and radio stations. If you do not see or hear that Saint Paul Public Schools are closed, then Highland Park Elementary will be in session.

### **School Patrol**

The school patrol walks students within one-half mile of HPE along a small handful of different routes. Please let the principal know if your child will be walking to and from school. The patrol walks every day as long as the temperature is above zero. If the temperature is below zero, the school patrol will not be responsible for walking students.

### **Testing**

The dates students will be taking the state-wide standardized tests in April and May 2025 will be published on our website as well as in the monthly newsletter. Please do not schedule vacations, doctor's appointments or anything that can be scheduled on alternate dates on testing dates. It is very important that all students complete the tests.

### **Technology Release**

Technology release is included in the [Back-to-School Forms](https://www.spps.org/families/campus-parent-portal-onestop) (<https://www.spps.org/families/campus-parent-portal-onestop>). Please make sure your information in the forms is current.

## **Transportation**

The transportation department does its best to have buses running on time, but on any given day, buses can be running late both in the morning and in the afternoon. Students should be at the bus stop 5 minutes before the bus is scheduled to arrive in the morning. The transportation department requests that you wait 10 minutes after the normal pick-up time to call transportation. If the bus does not show up, call transportation at 651-696-9600 and they can tell you when the bus is due to arrive. Similarly, in the afternoon, if the bus does not show up at your stop at the scheduled time, and you have waited an additional 10 minutes, you can call transportation and get an update on when the bus will arrive at the stop. The MySPPSBus app also gives you bus alerts and an estimated time of arrival. If the bus does not arrive at the stop on time in the evening, do not leave the stop, because as soon as you do, the bus may arrive and drop off your child. Call transportation at 651-696-9600 and ask them for the time the bus will arrive at your stop.

Families who need transportation to attend family events and/or conferences at Highland Park Elementary can receive transportation by calling the school at 651-293-8770. The clerk or parent liaison will schedule taxi service for conferences or school events upon request.

## **Valuables and Money**

Help support students in keeping valuables at home when possible. If students are bringing money to school for a specific reason, please put that money in a labeled envelope. Highland Park Elementary staff will not be responsible for money or valuables that are lost, damaged, stolen, traded, loaned, or spent.

## **Volunteer Opportunities**

Volunteers are always welcome at HPE. We host many opportunities to be involved in various aspects of school life. These opportunities include providing tutoring, helping teachers in the classrooms, chaperoning field trips, and helping with PTA events and fundraisers. If you would like to volunteer, please email our family liaison or contact your student's teacher. All volunteers must be cleared through a background check process prior to work on site.

## **Visitors**

We prioritize a focused education and a safe experience during the school day. All classroom visits must be arranged with the classroom teacher prior to building entry, and all guests must sign in through the main office before proceeding. Visits should not disrupt classroom learning.