

# NORTH STAR ELEMENTARY

## STUDENT/FAMILY A-Z HANDBOOK

### 2026-2027



Jennifer  
2013

### North Star

*Where Every Child Shines!*

On behalf of the wonderful North Star Staff, we welcome you to our school community and look forward to another successful school year. We are proud of our work and invite you to get to know our school community. Your active support and cooperation combined with our best professional efforts will ensure academic success for all our North Star students.

Please take a few minutes to review this very informative handbook. As with any community, there are rules, celebrations, schedules and expectations. North Star's policies and procedures reflect district policies, state mandates and instructional procedural directives.

When the family and school work together toward high expectations for student achievement and behaviors, students demonstrate greater success as positive, confident learners.

We look forward to working together as partners in learning! Thank you for sharing your children with us.

**Ben Barlow**

North Star Elementary Principal

## All About North Star

### School Colors:

Galaxy Blue  
&  
Solar Yellow

### School Mascot:

Wolves



### School Logo:



| CONTACT INFORMATION |                       |                    |                                                                   |
|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Office              | 856-6578              | Website            | <a href="http://northstar.aps.edu/">http://northstar.aps.edu/</a> |
| Fax                 | 856-7486              | Cafeteria          | 253-9268                                                          |
| Attendance          | 856-6578 x2           | Bus Transportation | 880-3989                                                          |
| Address             | 9301 Ventura NE 87122 | Children's Choice  | 296-2880 (aftercare)                                              |

| HOURS            |                  |                |                               |
|------------------|------------------|----------------|-------------------------------|
| Office (Mon-Fri) | 7:00am – 3:00 pm | Staff Duty Day | 7:15 am – 2:15 pm (Mon – Fri) |
|                  |                  | Student Day    | 7:30 am – 2:15 pm (Mon – Fri) |

### APS Contact Information

Website Address: [www.aps.edu](http://www.aps.edu)

Physical Address: 6400 Uptown Blvd NE  
87110

Mailing Address: PO Box 25704 87125-0704

APS Administration: 880-3700

Student Service Center Hotline: 855-9040  
[servicecenter@aps.edu](mailto:servicecenter@aps.edu)

### Daily Bell Schedule

|                |                               |
|----------------|-------------------------------|
| 7:15 am        | Students drop off             |
| 7:30 am        | 1st bell                      |
| 7:33 am        | Tardy Bell                    |
| 9:05–9:25 am   | Primary Recesses (K,1,2)      |
| 1:00-1:15 pm   |                               |
| 1:25-1:40 pm   | Kinder                        |
| 9:35 – 9:55 am | Intermediate Recesses (3,4,5) |
| 1:25-1:40 pm   |                               |
| OR             |                               |
| 1:50-2:05 pm   |                               |
| 2:15           | End of School                 |

### HOWL

*H — Help Others Shine*

*Be kind, encourage others, and contribute to a positive community.*

*O — Own Your Actions*

*Take responsibility for your choices, learning, and behavior.*

*W — Work with Purpose*

*Approach learning with effort, focus, and intention.*

*L — Lead by Example*

*Show integrity through your words, actions, and attitude.*

### Lunch/Lunch Recess

|               |              |
|---------------|--------------|
| 10:45 - 11:20 | First Grade  |
| 10:55 - 11:30 | Kindergarten |
| 11:05-11:40   | Second Grade |
| 11:15 - 11:50 | Third Grade  |
| 11:25 - 12:00 | Fourth Grade |
| 11:35 - 12:10 | Fifth Grade  |

**NOTE:** Adult supervision begins at 7:15AM each day. *Plan for your student(s) to arrive at school no earlier than 7:15 AM as there is no staff supervising before that.*

## After-School Care

Children's Choice will provide on-site after-school care (2:15–6:00PM) in the North Star Elementary School Cafeteria. For information, call 296-2880 or go online to [www.childrens-choice.org](http://www.childrens-choice.org). Off-site childcare is also offered through privately owned daycare centers. Please check with the office for off-site childcare that currently drop off and pick up at North Star. [Children's Choice](#)

## APS Attendance Policy Summary

- Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) prioritizes student attendance as crucial for academic success and overall well-being. The policy emphasizes that regular attendance, starting from a young age, builds positive habits that benefit students throughout their academic journey. APS encourages collaboration between students, families, and school personnel to promote good attendance.
- Key Aspects of the APS Attendance Policy:
  - Excused Absences:
    - APS recognizes certain absences as excused, including illness (with documentation if needed), quarantine, medical appointments, family emergencies, religious observances, and legal obligations.
  - Unexcused Absences:
    - Family vacations are generally considered unexcused absences, and it is expected that parents will schedule them during school breaks, according to the Albuquerque High School handbook.
  - Notifications and Communication:
    - Parents are required to notify the school of absences, preferably by phone or through ParentVUE.
  - Make-Up Work:
    - Students are generally entitled to make up missed work for both excused and unexcused absences, with the opportunity to request make-up assignments.
  - Chronic Absenteeism:
    - APS identifies students as chronically absent when they miss 10% or more of school days.
  - Intervention and Support:
    - APS employs a tiered system of interventions and support for students struggling with attendance, including early outreach, assessments, attendance plans, and referrals to relevant support services.
  - Attendance Supports Unit:
    - APS has a Student Success Systems and Attendance Unit dedicated to working with school staff to ensure students are not disciplined for attendance issues but rather receive the support they need to succeed.
  - Monitoring and Communication:
    - Schools monitor attendance daily and inform parents of their child's attendance record at each reporting period.
  - Focus on Early Intervention:

- APS emphasizes early intervention and collaboration between schools, families, and students to address attendance issues and provide necessary support to help students succeed.

## APS Tiered Approach to Attendance

### Attendance Procedures

**Each day** your child is absent, please contact the attendance line before 8:30AM. Our office clerk will check the attendance line every morning, beginning at 8:30AM. A call from the automated system verifying your child's absence from class will go out to parents starting at 8:30AM. The attendance number is **505-856-6578**.

