Liberty Elementary Student Handbook 2026-2027

Revised August 2025

Destination School District

Big Lake Schools has reinvented itself over the past decade to become a destination school district. We have families moving into the community because they see the value our district brings to their student's future.

Top Rated Preschool

Little Learners Preschool earned the highest rating possible from the state of Minnesota - a 4-Star Parent Aware Rating.

Focused On Technology

In 2024, we passed a technology levy and continue using those funds to transform our classrooms and buildings into technology-driven learning environments that prepare our students for college and careers.

WELCOME TO BIG LAKE SCHOOLS!

Whether you are new to the school district this year or have been with us your entire academic career, we are so excited that you have chosen to be a part of our Hornet community!

This student handbook encompasses policies, procedures and required notices for Liberty Elementary.

Policies are reviewed on a three-year cycle or as needed for legislative changes. The most up-to-date district policies and procedures can be found in their entirety on our website, biglakeschools.org.

The policies and procedures included in this handbook help to ensure that students and parents/guardians understand Big Lake Schools' operations, student behavior expectations, and disciplinary procedures.

Students and parents/guardians, please take some time to review the contents of this handbook and make sure you fully understand the information conveyed.

Should you have any questions about the handbook contents, please talk with the school principal.

We look forward to a growing partnership between our staff, students, and parents/guardians.
Thank you for choosing Big Lake Schools!

Sincerely,

Tim Truebenbach
Superintendent

DISTRICT CONTACT INFORMATION 4
SCHOOL CONTACT INFORMATION & HOURS 5

SCHOOL SCHEDULE 6
DISTRICT-WIDE PHILOSOPHIES 7
GENERAL INFORMATION 8
FOOD & NUTRITION 9
ATTENDANCE 10
DATA PRIVACY 12
BUS TRANSPORTATION 13
BUS BEHAVIOR MISCONDUCT MATRIX 14
HEALTH & SAFETY 15
IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS 17
SCHOOL RULES & BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS 18
BEHAVIOR POLICIES 19
DISCIPLINARY ACTION 22
ANNUAL NOTICES & INFORMATION 23
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL-SPECIFIC GUIDELINES 25
LIBERTY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL 26

DISTRICT CONTACT INFORMATION

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SCHOOL CONTACT INFORMATION & HOURS

LIBERTY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	
School Hours	7:40 AM - 2:25 PM
Attendance Line	763-262-8100 press 2
Address	17901 205th Avenue NW
Main Phone	763-262-8100
Principal	Teresa Smock-Potter t.smock-potter@biglakeschools.org
Assistant Principal	Casey Young c.young@biglakeschools.org
INDEPENDENCE ELEMENTARY STEM SCHOOL	
School Hours	7:30 AM - 2:15 PM
Attendance Line	763-262-2537 press 2
Address	701 Minnesota Avenue
Main Phone	763-262-2537
Principal	Jona Deavel j.deavel@biglakeschools.org
Assistant Principal	Scott Pierce s.pierce@biglakeschools.org
BIG LAKE MIDDLE SCHOOL	
School Hours	8:30 AM - 3:20 PM
Attendance Line	763-262-2567 press 2
Address	601 Minnesota Avenue
Main Phone	763-262-2567
Principal	Mark Ernst m.ernst@biglakeschools.org
Assistant Principal	Kevin Hillman k.hillman@biglakeschools.org
Dean of Students	Andrea Roth a.roth@biglakeschools.org
BIG LAKE HIGH SCHOOL	
School Hours	8:30 AM - 3:20 PM
Attendance Line	763-262-2547 press 2
Address	501 Minnesota Avenue
Main Phone	763-262-2547
Principal	Shallyn Tordeur s.tordeur@biglakeschools.org
Assistant Principal	Jacob Klingelhutz j.klingelhutz@biglakeschools.org
Dean of Students	Matt Venaas m.venaas@biglakeschools.org

SCHOOL SCHEDULE

LIBERTY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - LUNCH AND RECESS TIMES
Kindergarten 10:45 - 12:10 1st Grade 9:55-11:20 2nd Grade 11:40-1:05

DISTRICT-WIDE PHILOSOPHIES

MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to challenge, educate and inspire all students to reach their highest level of achievement in academics, athletics, and the arts.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

We believe:

- High expectations inspire high achievement and lifelong learning
- Learning occurs best in a safe, healthy, and positive environment
- Excellence in academics, athletics, and the arts is important in creating well-rounded citizens
- Preparing learners for the future is an innovative and evolving process
- Collaboration with critical partners promotes success
- In the five core values of the Hornet Way

HORNET WAY

It is the philosophy of Big Lake Schools that staff, students, parents and community members should model appropriate behavior by following the Hornet Way in all aspects of life.

The Hornet Way is based on five core values:

- **Respect** - be considerate of self, other people and other people's 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

RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION & POSITIVE BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTIONS AND SUPPORTS

Big Lake Schools uses the MTSS model as a tool to match instruction and interventions to individual student needs. More specifically, MTSS is used to identify learning and behavior differentiations between an entire grade, a targeted classroom and individuals. Ultimately, the system is used to answer the question, "How does our school ensure all students are learning?"
Another behavioral model, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), is also being utilized by our schools. Our PBIS programming emphasizes proactive approaches to student behavior, including intentionally teaching students the behavioral and learning expectations for every area and activities in our buildings. If students demonstrate behaviors that contradict school expectations, time is spent reteaching these expectations and when appropriate, we take a restorative approach to resolve misbehaviors. The PBIS model is closely tied and consistent with the MTSS model.
These frameworks help teachers and school administration develop an intervention strategy for a student who needs additional learning or behavioral focus, or a student who needs to be academically challenged more.
Behavioral and academic intervention time is embedded in a student's schedule as a normal class, but varies in offerings from school to school.

