

STUDENT HANDBOOK

Lakes Country Academy

Lakes Country Service Cooperative

#0926-83

2026-27

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WELCOME TO LAKES COUNTRY ACADEMY

Dear Students and Parents,

Welcome to the Lakes Country Academy 2026-27 school year! The guidelines set forth by the student handbook promote the common understanding essential for a positive and productive school experience. The Lakes Country Academy education team looks forward to assisting students in fulfilling their educational goals. The administration, faculty and staff welcome the opportunity to support student success throughout their attendance at Lakes Country Academy. Please feel encouraged to contact Lakes Country Academy program office with any questions (218) 737-6552. Parents, students and the community can also check our webpage at https://www.lcsc.org. The administration strongly recommends school families review this handbook together and keep it as a reference during the school year. Thank you for your partnership as we continue to support the growth of your child throughout the school year.

LAKES COUNTRY ACADEMY MISSION STATEMENT

Lakes Country Academy exists to serve students with educational and behavioral challenges by providing transformational support and skills (through evidence based practices) in a highly individualized environment.

LAKES COUNTRY ACADEMY VISION STATEMENT

Every student has the opportunity to achieve their fullest potential as individuals in order to contribute to all aspects of their community.

STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

It is the policy of the Lakes Country Academy #0926-83 to comply with federal and state law prohibiting discrimination and all requirements imposed by or pursuant to regulations issued thereto, to the end that no person in the school district shall on grounds of race, color, national origin, creed, religion, sex, marital status, age, status with regard to public assistance, or disability be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any education program, or in employment, or recruitment, consideration or selection, therefore, whether full time or part time under an education program or activity for

which the school district is responsible. The following persons have been designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies:
Lakes Country Academy Cooperative's appointed ADA/Section 504 Coordinator: Lakes Country Special Education Cooperative Director (218) 737-6545
This is a shortened version of the policies which may be found on the school's website under School District Policy. Policy #401 - Equal Employment Opportunity, #402 - Disability Nondiscrimination, #516 - Student Disability Nondiscrimination, #522 - Student Sex Nondiscrimination

DISTRICT PHONE NUMBERS

Lakes Country Academy Special Education Director's Office: 218-737-6545
Lakes Country Academy Program Office: 218-737-6552
- Lakes Country Academy Alexandria School Office: 218-736-9572
- Lakes Country Academy Fergus Falls School Office: 218-736-9575
- Lakes Country Academy Moorhead School Office:

Lakes Country Academy Program Office Fax: 218-739-0326

SCHOOL CALENDAR

A copy of the Lakes Country Academy #0926-83 calendar will be shared at the initial intake meeting or open house. Another copy may be requested by contacting your child's teacher. The calendar is also available on our website.

MCA TESTING SCHEDULE

While the Minnesota Department of Education strives to ensure this testing schedule remains unaltered, it is subject to change based on assessment decisions made by the state or federal Legislature.

March 8, 2027
- MCA Mathematics Grades 3-8 Online Begins
- MCA Reading Grades 3-8 Online Begins
- MCA Science Begins Online Begins
- MTAS Reading, Mathematics and Science Begins

May 7, 2027
- MCA Reading Grades 3-8, 10 and Mathematics Grades 3-8 Online Ends
- MTAS Reading, Mathematics, and Science Ends

May 14, 2027
- MCA Science Grades 5, 8, and High School Online Ends

MN READ ACT Required Annual Literacy Screening

Lakes Country Academy utilizes FastBridge for K-3rd grade literacy screening and Capti's ReadBasix for grades 4-12 literacy screening, both as approved literacy screeners to comply with the MN READ Act. Screening is required for all K-3 grade students, three times per year (fall, winter, spring) and required for students in grades 4-12 who are not reading at grade level, at least once per year. LCA offers Capti screening during the fall window for all 4-12 grade students regardless of previously known grade level reading performance and continues in winter and spring for those whose fall screening data shows not reading at grade level.

Due to the individualized nature of instruction at Lakes Country Academy, LCA does not delineate between Tier 1, Tier 2, or Tier 3 instructional interventions as a building-wide MTSS system. Student literacy development is individually addressed through their IEP instructional goals/objectives. In some instances, students attending Lakes Country Academy may be exempted from READ Act screening efforts due to individual characteristics that may lend inconclusive results or result in escalation of maladaptive behaviors, preventing progress on IEP Team established program priorities. These situations must be addressed by IEP teams, specifically approved by parents/guardians, and decisions to not participate in READ Act screening must be based on evaluation data with specific instructional plans to address literacy clearly outlined via the student's IEP.