If your student is tardy to school (past 7:33 am arriving), please walk them to the front entrance and press the door button on the wall to the right of the doors. By this time, staff on duty have gone back in the building and are no longer available to receive the child. Proceed into the office to check your student in with the attendance clerk.

If a student is absent from school for several consecutive days, parents may contact the teacher regarding homework. **One school day may be needed to prepare the assignments.** Teachers are not obligated to provide school or make up work for vacations or out-of-town trips. Classroom work must be made up according to [APS policy](#). Classroom instruction cannot be made up.

If a student must be removed from school early for a doctor's appointment or similar emergency, **you must come to the office and sign the child out.** We will not call a child out-of-class until a parent is physically in the office (you cannot telephone ahead for your child to be called to the office). We will not release a child to a parent waiting in a car outside. We do this in order to be able to identify those persons picking up children and to ensure the safety of your child. Your cooperation and understanding is appreciated.

### Bikes, Scooters & Skateboards

When weather permits, many students ride bikes, scooters and skateboards to school if permitted by parents. Please remember to walk your bikes and scooters while on campus and when crossing the street. All skateboards must be carried while on campus for your safety and the safety of others. The school is not responsible for stolen bicycles or scooters therefore we recommend that they be locked up while on campus in the designated area. It is a city ordinance that bikes, scooters, skateboards, roller blades are not ridden on school property. *STUDENTS MUST WEAR HELMETS.*

### Birthday Parties

We extend our "Happy Birthday" wish to each youngster on his/her "special day," but request that birthday parties be held outside of school. Any gifts or balloons delivered to the school will be kept in the office until the end of the day. It is best to keep these items at home or given in another setting. We do not take instructional classroom time to celebrate individual student birthdays. Please contact your teacher for information on sending in treats.

## **Bullying Procedures and Reporting**

**To qualify as bullying, an incident must involve an imbalance of power between the aggressor and target. Bullying usually involves multiple incidents, the aggressor and the target have drastically different reactions to the incident, and the target feels powerless to self-advocate.**

### **PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING AN INCIDENT OF BULLYING BEHAVIOR**

1. Parents and staff are directed to report any incidents of bullying to the Principal, the Assistant Principal, or Counselor.
2. Students may bring the incident to the attention of a Teacher, Redirector, Counselor, or Administrator.
3. A procedure is in place for students to anonymously report bullying.

### **SCHOOL POLICY ON DEALING WITH INCIDENTS OF BULLYING**

1. Reported incidents are investigated and documented. The student who is alleged to be the aggressor and the alleged target are interviewed separately.
2. The parents of all students involved are notified.
3. All incidents of bullying are viewed as serious offenses.
4. The student who is the target may be referred to the School Counselor or Redirector to develop skills to deal with bullying behavior.
5. If disciplinary steps are warranted, the aggressor will be:
  - a) Ticketed using the Discipline Referral form.
  - b) Referred to the School Counselor to learn empathy skills and alternative ways of dealing with peers.
  - c) Advised that if they do not stop the behavior, they will be requested to remain at home for a one-day suspension (or in-school suspension) to reflect on their behavior.
  - d) Advised that if the behavior continues, they will be recommended for suspension for a period up to 3 days.
  - e) Advised that if the behavior continues, the police will be involved.

### **SCHOOL BULLY PREVENTION AND EDUCATION PROGRAM**

- 1) North Star's Student Rule #4 states: I will not bully and I will report bullying to an adult. School rules are taught by teachers and enforced by all staff.
- 2) All students will be given classroom guidance to address bullying behavior. Second Step (K-2<sup>nd</sup>) and Steps to Respect (3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>) will be used as curricula in the classrooms, and taught by the School Counselor. In addition to Recognizing, Refusing and Reporting Bullying, Conflict Resolution, Problem-Solving, and Anger Management are taught to all students.

Mediation by the Redirector or School Counselor is available to all students to prevent the escalation of conflicts.

## Bus Service/Student Transportation

Riding a school bus in New Mexico is a privilege, not a right. When students choose to behave inappropriately or unsafely, they risk losing this privilege. Students who ride buses should go to the bus loading area **immediately** after dismissal at the close of the school day. [Bus Rules](#)

1. Students are to maintain appropriate behavior while waiting in line or walking to the bus.
2. While on the bus, specific rules will be given to bus students by representatives of the bus contracting company. School rules, as well, will be enforced.

The following process will be followed in case of behavior referral on student discipline from the bus company.

|                          |                         |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1st discipline referral: | Warning call to parents |
| 2nd discipline referral: | 1-day bus suspension    |
| 3rd discipline referral: | 3-day bus suspension    |
| 4th discipline referral: | Semester bus suspension |

|                                                          |
|----------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Bus Numbers At North Star:</b><br>193, 201, EV07. 195 |
|----------------------------------------------------------|

Numerous requests are made about students riding home with other students on buses other than their own. In order to clarify this, bus transportation regulations are listed below:

1. The school bus will pick up children at their designated stop and return them to their designated stop. They **MAY NOT** get on or off at any other stop.
2. A non-riding friend **MAY NOT** accompany a student.
3. A student **MAY NOT**, for any reason, ride a different school bus.

For parent complaints and concerns regarding the bus ride, routes, procedures or bus drivers please contact APS Transportation at **880-3989**. Please have your bus number handy when you call.

## Cafeteria

Student breakfast and lunches are free. If you have any questions or comments regarding the cafeteria service or meals please contact the cafeteria manager directly at 253-9268. Cafeteria Services are managed by APS Food & Nutrition Services and can be reached at **345-5661**.