- Differentiated Instruction - Liberty Elementary
- BEE (Best Education for Everyone) - Independence Elementary STEM
- WIN (What I Need) - Big Lake Middle School
- STING (Student Targeted Instruction & Goals) - Big Lake High School

GENERAL INFORMATION

VISITOR CHECK-IN

In order to provide a safe learning environment for our students, we require all visitors to check-in at the main office and present ID upon entering a building. This procedure applies during school hours or meetings that overlap into the school day. Anyone who is not a student or staff member is considered a visitor.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE TIMES

Elementary students should not arrive at school more than 10 minutes before school begins and need to be picked up immediately after the school day ends. Arrangements with Kids Club, our before and after school childcare program, should be made if parents/guardians need to drop off/pick up elementary students outside of the allowed times.

PARENT/GUARDIAN/STUDENT ONLINE ACCESS

Parents/Guardians can check grades and attendance, along with provide and change contact information, through the Infinite Campus Parent Portal. The portal can be accessed at https://goo.gl/AY1wAe or by visiting our website. To set up an account, contact the main office of your child's school for an access key.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS

If school is canceled, delayed, or released early, information will be posted on the Big Lake Schools website at biglakeschools.org, on Facebook, and on local TV stations. Parents/guardians who have a Parent Portal account with a valid email address will also receive an email alert (or text message) if school closes. Make sure your child knows your family plans if an early closing occurs. For elementary student parents/guardians, make sure you have provided emergency closing information through Infinite Campus. In the event that school closes for inclement weather, students may be expected to engage in online learning. Students and staff are expected to bring their school-issued devices and chargers home if there is a chance school is canceled in the near future. Teachers will post assignments within 90 minutes of the start of the scheduled school day and will be available to students for most of the day with the exception of lunch and their professional learning community meetings..

REPORT CARDS

Students and parents/guardians will receive report cards at the end of each trimester through Infinite Campus Parent Portal. Parents/guardians can also contact the school to request a printed report card. Elementary students will receive a standards-based report card that provides detailed information on how they are progressing on academic standards

REVISION NOTICE

This student handbook may be modified at any time throughout the year. The most up-to-date version will always be available on our district website at biglakeschools.org.

FOOD & NUTRITION

BREAKFAST & LUNCH PROGRAM

Big Lake Schools is proud to partner with Chartwells Dining Services to serve breakfast and lunch meals that are nutritional, balanced and delicious! For specific information about our food and nutrition program, including the nutritional content of each meal and daily menus, please visit our District website at biglakeschools.org.

FREE SCHOOL MEALS BILL

Thanks to the new Minnesota Free School Meals Bill, all Big Lake students will be able to receive one free lunch and one free breakfast each day they attend school. This significant legislation was signed into law by Governor Walz on March 17, 2023, and aimed to ensure that all students have access to nutritious meals by providing meal reimbursement to Minnesota districts. Key details you need to know:

- Students automatically receive 1 free breakfast and 1 free lunch each day they attend school
- Students must take a full meal for it to be free
- Additional charges apply for a la carte items or extra meals
- Students must attend in-person school to receive free meals
- Eligible families are still encouraged to submit the Application for Educational Benefits! *Your child(ren) may qualify for other benefits like reduced fees at school, and it helps the district receive additional funding*

For more information and FAQs about the Free School Meals Bill, visit our website Food and Nutritional Services FAQs

MEAL ACCOUNT

Students will still have a meal account and will go through the lunch line and enter their pin number or scan their finger each day. Parents/guardians are encouraged to add funds to their child(ren)'s meal accounts if they anticipate purchasing extras such as a la carte items or extra meals. You can monitor and add funds electronically through MySchoolBucks.com, or by sending cash or a check to your child's school (you can either drop it off or send it with your child). Students will not be able to purchase extras if their account balance is zero or negative.

SCHOOL MEALS POLICY

Click here to view the policy.

APPLICATION FOR EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS

Should I still fill out the Application for Educational Benefits?

YES! Although no application is required to receive this free meal benefit, filling out the Application for Educational Benefits is still important. Your child(ren) may qualify for other benefits like reduced fees at school. Additionally, your application may help the school qualify for education funds, discounts, and other meal programs.

There are two ways to complete the application:

1. **Online through Infinite Campus**: Your application will be processed faster and more efficiently using the online application. Log into your Infinite parent portal, click on Applications and Forms, and follow the link to the application.
2. **Submit a paper application**: Print out and complete the form and return it to:
   Big Lake Schools District Office
   Attn: Applications
   701 Minnesota Ave
   Big Lake MN 55309

ATTENDANCE

Big Lake Schools 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. Minnesota State Law requires attendance from age 7 (or under 7 but enrolled in kindergarten) to 17, and establishes valid reasons for excused absences.

Liberty Attendance Line 763-262-8100 or email lib.attendance@biglakeschools.org

EXCUSED ABSENCES

1. To be considered an excused absence, the student's parent or legal guardian may be asked to verify, in writing, the reason for the student's absence from school. A note from a physician or a licensed mental health professional stating dates that the student cannot attend school is a valid excuse.
    - May include pre-approved family trips of short duration at principal discretion
2. The following reasons shall be sufficient to constitute excused absences:
    - Illness
    - Serious illness in the student's immediate family
    - A death or funeral in the student's immediate family or of a close friend or relative
    - Medical, dental, or orthodontic treatment or a counseling appointment
    - Court appearances occasioned by family or personal action
    - Religious instruction not to exceed three hours in any week
    - Physical emergency conditions such as fire, flood, storm, etc.
    - Official school field trip or other school-sponsored outing
    - Removal of a student pursuant to a suspension. Suspensions are to be handled as excused absences and students will be permitted to complete make-up work
    - Family emergencies
    - Active duty in any military branch of the United States
    - A student's condition that requires ongoing treatment for a mental health diagnosis
    - Consequences of Excused Absences
    - Students whose absences are excused are required to make up all assignments missed or to complete alternative assignments as deemed appropriate by the classroom teacher
    - Student make up work will be determined by teacher

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

Any absence that does not fall within the above parameters may be considered unexcused—even if the proper absence procedure was followed. Unknown absences will be marked as unexcused absences after 5 school days.

