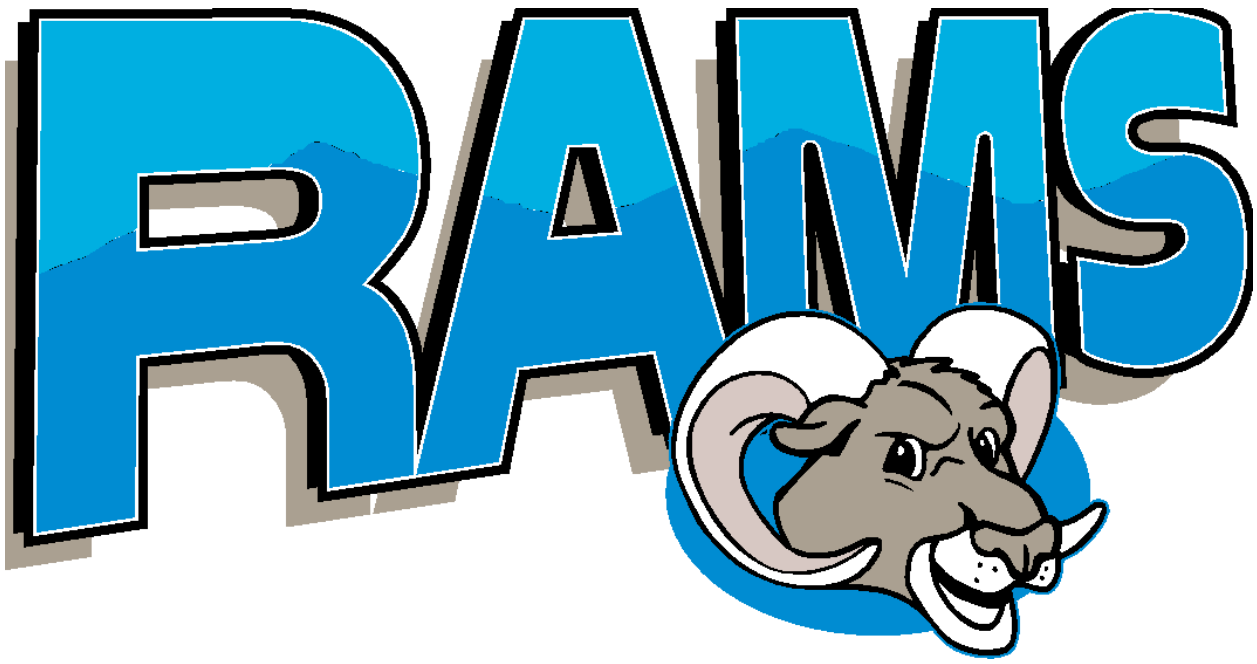
# Hermon Hutchens Elementary School Student/Parent Handbook




**Revised April 2026**

# District Strategic Goals and Vision

**Mission**

Schools, parents, and community united in education for life: Instructing, inspiring, and empowering every student in a safe environment.

**Goals & Objectives**

- We will incorporate new levels of knowledge, talent, creativity, workforce development, and leadership for the best education of our students.
- We will achieve greater levels of coherence, alignment, and integration, throughout the district; increase staff trust and morale; and strengthen relationships through communications.
- We will support and advocate for schools where our students perform at the highest levels and exceed state and federal accountability standards.

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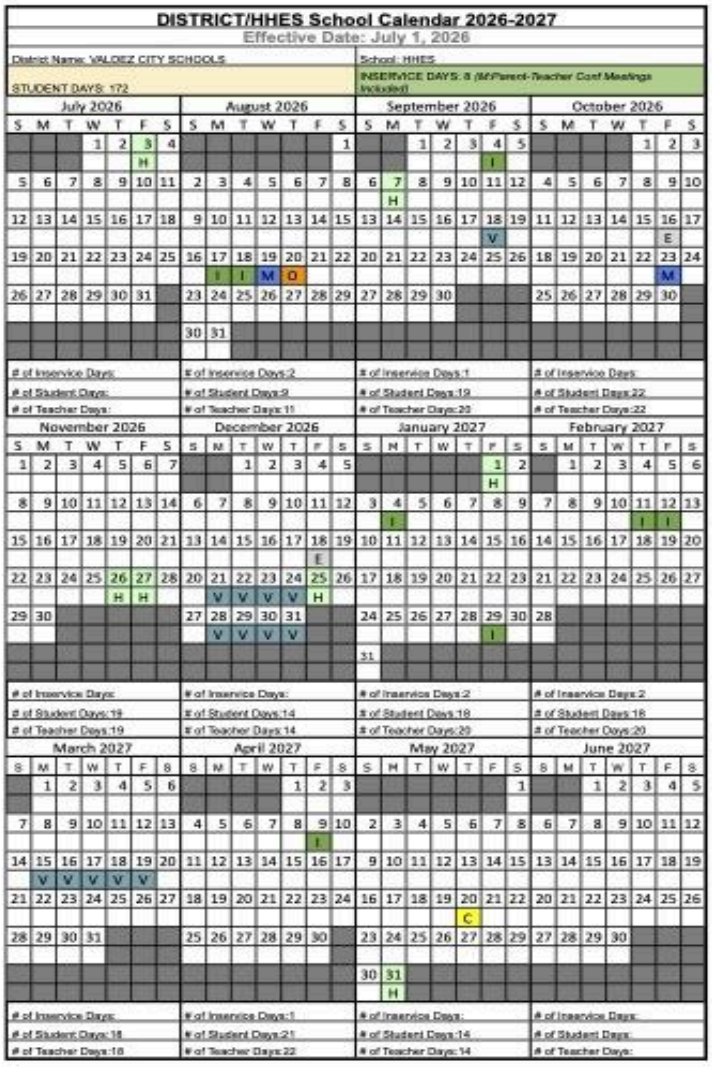