## Change of Classroom Policy

Great care is exerted in finding the optimal classroom placement for each child who attends North Star Elementary. Students are given a minimum of two weeks to adapt to a new classroom environment before any changes in placement will be considered. After two weeks if placement concerns are still present, the following steps will be initiated:

1. The parent/guardian meets with the classroom teacher to identify concerns, to establish open communication, and to develop a plan to solve or minimize any concerns. The plan must be implemented for a minimum of two weeks before proceeding to step two.
2. After the plan has been implemented for two weeks and all cooperative efforts are exhausted, if the parent continues to have concerns, the parent must notify the principal via email or letter about those concerns. The principal will arrange a formal conference with the parent and teacher to discuss the previous plan and its outcomes, as well as the continuing concerns. A placement decision will be made at this meeting and a record of the conference kept on file in the office.

3. If a change in placement occurs, the principal will place the student according to placement criteria, which includes but is not limited to ESL requirements, Special Education requirements and other criteria for maintaining balanced classrooms. **Individual teacher requests will not be granted.**

## **Classroom Observations**

In an effort to protect instructional time in the classroom and student confidentiality, observations are not permitted. Exceptions may include observations done by students in certified educational programs. In accordance with federal and state law, the credentials of all public school employees working with students can be obtained by the principal.

## **Emotional Regulation**

The counseling program at North Star Elementary is designed and dedicated to meet the needs of each child by focusing on the physical, social, intellectual, emotional growth of each student. This is accomplished through a counseling program, which is designed to reach the children through three types of counseling. The three types of counseling used are in-class presentations, individual counseling, and group counseling.

In-class presentations may cover such subjects as character education, peaceful conflict resolution, drug awareness education, bully proofing, and social skills. This allows the counselor to teach necessary skills to the children while the children get to know and feel safe with the counselor. This safeness makes it possible for the children to solicit help from the counselor on an individual basis when needed.

Individual guidance and counseling is the second way that the counselor meets the needs of the children. Most children, at sometime in their school career, experience a problem or difficulty they are unable to solve by themselves. One of the counselor's main roles is to listen to these children and facilitate their problem solving. If the problem cannot be solved at school, it is the counselor's responsibility to confer with parents or make the appropriate referral.

Group counseling is established and maintained throughout the year. Group counseling makes it possible to reach a large number of children who are experiencing problems in areas such as grief, self-esteem, friendship, divorce, and anger management. Through these groups, children are able to receive support and guidance while feeling less isolated and alone.

In addition, the counselor serves as a consultant to classroom teachers, a resource and support to parents, and a liaison to the community. With the use of these strategies and interventions, the counseling program is able to address the needs of the whole child to break down barriers to learning and empower the child to succeed at school

## **Curriculum Night for Parents**

Traditionally, schools have had "Open Houses" and other forms of programs for parents to visit in their children's classes at the beginning of a school year. North Star Elementary School Curriculum Night for Parents follows in this tradition, yet, will be structured to provide our parents with a

formalized opportunity to learn about our overall instructional program and receive a preview of each teacher's instructional plan for the coming year.

At the conclusion of these presentations, parents will:

- 1) have an understanding of each teacher's educational philosophy;
- 2) be knowledgeable about the skills and concepts that will be taught in each subject area;
- 3) know the homework expectations of each teacher;
- 4) know the process for "making up" missed schoolwork;
- 5) have an understanding of the grading system employed; and
- 6) have a basic knowledge of the Common Core State Standards and where they can be accessed on-line.

Curriculum night will be over 3 evenings following the schedule below:

8/25 - **Curriculum Night**, K-5th special education students (an opportunity to meet with your child's special education teacher)

8/26 - **Curriculum Night**, 2nd grade - 5:00 pm, 4th grade - 5:30 pm

**\*\* General PTA meeting 6 PM 8/26 in the cafeteria**

8/27 - **Curriculum Night**, 1st grade - 5:00 pm, 3rd grade - 5:30 pm, 5th grade - 6:00 pm

## **Custody of Students**

The office and the teacher should be notified of any custody issues involving your child. This notification should be in the form of written court documents, which clearly state who has custody, who may have access to your child and any changes in the situation. The school cannot deny access to a custodial parent unless there are court documents prohibiting such contact. Please update the documents when changes occur in the office. The office staff will adhere to paperwork on file. Only legal, court documents can be accepted. The school is and will always remain a neutral party in all custody issues.

## **Disaster Instruction/Off Site Relocation**

In the unlikely event that North Star would face a disaster situation in which children and staff are forced to leave school, students would either walk or go by bus to a location designated by an APS Police, County or APD Incident Commander. Parents will be notified of the location via School Messenger emails and phone calls, APS websites and your news media sites. Please make sure your phone and email information is always current in the office.

## **Discipline Policy**

Educating our youth is a cooperative venture involving the home as well as the school. It begins and continues in the home with the school engaging in a formalized partnership for a portion of each child's lifetime.

We are constantly seeking ways to strengthen and guide this partnership in a common direction for the welfare of the student.

In addition to academic skills, there are social skills including attitudes, behaviors, and responsibilities that are proven assets in our total scheme of living. While the school continues to be primarily accountable for academic instruction, good teaching has always included guidance toward the positive development of social skills, work habits, and the promotion of self-management.

The North Star student discipline policy was developed in concert with APS district student discipline and anti-bullying procedures, to provide all of us with consistency in helping our students along the avenue of positive and acceptable behavior skills.

- The entire school community, students, staff, and parents will be made aware of the school's behavioral aims, rules, and procedures. In addition, parents will be asked to join in a partnership with the staff to assist our children in the development of strong, positive, self-management behaviors.
- Staff, students, and family are all responsible for the creation, promotion, and maintenance of our desired campus environment.
- All school employees are responsible for monitoring the behavior and safety of all students.
- Classroom teachers will have the primary responsibility for instructing our students concerning our expectation of respect toward all. Students must accept correctional guidance from all adults working in a supervisory capacity (this includes instructions given by not only teachers and educational assistants, but also by all other adults in the school).
- All staff members should actively engage in ways of recognizing and reinforcing positive behaviors that are exhibited by individual students throughout the school.
- Individual staff members are encouraged to involve the principal, family, and/or other staff members in assisting a student with self-management skills as the need arises.
- Every classroom teacher will establish a process for recognizing, rewarding, and reinforcing good management behaviors exhibited by students. Students need to realize that **they** have control over their behaviors and they are empowered to choose among alternatives that carry either positive or negative consequences. They are the managers of themselves and need to self-regulate.

