

Kalispell Elementary Schools



Parent & Student Handbook 2026-2027

Welcome

We welcome you to the Kalispell School District. This handbook has been prepared to give you and your parents information concerning your school and help you become more familiar with some of its basic requirements and policies. All issues not directly addressed in this handbook will follow district policy. More detailed information on school district policies can be found on the district web site or you may call the school with any questions.

Principals and Contact Information

Edgerton: Jen Stein, 751-4040
Elrod: Linzi Napier, 751-3700
Hedges: Brent Benkelman, 751-4090
Peterson: Shay LaCasse, 751-3737
Rankin: Merisa Murray, 300-0600
Russell: Marti Paugh, 751-3900

Lunch/Breakfast

For the 2024-2028 school years, Kalispell Public Schools has been approved for schoolwide free breakfast and lunch. We offer Breakfast starting at 7:45am. Hot lunch is served daily-please see lunch calendar for menu. [It is linked here.](#)

School Hours:

8:25 - 4th and 5th grade bell
8:30 - Early Lit, 1st, 2nd and 3rd grade bell
3:25 - Early Lit and Kindergarten dismissal
3:30 - 1st - 5th Dismissal

Behavior Focus Areas:

Be Respectful
Be Responsible
Be Safe

Fighting, foul language, harassment, and bullying or any other action that can harm or carries the threat to harm a student or staff will not be tolerated. These actions will result in consequences dependent upon the severity and number of occurrences.

District policy and state law prohibit students from carrying firearms, knives, explosives, or other dangerous or deadly weapons.

After School

If students are being picked up after school, they must proceed with their parents off the playground as soon as possible, to allow for students who are riding buses time to transition. There is no supervision after 4pm. For safety purposes, students are required to leave the school grounds immediately upon dismissal.

Arrival Time for Students

Students should arrive no earlier than 7:50a.m when supervision is present outside. If you arrive earlier than this time it is important for you to know that students are unsupervised. If students are eating breakfast, they may arrive no earlier than 7:45 and proceed straight to the cafeteria to eat.

Attendance Policy

"To reach the goal of maximum educational benefits for every child requires a regular continuity of instruction, classroom participation, learning experiences, and study. Regular interaction of students with one another in classrooms and their participation in instructional activities under the tutelage of competent teachers are vital to the entire process of education. This established principle of education underlies and gives purpose to the requirement of compulsory schooling in every state in the nation. A student's regular attendance also reflects dependability and is a significant component of a student's permanent record." *Policy #3120*

Students are expected to be in school each day. Teachers will record absences daily and the school will keep a record of all absences and tardies. If your child does need to be absent for various reasons (that are expected), please contact the office to let us know. In the late morning, a voice recording will be sent from school to those who have not reported the child as absent for the school day, to determine whether the parent, guardian, or custodian is aware of the child's absence from school.

Bicycles

Students riding bicycles to school must observe all safety rules. Bicycles must be walked, not ridden, on school grounds or on the sidewalk in front of the school. They should be parked and locked to the bike rack during school hours.

Celebrations

Parties may be scheduled throughout the school year. Because of personal preference, you may not wish to have your child participate in room parties. If this is the case, your wishes will be honored. However, because normal class work precedes parties, you should request dismissal from the party only. Because of hurt feelings by the uninvited, please refrain from sending birthday and other such invitations to school. No names or addresses of any students can be released by the school per Family Education Rights and Privacy Acts (FERPA).

Classroom Transfers/Requests

Students will not be allowed to transfer between classes during the school year or make a request for a particular classroom teacher. All Kalispell teachers are highly qualified and committed to working with both parents and students to promote a safe, positive environment that fosters student learning and well-being. Classes are carefully balanced at the beginning of the school year based on a multitude of characteristics including: learning styles; academic strengths and weaknesses; and social, emotional and behavioral needs. A

classroom transfer causes a disruption in the learning environment for teachers, the student, and for other students in the classroom.

Cold Weather

In the winter months, all children will be expected to go outside during recess. Fresh air and exercise supports healthy bodies and enhances the ability of students to be more productive and learn better. Students need to be prepared each day with appropriate clothing including, hat, warm gloves, winter coat, snow pants and boots. Please make sure items are labeled. Students are able to leave their snow stuff in their locker area.

Weather will be closely monitored and appropriate action taken when it becomes too cold or windy. Students will be expected to go outside when temperatures are above 0°F, with wind chill factored in. Please note, even if we are inside in the morning, as the temperatures change, we will allow students outside once it reaches 0°F.

Drop off and Pick Up

Please see information specific to your school regarding drop off and pick up of your students.

Discipline

Effective student discipline is grounded in the belief that students do well if they can and that expected and/or appropriate behavior should be taught and learned in order to maintain safe, orderly and respectful school environments. Kalispell schools use Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) that encourage collaboration and a progressive level of interventions designed to change student behavior.

