Park Rapids Area School District



2026-2027 Substitute Handbook

Park Rapids Area School District #309
Park Rapids, Minnesota 56470
www.parkrapids.k12.mn.us

Dear Substitute,

Welcome to the Park Rapids Area School District!

It is our belief that substitute teachers are one of the essential keys to a successful education for all students. You are about to begin the day with various classes and strange faces. You may not know where to go or what adventures the day could possibly bring.

The purpose of this substitute handbook is to help your day run smoothly and to answer some of the questions you may have. Please review this handbook and feel free to ask any staff member questions. We hope you have a great day.

Please let us know if you have any suggestions and concerns.

Thank you!

Mike LeMier, Century School Principal
Annie Minske, Century Elementary School Assistant Principal
Mark Frank, High School Assistant Principal
Jeff Johnson, Park Rapids High School Principal

The Top 10 Points of Substituting

1. *Please follow set staff hours at each site.*
2. *Early dismissal: Please remain at site until released by site administrator.*
3. *Please check in and out in the main office.*
4. *Rooms left in an orderly manner are appreciated.*
5. *Please leave feedback for the teacher within the Aesop site.*
6. *Corrected papers are appreciated.*
7. *Following lesson plans is important and leads to consistency for students.*
8. *Parental concerns should be referred to the classroom teacher or office.*
9. *Data privacy is important to maintain.*
10. *Smile… And make it a great day of teaching and learning!*

"The mission of Independent School District 309 is to work together to prepare today's learners for tomorrow's challenges through: sharing of ideas and acceptance of diversity, efficient use of resources, including staff, finances, curriculum, physical plant, technology and area wide support services, thereby providing for maximum academic and personal growth."

SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTHORITY

All employees and students at Park Rapids Area School District have the responsibility to enforce school regulations. The principal, teachers, secretaries, nurse, cooks, custodians, bus drivers, student supervisors, paraprofessionals and fellow students have the right and responsibility to correct those who violate school rules.

The Park Rapids School District contracts substitute teachers, paraprofessionals, secretarial, and health services positions with ESS. Those substitutes that are provided by ESS should refer to ESS for additional policies.

This handbook and its contents were approved by the Park Rapids School Board of Education at its meeting on August 24, 2026.

This handbook may be changed or amended during the school year. Changes will be posted on the district website. If you have any questions about a provision, contact the building principal. Changes may be made at any time. For more information, check the district website at www.parkrapids.k12.mn.us. If the information in this handbook differs from the District Policy Manual, the District Policy Manual will be assumed to be correct.

The Park Rapids School District 309 does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex or disability.

Telephone Numbers

Superintendent: Lance Bagstad	*237-6501*
Human Resources: Marie Frost	*237-6508*
Century School	
Century Principal: Mike LeMier	*237-6330*
Century Assistant Principal, Annie Minske	*237-6220*
Elementary Office: McKenzie Spain Brist	*237-6200*
Middle School Office: Sherri Gottsman	*237-6300*
High School	
High School Principal: Jeff Johnson	*237-6440*
High School Assistant Principal: Mark Frank	*255-5411*
High School Office: Dotti Seifert	*237-6400*

ATTENDANCE

Providing service to the students of this district is the reason this district exists. When accepting an assignment in Red Rover, please make sure that you are able to fulfill that job. In the event that you are not able to fulfill that job please log on to Red Rover and cancel your assignment. If it is past the cutoff time for you to be able to cancel your assignment, please contact Julie Lovin, onsite Account Manager with ESS at 218-580-0359 or jlovin@ess.com.

ABUSE AND NEGLECT

School district employees and ESS substitutes are mandated by state law to report all suspected cases of physical, mental, sexual abuse and neglect of children to the Human Services Center and/or the Law Enforcement Center. Confidentiality of the reporter and the reports will be maintained.

ACCIDENTS: STAFF

All District contracted substitute staff members, including; Food Service, Custodial, Bus Drivers and Recess Monitor are covered under Worker's Compensation for injuries incurred while on duty. Report any such injury to your school office immediately. Reports must be submitted to the district office within 24 hours.
ESS substitutes must report any injuries directly to ESS within 24 hours of an injury at 877.983.2244.

ACCIDENTS: STUDENTS

1. *Administer first aid.*
2. *Notify the nurse.*
3. *The nurse will contact the parent / guardian. The nurse will keep a record of cases referred to the office and file the necessary accident report.*

BASIC DAY

The teacher day runs 7:30am to 3:30pm or 8:00am to 4:00pm. The paraprofessional day will run 7:45am-3:15pm. ESS Substitutes, who leave early, if at all necessary, must have permission from the principal.
For proper classroom atmosphere and student control, it is necessary for all ESS substitutes to be in their classrooms when the students arrive. ESS substitutes are asked to arrive 15 minutes prior to the start of the day. Substitute teachers should exercise supervision over dismissals, lunch and passing to and from classes as the regular teacher would during the day.

