



# School Handbook

## 2025-2026

Our School Handbook is provided to answer many questions as you prepare for the start of the school year and as the year progresses. If you have other questions, please contact our school office at (651) 653-2858 or your child's teacher. We're glad you're here!

**Our office is open Monday - Friday from 7 AM - 3:30 PM. Thank you!**

### **Neighborhood Staff:**

#### **Grizzlies**

Ms. Lapinski (K)  
Mrs. Gaddini (1)  
Ms. O'Donovan (2)  
Mrs. Bliss (3)  
Mrs. Mogren (4)  
Mr. Busse (PE)  
Mrs. Booth (ML)  
Mrs. Ulfing (SpEd)  
Ms. Bryant (SpEd)  
Mrs. Zirbel (SW)  
Mrs. Schneider (WIN)

#### **Polars**

Mrs. Powers (K)  
Mrs. Jensen (1)  
Ms. Aubin (2)  
Ms. Thimjon (3)  
Mrs. Haley (4)  
Mrs. Red (5)  
Mr. Drabek (Mus)  
Ms. Kazmierczak (ML)  
Mrs. Docken (Psych)  
Mrs. Quass (WIN)  
Mrs. Chouinard (SpEd)

#### **Kodiaks**

Ms. Sandberg (K)  
Mrs. Birkholz (K)  
Mr. Theissen (1)  
Ms. Gerten (2)  
Mr. Foster (3)  
Ms. Petrik (4)  
Mrs. Rider (5)  
Ms. Klein (Art)  
Mrs. Hartmann (SpEd)  
Mr. Gill (SW)  
Ms. Sawtell (WIN)

### **Morning Drop-Off      7:30 a.m. - 7:45 a.m.**

**PLEASE do not arrive at school before 7:25 AM if you are driving your child.** Our staff need to be able to enter the parking lot, prior to student arrival, and your assistance is appreciated.

#### **Safety Information for Drop-Off:**

- Students remain in vehicles until 7:30 AM
- Parents/Driver remain in the vehicle
- Students exit vehicle on the passenger side
- School staff will assist students as needed
- All cars **MUST** make a right turn as they exit the parking lot in the morning
- If parents/drivers need to exit their vehicle, please park your car in parking spaces

### **School Start Time**

Instruction will begin daily at 7:45 AM. If students are not in class by this time, they will be marked "tardy."

### **Breakfast**

All students may have free breakfast. It will be available as Grab and Go and it will be handed out to students as they arrive at school and they will eat in their homeroom.

## Snack

All classrooms will have snack time each day. Here is an approved list of items to ensure the safety of all of our students. Thank you for following these guidelines:

**\*Must be nut free**

**\*No candy, pop, or chips**

Fresh Fruit	Beef Jerky
Fresh Vegetables	Rice Cakes
Nabisco Wheat Thins	Graham Crackers
Goldfish crackers	Teddy Grahams
Gripz nacho cheese crackers	Nilla Wafers
Yogurt	Applesauce
Fruit snacks, Fruit Roll Ups	Dried Fruit
Oyster crackers	Bagels
Raisins	Cereal (must be nut free)
Skinny Pop Popcorn	That's It Fruit Bars
Pirate's Booty	Pop Corners
Good Made Granola Balls (these are nut free)	Fruit Cup
Saltine Crackers	Ritz Crackers
Triscuits	Cheese Ritz Crackers
Cheese Sticks	Pretzels
Pepperoni	Cheese Sticks

## Lunch -

All students may have free lunch in the cafeteria daily.

- Students will eat with their grade level in the cafeteria.
  - While in the cafeteria, students will...
    - have hand sanitizer available
    - choose school lunch choices or eat a lunch brought from home

## Recess -

- Students will attend recess with their grade level peers. There will be at least two adults assigned to each cohort
- Indoor recess:
  - The staff responsible for supervising the cohort will also do so during inside recess in case of inclement weather. In this case,
    - the students will remain in their classroom and will have the opportunity to choose from various games and activities

## Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance will be included in our daily announcements. Minnesota Statute 121A.11 mandates that "Anyone who does not wish to participate in reciting the pledge of allegiance for any personal reason may elect not to do so. Students must respect another person's right to make that choice."

## Instructional Schedule

Your child's teacher will share information specific to their classroom.