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# Staff Directory

Staff can be reached by calling the office at 907-835-4728. The building secretary will then transfer your call to the corresponding employee. Below is a list of staff emails for your convenience.

| | |
|---|---|
| Principal Krista Howell | khowell@valdezcityschools.org |
| Admin. Assistant Jennifer Shiell | jshiell@valdezcityschools.org |
| Building Secretary Rachel MacDonald | rmacdonald@valdezcityschools.org |
| Librarian Lorraine Critchlow | lcritchlow@valdezcityschools.org |
| Preschool Molly Dibb | mdibb@valdezcityschools.org |
| Kindergarten Cheryl Derifield | cderifield@valdezcityschools.org |
| Kindergarten Samantha Cook | scook@valdezcityschools.org |
| Kindergarten Jessica Tran | jtran@valdezcityschools.org |
| Grade 1 Jennifer Benda | jbenda@valdezcityschools.org |
| Grade 1 Tauga Shiery | tshiery@valdezcityschools.org |
| Grade 2 Laura Scott | lscott@valdezcityschools.org |
| Grade 2 Kelsey Kerney | kkerney@valdezcityschools.org |
| Grade 3 Melissa Koontz | mkoontz@valdezcityschools.org |
| Grade 3 Jennifer Tate-Lee | jtatelee@valdezcityschools.org |
| Grade 4 Karen Mehl | kmehl@valdezcityschools.org |
| Grade 4 Melissa McCumby | mmccumby@valdezcityschools.org |
| Grade 5 Joe Kerney | jkerney@valdezcityschools.org |
| Grade 5 Kayden Tague | ktague@valdezcityschools.org |
| Grade 5 Amanda Wiese | awiese@valdezcityschools.org |
| Special Education Holly Makowsky | hmakowsky@valdezcityschools.org |
| Special Education Mikaleigh Bottieri | mbottieri@valdezcityschools.org |
| Special Education Sommer Proden | sproden@valdezcityschools.org |
| Speech Rachel Sutton | rmsutton@valdezcityschools.org |
| Reading Specialist Katie Burns | kburns@valdezcityschools.org |
| Title 1 Carrie Stander | cstander@valdezcityschools.org |
| School Counselor Gianna Giusti | ggiusti@valdezcityschools.org |
| Art Jessica Bugni | jbugni@valdezcityschools.org |
| Music Chey Olson | colson1@valdezcityschools.org |
| Physical Education Alexandra Irving | airving@valdezcityschools.org |

# 2026-2027 District Calendar



**DISTRICT/HHES School Calendar 2026-2027**

Effective Date: July 1, 2026

District Name: VALDEZ CITY SCHOOLS | School: HHES

STUDENT DAYS: 172 | INSERVICE DAYS: 8 (M/Parent-Teacher Conf Meetings Included)

**July 2026**

| S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| | | | | | H | |
| 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
| 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 |
| 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | |

# of Inservice Days:
# of Student Days:
# of Teacher Days:

**August 2026**

| S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | 1 |
| 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 |
| | I | I | M | O | | |
| 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 |
| 30 | 31 | | | | | |

# of Inservice Days:2
# of Student Days:9
# of Teacher Days:11

**September 2026**

| S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | | | | | I | |
| 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| | H | | | | | |
| 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| | | | | | V | |
| 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 |
| 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | | | |

# of Inservice Days:1
# of Student Days:19
# of Teacher Days:20

**October 2026**

| S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| | | | | | E | |
| 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| | | | | | M | |
| 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | |

# of Inservice Days:
# of Student Days:22
# of Teacher Days:22

**November 2026**

| S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |
| 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| | | | | H | H | |
| 29 | 30 | | | | | |

# of Inservice Days:
# of Student Days:19
# of Teacher Days:19

**December 2026**

| S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| | | | | | E | |
| 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 |
| | V | V | V | V | H | |
| 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | | |
| | V | V | V | V | | |

# of Inservice Days:
# of Student Days:14
# of Teacher Days:14

**January 2027**

| S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | 1 | 2 |
| | | | | | H | |
| 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| | I | | | | | |
| 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |
| | | | | | I | |
| 31 | | | | | | |

# of Inservice Days:2
# of Student Days:18
# of Teacher Days:20

**February 2027**

| S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
| | | | | I | I | |
| 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| 28 | | | | | | |

# of Inservice Days:2
# of Student Days:18
# of Teacher Days:20

**March 2027**

| S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
| 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| | V | V | V | V | V | |
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | | | |

# of Inservice Days:
# of Student Days:18
# of Teacher Days:18

**April 2027**

| S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| | | | | | I | |
| 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | |

# of Inservice Days:1
# of Student Days:21
# of Teacher Days:22

**May 2027**

| S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | 1 |
| 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 |
| | | | | C | | |
| 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 |
| 30 | 31 | | | | | |
| | H | | | | | |