Each student will receive a copy of the APS Student Behavior Handbook at the beginning of each school year. Please review the APS Behavior Handbook together so children and parents will be familiar with expectations and consequences.

Students who choose not to follow the rules may receive a Discipline Referral, which will be sent home for the parent/guardian to sign. Any staff member may issue a discipline referral to a student at any time on the school grounds or at school-sponsored events for inappropriate behavior. Please discuss this policy with your children so that they understand that they must obey all North Star Elementary School staff members at all times and follow all school rules and expected behaviors.

Students are expected to have good behavior and follow all school behavior guidelines and expectations on their way to school, during the entire school day and on their way home from school including on the bus.

Discipline Referrals will be issued when behavior is disrespectful and unsafe. A referral can be dealt with by the student's teacher, the school Behavior Redirector, the Assistant Principal or the Principal, depending what the offense was or availability of staff. A copy of the Discipline Referral will be kept with the Redirector for the school year. Each new year the students start with a "clean slate" and in elementary school Discipline Referrals are not included in the permanent or cumulative record.

## **Dress Code**

Appropriate dress in school is essential to the learning process, and we ask for your support in enforcing our dress code. We subscribe to the district's policy, which is in part as follows:

‘Albuquerque Public Schools shall prohibit student dress that may present a health or safety hazard, violate municipal or state law, or present a potential disruption to the instructional program. The APS Board of Education shall not allow for the imposition of punishment, discrimination, or disparate treatment against a student based on the student's racial identity, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, cultural or religious identity and observances, household income,

body size/type or body maturity or because of the student's use of protective hairstyles or cultural or religious headdresses.’

Prohibited clothing and accessories include, but are not limited to:

- obscene or violent language or images
- depictions of alcohol or drugs or other illegal item or activity
- racist content, hate speech, profanity, or pornography
- accessories that could be considered dangerous or used as a weapon
- underclothing worn as primary clothing items
- sheer or see-through clothing
- swimwear
- clothing without all sides in the garment
- Hair color, length, and style, including hair coverings or styles related to an individual’s personal, cultural, or religious beliefs cannot be considered for disciplinary action.

In addition to the APS [policy](#), the North Star dress code supports the Desert Ridge dress code. The North Star dress code includes, but is not limited to, the following prohibited items:

- midriff, strapless and halter tops
- fishnet clothing
- make-up (only a lightly tinted gloss or balm is ok)
- shoes with more than a one-inch heel or platform
- shoes with wheels (“wheelies”)

Sleeveless shirts are acceptable as long as armholes are not so pronounced as to expose the chest.

If an acceptable change of clothing is not available (i.e. some spare T-shirts will be kept in the nurse’s office), parents will be called to arrange for acceptable clothing to be brought to the school for your student. Inappropriately dressed children will wait in the administration office until their parents can provide a change of clothing.

## Electronic Devices

Use of personal cell phones, tablets, iPods, electronic books, SMART watches, etc. is not permitted on campus unless the classroom teacher is using a device for instructional purposes. The misuse of cell phones and other forms of technology that could include, but not be limited to the unauthorized taking of pictures, cheating, invading privacy, receiving or making texts or calls, etc. will not be tolerated. (*APS [Policy Handbook](#)*) If a student is being disruptive to the educational process with any of these devices, the item will be taken away and stored in the administrative office. Cell phones must be off during the day. Students cannot receive texts or calls or make texts or calls during any part of the day (including lunch and recesses). If a student disregards this policy with any personal electronic device, it will be taken and held for parent pick up. The school is not responsible for any lost, broken or stolen phone or electronic device.

Cell Phone District Policy – The first time a student has his/her cell phone out or is using it anywhere on school grounds, the phone is confiscated and the student’s parents are notified to come pick it up from the teacher or office. The second time a student has his/her cell phone out or is using it anywhere on school grounds, the parents are notified that the phone will be held for one week then parents can come pick the phone up from the teacher or office. The third time a student has his/her cell phone out or is using it anywhere on school grounds, parents are notified that the phone

will be held for the remainder of the semester then parents can come pick it up or from the teacher or office.

It is NEVER ok that a student uses their cell phone on the school campus, anytime on the bus or at the bus stop to make calls, text, use the internet, take video or pictures of other students. If a student is caught doing any of these things including just having the cell phone out and visible to others, the cell phone will be confiscated and the school will follow the APS district policy outlined above.

Cell phones should remain in the student's backpack at all times and NEVER taken out during the school day until the student is off school grounds.

## **Emergency Information**

Please notify the office of any information changes such as new email, telephone number(s), change of address or change of custody. If any changes occur during the year, please update your child's enrollment cards, which are located in the office. Please have a picture identification card with you when you come into the office to make any changes. Changes cannot be made over the telephone. School Messenger information calls and emails are made for absences, emergencies and for important school info. *It is imperative that we have your current physical address, phone numbers and email address for best communication from the school and district to home.*

## **Field Trips**

A written permission slip signed by a parent and/or guardian must be submitted to the teacher before a child can participate in a field trip. *ONLY THE SCHOOL'S PERMISSION FORM WILL BE ACCEPTED AND ALL INFORMATION ON THE FRONT AND THE BACK OF THE FORM MUST BE COMPLETE.* A 70¢ non-refundable insurance charge will be required for every student if the field trip is considered an activity. If a child does not attend a field trip, the child is expected to attend school and arrangements for academic activities will be arranged in an alternate classroom. Only parents with an APS Background Check clearance can be chaperones on field trips. No younger or older siblings can attend classroom field trips, even with the parent present, as this is an academic classroom activity and parent supervision of North Star students should be their main priority and focus.