BULLYING

1. Bullying is intimidating, threatening, abusive or hurtful conduct
2. It is objectively offensive and
3. The conduct involves an imbalance of power and is repeated or
4. The conduct immaterially and substantially interferes with a student's education or ability to participate in school activities.

Bullying falls into 2 categories: (1) Behavior that involves an imbalance of power and pattern, or, (2) behavior that significantly affects a student's ability to participate in school, classes, or events. The fact that someone is simply offended is insufficient to meet this standard. There must be substantial interference with the student's educational opportunities or rights. (District Policy 514)

CHAIN OF COMMAND

The Board of Education believes the best scenario for problem solving is to handle the situation as close as possible to its origin. Therefore, the preferred chain of command for problem solving procedures shall be as follows:

1. *Immediate Supervisor*
2. *Principal*
3. *Superintendent*
4. *School Board*

If a staff member feels the importance of circumventing one of the steps to solve the problem, no employee reprimand will be given. The appropriate administrator shall respond in writing within 10 days to the staff member concerning the

outcome of the investigation or follow-up, including any appropriate action or corrective measure that was taken. (District Policy 103)
It is recommended that ESS substitutes follow the same chain of command for problem solving procedures.

CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

The administration has the responsibility to know what is being taught in the classroom and how it is being taught. It is their duty to help improve both curriculum and instruction. It may be necessary for them to make periodic visits to your classroom with this objective in mind.

CLEARING THE BUILDING

Students should be out of the school building by 3:15 unless some activity is in session in which he or she is a member. All activities must be supervised. The advisor must be the last person to leave the building. He / she should check all of the lights, windows, and doors.

CLOSING OF SCHOOL / SCHOOL MESSENGER

During severe weather when the superintendent and transportation director deem it unsafe for our buses to run, school will be closed, will start late, or be dismissed early. A personal plan of action for what your child should do in case of school closings needs to be discussed ahead of time with your child. If your child is to go to an alternate destination, call the school office immediately to let us know. The School Messenger System will be utilized to send an alert to parents and the following stations will carry weather-related announcements or school announcements:

Radio: KPRM 870 AM, KDKK 97.5 FM, K106 FM, KJ 104 FM

TV: KCCO/KCCW Channel 7/12, KARE 11, KMSP 9, KSAX 24

ESS staff will be notified of school closings through a notification from the District. In the case of an early dismissal, ESS staff should remain in the classroom until all children have left for their destinations.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Information obtained as a result of employment with this school district is confidential. The Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, Chapter 13 of the Minnesota Statutes, is the state law that protects the privacy of student educational records. The Federal Educational Rights Privacy Act (FERPA) is the federal law that protects personally identifiable information included in the student educational records. Respect for the privacy of our students requires that you discuss student issues only with those staff members with a mutual, legitimate educational interest, which is directly related to classroom instruction, teaching, student achievement and progress, discipline of a student, student health and welfare, and the ability to respond to a request for educational data. As a best practice school staff who have a legitimate educational interest in sharing private student educational data should not discuss student information in community areas such as hallways, lounges, and parking lots in order to prevent the unauthorized disclosure of private student data. Furthermore, privacy of information can often not be guaranteed when using emailing and faxing as communication. Overall, school staff should refrain from discussing personal student information in public areas and be aware of the security risks of other communication methods used when sharing private student data, such as emails or faxes. In addition to student information, confidentiality is expected in other areas including staff information or school district business information. Any breach of confidentiality is a serious violation of the integrity of the position and ultimately the school district. Sharing of confidential data with individuals not associated with the circumstance is a violation and subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.
The district will comply with requests for public information as they are received in accordance with state law and school district policy. Request should be directed to the proper departments. Please refer to School Board Policy 515: Protection and Privacy of Pupil Records and Policy 406: Public and Private Personnel Data.

DATA TO BE KEPT ON FILE

Data to be filed in the superintendent's office for District substitute staff: status and withholding exemption certificate (State & Federal W-4 Forms, I-9 forms, direct deposit information). ESS employees/substitutes' information will be kept on file with ESS.

DEFINITION OF SCHOOL PROPERTY

"School Property" is defined as meaning any school district owned building or property including school buses, bus garage, vocational shops, athletic fields, playgrounds, or parking areas.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

It is imperative that pupils, staff, and the public be protected in case of emergency, and that the educational process of the school is carried out with the least amount of disruption. Common sense should dictate the reaction of school personnel to emergency situations. All situations CANNOT be neatly defined into a category for which hard and fast guidelines can be drawn. Individual judgment will need to be exercised in given situations. Continuing and meaningful efforts to PREVENT incidents that lead to emergency situations should be the area of greatest concern. Emergency procedures are designed to give guidelines to those having responsibility for the safety of pupils, school staff, and users of school facilities.