# of Inservice Days:
# of Student Days:14
# of Teacher Days:14

**June 2027**

| S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 |
| 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | | | |

# of Inservice Days:
# of Student Days:
# of Teacher Days:

| | |
|---|---|
| X | Emergency Closure Day |
| C | School Closes |
| E | End of Quarter |
| H | Legal Holiday |
| I | Inservice Day |
| M | Parent-Teacher Conf Meeting reqts |
| N | Parent-Teacher Conf Not meeting reqts |
| O | School Opens |
| S | Saturday School |
| T | Testing |
| V | Vacation Day |
| W | Teacher Workday |
| RF | Required Friday |
| FF | Flex Friday |

| School Holidays | |
|---|---|
| Independence Day | 7/3/2026 |
| Labor Day | 9/7/2026 |
| Thanksgving and the day after | 11/26- 11/27/2026 |
| Christmas | 12/25/2026 |
| New Years | 1/1/2027 |
| Memorial Day | 5/31/2027 |

If one of these holidays falls on a Saturday, the Friday immediately preceding is a school holiday. If one of these holidays falls on a Sunday, the Monday immediately following is a school holiday.

# 1.0 General Information

**1.1 NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATION** It is the policy of Valdez City Schools not to discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, age, national origin, parenthood, pregnancy, marital status, changes in marital status, sex, disability, handicap, veteran's status, veteran's disability, or political affiliation in admission and access to, and treatment or employment in, its programs and activities.

Students attending Valdez City Schools may participate in education programs and activities, including, but not limited to, health, physical education, and vocational and technical education, regardless of race, color, national origin, age, handicap, or sex.

Grievance procedures for student and employee concerns in the areas of sex equity (Title IX) and handicap (Section 504) have been established by Valdez City Schools. Inquiries or complaints regarding compliance with these regulations may be directed to Valdez City Schools, VCS Superintendent, PO Box 398, Valdez, AK 99686 (see BP 5145.3 Nondiscrimination).

**1.2 DISSEMINATION OF OUTSIDE LITERATURE** All notices and information passed out through the school must have been approved by the principal. Please contact the principal if you have posters, handouts, or notices to distribute or display.

**1.3 EARLY ARRIVAL OF STUDENTS** Because of limited supervision, students should not arrive at school earlier than 7:55 am. All students, with the exception of preschool and bus students, will enter through the main entrance as marked. Between 7:55 am and 8:20 am, K-3 students will remain in the lunchroom. Grades 4 and 5 will utilize their commons area. During this time, students can eat, play games, and socialize with their peers.

**1.4 FOOD SERVICE** Breakfast and lunch are eaten in the cafeteria, and students are under the direct supervision of aides, teachers, and cafeteria staff. It's expected that food is eaten before students enter class. Breakfast is available to

purchase for all students in the morning before class.

**1.5 FREE OR REDUCED-PRICE FOOD SERVICE** Parents and/or guardians may apply for free or reduced-price food service anytime during the school year by completing an application available in the school office or online through Nutrition Services. All applications are evaluated by the school district business manager. All information is confidential. (see BP 3553 Free and Reduced-Price Meals).
https://www.valdezcityschools.org/departments/business-services/nutrition-services

**1.6 LOST AND FOUND** An area for lost and found items is located outside the office. Check this area periodically if your child is missing hats, gloves, and so on. All articles at the end of each semester will be donated to a charitable organization.

**1.7 PARENT–TEACHER ASSOCIATION** The Hermon Hutchens Elementary School PTA (Parent–Teacher Association) is an opportunity for parents and members of the community to become actively involved in providing support programs and activities for our school. There are dozens of ways to be involved, whether by volunteering at the school or from home. Meetings are scheduled monthly during the school year. Contact information for the PTA can be obtained at the HHES office.

**1.8 PARENT VOLUNTEERS**. HHES highly encourages parent and community volunteers. Please contact your child's homeroom teacher or the office if you are interested in volunteering or know somebody that is. Note all volunteer activities are based on student need and should have a positive direct impact on student learning. All parents and guests entering the school are required to sign in at the front office and wear a visitor/volunteer badge/sticker.

**1.9 TELEPHONE USAGE** The school telephone number is 907-835-4728. Students are allowed to use the phone only for business or an emergency. Students must have permission from their teacher or office staff to use the phone. Calling to see whether they can go home with a friend is not considered business or an emergency, and permission to use the phone will not be granted. Urgent messages can be delivered to students, but please allow time for delivery.

**1.10 ELECTRONIC SURVEILLANCE** Hermon Hutchens Elementary School employs the use of electronic surveillance equipment for security purposes throughout the public areas of the building and grounds. This equipment may or may not be monitored at any time.

**1.11 ENTRANCES** Buses will drop off students on the Egan side of the building using the drive-up entrance. The main entrance (parent pick-up/drop-off and building entrance) is in the main parking lot off Kutina.

# 2.0 Classroom Expectations

**2.1 PARTIES** Teachers are allowed to schedule three regular parties per year. The students and their teachers may choose three of the following: Halloween, Christmas, Valentine's Day, and/or end-of- school year. To avoid hurt feelings, we also request that invitations to private parties **NOT** be distributed at school unless they include the entire class.