## **Fire Drill and Lockdown Procedures**

Fire regulations require the school to hold periodic fire drills. They are held once a week for the first month of school and once a month thereafter. Twice a year a practice lock down drill will occur. During a lockdown, students and teachers are not allowed to leave their rooms for any reason. All doors are locked in the school and no one is allowed to enter the building. If you happen to arrive during this practice drill, you will have to wait outside the building in your car until the drill is complete. The drill will usually take about 20-minutes.

## **Flag Display and Pledge of Allegiance**

In accordance with New Mexico law the flag of the United States and the flag of the State of New Mexico will be displayed in each classroom. NM law also requires that the pledge of allegiance be recited daily in each public school in the state. While no individual may be coerced into participation, all students will be afforded this opportunity. Students abstaining from participation

will not be required to stand or to leave the room during the recitation of the pledge but they are asked to wait quietly while the pledge is being recited.

## Friends of the Library (FOL)

Friends of the Library sponsor the following school events: Visiting Authors, Illustrators and Storytellers; Book Clubs (Caldecott, Newbery, and other book clubs); Sponsor of Birthday Books; Principals in Pajamas, and Book Fairs. The Friends of the Library financially helps the North Star library, the leveled bookroom and teacher classroom literacy.

This is a *library volunteer group* made up of many parents who volunteer weekly at the check out desk during the school day. They check books in & out, shelve, and help with any FOL sponsored activities and miscellaneous duties assigned by the librarian. This group allows our librarian the freedom to introduce books and stories to our children, teach them about their library and how to use it, and introduce them to the reading clubs available to them.

The *library is very important to our school*. You are welcome to visit anytime and we encourage you to sign up to volunteer. Working in the library is a great way to contribute to your child's education and interest in reading. Working in the library is a great way to experience the whole school, see your child in school and make new friends.

## General School Rules

It is impossible to cover every detail that might arise in a day-to-day situation. North Star students should not engage in any behavior that can result in or cause physical or emotional harm to others. All rules are to create a safe and respectful environment.

### **The 5 basic North Star Rules include:**

1. I will respect myself and others.
2. I will keep my whole body and hurtful comments to myself.
3. I will take care of school property and school equipment.
4. I will not bully and I will report bullying to an adult.
5. I will behave in a way that allows everyone to learn.

When students are on the playground or building they should observe:

- Students sharing equipment and open games that allow for everyone to be included
- Students playing inside fenced areas
- Students playing appropriately without fighting, play fighting, tackling, or rough housing
- Students refraining from ball bouncing against walls and windows of buildings
- Students swinging back and forth without standing on or jumping off swings
- Students playing safely on the bars with one hand always on the bars
- Students avoiding running or playing tag around the play structures or bar areas
- **Children should NOT be in the building before school or during recess unless accompanied by a parent. Teachers are prepping their day so we do not allow students in classrooms before the bell rings – even if they are with their parents.**

### **MAJOR OFFENSES INCLUDE:**

- Fighting/hurting others

- Throwing objects (except balls)
- Verbally abusive language/gestures
- Damaging school or personal property
- Leaving campus
- Disrespect

## **Harassment**

Students should report any concerns related to harassment of any kind to a school administrator. If further information is required, please consult the “APS Student Behavior Handbook” or the APS Service Center at 855-9040.

## **Homework**

There are many positive aspects to homework, including the sense of responsibility it helps children develop. Homework assignments should be at the students’ level of competence and should relate to an instructional goal. Care should be taken to avoid overburdening students with excessive amounts of work and should not include curriculum that the teachers have not yet covered in class instructionally.

It is best practice to set homework guidelines at each grade level. Best practice guidelines suggest that homework should take a student 10 minutes per grade level to complete. Kinder and first grade homework should take 10 minutes; second grade 20 and so on. Nightly reading (20 minutes per night minimum) is a separate expectation not to be combined with homework minutes.

## **Illness and Injury**

Parents will be asked to pick up their children when there is:

- Vomiting/ diarrhea
- Temperature 100 or above (child may not return until fever has been broken for 24 hours)
- Skin rash
- Serious Injury
- Very red, swollen, draining eye

Should your child become ill at school and need to go home, you will be contacted by the Health Office. Make sure that we have all your current telephone numbers as well as numbers for emergency contacts.

## **Immunization Requirements**

### **Requirements for Attendance**

Each year the New Mexico Immunization Coalition determines immunization requirements for students attending school. These requirements may change from year to year based on recommendations from the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices.

[Per APS policy JF- Student Enrollment Requirements](#), the student and/or parent/legal guardian shall provide the district with evidence that the student is in compliance with immunization requirements under New Mexico state statute.

### Requesting Exemptions

New Mexico law allows for two types of exemptions for children seeking exemption from required immunizations to enter school. These two exemptions are medical or religious.

Parents must submit an approved [Certificate of Exemption Form](#) in order to register their child without proof of current vaccinations.

## Inclement Weather

When weather conditions create safety concerns for students being driven, walking to school and/or when school buses cannot run due to icy streets, the district will enact one of the following schedules.

Severe weather would result in schools being closed early or for the entire day. We have to make up full days on a designated snow make-up day as per State Department of Education guidelines.

Less severe weather would result in an abbreviated day. An abbreviated day is a day when school cannot be opened for the regular schedule due to severe snow and unsafe road conditions.

When the decision is made to abbreviate or cancel school a school messenger phone call and email will go out to parents with the information provided on the registration card. Local news stations will also have this information. Start and dismissal times for North Star students on an abbreviated day schedule are as follows:                      Classes Begin – 9:30 AM                      Classes Dismiss – 2:15 PM

## North Star Leadership Team (NSLT)

The NSLT is a group of staff and parents who monitor the quality and improvement of instruction at North Star. Concerns, agenda items and instructional/program school issues should be sent to the principal or leadership chair. NSLT will address the issue, if appropriate, or direct it to the appropriate person or office if the issue is not instructional or programmatic in nature. NSLT only deals with programs and instruction at North Star and not schedules or personnel issues of any kind.

