

Willmar Middle School

Student Handbook

2026 – 2027





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WELCOME TO WILLMAR MIDDLE SCHOOL



Welcome to Willmar Middle School! This handbook is your quick guide to a fantastic school year. Middle school is an exciting time of growth, discovery, and new opportunities. We are absolutely thrilled to have you join our Cardinal family!

Our school community thrives when we all practice three basic principles:

- Respect: Treat classmates, staff, and school property with kindness.
- Responsibility: Arrive on time, complete your work, and own your actions.
- Ready to Learn: Bring your materials, stay curious, and participate every day.

Middle school brings more independence and exciting new responsibilities. You will change classrooms, meet new teachers, and discover new interests. We encourage you to get involved in our many sports, clubs, and activities to build lasting friendships.

Let's work together to make this a safe, supportive, and memorable school year!

Amy Sack, Principal

Kristen Egge, Assistant Principal

James Menton, Assistant Principal

Contact Information

OFFICE HOURS

Office hours are between 7:15 am and 4:00 pm. The number is 214-6000. Individual teachers can be contacted via phone or email; all contact information is listed on the [District Website](#).

[Willmar Middle School Website](#)

[Willmar Public Schools Website](#)

Main Line

320-214-6000

Attendance Line

320-214-6006

Mailing Address

**209 Willmar Ave SE
Willmar, MN 56201**

**PREPARING
ALL LEARNERS
FOR THEIR
FUTURE**



COUNSELING/SOCIAL WORKER SERVICES

Guidance Office Main Line

320-214-6012

Counselors

Jeff Winter (A-L last names)

320-214-6014

Alison Scheffler (M-Z last names)

320-214-6013

Social Workers

Megan Davis (A-L last names)

320-214-6042

Colby Christensen (M-Z last names)

320-214-6015

Our school is proud of its guidance and counseling programs. We believe trained school counselors working directly with students, school personnel, parents, and community members are essential for a successful educational process. Services provided include personal, academic, and social emotional counseling.

A school social worker's mission is to promote academic success by reducing social, emotional, economic, and environmental barriers to learning. The social worker is available for students who are experiencing social, emotional, behavioral and/or mental health difficulties that are affecting their learning.

There are numerous resources available in the guidance office to assist students as they explore their many career and college options!

[Kandiyohi County Family Resource Guide](#)

WMS Belief Statements



1. *We believe that high quality of instruction provided by caring staff will improve student learning.*
2. *We should constantly seek to increase our capacity to accommodate the needs of all learners.*
3. *We believe that successful learning is possible for all students.*
4. *We believe professional decisions should be based on both past practice and valid research data.*
5. *We believe that students should face the natural and logical consequences of their actions.*

All of the above are possible under the conditions created by a three-way partnership between the school, the parents, and the students.



2026-2027 DISTRICT CALENDAR



AUGUST 2026						
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OCTOBER 2026						
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DECEMBER 2026						
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FEBRUARY 2027						
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APRIL 2027						
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JUNE 2027						
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SEPTEMBER 2026						
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NOVEMBER 2026						
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JANUARY 2027						
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MARCH 2027						
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MAY 2027						
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JULY 2027						
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KEY DATES

Aug. 18-20	New Teacher Induction
Aug. 24-27	Teacher Workshop (PreK-12)
Aug. 31	1st Day of School (6-12)
Sept. 2	1st Day of School (K-5)
Sept. 7	Labor Day - Holiday (NO SCHOOL)
Oct. 14	PreK-12 Teacher Inservice (NO SCHOOL) Required PD day for hourly staff
Oct. 15-16	MEA Break (NO SCHOOL)
Oct. 30	End of Term 1
Nov. 2	PreK-12 Teacher Inservice (NO SCHOOL) Required PD day for hourly staff
Nov. 25	Teacher Conference Comp Day (NO SCHOOL)
Nov. 26-27	Thanksgiving Holiday (NO SCHOOL)
Dec. 23-Jan. 1	Winter Break (NO SCHOOL)
Jan. 4	School Resumes
Jan. 15	End of Term 2
Jan. 18	PreK-12 Teacher Inservice (NO SCHOOL) Required PD day for hourly staff
Feb. 15	President's Day (NO SCHOOL)
Mar. 10	PreK-12 Teacher Inservice (NO SCHOOL) Required PD day for hourly staff
Mar. 19	End of Term 3
Mar. 22-26	Spring Break (NO SCHOOL)
Mar. 29	PreK-12 Teacher Inservice (NO SCHOOL)
Mar. 30	School Resumes
Apr. 30	PreK-12 Teacher Inservice (NO SCHOOL)
May 17	Teacher Conference Comp Day (NO SCHOOL)
May 28	End of Term 4
May 28	Graduation
May 31	Memorial Day - Holiday
June 1	PreK-12 Teacher Inservice
June 2	Teacher Workshop (PreK-12)

NO SCHOOL
 END OF TERM

Note: Inclement weather days will be made up in June (if additional days are needed after using e-learning days)



ANNOUNCEMENTS



Throughout the day, student information will be displayed on the television monitors in the hallway and cafeteria. This information includes, but is not limited to, extra-curricular information, lunch menus and important upcoming dates.

ARRIVAL AT SCHOOL

Our day begins at 8:00 at Willmar Middle School. Students who arrive at school before 7:30 will wait in the entryway. At 7:30 students will report to the following areas:

6th grade- Cafeteria

7th grade- New Gymnasium

8th grade- Academic hallways

Students should report to their first hour class when released from their supervised areas.

ATTENDANCE



Learning is increased by regular attendance. Students have the responsibility to maintain punctual, regular attendance. It is the responsibility of the student's parent or guardian to work cooperatively with the school and to inform the school in the event of a student's absence.