**2.2 SCHOOL HOURS** Regular school hours are from 8:20 a.m.–3:05 p.m, Monday through Thursday, and from 8:20 a.m.–2:15 p.m. on Fridays. After-the-Bell activities are scheduled from 3:15 p.m.–4:15 p.m, Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. All school rules apply during regular school hours, while riding the bus, and during After-the-Bell activities.

**2.3 LUNCHROOM EXPECTATIONS**

Teachers will walk students to the cafeteria and assist those who are receiving school lunch/purchasing milk. Students are expected to use inside voices and remain seated while in the cafeteria. Students must not run in the cafeteria and are expected to clean up their area before being excused to line up for recess. A recess duty supervisor will walk students from the cafeteria to their classroom to prepare to go outside.

# 3.0- Student Health and Safety

**3.1 ACCIDENTS** Every accident in the school building, on the school grounds, or at any school-sponsored event must be reported to the person in charge, who may contact the school office for documentation, and the parents will be notified.

**3.2 BICYCLES/ROLLERBLADES/SKATEBOARDS/SCOOTERS** Students who ride their bicycles/rollerblades to school should remember the following:

1. Be familiar with the laws and safety rules for bicycle operation and practice the rules.
2. Upon entering the school grounds, walk your bicycle directly to the racks located in front of the school.
3. Rollerblades will not be worn in the school building.
4. Bicycles should be equipped with locks to prevent unauthorized borrowing.
5. Bicycles/rollerblades/scooters may not be used except to-and-from school. No motorized scooters.
6. Upon leaving at the end of the day, students are not allowed to ride near the school buses or around the cars in the parking lot. Students are expected to walk their bicycles on the sidewalk.

**3.3 EARTHQUAKE** During strong earth tremors, the following procedure shall be employed.

**INDOORS** 1. Stay indoors. 2. Move under sturdy furniture such as desks, tables, and so on. 3. Move toward the center of the building into hallways. 4. Stay away from windows and other glass objects. 5. Do not use candles, matches, or other open flames. 6. Because aftershocks may occur, once outside of a damaged building, do not reenter.

**OUTDOORS** 1. Stay away from buildings where there is danger of falling debris. 2. Stay away (fifty yards) from buildings, power lines, and poles. 3. If in a moving vehicle, stop and remain inside (See AR 6114.3 Earthquake Emergency Procedures)

**3.4 CLOTHING AND DRESS CODE** We require that during the winter months, students keep a light pair of shoes (preferably gym shoes) in their lockers to change into upon entering the building. Students generally will not be allowed to wear outdoor coats, jackets, and hats inside the building unless an emergency occurs.

Students should come to school dressed with appropriate apparel during the

winter months. Whenever the temperature (with wind chill) is zero degrees and above, we have students participate in outdoor recess. All students must have coats, hats (hoods), gloves, boots, long pants, and/or snow pants for outside recess. Students without appropriate winter apparel will be required to remain under covered areas during recess.

**3.5 PERSONAL CARE AND DRESS CODE** Personal aerosols such as hair gel, hair spray, perfume, deodorant, shaving cream, and so on should remain at home. Use of perfume is discouraged because of chemical sensitivities.

1. Students must wear modest clothing. Underwear (bra, boxers, etc.), midriffs, and private parts of the body must not be visible.

2. Hats, hoods, and bandanas will not be worn in the building. Hair bands are permitted.

3. Clothing imprinted with or promoting obscenity, drugs, alcohol, tobacco, profanity, violence, or illegal behavior is not allowed. Sexually suggestive, racial, or abusive slogans or logos are not to be worn at school.

4. Pants must be worn at or near the waist level.

5. Dress and appearance that are so distracting as to clearly interfere with the educational process or present health and safety hazards shall not be permitted. Students will be asked to change their clothing and disciplinary action may be taken.

6. Parents of students requiring exceptions to the dress code to accommodate religious or health needs may make arrangements with the principal (see Board Policy AR 5132).

**3.6 EVACUATION SHELTER** Our school is a city-designated evacuation shelter. In case of a disaster, and particularly a tsunami, we will keep your child at school, unless you pick him/her up at the office.

**3.7 FIRE DRILLS** To ensure the safety of your child, we will conduct one fire drill per month. The following is the procedure we will use:

1. The sounding of the alarm is the signal to evacuate the building.
2. If feasible, teachers should turn off their classroom lights and close/lock their

classroom doors.

3. Students and personnel should move rapidly along the designated pathways to an exit. No one should run. If there is smoke in the pathway, crawl to an exit.

4. If the exit or pathway to an exit has become blocked, you should work back to an alternative exit.

5. After leaving the building, students should proceed to a distance of at least 100 feet from the building and avoid fire lanes. Care should be exercised to avoid interfering with the firefighting equipment.

6. Students are expected to become familiar with the fire drill exit route posted in each room. (Teachers must be prepared to give directions pertaining to leaving their classrooms.) (See AR 6114.1 Fire Drills and Fires)

**3.8 HEAD LICE** Please check your child's head periodically during the school year. In order for a student to return to school, the parent must treat the child with a head lice treatment at home.

**3.9 IMMUNIZATIONS** State law requires that students be properly immunized. A child who has not met the Alaska immunization requirements will not be allowed to enter school. It is the parent's responsibility to provide the school with a medically verified, date- and dose-specific immunization record. It is the parent's responsibility to notify the office of any immunization updates. Religious exemption and Medical exemption forms are available in the office and must be resubmitted annually (see BP 5141.31 Immunizations).