Instructional Minutes	
School Day Hours: 7:45 a.m. -2:10 p.m.	
Morning Meeting	20
Literacy K-3	120
Literacy 4-5	90
Core Math	60
WIN Reading	20-30
WIN Math	20-30
Lunch/recess	40
Specialists	45
Science/Social Studies/Health	45
Bear Time	15

The end of day school bell is at 2:15 PM

## End of Day Routines

2:15 PM - Bell will ring and students will be dismissed:



## Parent Pick-Up 2:15-2:25 pm

### Safety Information for Pick-up:

- Parents/Driver remain in the vehicle
- Students enter vehicle on the passenger side
- School staff will assist students as needed
- If parents/drivers need to exit their vehicle, please park your car in parking spaces
- Drivers may also be asked to park if their child is delayed in the building to allow for a constant flow of traffic.



### Attendance

Regular attendance is essential for good progress in school. We monitor attendance each day to verify when and **why** children are absent. A student is required by law to attend school. If they miss a school day or part of the day, for legitimate reasons, a parent or guardian must notify the school. A parent or guardian may seek an excused absence but the school administrator has the right to accept or deny an application for an excused absence.

#### **Examples of excused absences include:**

Sickness (a doctor's note may be required)  
Medical or mental health appointments  
Religious Holidays  
Family Emergency

#### **Examples of unexcused absences include:**

Missing the bus  
Need of sleep or rest  
Sporting Events  
Child is not immunized

If a child arrives after 10:00 a.m. or leaves school before 12:00 p.m. they will be considered absent for ½ of the day. Three unexcused tardies will be considered ½ day unexcused absence.

**Vacations must be pre-approved by the building administration. Vacations may be considered unexcused if the family has been alerted to an attendance issue or if not pre-approved by the building administration. Ramsey County recommends to school districts to excuse only up to 5 vacation days outside the established breaks in the school calendar. Schools are required to report excessive absences or 3 unexcused absences to Ramsey County.**

We urge you to carefully consider the circumstances that keep your child out of school. Regular school attendance is related to the degree of success in school. You will be notified when your child's attendance records indicate he/she has missed more than 10% of the school days in session. If the absences continue, a doctor's statement verifying that your child is not to be in school may be required.

Please call the absence line before 7:45 a.m. to report if your child will be late or absent: (651) 653-2859 or send an email to [attendancevadnais@isd624.org](mailto:attendancevadnais@isd624.org).



**\*When bringing your child in**

**late, an adult must sign him/her in at the office.**

## **Appointments**

Regular attendance is critical to success in school. For the sake of your child's education, please schedule family trips and medical appointments outside of school time. To ensure the safety and protection of your child, we will continue to use a student sign-out procedure. When it is necessary for the student to be taken out of school early, or for a few hours during the day, the parent or guardian must sign the child out of school. A sign-out sheet is located on the counter in the office. Please be prepared to show a photo I.D.

## **Backpacks & School Supplies -**

We are fortunate to have received many donations of student backpacks and school supplies. If you need these items for your children, they will be available at Welcome Back Conferences or from the main office.

## Birthday Celebrations

Birthdays will be recognized by your child's classroom teacher. Please remember that due to a wide range of allergies, health issues and promoting healthy choices, we will not be sharing any food items for birthday treats at school.

## Bikes

Students in GRADES 2, 3, 4 and 5 may ride bikes to school without an adult escort. They must submit a signed permission form from their parent or guardian. Permission forms are available at the office. Students are expected to wear a bike helmet and obey all bicycle safety rules.

We have two bike racks. One is located near door "B" and the other is located near door "E."

## Communication Folders

Communication Folders are sent home each week. Please take time to examine the completed assignments and information in the folder. This is an important communication tool between parent, child, teacher, and school.

## Grading

### [Assessment and Grading](#)

Elementary schools will continue to use standards-based report cards as in previous years. Using the scores of 1, 2, 3 as detailed in the rubric below to measure a student's mastery of academic skills/standards.

Scores	Description
3	Meets grade level standard
2	Partially meets grade level standard
1	Not at grade level standard - see progress

Additionally, students have multiple opportunities to demonstrate their learning. *Grades are not averaged but reflected on mastery toward standard at time of reporting.* Learning habits are evaluated and reported separately from academic standards. Homework is utilized as practice and not factored into the final score for the particular standard.

## Health Office

A registered nurse supervises the health aide at our school. Our health aide will dispense medication, determine appropriate action in emergencies, and monitor absences and health concerns of the students.

### Attendance Line:

Please call our attendance line before 7:45 a.m. to report your child's **absence or tardiness**. Please also state the reason for your child's absence or tardiness: 651-653-2859, enter the absence in ParentVue or send an email to [attendancevadnais@isd624.org](mailto:attendancevadnais@isd624.org)

### Medication:

The health aide must be informed about students taking any **medication** during the school day. All medications (prescription and over the counter) must be administered in the Health Office.