Administrators will use informed judgment to determine whether behavior incidents represent an infraction of policy and to what degree. The Board grants authority to school personnel to appropriately implement behavior management strategies to those students under their care and supervision. Administrators reserve the right to assign consequences as deemed appropriate. Suspension, including in-school suspension, and expulsion, that is in accordance with policies, procedures and rules on student discipline may be administered by school administration. Restitution may be required for behaviors that result in loss or damage to school and/or personal property. The disciplinary consequences for serious incidents may begin at a higher level. Repeated chronic or cumulative offenses may require higher levels of consequences.

Fighting, foul language, harassment and bullying or any other action that can harm or carries the threat to harm students or staff will not be tolerated. These actions will result in consequences ranging from detention to suspension/expulsion dependent upon the severity and number of occurrences.

District policy and state law prohibit students from carrying firearms, knives, explosives, or other dangerous or deadly weapons.

Additional information can be found in School Policies 3300 and 3310

Early Literacy-

Purpose: To give younger students who may not be ready for the rigors of an all day academic approach an option for an all-day setting that will provide modified Kindergarten instruction from a more play based model. The

Early Literacy year will help get them more prepared for the expectations of a full academic approach in Kindergarten the following year.

Early Pick-Up/After School Changes

If your student needs to be picked up from school early, please notify the teacher and/or call the office at the time you would like your student picked up. Notes to students for afterschool instructions or change in destination must be received by 2:45 p.m to ensure your student receives the message. Any requests received after 2:45 are not guaranteed to reach your student. At the time of pick up, the adult picking up the student will need to be on the student's approved pick up list, show ID at the time of pick up, and check them out through the kiosk. The office manager can assist you at any time.

******Unless documentation is on file in the office to the contrary, it will be assumed by the office that both parents have a custodial right to take the student from school. This is very important to the safety of the children and will be strictly enforced. If changes are necessary in the manner of how a student gets home after school, please notify the teacher and/or office in writing of the change whenever possible.

Education of Homeless Children

Every homeless child is entitled to equal access to a free, appropriate public education, just like children with permanent housing. The District must assign and admit a child who is homeless to a District school regardless of residence and irrespective of whether the homeless child is able to produce records normally required for enrollment. The Superintendent will review and update any rules or procedures that might create barriers to the enrollment of homeless students, considering factors such as transportation, immunization, and documentation. Homeless students will receive services comparable to those provided to other students, including transportation and educational support (See Policy 3125) . For assistance or questions, contact your Building Principal or the Kalispell Public Schools Homeless Education Liaison at 406.751.3400 ext. 3438.

Educational Technology and Data Privacy

Kalispell Public Schools uses various educational technology platforms and digital tools to enhance student learning. These may include Google for Education, digital textbooks, learning management systems, and assessment tools. Many of these services require data privacy agreements (DPAs) and parental consent for students under 18 years of age.

By acknowledging receipt of this handbook, parents/guardians consent to:

1. The district creating and maintaining school-managed accounts for students on approved educational platforms
2. The collection and use of necessary student information required for educational purposes
3. Student access to Google for Education services and other district-approved digital learning tools
4. The district acting as an agent on behalf of parents when signing required DPAs for educational technology services

If you wish to opt out of specific educational technology platforms, please contact your child's school in writing within two weeks of receiving this handbook. The school will work with you to provide alternative methods for completing required assignments.

For a complete list of authorized educational technology platforms and their privacy policies, please visit the district website or contact your school's office.

English Language Learners

Kalispell Public Schools is committed to providing all students, regardless of immigration status, with equitable access to a free, appropriate public education. The District does not request or disclose the immigration status of any student or family.

Federal law requires schools to identify English Learners (ELs) and ensure they receive appropriate language instruction services. Students who may qualify for English Learner (EL) services are screened upon enrollment in the district and evaluated annually to determine English language proficiency. EL students, including immigrant children and youth, are entitled to a meaningful opportunity to participate in educational programs.

Kalispell Public Schools provides language development support to help students attain English proficiency and meet the same challenging state academic standards as their peers. Title III funds are used to supplement state language instruction programs and support the academic success of EL students. (See Policy 2500)

For assistance or questions, contact your Building Principal or the Kalispell Public Schools Special Services Office at 406.751.3400.

Emergencies at School

If a child becomes ill or injured at school, every attempt will be made to notify the parents or guardians. If the parent or guardian, or another person designated by the parent or guardian cannot be located and informed, the child may be transported to the emergency room for medical attention if deemed necessary and appropriate. Home, work, and emergency numbers are vitally important to the school. In the case that your child becomes ill or injured, it is imperative that the school be able to reach the parent/guardian or designated friend or relative.