**3.10 INSURANCE** Accident insurance is provided for students during the school day and for related school activities or twenty-four-hour coverage is provided. Information regarding insurance is available at the school office and sent home at the beginning of the school year.

**3.11 INTRUDER RESPONSE** ALICE is an acronym for Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, and Evacuate, and it is designed to supplement current lockdown procedures as a stand-alone defensive strategy for an active intruder event. The main objective of the program is to provide the students and staff with options to increase their chance of survival during an intruder emergency. The school performs at least one ALICE drill per year.

**3.12 LOCKERS** Each student shall be assigned a locker. Lockers for students

will not include locks. Student lockers are the property of Valdez City Schools and, as such, may be opened and inspected by school authorities. Security of personal property in school lockers and security of the locker is the student's responsibility. The school is not responsible for lost or stolen articles. (Refer to A.S.14.03.103)

**3.13 MEDICATION** If it becomes necessary for a student to take any form of medication at school, a "Long- or Short- Term Request for Administration of Prescribed Medication" form signed by the parent must be on file in the office. All medication will be kept in and dispensed through the main office. Please send any of these medications in their appropriate medication bottle, with name, dosage, and prescription number labeled on the front. Safeway Pharmacy has volunteered to split monthly doses into two bottles—one for school—if the request is made. We ask that you make this request when refilling the prescription.

**3.14 PETS AND ANIMALS AT SCHOOL** Because of the unpredictable behavior of animals around many children and because of allergens, we ask your cooperation in keeping pets at home. If you would like to bring a pet to show your child's class outside, please arrange a day and time with the teacher. Individuals with disabilities are allowed to bring their service animals in accordance with school board policy(s).

**3.15 SCHOOL CLOSURES AND SCHOOL-WIDE EMERGENCY NOTIFICATIONS** Emergency closures of school due to weather conditions or similar factors will be announced over the local radio stations as soon as they occur. Closures during the regular school day because of a building emergency are handled in a pre-arranged orderly manner. No child will be sent home during the day without the knowledge and permission of parents or parental authority. One of the means to inform the general public is by the mass media including the district telephone alert system, radio, television, social media, and the school district website. The superintendent shall provide prompt and accurate information.

**3.16 SCHOOL COUNSELING** An elementary school counselor provides a comprehensive K-5 program that fosters development in academic, career, and personal/social domains for all students. Program components include *Guidance Curriculum*, *Individual Student Planning*, *Responsive Services*,

*Consultation, Collaboration, Referrals, Support in Crisis Situations, Small Group Education, and Connections between school and community.* If further services are required, the school counselor will refer to and help the parent/legal guardian contact the Providence Valdez Counseling Center (see BP 6164.2 Guidance and Counseling Services).

# 4.0- Academics

**4.1 ACADEMIC STANDARDS** We follow the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (EED) standards. Valdez City Schools curricula are aligned to state and national standards. For complete information about Alaska student standards, visit http://education.alaska.gov/akstandards.

**4.2 POWERSCHOOL AND REPORTING** Grades will be reported quarterly and are a composite of academic achievement, classroom participation/citizenship, and classroom attendance. PowerSchool is our student information management system. PowerSchool's Parent Portal provides parents/guardians with confidential, real-time access to information about their child(ren), including attendance and grades, through their own secure account. See the building secretary to obtain the forms and information needed to create your own personal, confidential PowerSchool Parent Portal account. Grade reports, in the form of report cards, are issued four times during the year. These reports are one method of reporting pupil progress. Report cards may be held until all books (library and text) are returned and/or fines paid (see BP 5121.2 through BP 5121.9 Grades/Evaluation of Student Achievement).

**4.3 GRADING** K-5 grading will reflect a combination of some of the following five areas: daily work, skill application, test scores, student readiness standards, and participation and will not be based only on one evaluation or criteria. The subjective judgment of the teacher is a major factor in determining any grade, specifically for participation and skill application.

Kindergarten through 5th grade will follow this system:

1,2,3,4, no mark

1= Far below proficient
2= Below proficient but progressing
3= Proficient level of performance
4= Mastery level of performance

No mark = Not evaluated at this time

(BP 5121.2)

**4.4 KINDERGARTEN** The law concerning kindergarten states that a child who is five years of age before September 1 preceding the beginning of the school year may enter a public kindergarten. Proof of age (registered birth certificate) is required before entering kindergarten.

**4.5 LIBRARY** Students are encouraged to check out books from the library. In the event that a book is misplaced or lost, please notify the library staff and a bill will be sent to cover the replacement of the book(s). If the book is found later, a refund will be made to you.

**4.6 PARENT–TEACHER CONFERENCES** The school will regularly schedule parent–teacher conferences in the first and second quarters each school year. Parents are welcome to request additional conferences at any time by contacting their child's teacher or school office (see BP 5124 Communication with Parents/Guardians).

**4.7 PASS AND RETENTION** A child may be considered for retention in a grade level if it can be clearly demonstrated that the child is not academically ready for the next grade level, and retention will be beneficial to the child. The principal, working with parents and staff, will make the final decision on retention (see BP 5121.8 Grades/Evaluation of Student Achievement).