In Minnesota, if a student is absent from school, without a valid excuse, they are considered truant. Some important points about this definition are:

1. A student does not have to be absent for an entire day to be considered truant. The school reserves the right to determine if an absence is excusable.
2. Valid excuse from attendance at school is limited by the State of Minnesota to the following:
 - a. Illness, verified by the parent or guardian. A physician's verification will be needed after the tenth illness.
 - b. Health appointments, verified by a note from the visited professional, stating the date and time of the visit
 - c. An extreme family emergency, at the discretion of the school principal
 - d. Religious observance i.e., funeral, wedding, etc.
 - e. Appearance in court, verified with proper documentation

When your child is absent please refer to the following: [Policy 503](#)

- ❖ Call the Attendance Office answering service available 24 hours a day at **320-214-6006**. If you would like homework, make the request at this time. All requests should be made by 10:30 a.m.
- ❖ A letter will be required from a physician to excuse any illness related absent days after 10 cumulative days.
- ❖ When reporting an absence, please include the following information:
 1. Child's name
 2. Date of absence
 3. Reason for absence
 4. Name of person reporting the absence.
- ❖ Homework can be picked up in the office between 2:30 and 3:45 p.m.
- ❖ If you do not have a phone, parents may send a signed note with your child when he/she returns to school or come directly to the school office to report the absence.

Parents or guardians who choose to have their son or daughter absent from school for an extended period of time must make prior arrangements with school administration.



ATTENDANCE - MAKE-UP WORK

Arrangements for make-up work are to be made with each teacher. For pre-excused absences, make-up work will be arranged with each teacher prior to the period of absence. An incomplete will be placed on the report card for work not made up.

ATTENDANCE -TARDINESS POLICY

If you are tardy to 1st hour, you should report directly to the attendance office for a pass. Oversleeping, missing the bus, or not having a ride to school will be considered an unexcused tardy. Although our school day begins at 8:00 am, students need to arrive by 7:55 am to allow time to go to their lockers. Morning tardy passes will be issued beginning at 7:57 am. If you are tardy between classes, you are to go to your next class rather than report to the office for a pass. Arriving to class on time is important so that you do not miss out on learning.

1. Students who receive 10 or more tardies during the term a WMS dance/activity night is being held will not be allowed to attend. Each term will be a fresh start.

ATTENDANCE - UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

Three Unexcused Absences: Student are referred to the Kandiyohi County Truancy Mediation Program, other appropriate agencies may be notified, and alternative placement may be made.



BULLY PREVENTION

A safe and civil environment is needed for students to learn and attain high academic standards and to promote healthy human relationships. Bullying, like other violent or disruptive behavior, is conduct that interferes with a student's ability to learn and or a teacher's ability to educate students in a safe environment. The school district cannot monitor the activities of students at all times and eliminate all incidents of bullying between students, particularly when students are not under the direct supervision of school personnel. However, to the extent such conduct affects the educational environment of the school district and the rights and welfare of its students and is within the control of the school district in its normal operations, the school intends to prevent bullying and to take action to investigate, respond to, and to remediate, and discipline for those acts of bullying which have not been successfully prevented. The purpose of this policy is to assist the school district in its goal of preventing and responding to acts of bullying, intimidation, violence, reprisal, retaliation, and other similar disruptive and detrimental behavior. (Please refer to Policy 514 on the District Website for more details).

Students, staff and parents may report bullying to WMS staff or by using our confidential **Bully Prevention Hotline (320)214-6003**. [Bullying Prohibition 514](#)



BUS SAFETY



Buses will load and unload on the north side of the building according to the plan established by the bus manager.

Each year, our students participate in bus safety week. During that week, Willmar Public Schools' Bus Transportation is reviewed and a Bus Safety Test is administered.

Please refer to Bus Safety Competencies at the end of the handbook for more information.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS OR TELEPHONE

Students who have a change of address or telephone number during the school year are to report the change to the Guidance Office immediately at 214-6012. If you move in or out of School District No. 347, report this change to the office. Additionally, proof of address is required before the change can be finalized. **It is of the greatest importance to report the correct school district in which you live.**

CLOSED CAMPUS

This means that students may not leave the school grounds after they arrive in the morning without a pass. This includes walking to Cashwise, Walt's or other area businesses.



CONDUCT OF STUDENTS



Students of the Willmar Public Schools will be expected to conduct themselves at all times in a manner that will reflect credit upon themselves and their school. They will be expected to show respect for all school personnel and fellow students, and for both public and individual property. District policy will be referenced and followed for any serious misconduct while lesser offenses will be at the discretion of the principal or assistant principal.

Please refer to [District Policy 506](#)

We will spare no effort to maintain that positive learning environment.

We hope that students will spend a few minutes with their families discussing the following points. Being a member of the Willmar Middle School community means the following things:

- Being involved and productive, including attending school regularly, arriving to classes on time, and completing all assignments;
- Respecting the Willmar Middle School building and school property, including helping to keep the building clean by always disposing of trash in appropriate places;
- Being courteous to all students and staff members and respectful of their property;
- Valuing the ethnic, religious, and economic diversity of the Willmar community



DRESS AND GROOMING



Dress, grooming, and appearance should not interfere with or disrupt the educational process, distract from school activities or provide a hazard to students' safety or to the safety of others.

[Policy 504](#)

If the administration believes a student's appearance, grooming, or mode of dress interferes with or disrupts the educational process or school activities or poses a threat to the health or safety of the student or others, the student will be directed to make modifications. The office has a limited supply of clothing students can access if they are unable to find an alternative option. Parents or guardians may be asked to bring a change of clothes to school. A parent or guardian will be notified.



DRUGS, ALCOHOL, ETC.