ESS staff are expected to read the Safety & Security Plan, as provided in the substitute folder in each classroom.

HARASSMENT

The purpose of this policy is to maintain a learning and working environment that is free from religion, racial or sexual harassment and violence. The school district prohibits any form of religious, racial or sexual harassment and violence. (District Policy 413)

HAZING

The purpose of this policy is to maintain a safe learning environment for students and staff that is free from hazing. Hazing activities of any type are inconsistent with the educational goals of the school district and are prohibited at all times. (District Policy 526)

KEYS/BADGES

Keys/Badges for individual rooms will be issued to substitutes each day and must be returned to the office at the end of the day. ESS staff should report to the office to receive keys/badge.

MAIL

Please mail things from school that are school related: no personal postage is to be paid for by the district.

MONEY/ VALUABLE ITEMS

The school is not responsible for the loss of money or damage / loss to personal property.

NURSING SERVICES

A licensed nurse is responsible for the maintenance of student health records, routine health checks, parental contact concerning health problems, care of minor injuries, and assistance in hearing and vision screening.

PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION (PTA)

This is the association of parents, teachers and the community working together to enhance the lives of our children. The PTA is an integral part of our school, providing resources and opportunities for students and parents.

PAYDAY

Payday is bi-weekly on Friday for all District contracted substitutes, including Food Service, Custodial and Recess Monitor staff. Employees are required to have their check direct deposited to the bank of their choice. There are limited exceptions to this requirement.

ESS staff should contact ESS for payroll information.

Payroll and leave information are available via SMARTeR and may be printed by employees.

PERSONAL APPEARANCE

As a substitute of Park Rapids Area School District, we are judged not only by our service, but also by our appearance and presentation to others. Employees, including ESS staff are expected to project professionalism. Employees should follow a "smart casual" style of dress. Items generally accepted under this style of dress are collared shirts, polo shirts, trousers, chinos, blazers, blouse, sweater, cardigan, jeans that are colored or dressy in nature (fitted and non-distressed), and skirts. The formality of workplace dress is determined by the context and nature of the work performed.

Items to avoid include gym shorts, hooded and non-hooded sweatshirts, t-shirts, items that are torn, dirty, ripped, or frayed. Clothing that is too revealing, such as low-cut or midriff-baring tops or excessively low-rise pants, are not appropriate for a school.

Positions that require work with heavy equipment, hazardous materials, or positions that may require physical support of students, should avoid loose clothing, shorts, open toed shoes or sandals, and excessive jewelry.

Staff, including ESS staff, should be mindful of student and/or employees that could be allergic or sensitive to the chemical or smells of perfumes, colognes, oils, and lotions, so please wear these in moderation or refrain from wearing them if possible.

No dress code can cover all scenarios so employees, including ESS staff, must use a certain amount of judgement in their choice of clothing. If you are uncertain about acceptable casual clothing for work, it may be best to refrain from wearing it. If clothing fails to meet these standards, as determined by a supervisor, the employee will be asked not to wear the inappropriate item to work again.

REASONABLE FORCE

Staff may use reasonable force to restrain or correct a student.

ROOM SUPERVISION

Substitute teachers should remain in their room always during class periods unless there is an urgent need to leave. In such cases, have someone supervise your classroom in your absence. Be sure you tell the class to be seated and to remain so. When leaving the room at the end of the day, please close and lock the door and windows.

SALARY DEDUCTIONS

Only those salary deductions authorized by law or by the Board of Education policy will be permitted.

SCHEDULING EVENTS

The official calendar of events is in the superintendent's office. Call the superintendent's secretary well in advance when scheduling any school event.

SCHOOL LIAISON OFFICER

The liaison officer is a member of the Park Rapids Police Department assigned to Park Rapids Area Schools. The proactive mission of the officer is early intervention in matters that if left unchecked, could have serious implications for the safety and security of the students and staff. The secondary responsibility of the school liaison officer is to respond to certain acts committed in the school that may be deemed as unlawful. At Century School, the liaison officer is most often consulted to assist with educating students to prevent future problems with the law.

A law enforcement officer may cite violations of the law and process charges through the county attorney's office, regardless of the school penalties imposed for the same act. Thus, it is possible that some acts may be violations of school rules, and District policies, and violations of the law, resulting in both school and legal consequences.

STAFF CONDUCT

All staff members, including substitute staff have a responsibility to familiarize themselves with and abide by the laws of the state, as these affect their work, the policies of the Board, and the regulations designed to implement them. In the area of personal conduct, the Board expects that teachers and others will conduct themselves in a manner that not only reflects credit to the school district, but also sets forth a model worthy of emulation by students.

All staff members, including substitute teachers will be expected to carry out their assigned responsibilities with conscientious concern.