**4.8 TESTING-** Students at HHES take the following tests: NWEA MAP Testing K-5, mClass K-5, AKSTAR 3-5, Alaska Science Assessment 5. Test results will be mailed home or shared at parent-teacher conferences.

**4.9 FIELD TRIP-** Field trips are a privilege, and the ability to participate in school field trips may be revoked. A student must have a completed permission slip turned in before the departure of the trip. Consequences for inappropriate behavior prior to or during the field trip could include missing the field trip, returning to school, or being sent home.

# 5.0 Special Programs

**5.1 CHILD FIND SCREENING** All 3 to 5-year-old preschool children are eligible

to participate in the Valdez City Schools Preschool Screening. During the screening, children who exhibit delays in speech/language, motor, social or emotional development will be referred for further in-depth assessment. Annual screenings will take place. A determination will be made within a week and recommendations given to the parents. If you feel your child experiences a delay in any of the areas mentioned above, please contact the **Special Education Office at (907) 835-4713** for an appointment.

**5.2 EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM** Valdez City Schools provides Early Intervention Services for children from preschool to kindergarten (ages three to five) who have identified special education needs (see Child Find Screening section). The purpose of Early Intervention Services is to intervene at the earliest stages when delays or disruptions in development are first identified, to help children reach their full potential. Early Intervention Services are provided in a variety of ways, dependent upon the child's age and identified special needs. Services are designed to prepare children for an inclusive kindergarten placement. Children qualify for the services by meeting criteria established by the federal and state law. Our program incorporates the use of peer models (typically developing same-age students).

**5.3 ACTIVITIES**

1. Elementary students have the following extracurricular and co-curricular activities available: Battle of the Books, Spelling Bee, and Ski Club.

2. After-school programs are available and change year to year. Check with the building secretary to get a list of current activities. Activities offered may change based upon enrollment, student interest, and availability of coaches/sponsors.

**5.4 Gifted and Talented**

The Valdez City School District believes in differentiated education for gifted children wherever the need arises. The district acknowledges that all the resources of these children's environment (home, school, community) are important to them reaching their fullest potential. To this end, the District will fulfill its obligation to help develop the special qualities of each gifted child. (BP 6185) Contact the building principal for more details.

**5.5 Early Entry to Kindergarten**

The Board authorizes the admission of students under school age who exhibit the ability to perform satisfactorily, including advancement through the curriculum or grade level by the following year. The Superintendent is delegated authority to make early-entrance determinations. Students under school age who were previously enrolled in public school shall be admitted to school at the grade level determined by the Superintendent or designee. (BP 5111) Contact the building principal if you have questions.

# 6.0 Attendance/Enrollment

**6.1 ATTENDANCE** Regular attendance is an important factor in your child's success. When your child must be absent, please enter the absence in the school messenger, or call the office at 907-835-4728. We must confirm the child is in your care for an absence to be excused. Students absent more than ten (10) times per semester may be considered for retention in the same grade the following year. Being absent for more than thirty minutes at the beginning of the day or after lunch is considered a half-day absence. (For the full attendance policy, see BP 5113 Absences and Excuses.) Attendance records are updated in PowerSchool daily.

**6.2 PARENT LITIGATION OR COURT ORDERS** Parents, by law, are entitled to certain rights of their children, even if they do not have custody of their child, unless there is a court order or other legal document denying them access to their child's records. It is the parent's responsibility to provide the school with copies of any court orders or pending litigation involving your child. Without documentation, we cannot assist you in protecting your legal rights of custody.

**6.3 PARENTS AND EMERGENCY CONTACT PHONE NUMBERS** It is essential that we have current home and work phone numbers for parents. Accurate phone numbers aid us in contacting you in case of an emergency. Please keep the office updated when you change telephone numbers, email, or addresses.

**6.4 RELEASING STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL** For the protection of the students and to prevent unauthorized and unwanted persons from taking children from school prior to dismissal or at the close of school, the following procedure will be followed:

1. No child will be permitted to leave with anyone other than the listed parent or guardian unless the permission of the parent or guardian has been secured.
2. Persons picking up children are requested to report to the office to pick up the child.
3. If your student has a change in after-school bus plans or pickup plans, please call the office to notify the school of the change.

Teachers have been instructed not to release children without authorization from the office.

**6.5 TARDY SLIPS** When a student is tardy, he/she must come to the office to receive a tardy slip, which is to be presented to the classroom teacher.

**6.6 VACATIONS** Families taking vacations/trips anytime during the school year, outside of scheduled school breaks, please notify the principal in writing prior to your departure. Parents and students must take responsibility for all makeup work assigned by the classroom teachers. Elementary students must not be absent more than ten (10) times per semester or they may be considered for retention in the same grade the following year. (For the full attendance policy, see BP 5113 Absences and Excuses.)

**6.7 ENROLLMENT** New students must complete the Hermon Hutchens Elementary online registration forms at
https://www.valdezcityschools.org/enrollment
Birth Certificate, immunization records, or exemption must be on file before a student may start school.

**6.8 WITHDRAWAL** Parents of students who must withdraw from elementary school should come to the school to sign student withdrawal forms and pay all fees due, one week before the date of withdrawal. (BP 5121.9)

# 7.0 Student Behavior

**7.1 ADDRESSING STAFF-** All staff will be addressed by their proper title—Mr., Mrs., Miss, or Ms.—followed by their last name.