The school is concerned for the health, safety, and well-being of the students, and about the problem of alcohol and drug abuse by some elements of the community; further, the school recognizes that the use, possession, distribution, or sale of alcohol or dangerous, illegal, or controlled substances constitutes a hazard to students and a disruptive effect on the school.

Thus, the student use, possession, distribution, or sale of alcohol or dangerous, illegal, or controlled drugs or drug paraphernalia is prohibited in all schools, on school grounds at school-sponsored activities, on student trips, or when students are being transported in vehicles dispatched by the district.

Students selling, in possession of, or under the influence of any of the above will be subject to immediate suspension and other disciplinary action deemed necessary to maintain a safe environment (i.e. referral to law enforcement, expulsion).

ELECTRONICS

Students shall turn off personal devices and place in their lockers any and all personal electronic devices upon arrival to school. They may use these items at the end of the school day. Failure to follow this policy will result in the confiscation of the item. Parents will be expected to pick these items up at the main office.

Students are required to adhere to the school's policy regarding iPad usage, which stipulates that iPads are to be used solely for assigned school coursework. Additionally, students are prohibited from engaging in inappropriate internet searches.



FEES



Materials that are part of the basic educational program are provided with state, federal, and local funds at no charge to a student. Students are expected to provide their own pencils, pens, paper, erasers, notebooks, and other personal items. Students may be required to pay certain other fees or deposits, including (not an inclusive list):

- Admission fees or charges for extracurricular activities, where attendance is optional and where the admission fees or charges a student must pay to attend or participate in an extracurricular activity are the same for all students, regardless of whether the student is enrolled in a public or a home school.
- Cost for materials for a class project that exceeds minimum requirements and is kept by the student.
- Security deposits for the return of materials, supplies, or equipment.
- Personal physical education and athletic equipment and apparel.
- Annual year book
- Field trips considered supplementary to the district's educational program.
- Admission fees or costs to attend or participate in optional extracurricular activities and programs.
- Use of musical instruments owned or rented by the school district.
- Transportation to and from school for students living within two miles of school.
- Transportation of students to and from optional extracurricular activities or post-secondary instruction conducted at locations other than school.



GANG AWARENESS



Clothing, writing, hand signs reflecting gang affiliations will be dealt with accordingly:

1st Offense - Conference with student. Parent notified.

2nd Offense - Dismissed for the day. Parent notified.

3rd Offense - Conference with student, Two-day out-of-school suspension. Parent notified.

HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE PROHIBITION

The school district strives to maintain a learning and working environment free from harassment and violence on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, gender, age, marital status, familial status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, or disability. The school district prohibits any form of harassment or violence on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, gender, age, marital status, familial status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, or disability.

HAZING POLICY

Willmar Public Schools Definition: "Hazing" means committing an act against a student, or coercing a student into committing an act, that creates a substantial risk of harm to a person, including initiating or harassing students by means of horseplay, practical jokes, or other acts often in the nature of humiliating or painful ordeals.

Examples of hazing may include but are not limited to:

- a. committing an act against a student, or coercing a student into committing an act, that creates a substantial risk of harm to a person in order to be initiated into or affiliated with a student organization or for any reason.
- b. taping, marking, name-calling, cyber hazing

"Student organization" means a group, club, or organization having students as its primary members or participants.



HEALTH SERVICES



Healthy students are better learners. School health services are provided to promote and maintain the health and safety of all students and staff. The school health office is a first aid station for students who become ill or are injured during school hours. Students are required to have a pass from their teacher to be in the health office. If a student is too ill to attend classes or has sustained a serious injury, a parent/guardian will be notified to arrange for the student to be taken home. Only basic first aid procedures are administered at school. The school does not transport ill or injured students and an ambulance will be called only in extreme situations. To avoid disciplinary actions, authorization from a parent/guardian is required prior to a student leaving the building.

Parents are requested to provide updated health information at the beginning of the school year regarding health problems, medications and allergies. During the school year, please notify the school health office about infectious diseases, major illness, or injuries for your child.

[Health Office: 320-214-6018](tel:320-214-6018)

[General MS Nurse Email: msnurse@willmar.k12.mn.us](mailto:msnurse@willmar.k12.mn.us)

MEDICATIONS:

If your child requires medications to be administered at school, a physician's order and written parent/guardian's permission must be provided to the nursing office along with the medication in a properly labeled container. NO medications will be provided by the school. If a student requires an "as needed" medication, such as acetaminophen, ibuprofen, or cough drops, they must have their own supply. These should be stored in the health office. The school is not responsible for administration of these medications unless they are accompanied by a physician's order. ALL medications MUST BE picked up on or prior to the last day of school each year or they will be disposed of. No medications will be stored at the school over the summer months. [516 STUDENT MEDICATION](#)

IMMUNIZATIONS:

MN State Law requires written proof of immunizations or legal exemptions. Willmar Public Schools adheres to a "No Shots - No School" Policy. All students must have the required immunizations, be actively in the process to receive the series, or have proper documentation of medical exemption or conscientious objection in order to attend school. It is every parent/guardian's responsibility to verify their child's immunizations are up-to-date.



HOMEWORK/PRACTICE/GRADING

- The assignments we give have value for learning and are attached to goals and standards.
- The homework we give is relevant to improve, practice, or review learning goals and standards.
- We only grade assignments that have value for learning and are connected to learning goals and standards.
- Reteaching as well as redoing and retesting are necessary to ensure student success.

LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN

The Willmar Public Schools Language Access Plan can be viewed by clicking [HERE](#).



NON-DISCRIMINATION



The school district is committed to inclusive education and providing an equal educational opportunity for all students. The school district does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, parental status, status with regard to public assistance, disability, sexual orientation, including gender identity and expression, or age in its programs and activities. The school board has designated Liz Windingstad, HR director, as the district's human rights officer to handle inquiries regarding nondiscrimination.