Essential to the success of ongoing school operations and the instructional program are the following specific responsibilities, which are required of all personnel:

1. *Faithfulness and promptness in attendance at work.*
2. *Support and enforcement of policies of the Board and regulations of the school administration regarding students.*
3. *Diligence in submitting required reports promptly at the times specified.*
4. *Care and protection of school property.*
5. *Concern for and attention to their own and the school district's legal responsibility for the safety and welfare of students, including the need to ensure that students are under supervision always.*

STUDENT ILLNESS /TARDY

This should be reported to the office immediately. Dismissal for illness and arrangements for transportation home will be handled through the principal's office. Students who come to class after 8:30am must report to the office. This includes tardiness at regular scheduled classes. Please do not allow students to leave the classroom to get something they have forgotten unless it is very important.

STUDENT INVESTIGATION

It is the principal's duty to be proactive in keeping the school safe and enforcing ISD #309 policy; therefore, in the event the school has reasonable suspicion of inappropriate activity during the school day or outside school hours, administration will investigate. The investigation may include individual interviews, locker/personal belongings search, personal vehicle searches, urine analysis or drug screening, 3rd party interviews, and involvement from outside governmental agencies. Parents may or may not be contacted during this process. If a student refuses to cooperate with the investigation, they will be suspended until the completion of the investigation or until notified by the principal.

SUBSTITUTE FOLDER

Each teacher should have a substitute folder to be kept in the top drawer of your desk and should include the following: class list, seating charts, daily schedule, emergency lesson plan, extra sheets for 'fillers', and any other special notes / reminders that you think a substitute may need. ESS staff are responsible for reading and becoming familiar with the contents in the substitute folder.

SUPERVISING STUDENT ACTIVITIES

When students are in school, engaging in school-sponsored activities, or traveling to and from school on school buses, they are responsible to the school and the school responsible for them. School personnel assigned to their supervision serve in loco parentis.

The Board expects all students to be under assigned adult supervision always when they are in school, on school grounds, traveling under school auspices, or engaging in school-sponsored activities. School personnel assigned this supervision are expected to act as reasonable, prudent adults in providing for the safety of the students in their charge.

In keeping with this expected prudence, no teacher or other staff member will leave his assigned group unsupervised except if an arrangement has been to take care of an emergency. During school hours, or while engaging in school-sponsored activities, students will be released only into the custody of parents or other authorized persons.

TECHNOLOGY / INTERNET USE

Internet and network use is a privilege, not a right, and can be removed. Violations of internet use may result in loss of internet privileges or more significant disciplinary action. (District Policy 524)

TELEPHONE CALLS BY STAFF MEMBERS

It is preferred that there be no personal phone calls made unless there is an emergency. Long distance calls involving students should be made by contacting the building secretary.

TOBACCO

Possession and use of tobacco or tobacco paraphernalia, including electronic nicotine delivery devices, in any form by students and use by adults is prohibited in any school building, on any school land, or at any school activity. School land includes, but is not limited to; athletic fields, parking lots, and the areas outside our school buildings. Violation of the 'Tobacco Free' policy is a misdemeanor. Furthermore, possession and use of tobacco is forbidden by state law by anyone under the age of 18. (District Policy 419)

VISITORS

Adult visitors must sign in at the office to obtain a visitor's badge. The school district reserves the right to ask a visitor to leave.

VOLUNTEERS

All volunteers who have direct, unsupervised student contact will submit to a criminal history background check. Volunteers must sign in and out at the office and wear an identifying nametag.

WEAPONS

No student or nonstudent, including adults and visitors, shall possess, (herewith defined to include handling, transporting, or possession on the student person, in the student's locker or vehicle), handle, or transport any object that can reasonably be considered a weapon:

- *on the school property at any time*
- *at any school activity or function*
- *within 300 feet of school property or activity.*

This policy does not apply to any normal school supplies such as pencils or compasses. The rule does apply to any firearm and/or its components including guns of any types: BB guns, paintball guns, stun guns, pellet guns, any knife, tool with knife or razor blade, box cutters, explosives including firecrackers, nun chucks , chains, look-alike weapons, electronic devices, ammunition and/or its components, laser pointers, chemical mace, tear gas, etc. and other devices that could be used or construed to be weapons carried for offensive or defensive purposes and capable of producing death or bodily harm or the fear of such, or any device or instrument which is in the manner it is used or intended to be used is calculated or likely to produce death or bodily harm or the fear of such. Any violation of the policy will be subject to the following disciplinary action:

- *A student who commits a weapons infraction may be immediately suspended from school, and the expulsion process may be immediately initiated.*
- *Per Minnesota statute, any violation of the above constitutes a gross misdemeanor/felony.*

To help ensure a safe environment, students and staff have the responsibility to inform the school authorities about the presence of any weapons on campus

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