## Insurance

The APS Board of Education makes student accident insurance available to all enrolled students of the Albuquerque Public School system. This option is available to you at the beginning of each school year. Parents are responsible for purchasing this policy if desired.

## Late Arrivals

The first bell rings at 7:30 AM and school starts promptly at 7:33 AM. Should your child arrive late, she/he must get a tardy pass before going to class **without exception**. The north side entrance doors near the gym are locked promptly at 7:30 am.

## Leaving School Early

The student check-out procedure begins in the school office. Please do not go directly to the classroom to get your child. Only parents or adults (over 18 years of age), who are listed on the *Parent Permission to Pick Up Student Card* will be allowed to check out students before the regular dismissal time. For the safety of our children, the office staff will ask for identification. **PLEASE HAVE PICTURE IDENTIFICATION WITH YOU WHEN YOU PICK-UP YOUR CHILD.** A child will not be released if proper ID is not given. Students will not be allowed to leave the campus early by themselves. Your child will not be released to any adult who is not listed on the child's enrollment card or on the *Parent Permission to Pick-Up Student Card*. After identification has been checked, your child will be called via the PA System to come to the office with their belongings to meet you for pick up.

### Policy When Calling the Office

When you call the office, you will be asked to identify and verify who you are with your name and a phone number. You may also be asked to verify an address, email, or other pertinent information. This is to ensure we are talking with the actual parent of the child. Please be patient with us and know we are doing this for student safety. We also ask that you do not call any later than 1:45 pm for changes to your child's schedule.

## Library

Books are checked out for a one-week period for all grade levels. If a book is out longer than one month, it will be considered lost and must be paid for in order to keep borrowing privileges. The child must pay for all lost and/or damaged books.

Unlike many of the elementary school libraries in the city, we have an *open checkout system* available to our students. While students at most other schools are allowed to make only one visit to the library per week with their class to check out books, North Student students can return and check out books as soon and as often as they wish. Parents are welcome to check out books for their child too! This encourages more reading and interest in books. The library is also open before school for book return and check out.

## Lost & Found

We ask that you label your child's outerwear clothing (jackets, coats, gloves, hats, sweaters, etc.) We have many articles found each week and we would like to ensure their return to the owner. The Lost and Found area is in the foyer between the office and the cafeteria. Feel free to check for lost items as the need arises. Unclaimed items left at school will be donated to the APS Clothing Bank periodically.

## Medications

Any student receiving prescription medication at school must have an *APS Authorization to Administer Medication* form filled out and signed by their physician. No prescription medication will be given without this authorization signed by a physician. APS policy stipulates that any

prescription medication given during school hours must be in the original container (the pharmacy label must match doctor order.) Over-the-counter medication may be given if the parent fills out an APS form. Please see our school nurse for further information regarding the complete APS Medication Policy. Without these authorizations, no medication or over-the-counter medication can be given to a child nor can the child carry them on their person or in their backpack.

## Nightly Reading

North Star encourages all students to read every night for at least 20 minutes. Research shows that reading 20 minutes nightly yields major cognitive and physical benefits. It exposes kids to 1.8 million words per year, expanding vocabulary and comprehension. Neurologically, it strengthens focus, builds empathy, and serves as a highly effective, calming bedtime routine to improve sleep.

## Family Engagement

**We welcome your participation!** Please remember that this is **our** school and **together** we share the responsibility for meeting the academic, social and emotional needs of your child. Check with your child's teacher and see what you can do to help. Let us know of any special interests, talents or abilities you can share with us. **We need you!** Please remember to sign in at the office every time you are scheduled to volunteer or visit the school and in your child's classroom. All volunteers must have a current APS background check and volunteer card in order to work in the classroom and/or chaperone on field trips.

A key ingredient in an outstanding school is the degree to which all adults unite in a concerted effort to provide for our children. Our children are our most precious resource. There should be no limit to the unification of effort in providing for them. When you volunteer, we ask that you . . .

- Check into the office and record your presence at school by signing in/out and by wearing a volunteer badge.
- Notify the parties involved if you are unable to fulfill your volunteer duties on a certain day. Please try to give sufficient notice so a replacement can be arranged.
- Be ***discreet and trustworthy and for respecting the confidences*** of teachers and children by signing a "Volunteer Confidentiality Agreement".
- State regulations and district policy requires any volunteer that will have unsupervised access to students to be background checked through APS. Forms may be obtained from the office. A fee of \$12 will be charged to each volunteer. Forms and fees need to be taken to APS City Center at 6400 Uptown NE.
- We love kids! However, ***when volunteering in the classroom or on field trips, we request that children other than the classroom student (siblings, etc.—both younger and older children) not accompany you.*** Younger children need supervision, thus can distract the students in the classroom, distract the volunteer and/or the teacher and be a disruption to instruction. When in the classroom or with a group on a field trip, we need the volunteer to be able to devote their full attention to the students and the task they have volunteered to help with. If you cannot find babysitting for the sibling(s), please ask for other ways you can volunteer in the classroom.
- Only background checked volunteers can chaperone field trips or volunteer in classrooms.

## Parent/Guardian-Teacher Conferences

Communication between school and home regarding a child's progress is vital. To help facilitate this communication, mandatory parent conferences have been scheduled two times each year.

Parent conferences will be scheduled at the conclusion of the first and second trimesters. The dates for parent-teacher conferences are determined by the district.

Students will not attend school on these days. Teachers will notify parents in writing as to the scheduled time. Please send back the verification that you can attend or need to request a different time. *If you cannot attend one of the scheduled days, you may arrange another time with your child's teacher AFTER the scheduled dates. Due to Negotiated Agreements with the Teachers Union, NO CONFERENCES WILL BE HELD PRIOR TO THE SCHEDULED DATES.* Other parent conferences may be scheduled with your child's teacher as the need arises. Teachers will try to coordinate conferences for families that have more than one student at like times but in the event that families need to reschedule a conference, this cannot be guaranteed.