EARLY RELEASE/EARLY PICK UP

If a student needs to leave before school is released, a parent/guardian should alert the office and provide a reason for the early release before the start of school. Before leaving for the day, the student should check out with the office. At the elementary and middle school levels, students should wait in the office for an authorized person to sign them out.

EXCESSIVE EXCUSED ABSENCES

At administrator's discretion, excessive absences (10 consecutively or 15+ in total) due to illness may require a doctor's note or a visit to the school health office to be considered excused. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to inform the school of any planned extended absences by contacting the school's attendance office either by phone 763-262-8100 or email lib.attendance@biglakeschools.org. This ensures proper record-keeping and facilitates effective communication.

MAKEUP WORK

Students are responsible for working with staff to make up missing work due to absences.

See School Board Policy 503 for more information.

ELEMENTARY ATTENDANCE INTERVENTION STEPS

Informational Letter Sent Home

8 excused absences or 2 unexcused absences

Sherburne County Referral

3 unexcused absences

Referred to County Attendance Review Board

For students 12 years of age or older

5 or more unexcused absences

Child Protection Report for Educational Concerns

For students under 12 years of age

7 or more unexcused absences

ABSENCE/TARDY PROCEDURES

Parents/Guardians should alert the school of an absence or tardy by either calling or emailing the school's attendance line by 9 a.m. the day of the absence/tardy.

Liberty: 262-8100 or lib.attendance@biglakeschools.org

DATA PRIVACY

Big Lake Schools recognizes its responsibility in regard to the collection, maintenance and dissemination of pupil records and the protection of the privacy rights of students as provided in federal law and state statutes.

NOTICE OF STUDENT EDUCATION RECORD PRIVACY

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents/guardians and students who are 18 years of age or older certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights include:

- The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days after the day Big Lake Schools receives a request for access.
- The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA.
- The right to provide written consent before the school discloses personally identifiable information from the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests.
- The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by Big Lake Schools to comply with the requirements of FERPA.

TENNESSEN NOTICE

An individual asked to supply private or confidential data concerning their self shall be informed of: (a) the purpose and intended use of the requested data; (b) whether the individual may refuse or is legally required to supply the requested data; (c) any known consequence arising from supplying or refusing to supply private or confidential data; and (d) the identity of other persons or entities authorized by state or federal law to receive the data. This requirement shall not apply when an individual is asked to supply investigative data to a law enforcement officer.

NOTICE OF DIRECTORY INFORMATION

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) allows Big Lake Schools to disclose personally identifiable information it has labeled as directory information without prior parental notification or consent, unless a parent/guardian has advised the district otherwise through an opt-out form. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow Big Lake Schools to include information from your child's education records in certain school publications. Examples include:

- The annual yearbook/graduation programs
- Honor roll and other recognition lists
- Sports activity sheets, such as for wrestling, showing weight and height of team members
- District print, broadcast or online publications, such as social media, websites, and marketing materials for district use
- Media's request of information such as the newspaper or online news stories

Directory information, which is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released, can also be disclosed to outside organizations without a parent's prior written consent. Outside organizations include, but are not limited to, companies that manufacture class rings or publish yearbooks. In addition, two federal laws require local educational agencies (LEAs) receiving assistance under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) to provide military recruiters, upon request, with the following information – names, addresses and telephone listings – unless parents/guardians have advised the LEA that they do not want their student's information disclosed without their prior written consent.

Big Lake Schools considers the following information as directory information:

- Student's name
- Age
- Gender
- Grade level
- Dates of attendance
- Degrees, honors and awards received
- Participation in officially recognized activities
- Weight and height of members of athletic team
- Any photograph, video or recording of a student's likeness

If you would like to opt-out of the release and use of directory information, Big Lake Schools must receive an opt-out form by the end of the first month of a new school year. An opt-out form is available on the District's website or in the main office of each school.

BUS TRANSPORTATION

Vision Transportation provides bus services for Big Lake Schools. Vision can be reached at 763.263.7900 with any questions or concerns. Parents/Guardians can also reach Vision about concerns happening on the bus by filling out the Student & Parent Misconduct form and returning it to the school office.

PROCEDURES

Liberty AM: Buses will drop off in the front of the building at 7:30 a.m.
Liberty PM: Buses will be parked in numerical route order (not bus number) at the end of the school day. Each bus will have a placard in the window displaying the route number along with an animal symbol for young students who may still be learning number recognition.

GUIDELINES

Taking an Alternative Bus
Students are only allowed to ride their assigned bus. Notes that give permission to ride other buses will not be accepted. If there is an emergency requiring a student to ride a different bus, please call Vision Transportation to make arrangements.

If a student who normally rides the bus home will be getting picked up or will be walking/biking home instead, communicate directly with your student's teacher and the office. Transportation plans will not be changed for a student without this communication.