- **Prescription medications** must come to school in the original container, correctly labeled by the pharmacist, and be accompanied by notes from you and your doctor. Pharmacists will give two prescription bottles upon request (one at home and one at school)
- **Over the counter medication** (including cough drops) must be accompanied by a note from the parent or guardian. The note should be specific with respect to dosage, time of day, duration, etc... If medication is taken longer than two weeks you must send a note from your doctor.

### Vision and Hearing Screening:

Our school nurse and health aide will conduct vision and hearing screening. Parents will be notified if further testing is suggested.



## Cell Phones and Smart Watches



If students choose to bring a cell phone/smartwatch to school our expectations are as follows:

### Cell Phone Guidelines

The intent of these guidelines is to minimize distractions and emphasize a focus on academics during the school day.

1. Cell phones should not be used and must be put away and silenced during the school day. Smart watches should only be used as a traditional watch, time/date, during school hours.
2. Parents are welcome to contact our main office if there is a message that needs to be relayed.
3. Students/families assume the risk of damage, theft or loss when choosing to bring/send a phone/watch to school.
4. Electronic device use, of any kind, is not permitted in bathrooms or on the bus.
6. Students may not use electronic devices to photograph or record students or staff at school without permission from a staff member.
7. Using social media, apps, or any other function of a device to spread rumors, bully, make fun of, exclude, or create a disruption in school or outside of school is not permitted.

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We recognize that families often want their children to have a phone before/after school. Our goal is to maximize learning during the school day and we want to minimize distractions and disruptions for all students; as a result, if a student is not following our guidelines the following will occur:

**1st Offense** - The device will be taken by the teacher, given back at the end of the day and parents will be informed.

**2nd Offense** - The device will be taken by the teacher and held in the office until a parent or guardian picks it up.

**3rd Offense** - The device will be held by the principal and a conversation will occur to make a plan with the student, parent and administrator when the device is collected.

## PTO - Parent/Teacher Organization

The PTO will meet 5 times during the school year and everyone is welcome to attend. In addition, they will host events to encourage connections between home and school. Please check out the [calendar](#) for the full list of events.

## Cold Weather Information

Our school's temperature varies and layers are truly the best option to make sure your kids aren't too hot or cold. They will need outerwear for playing outside: coat, hat, mittens/gloves and boots. **Be sure to label** all of your children's clothing, especially outerwear. Your kids will go outside every day unless it's raining or the temperature falls below -10.

If your family needs outerwear for this winter season, don't hesitate to contact your child's teacher or our school office.

If winter weather is so severe that schools need to close, families will be alerted in three ways as soon as a decision is made:

- A SchoolMessenger phone message and email will be sent to all guardians. A text message will be sent to those who have opted in to receiving texts from the district,
- A message will be posted on the homepage or [www.isd624.org](http://www.isd624.org) and
- Messages will be posted on the District's [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages.

Find complete information [here](#).

## Emergency School Closings

If winter weather is so severe that schools need to close, families will be alerted in three ways as soon as a decision is made:

- A phone message and email will be sent to all guardians. A text message will be sent to those with texting capabilities.
- A message will be posted on the homepage of [www.isd624.org](http://www.isd624.org).
- Messages will be posted on the District's [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) pages.

Information will also be available on local media outlets.

Make sure you don't miss the call. If you've had a recent change in your email or phone number, contact your child's school to provide the updated information.

Find complete information [here](#).



## Technology Tips & Information



- ★ [Family ParentVUE Activation Instructions](#)
- ★ [Synergy Family Annual Update Parent Instructions](#)
- ★ [Student Synergy Quick Tips](#)

## Free Resources for our School Community

- [The Closet](#) - Our school is fortunate to be part of a district that has its very own clothing store. Everything there is donated and it's either new or gently used. If your family is in need of clothing, shoes or items for your growing children or the next season - please reach out. Everyone in your family is able to shop and benefit from The Closet.
- [Bear Care](#) - If your school-age children are in need of medical attention, please check out Bear Care. It's free services for a variety of needs and it's located at our new high school.
- [KidPack](#) - This is a free program and enrolled students will receive a grocery bag of food items on the last day of school each week. If you'd like to enroll, there are paper copies available in our school office or make a copy of the Enrollment Form and email the completed form to [sara.svir@isd624.org](mailto:sara.svir@isd624.org)
- Vadnais Heights Elementary is a Title 1 school. This means we qualify for additional funding, from the federal government, that provides additional teachers to support our students, funds for instructional supplies and money to pay for food when we host family events. Each year they collect information, on October 1st, that has been submitted by our families, to determine the amount we will receive for the following school year.

If you've completed the Educational Benefits form - Thank You.

If you have not yet completed it for this school year, please request a form from your child's teacher and we will send it home in their communication folder. If you'd like the form in a language other than English, please let us know.