**7.2 DETENTION** If a child fails to follow the rules, he/she may be assigned

detention after school. The school will contact the parent to arrange for the day of detention (see BP 5144 Discipline).

**7.3 DISCIPLINE** Behavior that disrupts the learning environment, invades the rights of others, or is inappropriate in a school setting will not be tolerated. Students are expected to obey all district employees. All disciplinary action is intended to be fair and will correspond to the district's educational objectives. Because students are at different levels of development, each must be moved along in realistic, deliberate steps that allow successful growth toward mature, responsible behavior (see BP 5144 Discipline).

**7.4 DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR** Disruptive behavior is student conduct that materially and substantially interferes with the educational process or with school-sponsored activities. Examples of disruptive behavior include insubordinately talking out, moving around the classroom without permission, profanity/vulgarity, uncomplimentary gestures/speech, threatening, noncompliance with school/class rules, refusing to acknowledge a school employee's direction, and behavior that jeopardizes the welfare and/or safety of other students and staff (see BP 5144 Discipline).

**7.5 DRUGS** Consuming alcoholic beverages, using or possessing illegal drugs, or being under the influence of drugs or alcohol is not allowed in the school buildings, on school property, or at school activity events (see BP 5131.6 Alcohol and Other Drugs).

**7.6 HARASSMENT** Harassment is not permitted and will result in disciplinary action. Harassment includes, but is not limited to, abusive language, sexual harassment, inappropriate physical contact, racial or ethnic slurs and comments, hazing, and other provocative actions (see BP 5151 Hazing; BP 5145.7 Sexual Harassment; BP 5131.43 Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying; and BP 5131.41 Violent and Aggressive Conduct).

**7.7 LOITERING** Students are requested to leave the building after their daily programs are finished. Students must have a valid reason for staying in school after their classes are over. Nonstudents loitering on campus may be arrested (see BP 1330 Use of School Facilities).

**7.8 CELL PHONES AND OTHER PORTABLE ELECTRONIC DEVICES** Cell phones and other portable electronic devices are not allowed during the school day. This includes, but is not limited to, cell phones, smartphones, smartwatches, smart glasses, tablets, cameras, and electronic toys or games. If you need to contact your student, please call the office and identify the issue as an "emergency" and we'll put you in immediate contact with your student. Students are not allowed to take photos, record audio or video of others using personal electronic devices during the school day or on the school bus.

**7.9 PROFANITY** The use of vulgar or profane language, gestures, or possession of or the display of obscene material is prohibited.

**7.10 SCHOOL PROPERTY** Students are responsible for the proper care and return of all equipment, books, and supplies entrusted to them. Malicious or willful damage to school property makes not only the student subject to disciplinary action but also the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) liable for damages (see BP 3515.4 Recovery for Property Loss or Damage and BP 5131.5 Vandalism, Theft, and Graffiti). Textbooks and workbooks are furnished without cost to each student. All books remain the property of Valdez City Schools. Lost and/or damaged books will result in the levying of fines. Books found to be beyond repair will be paid for by the student based on the replacement cost of a new current issue.

**7.11 STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES** All students have the right to appeal decisions from a higher authority. Valdez City Schools has established a complaint procedure for students to follow, when they feel the need to appeal decisions made at the school or district level. Valdez City School District Complaint Forms can be found in the school office.

**7.12 SUSPENSION** The principal has the exclusive right to suspend a student in and out of school. The act of suspension shall be reserved for serious or repeated infractions of school rules. A student placed on suspension shall not participate in any extracurricular activity or trip sponsored by the school during the period of suspension. The Compiled School Laws of Alaska and Valdez City School Board Policy procedures govern suspension and expulsion. Letters of suspension and expulsion shall be placed in the appropriate student's record in the school office (see BP 5144.1 Suspension and Expulsion).

**7.13 WEAPONS AND DANGEROUS INSTRUMENTS** Students shall not carry on their person, use, transmit, or possess weapons, dangerous instruments (including knives or handcuffs), or their replicas in school buildings, on school grounds, on the school transportation system, at school bus stops, or at any school-related or school-sponsored activity away from school (including athletic events). If you find that you have accidentally brought a dangerous instrument to school, and as long as nobody else has seen the instrument, you may turn it into the office without fear of punishment (see BP 5131.7 Weapons and Dangerous Instruments).

# 8.0 Transportation

**8.1 STUDENT EXPECTATIONS** School buses are monitored by video surveillance. Exercise good manners, caution, and consideration for other people. Obey the school bus driver; his/her primary concern is your safety. Pupils may be assigned a seat by the driver. Pupils must not have anything in their possession that may cause injury to another.

If a pupil's conduct is such that the health, safety, comfort, or well-being of others is jeopardized, on or off the bus, the option of riding the bus may be denied by a school official. All documented infractions of the above rules will be brought to the attention of the parents. A student is not allowed to ride a different bus unless authorized by the parent and approved by the principal (see BP 5131.1 Bus Conduct).

**8.2 CONDUCT ON THE SCHOOL BUS**

1. Keep the aisle clear.
2. Place books or other gear on your lap.
3. Avoid loud talking, confusion, or anything else that might distract the driver.
4. Keep your head, arms, and body inside the bus.
5. Do not throw objects inside or outside the bus.
6. Do not chew tobacco, smoke, eat, or drink on the bus.
7. Remain seated until the bus has come to a complete stop and get off only at your stop.
8. Do not open windows without permission.
9. Assist in keeping the bus clean; pupils can be held responsible for any

damages to the interior of the school bus.
10. In general, classroom conduct will be observed. Horseplay and wrestling will not be allowed on the school bus.