RULES & EXPECTATIONS

- Students may only ride their assigned bus
- Be on time at the bus stop (5 minutes early) and wait safely off the roadway
- When crossing the street, wait for the driver to signal and cross where you can be seen
- Follow the directions of the driver
- Sit facing forward and remain seated
- Talk quietly and use appropriate language
- Keep all body parts inside the bus and to yourself
- No fighting, intimidation or horseplay
- No littering or throwing of any object(s)
- No possession or use of illegal substances is allowed on the bus
- No weapons, dangerous objects or metal/ glass containers
- Avoid damage to the school bus and to other people's property
- Avoid any acts that endanger yourself or others
- Avoid bringing band instruments on the bus unless it fits in your backpack
- All school policies apply on the bus and at the bus stop

CONSEQUENCES:

- 1st Offense: report to parents/guardians and/or one day suspension from riding the bus
- 2nd Offense: 1-3 school days suspension from riding the bus
- 3rd Offense: 3-5 school days suspension from riding the bus
- 4th Offense: 5-10 school days suspension from riding the bus and meeting with parent/guardian
- Alternate Consequences: **Consequences are assigned by Vision**. Based upon the circumstances, an administrator may use his/her discretion in applying alternate consequences

BUS BEHAVIOR MISCONDUCT MATRIX

VISION TRANSPORTATION IN PARTNERSHIP WITH BIG LAKE SCHOOLS

MINOR INCIDENTS:

Disrespectful behavior, minor physical contact or horseplay, taking personal items from others, name calling, not following directions, littering, excessive noise level, leaving seat, inappropriate language or gestures, inappropriate use of cell phone or technology, arguing, disobedience towards driver or monitor, other incidents reported and deemed inappropriate.

MAJOR INCIDENTS

Major physical aggression (fighting, kicking, punching, etc), profanity and abusive language directed at driver, monitor, or another student, sexual or harassing language, damage or theft of property, intimidating or threatening behavior, insubordination toward driver or monitor, possession or use of illegal substances or related items (tobacco, drugs, e-cigs, weapons), throwing items out of the bus, throwing items at other students.

Response to Bus Referrals				
	1st Incident	2nd Incident	3rd Incident	4+ Incidents
Minors	Verbal Warning, Bus Driver has conversation with Student	Bus Driver has conversation with Student & Vision contacts Parents/guardians	Bus Driver has conversation with Student, Vision contacts Parents/guardians (notifying next incident may result in suspension from the bus), & Assigned Seat	Bus Driver has conversation with Student, Vision contacts Parents/guardians, Assigned Seat, as well as some or all of the following: 1. In-School Consequence 2. Bus Suspension, Number of Days dependent on number and nature of incident
Majors	Bus Driver has conversation with Student, Vision Contacts Parents/guardians, as well as some or all of the following: 1. Assigned Seat 2. In-School Consequence 3. 3-Day Suspension from the Bus	Bus Driver has conversation with Student, Vision Contacts Parents/guardians, as well as some or all of the following: 1. Assigned Seat 2. In-School Consequence 3. 5-Day Suspension from the Bus 4. Possible New Bus Assignment	Bus Driver has conversation with Student, Vision Contacts Parents/guardians, as well as some or all of the following: 1. Assigned Seat 2. In-School Consequence 3. 7-Day Suspension from the Bus 4. Possible New Bus Assignment	Bus Driver has conversation with Student, Vision contacts Parents/guardians, as well as some or all of the following: 1. Assigned Seat 2. In-School Consequence 3. Possible New Bus Assignment 4. 10-Day + Suspension from the Bus, Number of Days dependent on number and nature of incidents and may result in loss of bus privilege.

*Please note that a suspension from transportation includes all forms of transportation during that time period, including but not limited to, to and from school, after school activities, in school activities, and field trips.

*In the event that there is a reported threat that could result in possible harm, the alleged student may be removed from the bus until an investigation can be completed.

*Both Vision or Big Lake School Administration may impose other consequences, longer bus suspensions, and/or other school discipline as deemed appropriate on a case by case basis. The driver has the authority to assign seats at any time.

HEALTH & SAFETY

Big Lake Schools is dedicated to ensuring the health and safety of each student and staff member. The District's health and safety committee is responsible for developing, reviewing and revising policies, procedures and regulations regarding health and safety at Big Lake Schools.

ILLNESS

A child should be kept home from school if they have any of the following:

- A contagious disease, such as chicken pox, strep throat, or impetigo
- Vomiting or diarrhea-children should remain home 24 hours after having vomiting or diarrhea
- Draining ears
- Undiagnosed rash
- Elevated temperature greater than or equal to 100 degrees-children should remain home 24 hours after temperature has returned to normal without fever-reducing medication
- If your child is taking antibiotics or medication for an infection, it is recommended that they have taken the medication for at least 12-24 hours before returning to school.

MEDICATION

Big Lake Schools follow Minnesota state guidelines and School Board Policy 516 to ensure the safe administration of medications during the school day.

Bringing Medication to School

All medications should be brought to the school by a parent or guardian and given directly to the health office. Students should not carry medications in backpacks or pockets unless they have prior approval to self-carry.

Authorization Requirements

Before any medication can be given at school, the following must be on file:

- Written permission from a parent or guardian
- A healthcare provider's order for all medications
- Medication in the original container:
  - Prescription medications must have a pharmacy label
  - Over-the-counter medications must be in the original, unopened packaging

Medication cannot be administered without completed forms.

Self-Carry and Self-Administration of Medication

Medications eligible for self-carry may include:

- Asthma inhalers
- Epinephrine auto-injectors (EpiPens)
- Diabetic supplies and medications
- Other emergency medications approved by the school nurse

Before a student may self-carry medication, the following must be provided annually:

- Written parent/guardian permission
- Written authorization from a licensed healthcare provider
- Verification that the student can safely and responsibly self-administer the medication
- Medication in the original labeled container or pharmacy-labeled packaging

The school reserves the right to revoke self-carry privileges if medication is used improperly or if safety concerns arise.