NOTICE OF VIOLENT BEHAVIOR BY STUDENTS

The school district will give notice to teachers and other appropriate school district staff before students with a history of violent behavior are placed in their classrooms. Prior to giving this notice, district officials will inform the student's parent or guardian that the notice will be given. The student's parents/guardians have the right to review and challenge their child's records, including the data documenting the history of violent behavior.



PARENT RIGHT TO KNOW



If a parent requests it, the school district will provide information regarding the professional qualifications of his/her child's classroom teachers, including, at a minimum, the following:

- whether the teacher has met state qualifications and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction;
- whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or other provisional licensing status through which state qualification or licensing criteria have been waived;
- 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 certification or degree;
- whether the student is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

In addition, the school district will provide parents with information as to the level of achievement of their child in each of the state academic assessments. The school district will provide notice to parents if their child has been assigned to, or taught for four or more consecutive weeks by, a teacher who is not highly qualified.



PHYSICAL EDUCATION



WMS students are required to wear uniforms during all Physical Education classes. The PE uniforms (shirts and shorts) will be provided by the school and will be paid for out of the student's registration fee. Uniform clothing after the provided pair will cost an additional fee.

All students are expected to participate in Physical Education. If an injury or illness prevents a student from participation, a doctor's note is required.

Swimming is a valuable skill and all students are expected to participate. If a student cannot swim for personal reasons, a parent note is required for exemption.

Each student is assigned a combination locker in the locker room. It is the student's responsibility to keep personal belongings locked up at all times. The middle school is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Students will recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States of America weekly. Any person who does not wish to participate in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance for any personal reason may elect not to do so. Students must respect another person's right to make that choice. Students will also receive instruction in the proper etiquette toward, correct display of, and respect for the flag.



SEARCHES



In the interest of student safety and to ensure that schools are drug free, district authorities may conduct searches. Students violate school policy when they carry contraband on their person or in their personal possessions or store contraband in desks, lockers, or vehicles parked on school property. “Contraband” means any unauthorized item, the possession of which is prohibited by school district policy and/or law. If a search yields contraband, school officials will seize the item(s) and, when appropriate, give the item(s) to legal officials for ultimate disposition. Students found to be in violation of this policy are subject to discipline in accordance with the school district’s “Student Discipline” policy, which may include suspension, exclusion, expulsion, and, when appropriate, the student may be referred to legal officials.

The personal possessions of a student and/or a student’s person may be searched when school officials have a reasonable suspicion that the search will uncover a violation of law or school rules. The search will be reasonable in its scope and intrusiveness.



LOCKERS



A numbered locker with a permanent combination lock will be assigned to you when you register. We strongly urge you **not** to share your combination with anyone.

1. Under Minnesota law, school lockers are school district property. At no time does the school district relinquish its exclusive control of lockers provided for students' convenience. School officials may inspect the interior of lockers for any reason at any time, without notice, without student consent, and without a search warrant. Students' personal possessions within a school locker may be searched only when school officials have a reasonable suspicion that the search will uncover evidence of a violation of law or school rules. As soon as practicable after the search of a student's personal possessions, the school officials will provide notice of the search to students whose lockers were searched, unless disclosure would impede an ongoing investigation by police or school officials.
2. Excessive slamming of the doors and abuse to lockers result in damage. Lockers should be kept neat and clean. Stickers or other items are usually permanent and are damaging to lockers. Students may be fined for damage caused to their lockers.
3. Students are not allowed to share lockers.

STUDENT PICK UP

Parents picking up students after school hours should do so in the circle drive in front (south) side of the school, moving forward with direction of school personnel. The back (north) side is used for bus loading.



STUDENT PUBLICATIONS AND MATERIALS



The school district's policy is to protect students' free speech rights while, at the same time, preserving the district's obligation to provide a learning environment that is free of disruption. All school publications are under the supervision of the building principal and/or sponsor. Non School-sponsored publications may not be distributed without prior approval.

STUDENT RECORDS

Student records are classified as public, private, or confidential. State and federal laws protect student records from unauthorized inspection or use and provide parents/guardians and eligible students with certain rights. For the purposes of student records, an "eligible" student is one who is 18 or older or who is enrolled in an institution of post-secondary education. For more information on the rights of parents/guardians and eligible students regarding student records, see "Student Records" (*Appendix 3*). A complete copy of the school district's "Protection and Privacy of Pupil Records" policy may be obtained at www.willmar.k12.mn.us.

STUDENT SURVEYS

Occasionally, the school district utilizes surveys to obtain student opinions and information about students. For complete information on the rights of parents/guardians and eligible students about conducting surveys, collection, and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical examinations. A complete copy of the school district's "Student Surveys" policy may be obtained at www.willmar.k12.mn.us.



TOBACCO/VAPING

MN Statute 144.4165: No person shall at any time smoke, chew, otherwise ingest tobacco, or carry or use an activated electronic delivery device in a public school, or on public school grounds. Students selling, in possession of, or under the influence of the above will be subject to disciplinary action deemed necessary to maintain a safe environment.

Minimum Action: notification of police who will issue a citation and notification of parents/guardians.

Maximum Action: repeated violations may result in suspension or expulsion in addition to police notification.

VISITORS

All visitors are required to check in at the Student Services Window. All visitors to WMS will receive a visitor's badge and are required to wear it throughout their visit.



SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMS



(Breakfast and Lunch)

The Willmar Middle School has a closed lunch period. Students must have a student Personal Identification Number (PIN Number) to eat in the cafeteria. Breakfast and Lunch Menus are planned by the Director of Food and Nutrition Services, Assistant Director, and Head Cooks at each site. Input for menus is received from students, parents and school staff. Menus are planned to meet the Meal Pattern Requirements for Breakfast and Lunch established by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Minnesota Department of Education (MDE). Our goal is to serve quality, nutritious meals to all students and to encourage healthy eating habits. **Please let us know by calling 320-231-8560 if your child has any special dietary needs.**

[534 SCHOOL MEALS POLICY](#)

Special Dietary Needs

If your child has any special diet needs, please have your medical provider fill out a special diet form and review our special Dietary Needs Policy found on the district website under our Food and Nutrition page. Special diet forms do not need to be renewed annually unless something has changed. Lactose-Free, Soy, or Almond Milk will be provided upon receiving a written request from parents and/or guardians. Contact the Assistant Director of Food and Nutrition Services at 320-231-8560 with any questions.



2026-2027 Pricing



Breakfast and lunch meals will be free for enrolled students this upcoming school year. This covers ONE breakfast and ONE lunch. Any additional items or second entrees will be charged based on our ala carte price lists.

Pricing:

Student Breakfast	FREE
Student Lunch	FREE
Additional Milk	\$0.75
Adult Price Meals	\$2.50 - Breakfast \$5.15 - Lunch (May change based on MDE requirements)
Ala Carte Pricing	Price Range \$0.25 - \$2.50



Free and Reduced Meal Applications



Even though meals are free for the 2026-2027 school year, we encourage all households, who do not qualify directly with the state and did not receive a letter confirming so from the district, to apply for educational benefits.

If your family qualifies, your family may be eligible for these additional benefits: reduced testing fees, reduced athletic fees, scholarships, and the SUN bucks program.

You can get an application from your school office, District Office (WEAC) or online at www.willmar.k12.mn.us. You can also complete the Application for Educational Benefits (Free and Reduced Meal Application) online through your Parent Portal Account.

Meal Account Balances

We operate on a pre-paid system, meaning that meal charging is not allowed by School Board Policy. Second meals and ala carte items must be paid for by depositing money into the student's meal account or the student having cash in hand before meals are served. It is very important to stay current on your meal account. With meals being free this school year, we are still encouraging households to put money on their child(ren's) account so they are able to purchase ala carte items, second meals, or snack bar items. Accounts will not be allowed to be charged unless funds are available.

If you have a remaining balance that you will not use this school year and you'd like to donate it to help households in need pay off their balance from the prior year, please contact us at 320-231-8526.



Managing Meal Account Payments



You have several options when it comes to managing the payment method on your meal accounts. Each student has their own meal account. **All payments will be distributed equally between your students unless you notify Food and Nutrition Services otherwise.**

Parent Portal – You will need a Parent Portal in order to make online payments. By signing up for Parent Portal you will be able to view the balance, check the activity of your student's meal account and make online payments. If you do not have access to the Parent Portal, please pick up an application at your student's school office or print one off from the District Website, under the Parents section, select Campus Portal, then scroll down to select the Parent Portal Activation Request.

WEAC (District Office) – You may drop off payments at our District Office between 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday at 611 5th Street SW, Willmar, MN. In most cases this payment is applied immediately, but it can take up to 24 hours to be applied.

WEAC (District Office) Drop Box – We have a drop box located at the front of the building where you can drop off meal payments anytime. In most cases all payments received by 9:30 a.m. will be on your student's account before Lunch, but it can take up to 24 hours to be applied so please plan accordingly.

Student's School Office – You may send money with your student to school. These funds need to be brought to the office before 9:00 a.m. in order to be entered on your student's account the same day. If your payment is received after 9:00 a.m. it will take up to 24 hours to be applied.

Auto withdrawal- We offer Automatic Withdrawal from a checking or savings account. You may choose to have money withdrawn once or twice a month. Please be sure to fill out a new form each school year and include a voided check or voided withdrawal slip.



Breakfast Option

Students and staff can access Breakfast in the Cafeteria or the classroom (if this option is available) each morning. Students in 6th, 7th and 8th grades are given time to eat breakfast by grade level according to the school schedule.

Lunch Site Options

Students and staff will have access to two Main Lines with a Second Choice and an Alternate Line. We also have our Salad Bar Line with a hot entree and full salad bar. Serving line options may depend on staffing and supply chain. Students may purchase a second meal at the current adult meal price or additional ala carte item price (prices vary). Money must be in your child(ren's) account or in hand in order to purchase ala carte items or anything from the snack bar.

Meals from Home

The School District encourages parents, if you want to send a meal from home, to pack healthy lunches and snacks and refrain from including beverages and foods without nutritional value per the District's Wellness Policy.

The Policy can be found on the District Website under Policies.

If a Fast Food meal is brought in, the parent/guardian and child will eat in a designated area outside of the Cafeteria. If you bring a meal from home you may purchase milk for \$0.75 per carton.



PIN Numbers

Each Student has their own PIN Number that they are given at the start of their school career. Your student will use the same PIN number every school year. Students enter their PIN Number into a keypad, which is matched with a student photo. **Your PIN Number is confidential – please do not share this number with other students.**

School Meals Policy #534:

The United States Department of Agriculture and Minnesota Department of Education, who oversee the School Nutrition Programs, require a copy of the school district's Unpaid Meal Charges Policy #534 be shared with you for your reference. Please find a copy on the following three pages. The School District's Unpaid Meal Charges Policy can also be found on the District's Website under Food and Nutrition Services, then Policies.

For more information regarding School Nutrition Programs and forms you might need, please call the Food and Nutrition Services office at 320-231-8526, or email the district at wpsfns@willmar.k12.mn.us.

534 SCHOOL MEALS POLICY

[Note: In 2021, the Minnesota legislature amended Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.111, to require that Minnesota school districts that participate in the national school lunch program adopt a school meals policy. In 2023, the Minnesota legislature amended the statute to create the free school meals program].