Below is the screening schedule for Lakes Country Academy in 2026-2027. Parents will receive screening information both through the IEP team process (annual IEP meeting and progress reporting) as well as after each screening event.

K-3rd grade screening via FastBridge:

Fall Screening Window - September 28-October 9
Winter Screening Window - February 1-11
Spring Screening Window - May 3-7

Grades 4-12 screening via Capti:

Fall Screening Window - September 28-October 9 (ALL 4-12 students*)
Winter Screening Window - February 1-11 (students not reading at grade level)
Spring Screening Window - May 3-7 (students not reading at grade level)

**students grades 4-12 enrolling after the Fall Screening window may be given the Capti assessment upon enrollment to determine reading level if referral data did not include current screening results from the referring district.*

Lakes Country Academy #0926-83 reserves the right to revise and update the Student Handbook when necessary. When revisions are made to the handbook during the school year it is updated online, without notification of change.

POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND PROGRAMS

All policies and procedures listed pertain to K-12 students enrolled in the Lakes Country Academy.

SCHOOL DAY

The typical Lakes Country Academy school day will begin at 9:30 a.m. and end at 2:30 p.m. The length of the school day may be modified by the IEP Team as needed for individual students.

GRADING PROCEDURES

Due to the individualized nature of Lakes Country Academy, students are graded on a Pass/Fail basis at Semester 1 and Semester 2. Students grades 9-12 earn credit for Pass grades and will not earn credit for Fail grades. The primary purpose of Lakes Country Academy is to provide specialized instruction for identified needs on a student's IEP. In most cases, grades are synonymous with IEP Progress Reports because students are working on specific goals from their IEP rather than specific academic subjects.

AFTER SCHOOL HOURS

Students are not to be at school after hours (2:30) unless they are here for a specific purpose under the direct supervision of a PARENT/GUARDIAN and as approved by Lakes Country Academy administration. This regulation also pertains to before 9:30 a.m.

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is an important requirement for all students. When it is necessary for the student to be absent, parents are to notify the Lakes Country Academy site of attendance by 9:15 a.m. via phone call, email to the Site Administrator or School Social Worker, or Remind text message. **Parents are responsible for notifying their resident district of transportation cancellation for absences.**

ABSENCES

Types of Absences

1. Excused – Any absence falling into the categories of personal illness or family emergency. Examples include medical appointments, dentist appointments, counseling appointments, court appearances, driver license exam, death in the family and prearranged family vacations. All appointments need to be reported to the site administrator or their designee in order to be excused. To ensure continuity of the student's educational program, Lakes Country Academy recommends that family trips occur less than 5 school days in a row.
**Student absences resulting from resident school district failure to transport (i.e., bus suspensions, driver unavailability) are considered excused absences from LCA.*

2. Advanced Make-Up – May be obtained from the classroom teacher with a parent request before the date of absence. All work can be made up. Examples would include medical appointments, family trips, court appearance, etc.

3. Unexcused – Any absence not directly covered by the preceding excused absences will be considered an unexcused absence. Examples of unexcused absences include errands and appointments with no further explanation, truancy, leaving school without proper clearance, forgery on excused, babysitting, luncheons, work, missed bus, car trouble, shopping, hair appointments, tanning appointments, oversleeping, etc. In the case of a student being needed at home, parental contact to Lakes Country Academy administration by phone is necessary to explain the extenuating circumstances. A decision will then be made as to whether the absence is excused or unexcused by administration. Attendance issues can be determined at the discretion of the Lakes Country Academy administrator. The IEP Team may be convened to discuss excessive unexcused absences.

4. Excessive Excused Absences – Students and parents/guardians must understand that students are expected to attend school in the state of Minnesota and that absences can adversely affect a student's academic and behavioral progress. The Lakes Country Academy expects that students attend regularly and participate in their educational program. Every minute of attendance at Lakes Country Academy is an IEP service minute, agreed upon by the IEP team. Absences which create situations in which the student is absent for 20% of the time (thus, missing 20% of their IEP services due to any kind of absence) will be subject to additional excusal requirements before absences beyond 20% are excused. Physician's notes may be requested for excessive absences due to illness in order to be excused. The IEP Team may be convened to discuss excessive excused absences and placement at the Lakes Country Academy will be reviewed.
**excessive excused absences resulting from resident district transportation failures (i.e., bus suspensions, driver unavailability) will require the resident district provide IEP services after 3 days in a row of absence from LCA programming. Additional excusal requirements for LCA will not be required in the event the resident district does not provide transportation.*