End of Year Pick-Up

Parents/guardians are responsible for picking up all medications at the end of the school year. Medications will not be sent home with students. Any medications not picked up will be properly disposed of.

INJURY

A student who experiences an injury while on school grounds or during a school-sponsored event is required to report the injury to a teacher, coach or school health personnel.

CONCUSSION AWARENESS

Big Lake Schools takes head injuries seriously and has procedures in place for notifying parents if a head injury occurs during school. We ask parents/guardians and students to make sure to notify their school's health office if a head injury occurs outside of school so that we can monitor the student for concussion signs.

SECTION 504 PLANS

Section 504 is a part of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 that prohibits discrimination based upon disability. Section 504 is an anti-discrimination, civil rights statute that requires the needs of students with disabilities to be met as adequately as the needs of the non-disabled are met.

Federal law defines an individual with a disability as any person who: (1) has a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; (2) has a record of such an impairment; or (3) is regarded as having such an impairment.

Major life activities include caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning and working. When a condition substantially limits a major life activity, an accommodation plan should be developed.

If you believe your child may qualify for a 504 accommodation plan, please contact your child's school administrator. They will walk you through the necessary steps to determine eligibility.

COUNSELING/SOCIAL WORK SERVICES

Students may ask for, or staff may suggest, visits to a school counselor or social worker for minor social/emotional guidance. School counselors and social workers may provide information regarding family and community resources, including therapy from a partnering organization.

MEDICAL CLEARANCE

With a parent's/guardian's written approval, students can be excused from a physical education class for one day only. Students needing to be excused for more than a day may need to bring a doctor's note to the health office for approval. In

situations requiring a doctor's attention, the child or parents/guardians may be required to present a slip from the doctor stating any limitations or non-participation in physical education or other school activities. A reinstatement permission slip from the physician may be necessary before a student may participate again.

NUCLEAR EMERGENCY

In the event of an emergency at the Monticello Nuclear Generating Plant, students will be evacuated directly from Big Lake Schools to Princeton Schools. Parents/guardians will be notified via email, text and/or television stations. Students at Wright Technical Center or the ALC in Buffalo will evacuate to Rockford High School. Parents should NOT come to Big Lake Schools if an evacuation is in process.

SAFETY DRILLS

Numerous times throughout the year each school performs announced and unannounced safety drills. These drills consist of lockdowns, fire, tornado and bus drills as required by state law.

USE OF AEROSOL CANS/SPRAYS

Due to health conditions of other students, the use of aerosol cans or sprays is limited to maintenance and projects in class with teacher's supervision in all of our buildings.

PEANUT ALLERGY

Based on studies in the United States approximately 1 out of 125 children have a peanut allergy. Allergies to peanuts, shellfish, and eggs, along with other allergies have increased in the last decade. Therefore, it seems that it is likely that we will have students with food allergies in our school system. We have implemented a PEANUT-AWARE ZONE in our cafeterias. A table is set aside for students with peanut and other food allergies. Students may sit at this table with friends if their breakfast or lunches do not include peanuts, peanut oil, or other known food allergies. Our goal is to keep all students safe!

OTHER

We ask that students remember that some students and/or employees could be allergic or sensitive to the chemicals or smells of perfumes, colognes, and lotions. Please wear these substances in moderation or avoid wearing them if possible.

IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS

Per Minnesota State Law, the parent/guardian of any child entering a public school, and/or any student entering the 7th grade, must submit a statement from a physician or public clinic that states the child has received adequate immunizations against measles, rubella, mumps, diphtheria, tetanus, polio, chicken pox and hepatitis B. All immunizations must include the day, month and year given.

A parent/guardian may decide not to have their child immunized due to conscientiously held beliefs or for medical purposes. If so, an exemption statement must be submitted to the school.

A form to report immunizations and immunization exemptions is available on the parent portal on our district website and in each school's health office.

Please see "Are Your Kids Ready" for immunization requirements.

SCHOOL RULES & BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

All students are expected to follow the District's behavior philosophy of the Hornet Way while on school grounds, at school-sponsored activities and while riding school-appointed vehicles. Any behavior not aligned with the Hornet Way or any of the rules below may result in disciplinary action subject to an administrator's discretion. See district philosophies for information on the Hornet Way.

SOLICITATION

Students are not allowed to sell items of any sort on school grounds or buses without specific approval from the building principal.

CELL PHONES/SMART DEVICES

Liberty expects phones/smart devices to be stored in lockers during the school day. Unless given permission by a teacher, students should not have phones/smart devices out during class. The use of camera features is NOT allowed in school locker rooms or bathrooms at any time. Recording, posting or transmitting photos or video of a person without their permission is NOT allowed. Use of external speakers is not allowed; please use earbuds (if your school permits or silence device). Improper use of phones/smart devices may result in confiscation of the device or an inability to bring it to school in the future. The district is not responsible for loss, damage or theft.

LOCKERS

Students should not switch or share lockers without administration's permission. Only school-approved items should be displayed on the outside of lockers. Students are responsible for the condition of their locker; including any content and damage to their locker. Stickers and decals should not be used. Big Lake Schools is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

MODES OF TRANSPORTATION

Bicycles, in-line skates, skateboards, scooters or other wheeled items should not be used inside schools or directly outside of school exits. Bikes should be parked in bike racks provided, and it is recommended to secure your bike to the rack with a locking device. Big Lake Schools is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

BOOKS/TEXTBOOKS

Students are responsible for taking care of books/textbooks provided to them by the school district. Failure to return a book/textbook or return a book/textbook in good condition may result in paying replacement and/or repair costs.