[Note: This MSBA/MASA model policy is drafted to be consistent for all grade levels. However, local school districts may vary the meal charge policy for elementary, middle, and high schools.]

[Note: School districts must follow appropriate debt collection practices when attempting to recover unpaid a la carte items or second meal charges.]

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of these procedures is to ensure that students receive healthy and nutritious meals through the school district's nutrition program and that school district employees, families and students have a shared understanding of expectations regarding meal charges. The policy of the school district is to provide meals to students in a respectful manner and to maintain the dignity of students by prohibiting lunch shaming or otherwise ostracizing the student. The policy seeks to allow students to receive the nutrition they need to stay focused during the school day and minimize identification of students with insufficient funds to pay for a la carte items or second meals as well as to maintain the financial integrity of the school nutrition program.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT

1. Willmar Public School's goal is to provide nutritious meals to students to promote healthy eating habits and enhance learning.
2. Willmar Public Schools will offer Breakfast and Lunch meals that meet state and federal guidelines.
3. If the school district receives school lunch aid under Minnesota Statutes §section 124D.111, it must make lunch available without charge to all participating students who qualify for free or reduced-price meals regardless of account balance.
4. The meal accounting system at the Willmar Public Schools is a PRE-PAID SYSTEM. All meals are paid for by depositing money into the meal account before meals are served.

III. PAYMENT OF MEALS

- A. When an account is in a negative status or has a balance of zero, no ala carte items or second entrées will be allowed to be charged to a student's account. If the purchase of ala carte items will make the student's account negative, the purchase will not be allowed. Students may use cash for snack bar or ala carte purchases as they wish.

Families can add money to their student's accounts through Parent Portal, at the school office, at the WEAC building, or via phone at 230-231-8516 or 320-231-8526. Payments can also be sent in the mail to:

Willmar Public Schools
ATTN: Food and Nutrition
611 5th St SW
Willmar, MN 56201

If the school district participates in the United States Department of Agriculture National School Lunch program and has an Identified Student Percentage below the federal percentage determined for all meals to be reimbursed at the free rate via the Community Eligibility Provision must participate in the free school meals program.

- B. A school that participates in the United States Department of Agriculture National School Lunch program and has an Identified Student Percentage at or above the federal percentage determined for all meals to be reimbursed at the free rate must participate in the federal Community Eligibility Provision in order to participate in the free school meals program.
- C. Each school that participates in the free school meals program must:
 - (1) participate in the United States Department of Agriculture School Breakfast Program and the United States Department of Agriculture National School Lunch Program; and
 - (2) provide to all students at no cost up to two federally reimbursable meals per school day, with a maximum of one free breakfast and one free lunch.
- D. Once a meal has been placed on a student's tray or otherwise served to a student, the reimbursable meal may not be subsequently withdrawn from the student by the cashier or other school official, whether or not the student has an outstanding meals balance. Second entrées and/or ala carte items

are not a part of the reimbursable meal and may be removed if a student does not have adequate funds to cover the cost.

- E. When a student has a negative account balance, the student will not be allowed to charge a snack item.
- F. When money is placed into a meal account, negative balances will be paid off first before money is distributed within the household.

IV. LOW OR NEGATIVE ACCOUNT BALANCES – NOTIFICATION

The school district will make reasonable efforts to notify families when meal account balances are low or fall below zero.

- A. **Low Balance:** Food and Nutrition Services considers a \$10.00 balance a "low balance".
 - a. The FNS Business Coordinator will operate the automated calling and email systems as follows:
 - 1) Accounts with a negative balance are notified on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays
 - 2) Accounts with a \$.00-\$10.00 balance are notified on Tuesdays and Thursdays.
 - b. The FNS Business Coordinator will invoice all student meal accounts with a negative \$15.00 balance or more every month or as needed. Households may set up a payment plan if they are unable to pay off the entire balance.
- B. **Application for Educational Benefits:**
 - a. Families may fill out an application for educational benefits anytime during the school year. Meals will remain free, despite qualifications. Meal applications are distributed to all families in the district prior to the start of the school year. In addition, applications are available at the district office, via Infinite Campus Parent Portal, and on the district website at www.willmar.k12.mn.us.
 - b. If household income or size changes, families can submit a new application anytime during the school year.
 - c. When assistance is needed to resolve these requests, it will be provided by the principal, social worker, food and nutrition staff, or an interpreter upon request.
- C. **Notification of Account Status:**
 - a. All Sites:
 1. Reminders for payment of outstanding student meal balances will not demean or stigmatize any student participating in the school lunch program, including, but not limited to, dumping meals, withdrawing a meal that has been served, announcing or listing students' names publicly, or affixing stickers, stamps, or pins.
 2. Parents/guardians may call 231-8516 or 231-8526 on any school day and find out how much money is remaining in their account. Families can check their student's meal account balance via Infinite Campus Parent Portal.

V. UNPAID MEAL CHARGES

The District will follow all applicable state and federal laws related to the collections of debts by public entities in seeking to recover unpaid balances. Students will always be served a meal regardless of unpaid food service accounts. Adults will be required to have money in their account or cash on hand to receive a meal.

- A. The school district will make reasonable efforts to communicate with families to resolve the matter of unpaid charges. Where appropriate, families may be encouraged to apply for free or reduced-price meals for their children.
- B. The school district will make reasonable efforts to collect unpaid meal charges classified as delinquent debt. Unpaid meal charges are designated as delinquent debt when payment is overdue, the debt is considered collectable, and efforts are being made to collect it.