A student who has been absent from school for 15 consecutive school days during the regular school year without receiving approved instruction in the home or hospital (as approved by the state of Minnesota) shall be dropped from Lakes Country Academy enrollment and classified as withdrawn as soon as the parent reports or after day 15, whichever comes first (MN Statute 126C.05 Subd. 8). **This includes absences that are excused by parents/guardians and unexcused absences combined.**

E-Learning Days Attendance/Absences

1. E-Learning Day Assignments- in the event that an e-learning day is conducted due to inclement weather, students are given an opportunity to complete the day's assignment within one school day, unless a packet had been sent home prior to the e-learning day, then the assignment(s) is due the next school day. A student who does not return their assignment the next school day (or when due) will be considered absent unexcused for that day.

2. E-Learning Day Absences - A student who does not turn in their assignment(s) by the due date after an e-learning day will be considered Absent-Unexcused for that day. It is crucial that the student and/or their parent/guardian communicate issues in completing the assignment(s) by the due date.

***Note-** The outcome of an IEP Team convening to discuss excessive excused/unexcused absences may be a recommendation of alternative placement. Excessive excused absences due to transportation suspensions may result in recommendation of alternative placement.

5. Tardiness – Students at the Lakes Country Academy are expected to be prompt for their transportation and arrive on time at the Lakes Country Academy. Tardiness does not include inclement weather, transportation mechanical or driver error, or other extenuating circumstances which can occur during transportation that is out of the student's control. Tardiness does include any late arrival due to student behavior on transportation, student lack of promptness for transportation, and a student's refusal to follow their daily schedule.

In general, students are considered "tardy" if they arrive to school up to 60mns after their scheduled arrival time. Coming very late to school (60mns after their program arrival time), may result in a ½ day unexcused absence. Each tardy event will be considered individually and excessive or routine tardiness may result in an IEP team meeting convening to discuss appropriate placement options.

It is the responsibility of each student and parent/guardian to read attendance policies within the handbook. Refer to Lakes Country Academy administration for questions or clarification.

TRUANCY PROCEDURES

In general, most school districts conform to the following language when determining whether a student is "truant" and whether such truancy is reported to their county of residence. Minnesota Statute 260A.03 defines a student with unexcused absences in three (3) or more classes on three (3) differing days as "Continuing Truant". Students meeting the Continuing Truant criteria may be referred to the County Attorney in their county of residence. Minnesota Statute 260C.007 defines a student with an unexcused absence from one (1) or more class periods on seven (7) different school days as "Habitual Truant". Students meeting the Habitual Truant criteria may be referred to the County Attorney in their county of residence.

At the Lakes Country Academy, student truancy will be addressed with their resident school district and will follow the guidelines set forth by the resident school district, which may include a 3 day unexcused absence letter and a 7 day unexcused absence letter sent to the parent/guardian with opportunities to collaborate with Lakes Country Academy before a petition of truancy and/or report of educational neglect report is filed with the student's resident County Social Services office. In instances when the Lakes Country Academy files a petition of truancy or report of educational neglect with the resident county, it is solely up to the County Human Services Department of the resident county to make a formal determination of truancy and/or educational neglect and pursue legal action. Lakes Country Academy reserves the right to notify appropriate authorities of truant behavior regardless of parent involvement.

TRANSPORTATION

It is the responsibility of the school district where the student resides to provide and monitor the safety of transportation to and from the program. The Lakes Country Academy may help facilitate this process, but the responsibility for transportation to/from LCA programming is the responsibility of the resident/referring school district. Transportation is provided/arranged by the resident school district, even if the resident district does not have school and Lakes Country Academy is in session. **It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to notify the resident school district's transportation in the event of a student absence.**

Students must return home from school in the designated (per IEP) transportation. No student will be allowed to change the transportation plan. If a parent/guardian must change the transportation for a student, a call must be made by the parent or guardian to give Lakes Country Academy staff time to facilitate that change (for example, consistent early pickups/drop offs which is a change from the previous schedule) and an IEP team meeting may need to be scheduled to review this service. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to make transportation changes with the resident district; Lakes Country Academy staff will help support those changes if appropriate.