GUESTS/VISITORS

Students should not bring individuals with them to school who are not currently enrolled at Big Lake Schools, unless for a school-wide or classroom event that is approved by administration. While visiting, guests should not take pictures of students due to data privacy.

LOST AND FOUND

Students should report valuable lost and found items to the main office. Students who find item(s) not belonging to them (including money) are expected to turn the item(s) into the office.

CLOSED CAMPUS

All of Big Lake Schools are closed campuses, which means students are not allowed to leave their assigned school unless given permission from administration. Exceptions include class-related activities supervised by a teacher.

BEVERAGES IN SCHOOL

Students are welcome to have water while school is in-session.

BEHAVIOR POLICIES

The following are examples of unacceptable behavior on school grounds subject to disciplinary action. These examples are not intended to be an exhaustive list. For definitions of each unacceptable behavior and a more complete list, please see the full discipline policy on our website.

1. Academic dishonesty
2. Actions causing harm to another person
3. Attire (see dress code regulation)
4. Careless or reckless driving
5. Disrespectful language/verbal confrontations
6. Disruptive acts such as insubordination
7. Excessive public displays of affection
8. False 911 calls
9. Gambling
10. Gang or cult activity
11. Incendiary/ignition device use
12. Possession of nuisance devices/objects
13. Terroristic acts
14. Unauthorized use or tampering of fire extinguisher, fire alarms or AED alarms
15. Violation of school bus and student parking regulations
16. Violations against persons such as assault or fighting
17. Violations against property
18. Willful conduct that disrupts the educational process, endangers others or violates any policies, procedures, regulations or rules

TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTABLE USE

Big Lake Schools believes the use of technology in classrooms is a vital part of the learning process for today's students. Teachers also have students use Internet-based technologies owned by the district. With the use of district technologies comes a huge responsibility of using these things appropriately. We fully expect students' behavior while using district technologies to reflect the Hornet Way. All district technologies are intended to be used for educational purposes only. This includes activity while on school grounds, at school-sponsored activities, and in school-supplied vehicles. Additionally, unacceptable use of technologies while off school grounds may be subject to disciplinary action if the activity disrupts the educational environment, or negatively affects another student or school staff member. Students cannot change their school email account name or profile picture.

Parents/guardians and students are required to sign a technology use agreement upon enrollment and annually.

For additional information on this topic, please see the technology acceptable use policy on our website.

ILLEGAL SUBSTANCE VIOLATIONS

Use, possession, sales, distribution, exchange, and/or physical contact with illegal substances are prohibited on school grounds, at school-sponsored events and in district supplied vehicles. This includes any look-alikes or accessories/equipment that can be used to hold or ingest a substance. Also see the District's policy on the use of medication during school hours.

DRESS CODE REGULATION

The purpose of the school dress code is to enhance the education of students by establishing expectations that support educational goals. Students and their families have the primary and joint responsibility for student clothing and appearance. Teachers and other district staff should exemplify and reinforce student clothing and appearance standards and help students develop an understanding of appropriate appearance in the school environment.

The school district expects students to dress appropriately for school activities. This is a joint responsibility of the student and the student's parent(s) or guardian(s).

A student's clothing or appearance may not materially and substantially disrupt or interfere with the educational mission, school environment, classwork, or school activities. A student's dress or appearance may not incite or contribute to substantial disorder or invasion of the rights of others or pose a threat to the health or safety of the student or others.

Students' rights to choose their dress and appearance for school and school-related activities will be protected provided that the clothing:

1. does not injure people or damage property;
2. does not materially and substantially disrupt or interfere with the educational process or classwork;
3. does not interfere with the requirements of discipline in the operation of the school or school activities, materially disrupt classwork;
4. does not involve substantial disorder or invasion of the rights of others

Such clothing includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Clothing for the weather.
2. Clothing that does not create a health or safety hazard.
3. Clothing for the activity (i.e., physical education or the classroom).
4. Footwear that does not present a safety hazard.
5. Students may wear headgear for a medical or religious reason.
6. Outerwear such as caps, hats, coats, purses, cinch bags, sunglasses, blankets, and backpacks are to remain in lockers during the academic school day. Exceptions for school-related events may be made at the discretion of building administration.
7. Hair, including but not limited to hair texture and hair styles such as braids, locks, and twists

Students clothing:

1. Students may not wear inappropriate clothing. Extremely brief garments and see through garments may not be worn. Clothing with rips, holes, mesh or see through garments must not be worn without appropriate coverage underneath to meet minimum dress code requirements. Tops must have straps. Clothing must cover areas from one armpit across to the other armpit. Bottoms must be at least 3 to 4 inches in length on the upper thighs.
2. Clothing (including emblems, badges, symbols, signs, words, objects or pictures on clothing or jewelry) bearing a message that is lewd, vulgar, obscene, libelous, or denigrates, harasses, discriminates against others on the basis of protected class status under the Minnesota Human Rights Act, or violates school district policies prohibiting discrimination, violence, harassment, or other harmful activities.
3. Apparel promoting products or activities that are illegal for use by minors.
4. Communicating a message that is racist, sexist, or otherwise derogatory, or approves, advances, or provokes any form of religious, racial, or sexual harassment and/or violence against other individuals as defined in Policy 413.

The intention of the school dress code is not to abridge the rights of students to express political, religious, philosophical, or similar opinions by wearing clothing on which such messages are stated. Such messages are acceptable as long as they are not lewd; vulgar; obscene; libelous; do not denigrate, harass, or discriminate against others or do not violate school district policies prohibiting discrimination, bullying, violence, harassment, or other harmful activities.