When a household's student meal account reaches negative \$100.00 or below and no response is received from the household from the notification options listed in Section III, the below actions will be taken in the following order:

- A. The Food and Nutrition Services Business Coordinator will contact the building principal if no payment is received. The building principal or their designee will contact the family and review with them their responsibility to provide meals for their student.
- B. If no response is received by the building principal within two weeks, a certified letter will be sent to the household with unpaid meal account balances notifying them that the District will file a claim in Conciliation Court against the household as a means to retrieve unpaid balances. If the District files such a claim in Conciliation Court, it will also request that it be reimbursed by the household for any and all fees and costs it incurs in the case. At any point during or after this process of reaching the

household, all students will continue to receive their reimbursable breakfast and lunch meals regardless of their account balance.

- C. If no response is received from the household within two weeks after the certified letter has been sent, the District will move forward with the Conciliation Court process.
- D. The school district will not impose any other restriction prohibited under Minnesota. Statutes, section 123B.37 due to unpaid student meal balances. The school district will not limit a student's participation in any school activities, graduation ceremonies, field trips, athletics, activity clubs, or other extracurricular activities or access to materials, technology, or other items provided to students due to an unpaid student meal balance.
- E. The school district may not enlist the assistance of non-school district employees, such as volunteers, to engage in debt collection efforts.

VI. COMMUNICATION OF POLICY

This policy and any pertinent supporting information will be provided in writing (i.e. mail, email, back to school packet, student handbook, etc.) by Food and Nutrition Services to:

- 1. All households at or before the start of the school year,
- 2. Students and families who transfer into the school district, at the time of enrollment, and
- 3. All school district personnel responsible for enforcing this policy.
- 4. The school district will post the policy on the school district's website, in addition to providing the required written notification above.
- 5. If the school district contracts with a third party for its meal services, it will provide the vendor with its school meal policy. The school district will ensure that any third-party provider with whom the school district enters into either an original or modified contract after July 1, 2021, adheres to the school district's school meals policy.

Legal References: Minn. Stat. § 123B.37 (Prohibited Fees)
Minn. Stat. § 124D.111, Lunch Aid; Food Service Accounting
42 U.S.C. § 1751 *et seq.* (Healthy and Hunger-Free Kids Act)
7 C.F.R. § 210 *et seq.* (School Lunch Program Regulations)
7 C.F.R. § 220.8 (School Breakfast Program Regulations)
USDA Policy Memorandum SP 46-2016, Unpaid Meal Charges: Local Meal Charge Policies (2016)
USDA Policy Memorandum SP 47-2016, Unpaid Meal Charges: Clarification on Collection of Delinquent Meal Payments (2016)
USDA Policy Memorandum SP 23-2017, Unpaid Meal Charges: Guidance and Q&A

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202)720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800)877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complaint should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at:

<https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDA-OASCR%20P-Complaint-Form-0508-0002-508-11-2-5-17FAX2Mail.pdf> from any USDA office, by calling (866)632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA.

The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washing D.C. 20250-9410; or
- (2) fax: (833)256-1665 or (202)690-7442; or
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider



Title IX Sex Nondiscrimination Policy, Grievance Procedure and Process

[School District Policy 522](#)



The school district does not discriminate on the basis of sex in its education programs or activities, and it is required by Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, and its implementing regulations, not to discriminate in such a manner. The requirement not to discriminate in its education program or activity extends to admission and employment. The school district is committed to maintaining an education and work environment that is free from discrimination based on sex, including sexual harassment.

Any student, parent, or guardian having questions regarding the application of Title IX and its regulations and/or this policy and grievance process should discuss them with the Title IX Coordinator. The school district's Title IX Coordinator(s) is:

Elizabeth Windingstad, Human Resources Director

320 231-8520, windingstade@willmar.k12.mn.us

Willmar District Office, 611 5th St. SW, Willmar, MN 56201

Questions relating solely to Title IX and its regulations may be referred to the Title IX Coordinator(s), the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights of the United States Department of Education, or both.



WEAPONS



It is a violation of the policy of Independent School District #347 for any individual to knowingly or voluntarily possess, store in an area subject to one's control, handle, transmit, or use any instrument that is considered a weapon or destructive device or a "look-alike" weapon or destructive device in school, on school grounds, at school activities, at bus stops, in school vehicles, or entering upon or departing from school premises, property or events. Weapons and destructive devices will not be tolerated. Any student found in possession of such weapons may be expelled for up to one calendar year.

[School Weapons Policy](#)

WITHDRAWAL FROM SCHOOL

A student planning to withdraw from school for any reason must bring a written statement from the parents or guardian to the Guidance Office. He/she will then be given a withdrawal form. This form must be signed by all of the student's teachers and the Media Center before being returned to the office. Refunds and unpaid fines or fees will be considered at this time. Upon leaving the school in good standing, the student will be given a transfer letter for admittance to the next school.



BUS SAFETY COMPETENCIES



1. **TRANSPORTATION IS A PRIVILEGE NOT A RIGHT.** (M.S. 123.801)

*A student's eligibility to ride a school bus may be revoked for a violation of school bus safety or conduct policies.

2. **THE SCHOOL BUS IS AN EXTENSION OF THE CLASSROOM.**

*District conduct and discipline policies apply to the school bus and to bus stop areas as well as to school buildings and grounds.

3. **APPROPRIATE CONDUCT WHILE ON THE BUS.**

*Be on time.

*Stay out of the "Danger Zone."

*Follow the driver's and monitor's instructions.

*Always stay seated.

*Be courteous. No fighting, swearing, or yelling.

*No eating or drinking.

*Keep the bus clean. Do not damage the bus.

*Keep your hands and arms inside the bus windows.

*No pets or dangerous objects allowed on the bus.

*Windows are not to be lowered below the black safety line indicated on each bus.