Students are required to abide by all behavioral expectations and regulations while waiting for transportation, being transported, or exiting the vehicle. School transportation vehicles are considered an extension of school grounds. The health and safety of students and the driver are a priority. If a student's behavior compromises health and safety conditions, the student's resident district will be notified and will need to provide Lakes Country Academy with a safety plan in order for the student to continue their placement. Resident districts are strongly encouraged to collaborate with parents on transportation issues. Parents' cooperation and support of these expectations are vital so that everyone is healthy and safe. Lakes Country Academy and the student's home school district will work together to resolve discipline issues that may arise during transportation to the Lakes Country Academy.

Because transportation to and from the Lakes Country Academy program is a related service on a student's IEP, an IEP team meeting will be scheduled to problem solve a situation where a student consistently displays dangerous behavior on transportation and transporting that student poses a risk to themselves, other students, and/or staff. Lakes Country Academy does not suspend students from transportation nor is responsible for transportation suspension documentation/reporting to parents. The resident district holds the responsibility for that in accordance with PFDA guidelines and must notify LCA whenever a transportation suspension occurs so that a manifestation determination meeting can be scheduled if necessary. The resident district is responsible for initiating, scheduling, and completing manifestation determination meetings in the event of 10 cumulative days of transportation suspensions or in the event of 5 consecutive days of transportation suspensions.

Students with a valid MN Driver's License may be permitted to transport themselves to/from Lakes Country Academy programming only in situations where the resident district is unable to provide transportation (e.g., unavailability of drivers, suspension of student from district transportation) and at the suggestion of the resident district. Because transportation is a related service on each LCA student's IEP, written parent permission will be required with the Site Administrator's written approval. The student will be required to acknowledge understanding of safety guidelines (must turn in vehicle keys to LCA office, must arrive on time, may not leave until dismissed, must not access vehicle during school hours without staff escort, must operate vehicle safely on school property and park in a designated location, and must agree to conduct themselves responsibly in all transportation aspects). Failure of student to comply with guidelines will result in revocation of self-transport and the resident district will be notified. Resident district transportation responsibilities related to Special Education due process and MN Fair Pupil Dismissal Act policies remain in effect, even if the LCA student is approved to transport themselves.

CLOSED CAMPUS

Campus is completely closed for all students attending Lakes Country Academy. All students must stay on school property at all times during the school day, which begins at the time they

arrive at school in the morning and ends when they leave for home after dismissal. Outside activities must be supervised by a Lakes Country Academy staff member at all times.

ILLNESS AT SCHOOL

Should a student become ill while at school, trained staff will assess the health of the student, in collaboration with LCA contracted nursing services. The following are guidelines followed by our contracted nursing service:

The CDC recommends that students or staff should stay home from school when they exhibit certain symptoms or have specific infectious conditions that can pose a risk to others or require medical attention.

Students should remain home if they exhibit symptoms such as:

- Fever of 100.4 or greater.
- Vomiting more than twice in the proceeding 24 hours.
- Diarrhea that causes "accidents", is bloody, or results in greater than two bowel movements above what the child normally experiences in a 24-hour period. Students who are unable to toilet themselves should stay home if stool cannot be contained in diaper.
- New rash with fever and/or draining skin sores that cannot be covered with a bandage.
- Respiratory virus symptoms that are worsening or not improving and not better explained by another cause such as allergies.

Students may return to school when:

- The child has not had a fever in 24 hours without fever reducing medications.
  EXCEPTIONS:
    - If the fever is determined to be most likely caused by a non-contagious source (i.e. ear infection, toothache) by Avel eCare nursing staff or the child's medical provider the child may return the next school day.
    - If the student has seen a medical provider, started treatment, and has documentation from the provider that the student may return to school.
- Vomiting has resolved overnight and the child can hold down liquids in the morning.
- Diarrhea has improved; the child is no longer having "accidents" or more than 2 bowel movements above what is normal for the child in a 24-hour period. Bloody diarrhea should be evaluated by a healthcare provider prior to return.
- New rash with fever has been evaluated by a medical provider, fever has resolved, and uncovered sores are crusting.
- Respiratory virus symptoms are getting better overall for at least 24 hours **OR** child has been evaluated by a medical provider and has documentation that the student may return to school.

Should a student exhibit any symptom described above during the school day, the LCA contracted nursing service will notify parents/guardians and ask to make arrangements for their

student to be picked up immediately. Should a parent/guardian not be available, the contracted nursing service will contact Lakes Country Academy staff who will make every effort to notify emergency contacts and the student's resident district to arrange transportation. Parents are encouraged to assess the health of their student before the student leaves for school and contact Lakes Country Academy Administration a parent/guardian questions whether the student should stay home ill. Excessive absences due to illness (such as five absences in a two week period), may require the student to submit a note from their medical provider for excusal of the absence.