See School Board Policy 504 for more information.

HAZING

No student should organize, participate in or encourage hazing. Hazing is having a student or groups of students commit an act or have an act committed against them for the purpose of acceptance into an organized or unorganized group. See School Board Policy 526.

BULLYING & INTIMIDATION

Bullying and intimidation are unacceptable behaviors. Bullying is defined as intimidating, threatening, abusive or hurtful conduct that is objectively offensive, repeated and involves an imbalance of power, or materially and substantially interferes with a student's education or ability to engage in school-related activities. This policy covers behavior occurring at school, on buses, at school-related events, and electronic behavior occurring off school grounds that substantially and materially disrupts school or learning. A form to report bullying is available on our website. See School Board Policy 514.

WEAPONS

Any individual entering school grounds shall not possess, use or distribute a weapon except as provided in the weapons policy. A weapon means any object, device or instrument designed as a weapon, looks like a weapon, or is capable of producing bodily harm.

RACIAL, RELIGIOUS, SEXUAL HARASSMENT & VIOLENCE

Any form or infliction of religious, racial, sexual harassment, violence, or anything that has the potential to create a hostile or intimidating environment based on any protected class is not allowed. A student who believes they have been a victim of religious, racial or sexual harassment or violence should report it immediately to the school principal. The student may make this report verbally or in writing by using the harassment report form available on the district website. Please refer to School Board Policy 522 for sexual harassment definitions and guidelines to file a report. Until Title IX, a report of sexual harassment should be made to the Title IX Coordinator for the district: Sue Schmidt, Human Resource Manager, 763-262-5194, 501 Minnesota Ave, Big Lake MN 55309, s.schmidt@biglakeschools.org.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

It is the general policy of Big Lake Schools to emphasize proactive, instructive, and restorative approaches to the student behavior and to utilize progressive discipline to the extent reasonable and appropriate based upon the specific facts and circumstances of student misconduct. Disciplinary action is at the discretion of school administration, and may include, but is not limited to:

- Student conference with teacher, principal, counselor or other school district personnel and/or verbal warning
- Skill building or behavioral intervention
- Parent/Guardian contact or conference
- Removal from class
- Dismissal from school
- In-school suspension/monitoring in an alternative learning space
- Suspension from extracurricular activities
- Detention outside of the school day
- Loss of school privileges
- Referral to in-school support services, community resources or outside agency services
- Restorative measures, including financial, symbolic, or other means of restitution
- Referral to police, other law enforcement agencies, or other appropriate authorities
- A request for a petition to be filed in district court for juvenile delinquency decision
- Out-of-school suspension
- Expulsion under the Pupil Fair Dismissal Act. "Expulsion" means a school board action to prohibit an enrolled pupil from further attendance for up to 12 months from the date the pupil is expelled
- Exclusion under the Pupil Fair Dismissal Act. "Exclusion" means an action taken by the school board to prevent enrollment or re-enrollment of a pupil for a period that shall not extend beyond the school year

Parents/guardians may be asked to pick up their child at any time due to unacceptable behavior.

All school board policies can be found in their entirety on our website.

ANNUAL NOTICES & INFORMATION

EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

Big Lake Schools is committed to providing equal educational opportunities to all students, no matter what gender, religion, marital status, race, sexual orientation, disability or public assistance status.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Please see District Policy 531.

RELIGION

Please see District Policy 609.

STUDENT SURVEYS

Please see District Policy 520.

SURVEILLANCE

In an effort to maintain the health, welfare and safety of students, staff and visitors, Big Lake Schools uses video surveillance to monitor activity.

LOCKER/DESK & CANINE SEARCHES

Student lockers and desks are subject to search without notification for any reason, at any time and without student consent. Canine searches of anything on school grounds may occur without notice periodically throughout the school year. Any non-compliant item(s) found are subject to disciplinary action and any applicable laws.

USE OF MOVIE CLIPS

From time to time, teachers may use video clips from movies to support their instruction. Any video clips are required to align with both the content standard and the learning target for the daily lesson. Permission forms are needed for PG movie clips for students in K-5. Permission forms are needed for PG-13 movie clips for students in grade 9. PG-13 movie clips are not shown in grades K-8. Permission forms are needed for clips from R-rated movies for students in grades 10-12. No clips from R-rated movies can be used in grades K-9. If a student does not receive permission to view a movie clip being shown, an alternative assignment would be provided.

The following procedure has been developed for parents who object to the content of instructional material:

1. Meet with the teacher regarding the objection, and if issues are not resolved at this level:
2. Take your concern to the school principal, then,
3. A meeting may be held with the teacher, the school principal, and the teaching and learning director to discuss the topic at hand with the goal of resolution.
4. If no resolution is made, an alternative instructional contract will be developed that adheres to state and district academic standards and graduation requirements.

PARENTS/GUARDIANS RIGHT TO REQUEST

Parents/guardians have the right to request information about whether their student's teacher(s) meet State licensing approval for the grade and subject being taught, is teaching with a waiver, has certification for the field being taught, and/or the qualifications of any educational assistant providing instruction.

THERAPY DOGS

To support student well-being, our school occasionally invites certified therapy dogs on campus. These dogs, accompanied by trained handlers, provide comfort and emotional support in a safe, supervised environment. Participation is entirely voluntary. If you prefer your student not to interact with therapy dogs, please notify the school office.

Big Lake Schools is committed to providing a safe and healthy learning environment for our students and community. Below are resources for information on our Health and Safety programs.

INDOOR AIR QUALITY

Big Lake Schools implemented an Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) management plan based on the Environmental Protection Agency's IAQ Tools for Schools Program. The goal of this program is to maintain a healthy environment in our buildings by identifying, correcting, and preventing IAQ problems. For more information or to review the Indoor Air Quality Management Plan please contact the Director of Buildings and Grounds using the link on our website under Departments/Buildings and Grounds.