Please update all telephone numbers as they change.

Head Lice

See website [Here](#) for information.

Medications: Prescription, Over the Counter

Kalispell Nurses' Website: [Linked Here](#)

The school understands that it may be necessary for your child to take prescription medication during the school day. In order to do so, these guidelines must be followed:

If a student requires administration of medication during school hours, the student's parent/guardian must complete a Physician's Request for Administration of Prescription Medication [Linked Here](#). This includes OTC and prescription medication.

- All medications must be brought to school by the student's parent/guardian in the original container.

- The original container must be labeled with the student's name, medication, dosage, and directions for use, time to be given, prescribing health care provider, and date. School personnel will not administer medication that is not in its original container.
- Students are not allowed to carry or possess any medication while at school. Medications brought to school by a student will not be administered. Please plan to drop off and pick up any unused medication in person.

Please keep your child home when the following symptoms are present:

- Temperature of 100.4 degrees F or greater within the past 24 hours
- Vomiting or diarrhea occurring within the past 24 hours
- Strep infections of any kind, ringworm, conjunctivitis or impetigo. These are all contagious infections and must be treated with medication for at least 24 hours prior to returning to school
- Rash of unknown origin–this may indicate many different things and should be checked by your pediatrician
- Pain should be taken seriously, especially in young children. Earaches, toothaches and headaches should be evaluated
- Untreated lice infestation

Parental and Family Engagement

Kalispell Elementary Schools collaborates with parents and guardians to promote the mutual goal of student achievement. To ensure parents are aware of their rights and the opportunity to engage with the School District, specific policies and procedures are available on the School District's website at <https://www.sd5.k12.mt.us/> and are available to be printed upon request. Please consult the following policies to learn more about methods to be an active part of your student's education:

- Uniform Grievance Procedure – Policy 1700
- Student and Family Privacy Rights – Policy 2132
- Parent/Family Engagement and Involvement in Education – Policy 2158
- Student Health Instruction – Policy 2335
- School Activities and Clubs – Policy 3233, Policy 3510, Policy 3550
- Student Health – Policy 3410
- Student Immunization – Policy 3413
- Student Records and Confidentiality – Policy 3600

Parent Teacher Organizations (PTO)

We welcome participation from parents and guardians in Kalispell Elementary Schools. Please make sure you let the principal know if you are interested in some aspect of supporting the schools. Our meetings will be minimal, but the impact will be huge!

Personnel Files

Parents may request information regarding the professional qualifications and degrees of teachers and paraprofessionals who provide instruction to your son/daughter. Please submit your request for information in writing to the principal. The request should include your student's full name, your name, and your mailing address.

Phone/Smart Watch/Electronic Use

Student possession and use of cellular phones or other electronic devices is a privilege. We recognize the value for students and parents to communicate before and after school. However, in response to recurring problems with cell phones including disruptions, theft, bullying, harassment and cheating, students are encouraged to leave all cell phones at home. Cell phones brought to school must remain silenced and secured in a student's backpack/bag or in their teacher's possession during normal school hours. Phones may be used only with teacher permission if used as a learning tool. Telephones are available for students in all classrooms and the office throughout the day. If a cell phone or any other electronic device is deemed a distraction to the learning environment, the device may be confiscated by the teacher and brought to the office. A parent or guardian may be asked to pick it up. Students cannot use cell phones for the following (as per FERPA):

- The use of cell phones during class for any reason without the approval of the classroom teacher.
- Taking pictures in the bathroom or locker room.
- Taking any picture of another person (falling asleep, chewing food with mouth open...it doesn't have to involve nudity) or using a device for the purpose of ridiculing / harassing another person.
- The use of a cell phone or any device to cheat.

Consequences of unacceptable device use could include, but are not limited to the following:

- Device may be confiscated and released only to a parent/guardian
- Device may be turned over to law enforcement

Students who do carry cell phones or other electronic devices assume the risk of damage and/or theft as the school cannot, and will not, be responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged phones/electronic devices.

Request for Information on Teacher Qualifications

You may request the following information regarding your student's classroom teacher(s), if you wish. If you request the information, the School/ District will provide it in a timely manner in an understandable and uniform format. To the extent practicable, information will be provided in a language you understand.

The following information regarding your student's classroom teacher may be requested:

1. Whether the teacher has met state qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction.
2. Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which state qualification or licensing criteria have been waived.
3. The baccalaureate degree major of the teacher and any other graduate certification or degree held by the teacher, and the field of discipline of the certificate or degree.
4. Whether the student is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

If you would like to request this information for your student's teacher(s), please submit your request in writing to your student's school principal. Please specify your student's full name, your name, and the address where the response can be mailed.