NARCAN IN SCHOOLS

In response to MN Statute 121A.224, each Lakes Country Academy site will have a Narcan kit on site with annual certification training for all staff for its use.

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSING/EARLY DISMISSAL

All school closings (including weather related) will be announced via the notification platform as shared by the Site Administrator (e.g., Remind App, Zoom texting platform, other notification application). Individual emails and phone calls will only be conducted when individually agreed upon by the Site Administrator and the parent/guardian.

Before School: During severe winter storms when a resident district deems it is unsafe for the buses of that district to run, the students attending Lakes Country Academy will be excused from attending school or will have a later starting time in the case of a late start. If Fergus Falls or Alexandria Public schools close or will have a late start, Lakes Country Academy for corresponding sites will be closed or have a late start. If the Lakes Country Academy sites experience any problems at school (power outage, water problems, etc.) we will announce closing or delays on the notification platform as shared by the Site Administrator (e.g., Remind App, Zoom texting platform, other notification application). Individual emails and phone calls will only be conducted when individually agreed upon by the Site Administrator and the parent/guardian.

During School: If serious weather develops during the school day, Lakes Country Academy staff will work with resident districts to return students home. You will be notified by Lakes Country Academy staff regarding the reason and time your student will return home through the the notification platform as shared by the Site Administrator (e.g., Remind App, Zoom texting platform, other notification application). The same will occur if we need to close due to other problems such as power or electrical failures. IT IS CRUCIAL THAT YOUR CHILD KNOW WHERE TO GO IF THIS SITUATION ARISES so that the resident district transportation personnel are not sending the child to a locked or empty house. If the weather looks threatening and no one will be home, discuss with your child ahead of time a safe alternative plan.

DRILLS

Fire drills, tornado drills, crisis-event drills will take place periodically, as according to state guidelines. Leave the room quickly, quietly, and in good order. Leave the building by the route indicated on the instruction sheet for the particular room from which you are evacuating. Parents/guardians will typically not be notified of planned drills unless their child demonstrates a need.

VISITORS FOR STUDENTS

Due to confidentiality for all students and protection of the important learning students are engaged in, Lakes Country Academy prefers students to remain in class all day. If there is an emergency and a student enrolled in Lakes Country Academy needs to have a visitor, the person will check in with the front office, speak with the site administrator or their designee, and staff will notify the student after confirming the reason for the visit. All visitors MUST sign in and

MUST have permission to be on the premises by the site administrator. In compliance with MN Statute 609.605, a school administrator or their designee are authorized to ask visitors to leave the premises. Law enforcement will be contacted if a visitor refuses to follow a request to vacate the premises.

Outside providers (such as mental health providers, Rule 79 workers, social workers, etc) visits should be arranged ahead of time, with site administrator notification. All outside provider visitors must sign in at the front office.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

Parent/Guardian participation is strongly encouraged. All parents/guardians will receive information from the school on ways to be involved in their student's education.

STUDENT SAFETY/NOTIFICATION OF CHARGES

To ensure the safety and wellbeing of all students, LCA requires Parent/Guardian to promptly inform the school administration if their child is facing any pending criminal charges. This information is critical for the district to provide appropriate support and to take necessary measures to maintain a safe educational environment. All information provided will be kept confidential, shared only with personnel who need to know in order to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the school community.

REPORT CARDS

Progress reporting on IEP progress as well as academic progress will be issued each Semester. Parent conferences can be scheduled whenever a teacher or parent sees the necessity, outside of IEP Team meetings.
Semester 1: September 1 - January 15
Semester 2: January 18 - May 28

DISCIPLINARY POLICIES/PROCEDURES

Disciplinary Actions will be determined in collaboration by the Special Education Director and Site Administrators. If a pattern of behavior develops that is not able to be addressed by the student's IEP and Positive Behavior Support Plan/Behavior Intervention Plan, the IEP team will meet to review and revise the plan for the student. The student's placement may be reviewed in the event a student continually fails to respond to concerted efforts by the IEP team to make revisions.

Suspension is the short-term exclusion of the student from school during which the school is relieved of custody of the child. Suspension, exclusion and expulsion shall be utilized in accord with The Pupil Fair Dismissal Act as amended and listed at the end of this handbook. It is the goal of Lakes Country Academy to use out of school suspension sparingly and only when needed to maintain the safety of the students. Suspension is meant as an avenue for the IEP team to come together to review the current behavior intervention plan and make changes to further support the student so safety can be maintained. Students in grades K-3rd grade will not experience suspension.