INTEGRATED PESTICIDE MANGEMENT

Big Lake Schools uses licensed professional pest control services to prevent and control rodents, insects and other pests in and around our buildings. For more information or regarding our management plan or to request notification of applications please contact the Director of Buildings and Grounds using the link on our website under Departments/Buildings and Grounds.

LEAD IN WATER TESTING

Big Lake Schools has historically conducted, and continues to conduct, Lead in Water testing per the Minnesota Department of Health and Education's recommendations and guidelines. MN Statute 121A.335 requires public school buildings serving K-12 students to test potable water sources for lead every five years and to make the results of these tests available. Our management plan and results are available on our district website under Departments/Buildings and Grounds.

ASBESTOS

With the exception of buildings certified by the designing architect as asbestos-free, each of the Big Lake Schools buildings has been inspected for asbestos under the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHEAR) of 1986, using accredited inspectors. Asbestos containing materials have been identified during building inspections. Based on the results of these inspections management plans

have been developed and implemented to safely manage asbestos-containing materials at each affected location. Contact the Director of Buildings and Grounds using the link on our website under Departments/Buildings and Grounds to review plans and inspection results.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL-SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

RECESS

We value the benefits of outdoor play and have students go outside every day unless weather or air quality restricts us otherwise. Please help ensure your child comes to school every day with weather-appropriate clothing. Unless a parent/guardian provides a doctor's note outlining outdoor restrictions, the student will be required to participate in outdoor recess.

WALKERS & BIKE RIDERS

Students are expected to cross streets where there is a crossing guard on the way to school and on the way home. Bikers should walk their bikes across the streets patrolled by a crossing guard. Crossing guards are on duty 25-30 minutes before the start of school and 15 minutes after the release of school at the intersections of Eagle Lake Road and Minnesota Avenue, Hwy 43 and Glenwood Street, Phyllis Street and Minnesota Street, Fern Street and Minnesota Street.

FOOD ALLERGIES

When students are eating breakfast, lunch, or snack within their classrooms, teachers and supervisors will be informed of specific student food allergies. In these cases, assigned seating will be utilized to keep students safe.

BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

Liberty is a PBIS (Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports) school. All students and staff are taught the expectations for building a healthy school community in all aspects of their day. Find a detailed matrix of the PBIS expectations on the following pages.

CELEBRATION DAYS

In our desire to celebrate differences, embrace all people, and to prepare students for the diverse world, we are intentional about cultivating strong school families. This process starts with our students and families first! Our staff utilize Getting to Know You Days and family conferences to learn all about their students and families. Information collected may include such things as: what each student likes and dislikes, what the students strengths are, what their areas for growth are, their future goals, who makes up their family, important people in their lives, celebrations, and other information the teacher should know in order to set up the most welcoming, supportive, and engaging classroom environment possible.

Sharing and learning about each other, as well as having shared experiences is important when increasing awareness and accepting differences. When continuing to develop a classroom family, a grade level may decide to have a celebration connected to a changing season, a common experience, or a holiday. The focus of the celebration will be on a proactive trait like gratefulness, generosity, kindness, or just plain fun! All staff are responsible to ensure that any celebration has an educational purpose and is inclusive to all students. Families can decide to opt out of any community building celebration.

BIRTHDAYS

If your child would prefer not to have their birthday acknowledged at school, please let us know. To help keep the focus on learning, we ask that all birthday treats, gifts, and celebration items be kept at home. If you choose to send birthday party invitations to school, please know that the teacher will not facilitate distribution—your child will be responsible for handing them out. We also encourage families to consider sharing invitations outside of the school setting whenever possible and to be thoughtful of students who may not be included.

SPECIAL DAYS

As a way to build classroom community and promote individuality and creative expression we have a few "special days" planned throughout the school year such as Upstander Day, You Matter Day, silly hair day, pajamas day, etc. Watch for communication from your child's classroom teacher for notification of these days.

VISITORS TO SCHOOL BUILDINGS

To minimize disruption to our learning environment, we ask that visitors to school buildings are only for educational purposes. Additionally, to create safe spaces, we ask all visitors to check-in at the building office. If you would like to have lunch with your child, please check them out with the front office of each school building for an off-site meal.

LIBERTY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

	BE KIND	BE SAFE	BE A LEARNER
CLASSROOM	We use kind words. We are helpful. We are welcoming to all.	We respect ourselves and others. We use self-control. We use school tools safely.	We listen to and follow directions. We work as a team. We try our best.
HALLWAY	We use quiet voices. Keep our bodies to ourselves. We ask others to stop if needed.	We move carefully. We work as a team to keep spaces in line.	We help others stay focused on learning. We go directly to our planned location.
BATHROOM	We use soap and paper towels correctly. We throw away used paper towels.	We limit pod bathrooms to 2-3 students to give others space. We wash our hands with soap. We walk.	We return to class right away. We go at scheduled times when possible.
RECESS	We take turns with equipment. We ask to join a game. We include others.	We listen to the adults. We keep our bodies to ourselves. Use materials in the right way.	We line up right away. We enter the building calmly.
CAFETERIA	We wait our turn. We clean up after ourselves. We throw away garbage when done.	We wash our hands before and after we eat. We follow directions. We sit in our assigned space and eat our own food.	We talk with our classmates about our learning and our interests.
BUS & VANS	We use kind words. We will ask others to stop if needed.	We will stay in our own space and seat. We will wait our turn. We follow our drivers directions.	We will watch for our stop. We will keep our items in our backpack and keep track of our gear.