School and District Communication

All communication is done electronically through either the district and/or school. Notifications, reminders, school closures, report cards etc. are sent through a mass communication program. It is critical we have current email and phone numbers in order to ensure you receive important and timely information. Kalispell Public Schools can be found on Facebook. Please go to your school's website to follow your specific school on social media as well.

Bright Arrow: Kalispell Public Schools uses Bright Arrow as our parent notification system. This is our primary way of contacting you via email and text. In order to receive texts, you will have to opt in.

- Simply text the word YES to 87569 or 79041, or reply YES to the text invite that will accompany the first outgoing text from Kalispell Public Schools.
- If you do not opt in you will no longer receive texts from Kalispell Public Schools.
- Add 87569 and 79041 to your contacts list under KPS or Kalispell Public Schools.

Special Education

Every student with a disability is entitled to a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment, as outlined under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The District ensures that eligible students with disabilities receive specialized instruction and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living. Services and supports are determined through an Individualized Education Program (IEP) developed by a team that includes educators, specialists, and the student's parent or guardian. Students with disabilities will receive educational opportunities and supports equal to those of their peers (See Policy 2161P). For assistance or questions, contact your Building Principal or the Kalispell Public Schools Special Services Office at 406.751.3400.

Student Dress

"The District recognizes that a student's choice of dress and grooming habits demonstrates personal style and preference. The District has the responsibility to ensure proper and appropriate conditions for learning, along with protecting the health and safety of its student body. Even though the schools will allow a wide variety of clothing styles, dress and grooming must not materially or substantially disrupt the educational process of the school or create a health or safety hazard for students, staff, or others." *Policy 3224*

Student Pictures: We like to showcase our amazing student accomplishments with pictures on school social media sites and the district website. Please notify your child's school if you do not wish to have your child photo on social media or our website.

Systems of Support

In Kalispell Public Schools we work to meet every child where they are and help them grow. We offer academic and behavioral interventions through our tiered systems that allow us to support students who have not mastered

a grade level skill yet. We work with you as parents and students to create an intervention plan that will provide opportunities for growth and success.

Visitors

All adults must enter the building through the front entry only. All visitors, including parents, are required to check in with the office and obtain a visitor pass at the kiosk found in the entry vestibule. The first time you check in with our system, you will need to scan your driver's license.

All classroom visits and meetings must be pre-arranged with the teacher and/or office. Items being delivered from home will be dropped off at the office and your student will be notified to come get them when classroom instruction allows. Please refrain from dropping into your child's classroom without an appointment with the teacher. You are welcome to make an appointment through the office as well.

****All visitors and volunteers will be asked to provide photo I.D**

Volunteers

Volunteers strengthen the school community by creating a home/school/community partnership that enables us to better meet the educational and social needs of students. Volunteers can work at our school in many capacities; Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) activities, classroom/library volunteers, literacy volunteers etc.

All volunteers who will be in the school working with students must submit a background check to the school prior to being accepted as a volunteer in the classroom, at the school or on a field trip. Forms are available at the front office and are no cost to you. These approvals are good for three years before you will need to submit another form.

****We request all non-school age children not accompany parents when volunteering to minimize distractions and the potential for classroom interruption.**

Elementary School-Wide Title 1 Program

Title I is a federally funded program designed to help all students in our school succeed. With a strong focus on reading and math, Title I provides additional support to ensure students develop the essential skills needed for academic achievement. A school-wide Title I program offers comprehensive changes to instruction and provides support systems that benefit the entire school. This flexible approach allows educators to target assistance in various areas where students need it most, ultimately promoting a well-rounded education. A copy of the Title I compact can be found linked [here](#).

Policy 3210 Notice of Nondiscrimination

The District will make equal educational opportunities available for all students without regard to race, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, ethnicity, language barrier, religious belief, physical or mental handicap or disability, economic or social condition, actual or potential marital or parental status, gender identity, sexual orientation, or gender expression.

No student will be denied equal access to programs, activities, services, or benefits or be limited in the exercise of any right, privilege, or advantage, or denied equal access to educational and extracurricular programs and activities.

Inquiries regarding sexual harassment, sex discrimination, or sexual intimidation should be directed to the District Title IX Coordinator, to the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights of the Department of Education, or both. The Board designates the following individual to serve as the District's Title IX Coordinator:

Carie Brady
233 1st Ave E., Kalispell, MT. 59901
carie.brady@sd5.k12.mt.us
406-751-3435

Any individual may file a complaint alleging violation of this policy, Policy 3200–Student Rights and Responsibilities, Policy 3225/3225P–Sexual Harassment, or Policy 3226–Bullying/Harassment/Intimidation/Hazing by following those policies or Policy 1700–Uniform Complaint Procedure.