Out of School Suspension Procedure for students grades 4-12: Parents will be notified, by phone or text message (as preferred by the parent) and receive a followup Letter of Suspension by mail, if a student has been suspended by LCA administration. Phone calls or text messages (as preferred by the parent) will be made when a student is suspended during the school day. The administration has the authority to suspend students when it is judged that their conduct does in fact undermine good order, threatens the welfare of the school, extremely disrupts the educational process, or markedly deprives other students of an effective opportunity to receive a free and appropriate public education. All suspensions are of short duration and readmission will require a meeting between the parents and the administration.

This is a shortened version of policies which may be found on the school's website under School District Policy. POLICY 520: Student Discipline

Copies of this policy, together with The Pupil Fair Dismissal Act, are available on the website. Nothing in this policy is intended to conflict with The Pupil Fair Dismissal Act (at the end of this handbook).

Parent Notification

Parents shall be notified in writing of violation of the rules on conduct and resulting disciplinary actions by first class mail as provided otherwise by The Pupil Fair Dismissal Act.

NUISANCE OBJECTS/ITEMS

Laser lights of any type are prohibited in any school building, on school grounds, or at school sponsored activities both on and off campus. Unless school issued, mobile devices are not to be used during class time. No use of iPods or MP3 players in classrooms without the teacher's permission. No riding of skateboards or rip-sticks on school grounds. Upon arriving, each student will store personal items (such as cell phones) in a designated area to be returned to them upon leaving. Personal items include any wrist device (such as Apple watches, FitBits, etc) which the student receives notifications on and it is not prescribed by a medical professional to wear. When a device has been confiscated from a student, the device will be held in the school office and the student or student's parent/guardian will be asked to pick up the confiscated device, depending on the incident. Students will be expected to turn in their devices/phones at the start of the school day. They will be locked safely away and given back at the end of the school day, unless specifically allowed via individual student program.

TOBACCO PRODUCTS/TOBACCO SUBSTITUTES OR LOOK-A-LIKES AND THC PRODUCTS

Lakes Country Academy (Lakes Country Service Cooperative) is a tobacco-free facility and per Minnesota statute, no tobacco or tobacco related products are allowed on school grounds. This includes THC products, which are not legal to possess on public school property. Students shall not possess, use, sell, or transmit tobacco products, paraphernalia (including lighters and matches), vape materials (including cartridges and/or liquids), substitutes or look-a-likes on school property, in school transportation, or at school sponsored events. Students who are in possession of such products will have them confiscated by program staff. These items will not be returned to students and will be turned over to law enforcement. This applies to tobacco replacement products (nicotine cartridges, any vape device, nicotine replacement gum/mints) and any product that delivers THC (such as gummies, soft drinks, etc).

Parents will be notified when students are caught using or possessing such. A report will be filed with local law enforcement. If repeated offenses occur, a staffing will be held with the student's team and placement will be reviewed.

*Students may be subject to resident district transportation suspensions if found possessing and/or using tobacco products (including vape devices) during transportation to/from school. Please be mindful that although this would not be an LCA infraction, it will cause the student to be suspended from their transportation if enforced by their resident school district. LCA will not engage in suspension for incidents occurring on resident district transportation.

This is a shortened version of the policy which may be found on the school's website under School District Policy. Policy #419 - Tobacco-Free Environment

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES, NON-PRESCRIPTION DRUGS, OR CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES

Students shall not buy, sell, possess, use, transmit, be under the influence of, or show any effect of any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana, alcoholic beverage or intoxicant, etc. while on school property or at a school sponsored event. This may also apply to the possession and use of CBD products as well as THC products.

Using, possessing, distributing, intending to distribute, making a request to another person for (solicitation), or being under the influence of narcotics, drugs, or other controlled substances, (except as prescribed by a physician), CBD products, THC products or look-alike substances (these prohibitions include medical marijuana or medical cannabis, even when prescribed by a physician, and one student sharing prescription medication with another student) is not permitted. THC products, while somewhat legal in Minnesota, are prohibited in their use and possession on public school property.

Law enforcement agencies will be contacted. Parents will be notified and expected to pick up their child or make arrangements for their child to be picked up. If parents are not able to pick up their child, Lakes Country Academy will notify the resident district to inquire if their transportation plans can include an early pick up of the student. Law enforcement may be notified if parents are unwilling to have their child picked up. If LCA determines the student is under the influence of a prohibited substance, parents will be notified to make arrangements to pick up their student as soon as possible. The student will be kept as safe as possible until picked up. The student may not be allowed to use district transportation, unless it's determined the student's health and the safety of other riders will not be impacted. In most cases, LCA is required by law to report instances of minor consumption and controlled substance use to proper authorities.