## Parking Lot Safety

During the times of “drop-off” in the mornings and “pick-up” in the afternoons, we need to be patient and tolerant at all times in order to keep our children safe. We’re all excited; we’re all in a hurry, and there are a lot of us! This adds up to a potentially dangerous situation for our children every day. We know that our drop-off and pick-up lanes sometimes result in traffic and some wait time, but they are the procedures that have been approved by the district and county safety divisions and need to be followed by everyone.

North Star has had an audit of our “traffic procedures” and received high marks for the procedures we have in place. These procedures greatly reduce the risks to our children. Most issues that arise have resulted from *adults choosing NOT to follow them*. The basic rules are outlined below:

- Use designated areas for pick-up and drop-off. Kinder through second-grade students will use the front or east parking lot. Third through fifth-grade students will use the north side or gym parking lot.
- Children should be waiting in the designated area or zone by the Duty Teacher.
- When a car reaches the designated pick-up zone, the children will be permitted to enter from the curbside only.
- Drivers should remain in the car behind the steering wheel and wait for the staff on duty to help the students into the car.
- Follow the car in front of you to exit the parking lot and obey all turning lane restrictions.
- If your child is not ready or waiting for you when you reach the pick-up zone, exit and continue around again or pull into a parking space. Do not block traffic behind you.
- If you need to assist your child in any way, park in a parking space and walk your child to your car and cross the parking lot using the designated crosswalks ONLY.

Above all, please practice PATIENCE and RESPECT. It will prevent children from getting hurt. Please respect these procedures and be a good example to the children in your car. REMEMBER that the crossing guard and duty teachers are all there working to keep all our kids safe. ☺

## Pets

Pets need to remain at home and not come with children or parents to school. Dogs present an especially difficult situation on the playground when unattended. It is also against city ordinance to have dogs on campus. If necessary, we will call the animal control center to remove animals from the campus. Due to potential student allergies and unknown fears, all other furry friends need to stay home as well.

## Photography/Videotaping of School Events

Each year, an APS Permission to Photograph form is given to parents during online registration for consent to allow photos and/or videos to be taken of their child. If you do not allow consent to photograph your child, please indicate this on the above mentioned form during online registration and bring it to the attention of the child's teacher. However, this does not allow students to take pictures of each other using cell phones, cameras, or other recording devices on school grounds, buses, field trips, or any other school-sponsored activities. The Permission to Photograph is intended for school and classroom use only.

## Physical Education

There are NM State Standards for Physical Education that every child is expected to meet. Therefore, all children are expected to participate in PE. **EXCEPTIONS CAN BE MADE ONLY WITH A PHYSICIAN'S WRITTEN STATEMENT.** On days when your child has PE, please make sure they are dressed for physical activity, wearing appropriate shoes (no sandals, flip-flops, boots, or heels of any kind) and wearing comfortable clothes that they can move easily. If a student is not dressed appropriately, to prevent any injuries, the student may not be able to participate in P.E. This may affect their proficiency level on their Standards-Based Progress Report.

## Progress Reports

Parents are given a Standards-Based Progress Report (SBPR) at the end of each trimester, every 12 weeks of school. Additional information about the SBPR can be found on the back of the SBPR or on the APS website under the parent information tab.

## PTA

Families are strongly encouraged to become involved in the PTA. As a PTA member, you become an active participant in the decision-making process of our school. For more information about joining the North Star PTA, please go to the school website and click on the PTA web page.

## **Redirector**

North Star has a staff member in a position that helps students solve problems, mediate issues with other students, help with organizational skills, and basically anything else that may help students succeed in school and in building and maintaining social relationships.

The redirection process is NOT: Counseling or Punishment.

The principal and assistant principal handle behavior serious enough for immediate consequences.

The redirection process:

- Teacher contacts Redirector – being as detailed as possible
- Redirector helps the student(s) get back on track in the classroom or in the Redirector's Office. This may include role-playing, playing games, mediation between students, etc.
- Redirector will escort the child back to the classroom as needed

## **Redistribution Policy**

Year in and year out, North Star finds each classroom packed to the class size allowable by law. In the event we need to create a new classroom due to an overage in class size, which results in North Star being out of compliance for class size averages, we will follow the following procedure:

- A. Volunteers...parents and children will be given the opportunity to volunteer to move to the new classroom first.
- B. After the volunteers are placed, additional classroom spots will be filled using the placement method. The rest of the class will be formed with names that will be drawn to ensure balanced classrooms of all abilities and gender.

If on the 20<sup>th</sup> day we are required to lose a teacher(unlikely), the students who are in the classroom that is to be closed will be equitably distributed among the other teachers at that grade level. The principal will place the students using teacher input and maintaining a balance of gender and ability ratios. Parents may not request a particular teacher.

We appreciate the support you will offer your child and his or her new teacher during this time of transition. It is important to remember that the students will be observing how the adults in their lives handle the change during this transition.

## **Safety at Crosswalks**

Many families walk their children to North Star. Please use the safest route to school and cross the street at designated crosswalks or intersections. We have crossing guards stationed at Ventura/Florence and San Diego/Ventura to assist your child in crossing. Because most streets around North Star do not have sidewalks, it is not advised that students walk to and from school without an adult.

## **School Volunteers (APS Policy)**

The goals of a school volunteer program are to: 1) increase parent involvement in public education; 2) encourage schools to use other pools of volunteers, including students, senior citizens, service

clubs, and businesses; 3) provide assistance to classroom teachers and other educators; and 4) improve communication between the schools and the communities they serve.

A school volunteer is a person who donates time, energy, or talent to various phases of school programs under the direction of school district personnel.