BUS SAFETY COMPETENCIES



4. THE DANGER ZONE

- *The “Danger Zone” is the area within 10 feet of the bus.
- *The two areas which are the most dangerous, due to limited driver visibility, are the right rear and the front of the bus.

5. PROCEDURES FOR SAFELY BOARDING AND LEAVING THE SCHOOL BUS.

- *Be on time.
- *Always line up single file to board (no pushing or shoving).
- *Do not approach the bus until the driver opens the door.
- *Use the handrail.
- *Take one step at a time.
- *Be seated quickly.
- *Remain seated until the bus stops at your stop.
- *Walk to the door.
- *Use the handrail.
- *Take one step at a time.
- *Move out of the “Danger Zone.
- *If you must cross the street, wait for the driver’s instruction or signal.
- *Go directly home.



BUS SAFETY COMPETENCIES



6. PROCEDURES FOR THE SAFE CROSSING OF VEHICLE LANES.

- *Move away from the side of the bus (if you can touch the bus, you are too close.)
- *As you move away from the bus, move to a point at least 10 feet in front of the bus.
- *Turn toward the driver and make eye contact (see that the driver sees you.)
- *Wait for the driver to signal you that it is safe to cross (either by the public address or by hand signal.)
- *Walk 10 feet in front of the bus, stopping to check for vehicles that might violate the stop arm.
- *When it is safe, complete the crossing.

7. SCHOOL BUS EVACUATIONS AND OTHER EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

- *There are three different evacuation plans:
 - a. using only the front service door
 - b. using only the rear (or side) emergency door
 - c. using both the service door and emergency door
- *All students should know the location and basic function of the emergency equipment
- *In a real emergency, students should leave personal belongings on the bus.
- *Students should gather in a group in a safe area about 100 feet away from the bus



Statewide Assessments



Statewide Assessments:

Parent/Guardian Participation Guide and Refusal Information

Your student's participation in statewide assessments is important as it allows your school and district to ensure all students have access to a high-quality education. In the past, students with disabilities and English learners were often excluded from statewide assessments. When all students participate in statewide assessments, schools and educators have more information to see how all students are doing. This helps schools continuously improve the education they provide and identify groups, grades, or subjects that may need additional support.

Assessments Connect to Standards

Statewide assessments are based on the [Minnesota Academic Standards](#) or the [WIDA English Language Development Standards](#). These standards define the knowledge and skills students should be learning in K-12 districts and charter schools. Minnesota prioritizes high-quality education, and statewide assessments give educators and leaders an opportunity to evaluate student and school success.

Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs)

MCA and the alternate assessments (Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS)/Alternate MCA) are annual assessments in reading, mathematics, and science that provide a snapshot of student learning aligned to the Minnesota K-12 Academic Standards.

WIDA ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS for English Learners

The WIDA ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS are the annual assessments for English learners that provide information about their progress in learning academic English, based on the WIDA English Language Development Standards.

Statewide Assessments Help Families and Students

Participating in statewide assessments gives families a snapshot of their student's learning so they can advocate for their success in school. High school students may use MCA results for:

- Postsecondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) enrollment eligibility in grade 10.
- Course placement at a Minnesota State college or university. If students receive a college-ready score, they may not need to take a remedial, noncredit course for that subject.

English learners who take the WIDA ACCESS or WIDA Alternate ACCESS and meet certain requirements have the opportunity to exit from EL services.

Taking Statewide Assessments Helps Your Student's School

Statewide assessments provide information to your school and district about how all students are engaging with the content they learn in school. This information helps:

- Educators evaluate their instructional materials.
- Schools and districts identify inequities between groups, explore root causes, and implement supports.
- School and district leaders make decisions on how to use money and resources to support all students.

Student Participation in Statewide Assessments

Student participation in state and locally required assessments is a parent/guardian choice. If you choose to have your student not participate in a statewide assessment, please provide a reason for your decision on the following page. Contact your student's school to learn more about locally required assessments.

Updated March 2026

Consequences of Not Participating in Statewide Assessments

- The student will not receive an individual score. For WIDA ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS, the student will not have the opportunity to exit from EL services.
- School and district assessment results will be incomplete, making it more difficult to have an accurate picture of student learning.
- Certain statewide assessment calculations include all eligible students, including those who do not participate. Non-participation impacts accountability results, which may affect the school's ability to be identified for support or recognized for success.

Check with your local school or district to see if there are any additional consequences for not participating.

Explore the
[Statewide
Testing page](#)
for more
information.

([education.mn.gov](#) > Students
and Families > Programs and
Initiatives > Statewide Testing)

Additional Information

- On average, students spend less than 1% of instructional time taking statewide assessments each year.
- Minnesota Statutes limit the total amount of time students can spend taking other district- or school-wide assessments to 11 hours or less each school year, depending on the grade.
- School districts and charter schools are required to publish an assessment calendar on their website by October 1 each school year. Refer to your district or charter school's website for more information on assessments.

Statewide Assessments: Parent/Guardian Decision Not to Participate

By completing this form, you are acknowledging that your student will not participate in statewide assessments and will not receive individual assessment results. **This form must be submitted to your student's school or district office prior to testing.**

First Name:		Middle Initial:		Last Name:	
Date of Birth:		Current Grade in School:		Student ID Number (if known):	
School:			District:		
Parent/Guardian Name (print):					
Parent/Guardian Signature:				Date:	
Reason for Refusal:					

Please indicate the statewide assessment(s) your student will not participate in this school year:

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Reading MCA/Alternate MCA | ☐ Science MCA/Alternate MCA |
| ☐ Mathematics MCA/MTAS | ☐ WIDA ACCESS/WIDA Alternate ACCESS |

Contact your school or district for more information on participation decisions for local assessments.

(Note: This form is only applicable for the 20 to 20 school year.)

Updated March 2026