The IEP Team may be convened to discuss events and appropriate outcomes. Placement at Lakes Country Academy may be reviewed.

This is a shortened version of the policies which may be found on the school's website under School District Policy. Policy #420 Chemical Use and Abuse and #415-Drug Free Workplace/Drug Free School

PROPERTY DAMAGE

Any student who damages school property and/or the personal property of other students or program staff may be required to make restitution; the IEP team may be convened to review and modify the behavior plan. Parents will be notified. The student may be subject to disciplinary proceedings. Law enforcement may also be notified and the student may be subject to prosecution by law enforcement if more than $500 of damage has occurred on Lakes Country

Academy/Lakes Country Service Cooperative property (owned or leased). If personal property (staff or other student(s)) is destroyed, it is up to the owner of the property to request law enforcement involvement on their own and follow law enforcement procedures on filing charges. In the event law enforcement is notified and a report is filed, the student (and their parent/guardian) may experience county legal proceedings.

STUDENT DRESS AND APPEARANCE

Students are encouraged to dress appropriately for school activities. This is a joint responsibility of the student and the student's parent(s) or guardian(s).

Appropriate clothing includes, but is not limited to, the following:
1. Clothing appropriate for the weather;
2. Clothing that does not create a health or safety hazard;
3. Clothing that is appropriate for the activity;
4. Students are required by law to wear shoes that do not pose a safety hazard to self or others.

Inappropriate clothing/headwear includes, but is not limited to, the following:
1. Clothing which bears a message which is lewd, vulgar, or obscene such as swear words, words that are derogatory to others, and/or images which communicate the same;
2. Apparel promoting products or activities that are illegal for use by minors such as alcohol or drug related text and/or images;
3. Objectionable emblems, signs, words, objects, or pictures on clothing communicating a message that is racist, sexist, or otherwise derogatory to a protected minority group or which connotes gang membership
4. Clothing that may pose a danger to self or others. Examples are but not limited to: steel toed boots, frayed/fringed edges of clothing, cowboy boots, metal spikes on clothing, etc.

When, in the judgment of the administration, 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 if possible, and parents/guardians will be notified. In rare occasions, LCA staff may intervene in student dress that inhibits a professional appearance, especially if the student’s program includes work based learning activities and/or the student’s IEP program includes socially appropriate behavior goals.

Jackets, coats, blankets, etc are not permitted to be worn by students throughout the day at Lakes Country Academy. Students must store these items in the appropriate location upon arrival and until being released to their transportation.

FALSE FIRE ALARMS/FIRE EXTINGUISHERS/SECURITY SYSTEM/BOMB THREAT

Any student who tampers with a fire alarm, fire extinguisher or the security system will be subject to disciplinary action. Parents/guardians will be notified of the incident.
Turning in a false fire alarm or bomb scare is a misdemeanor under MN Statute. Lakes Country Service Cooperative may prosecute anyone caught turning in a false alarm. Damage to property due to misuse of fire prevention equipment shall be dealt with according to the Property Damage Policy.

WEAPONS/EXPLOSIVES

No student or non-student, including adults and visitors, shall possess, use, or distribute a weapon when in a school location.

A “weapon” means any object, device, or instrument designed as a weapon or through its use is capable of threatening or producing bodily harm or which may be used to inflict self-injury including, but not limited to, any firearm, whether loaded or unloaded, air guns, pellet guns, BB guns, all knives, blades, clubs, metal knuckles, nunchucks, throwing stars, explosives, fireworks, mace, and other propellants, stun guns, ammunition, poisons, chains, arrows, and objects that have been modified to serve as a weapon.

No student shall possess, use or distribute any object, device, or instrument having the appearance of a weapon and such objects, devices, or instruments shall be treated as weapons including, but not limited to, weapons listed above which are broken or nonfunctional, look alike guns, toy guns, and any object that is a facsimile of a real weapon.

No student shall use articles designed for other purposes (i.e., belts, combs, pencils, files, scissors, etc.) to inflict bodily harm and/or intimidate and such use will be treated as the possession and use of a weapon.