Volunteers may assist in the following ways:

- A. Advocacy/Advisory - serving on committees or task forces; advising on special projects; consulting on certain issues.
- B. Instructional Support - curriculum and classroom-related activities; motivational programs; materials and program development; enrichment programs.
- C. Support Services - cafeteria, health, clerical, instructional materials, and audiovisual services.
- D. And other ways that the principal deems appropriate.

Volunteers may be recruited from many different populations, including parents, community members, senior citizens, community agencies, high school and post-secondary students.

## **School Volunteer Requirements and Processing (APS Policy)**

Unsupervised school volunteers have unsupervised access to students.

- If your volunteer role requires unsupervised access to children, including unsupervised access to students during field trips, you will need an Unsupervised School Volunteer Full FBI Fingerprint clearance initiated by the principal or the principal's designee.
- Please contact your school's clerk or principal to initiate this type of clearance. If you are an agency provider or other entity, please email [sfcs.clearance@aps.edu](mailto:sfcs.clearance@aps.edu) for Unsupervised Volunteer Clearance information.
- Please do not make an appointment to be fingerprinted until you have received email instructions from APS to do so.

## **Section 504 and ADA**

Please consult the “APS Student Behavior Handbook” or the APS Service Center at **505-855-9040** for current information regarding 504 and ADA.

## **Student Messages**

Please make every effort to arrange schedules, where to meet, etc., with your child prior to the start of each school day. We try to limit classroom interruptions to a minimum so that the delivery of valuable instruction is not disturbed. *ONLY EMERGENCY MESSAGES WILL BE DELIVERED TO STUDENTS.* Please see the important note under **Student Responsibilities**. We would appreciate your cooperation.

## Student Placement

Placement of students is always an emotional issue. Sometimes, as parents, we want a particular teaching style or the same teacher that another family member had. It is important to remember that we must have equitable placement for all children and that classrooms must be reasonably balanced with children of all abilities and genders. Every parent input form is read, and thought is given to where children are placed.

Final class lists are made by the first day of school; however, due to enrollment and district determinations of teaching assignments, administrative changes may be made up until the 20<sup>th</sup> day.

Children and parents both need to be exposed to different teaching styles and learning environments. If we continually place children in the same learning environment year after year, it would be an enormous disservice to them when they reach middle school and are exposed to a variety of different teachers and styles, as they have up to seven teachers in a day.

Teacher requests will not be considered.

## Student Placement Procedure

It is important to remember that we must have equitable placement for ALL children. For this to be achieved, the following procedure will be followed in the placement of students:

- A. Parent Input and Teacher Input Forms—Parents will have the opportunity to fill out a Parent Input Form, describing certain learning styles of their children, observations, needs, behavior, etc. Teachers will also fill out a Teacher Input Form for EACH child in their classroom.
- B. All Input Forms will go to the Placement Team—A Placement Team, consisting of grade-level and support teachers, the counselor, and administrators, will be formed for each grade level.
- C. The Placement Team will review ALL Input Forms—The team, taking into consideration all categories, will form balanced, equitable classes. Balance must be maintained.
- D. The Principal has final authority on balance/equitable changes, if needed.

**ALL CLASSROOM PLACEMENTS ARE TENTATIVE UNTIL THE 20<sup>th</sup> DAY OF SCHOOL.** At this time, the district makes a final teacher allotment, based on school population, for the first 20 days of school. If we are required to add or lose a teacher, changes in classrooms will occur, and we will follow the Redistribution Policy.

## Student Responsibilities

It is the student's individual responsibility to remember to bring their lunch, homework, signed permission slips, library books, etc. to school each day. Please help them to remember these items, but try not to do these tasks for them by bringing, sending, or faxing them to school. This does not teach them student responsibility.

## Transferring/Withdrawing From School

If your family must transfer from North Star, please notify the school office at least one week before the student's last day. This will enable our clerical staff to complete the necessary forms in a timely fashion and allow you to turn in library books and textbooks that may be off campus, pay library/cafeteria fines, and allow the teacher to gather all supplies, etc. The school that you will be

attending will request your child's cumulative and academic records, which we will send as soon as a request is made.

## Visitors to our Campus

In accordance with state law, all visitors to our campus **must** first check in at the office and **must** wear a "Visitor" badge. We welcome and encourage visitors to North Star and strive to keep close surveillance of our campus. We do this to ensure the safety and security of our students.

- When checking in, you will identify the purpose of the visit. ***It is unacceptable to visit a classroom unless you are scheduled to help the teacher. Other reasons to visit the classroom or meet with the teacher should be scheduled with the teacher in advance to prevent interruption to instruction.***
- If you need to leave something for your child (i.e.: a jacket, homework, lunch, birthday treats, etc.) leave it with someone in the front office, and we will get it to your child. Please see the important note under **Student Responsibilities**.

## Website

North Star's website is <http://northstar.aps.edu/> All of our district and school information, school newsletters, computer lab information, staff contact information, etc. will be available on our website for parents and community members to access at all times.

## Wellness at School and P.A.L. (Protect a Life) Table

In order to minimize the spread of communicable disease at school, the following criteria may be considered reasons to keep a child home from school.

- Acute phase of cold/upper respiratory infection (cough and nasal drainage).
- Elevated temperature – students can return to school after 24 hours fever-free without meds.
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Undiagnosed rashes.
- Untreated conjunctivitis or “pink eye”.
- Untreated Impetigo or pediculosis (head lice).
- If antibiotic therapy is needed, the student should remain home for the first 24 to 48 hours of therapy.

### PAL (Protect A Life) Tables in the Cafeteria

- Please encourage your student with life-threatening food allergies to sit at the PAL tables in the cafeteria during lunch. Students may have a friend join them if a seat is available. The friend's lunch must be free of foods that need to be avoided, such as peanuts, tree nuts, eggs, fish, berries, etc.

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## HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

Your teacher may ask you to sign and return this form.

**Parent/Guardian and Student Acknowledgement:**

***By clicking on the link below and completing the form, we acknowledge that we have read the North Star Student-Family Handbook.***

**[Handbook Acknowledgement Google Form Link](#)**