**8.3 SCHOOL BUS "Appropriate Clothing Policy"** The school district's policy governing clothing to be worn on a school bus in cold weather states:

> It is the position of the School District to endorse and support the school bus contractor to enforce a policy that requires students riding the bus to clothe themselves in a reasonable manner that protects the student from the elements. This would include covering exposed arms and legs in freezing temperatures. Safety of our students is of utmost importance to the District.

Bus mechanical failures, accidents, or other delays from road conditions present hazardous situations, particularly in cold weather. Elementary age children should wear coats, hats (or hoods), gloves, boots, and long pants or snow pants. Bus drivers have been instructed to refuse admittance to students if they are inadequately clothed. These restrictions will be in place when the temperature falls to thirty-five degrees or below (ambient or wind chill).

**8.4 WAITING FOR THE SCHOOL BUS**

1. Stay a safe distance from the road.
2. Be at your stop five minutes ahead of time; the driver cannot wait for you.
3. Be in line when the school bus approaches.
4. Stay clear of wheels until the bus has come to a complete stop.
5. Let the smaller children board first.
6. Pupils must cross the highway only in front of the school bus when given permission by the school bus driver.
7. Walk on the left-hand side of the road facing traffic.

**8.5 BOARDING THE SCHOOL BUS**

1. Always use the handrail and go up the steps one at a time.
2. Don't push, crowd, or disturb others.
3. Go directly to your seat and be seated.
4. Individuals with disabilities are allowed to bring their service animals.

Otherwise, no animals are allowed on the school bus.

**8.6 GETTING OFF THE SCHOOL BUS**

1. Use the handrail and take one step at a time.
2. No pushing or crowding.
3. After you leave the bus, go home or to an assigned place.
4. Cooperate with the school bus driver at all times to ensure safe, timely, and efficient pupil transportation to and from school.

**8.7 BUS VIOLATIONS** Valdez City Schools is happy to provide bus service to and from school. Students are expected to maintain acceptable behavior while riding the bus. If student behavior is deemed to be aggressive or results in the injury of another person, procedures may escalate. Please review the attached School Bus Incident Report and discuss acceptable behavior and consequences with your student.

**8.8 BUS INCIDENT REPORTS and CONSEQUENCES**

- 1st Offense
  - Phone call informing parent of the incident
  - Incident logged into PowerSchool
  - Depending on the severity of the incident student may lose use of the bus for a period of time
  - Incident Report mailed to parent(s)
- 2nd Offense
  - 1st Offense items plus...
  - Responds to reflective questions and presents to the administrator for acceptance.
  - Incident Report and reflection mailed to parent(s)
- 3rd Offense
  - 1st & 2nd Offense items plus...
  - Loss of bus riding privilege for a minimum of 5 school days.
  - Possible parent meeting scheduled (with student and bus driver)

# 9.0 Recess/Activities

**9.1 RECESS** Students are expected to play safely, which includes listening, sharing, proper use of equipment, respecting others, and the games they are playing. Students are not to play fight, fight, or use hostile gestures, and must stay in the fenced area of the playground at all times. Students need to request permission before entering the building or leaving the playground. Consequences will be determined by adults supervising the playground, the consequences could include timeouts, missing recess, parent communication, and in severe cases suspension. During the winter months, students are expected to dress appropriately. (see section 3.4)

**9.2 SLED HILL RULES**

1. Students must wear a coat, snow pants, boots, gloves, and a hat or hood. Ice cleats are not allowed on the sled hill.
2. No throwing snowballs.
3. An adult must be at the top of the hill before students walk up the hill.
4. Only use the designated "walking" area to get up the hill.
5. When reaching the bottom of the hill, get out of the way quickly.
6. Stay away from the fence; students must be visible by adults at all times.
7. Each grade is scheduled at a time during their recess.
8. Unsafe behavior will result in a loss of sledding privileges.

**9.3 GYM SHOES** Gym shoes (tennis shoes) are required for participation in Physical Education class at Hermon Hutchens Elementary School. Gym shoes must meet the following requirements:

1. They must have laces or Velcro straps.
2. They cannot leave marks on the floor (no black soles).
3. Gym shoes should fit the student's feet properly.
4. They should be kept at school at all times.
5. Students cannot share gym shoes.
6. Students should keep their gym shoes clean, it is recommended that they not wear their gym shoes outside for recess.

# 10.0 Technology

One-to-one computers and iPads are provided for students at HHES at no cost; however, damage to district-provided technology will result in a fine in

accordance with the VCS Digital Participation Agreement. A VCS Digital Participation Agreement must be on file for each student using one-to-one computers and iPads.

## LINKS

**Pre K Handbook**
**HHES Behavior Matrix**

# HERMON HUTCHENS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENT HANDBOOK 2026-2027

**https://hhes.valdezcityschools.org/**

**Follow us on FaceBook @**
**Hermon Hutchens Elementary School**

**We are RAMS and we are proud!**
**R...esponsible for our learning!**
**A...ppropriate in our actions!**
**M...indful of others' needs!**
**S...afe at all times!**