Though Lakes Country Academy believes in addressing each incident with individualized consideration as relevant to the student’s IEP program, LCA takes a position of “zero tolerance” in regard to the possession, use or distribution of statually defined weapons by students. Consequently, the consequences for students possessing, using, or distributing weapons as defined in MN statute may include but not be limited to***:
1. Immediate out-of-school suspension;
2. Confiscation of the weapon;
3. Immediate notification of police;
4. Parent or guardian notification; and

5. Resident district notification
6. Recommendation to the Superintendent of dismissal for a period of time not to exceed one year.

Pursuant to Minnesota law, a student who brings a firearm, as defined by federal law, to school may be expelled for at least one year, with special education supports and services provided in an alternative manner as determined by the student's resident school district. The resident district board may modify this requirement on a case-by- case basis in accordance with their district weapons policy.
This is a shortened version of the policy which may be found on the school's website under School District Policy. Policy #518 - School Weapons Policy

*****An IEP Team meeting will be scheduled immediately** to discuss the situation and determine what, if any, changes to the student's program need to be made. During the time between the event and the IEP meeting, the student will not be allowed to attend the Lakes Country Academy programming and an alternative interim placement will be determined and executed by the resident school district. LCA programming may cease to be appropriate for the student.

SEARCH AND SEIZURE

Students or their property may be searched if staff has a reasonable suspicion that the student is in possession of contraband, illegal substances or something that may be a health and safety hazard. This suspicion may be due to a concern raised by students or staff, unusual behavior, etc. Students should have a lowered expectation of privacy in a public school setting due to the significant health and safety concerns for all students and staff. If contraband, illegal substances, or dangerous objects are taken from a student, these objects cannot be returned to a student. Examples: drugs, cigarettes, lighters, matches, knives, sharp objects, etc.

Lakes Country Academy staff may also ask students to give them items which are disruptive to the learning environment. Examples: toys, rubber bands, electronic devices such as cell phones, etc. These disruptive items may be returned to the student at the end of the school day or returned to parent/guardian.

Lakes Country Academy staff may inspect the interiors of lockers, cubbies, desks, etc for any reason at any time, without notice, without student consent, and without a search warrant. Lakes Country Academy administration may inspect the personal possessions of a student and/or a student's person based on a reasonable suspicion that the search will uncover a violation of law or school rules. A search of personal possessions of a student and/or a student's person will be reasonable in its scope and intrusiveness.

As soon as practicable after a search of personal possessions within a locker, cubbie, or desk pursuant to this policy, Lakes Country Academy administration must provide notice of the search to students whose possessions were searched unless disclosure would impede an ongoing investigation by police or school officials. Whenever feasible, a search of a person shall be conducted in private by a school official of the same sex. A second school official of the same sex shall be present as an observer during the search of a person whenever feasible.

A student found to have violated this policy and/or the directives and guidelines implementing it shall be subject to discipline, which may include suspension, exclusion, or expulsion, and the student may, when appropriate, be referred to legal authorities. A refusal by the student to cooperate with staff reasonable suspicion may result in assumed violation of this policy.
This is a shortened version of the policy which may be found on the school's website under School District Policy. Policy #514 - Search of Student Lockers, Desks, Personal Possessions and Student's Person

*****An IEP Team meeting will be scheduled immediately** to discuss the situation and determine what, if any, changes to the student's program need to be made. During the time between the event and the IEP meeting, depending upon the results of a search and seizure, the student may not be allowed to attend the Lakes Country Academy.

DISORDERLY CONDUCT/VERBAL OR PHYSICAL ABUSE/THREAT OF VIOLENCE/ASSAULT/HARASSMENT

Ongoing disorderly conduct, verbal abuse, physical abuse, and verbally or physically threatening violence or assault of students or staff at the Lakes Country Academy site will be taken seriously and addressed through the IEP team process. Examples of such behavior are: obscene gestures, obscene language directed at another person, behavior that interferes with the teaching and learning environment of the program, deliberately embarrassing another, flagrantly and repeatedly violating program behavior expectations, any physical aggression – hitting, kicking, biting, spitting, etc. Staff or students have a right to report assault or serious threats of harm to law enforcement. Though Lakes Country Academy recognizes that such behavior may be a manifestation of the student's disability characteristics, in some situations, disciplinary action may be taken.

Staff will work with the student to help de-escalate the behavior using redirecting, one-on-one processing, distracting, practicing/learning social skills, calming methods, etc. Staff will follow the steps written in the Individual Education Plan (IEP) to help the student stop the behavior or schedule an IEP meeting to revisit goals and objectives to establish if there is a need for a change in the IEP.

***Note:** The outcome of repeated IEP meetings and program changes for ongoing violence/assault/harassment may be the recommendation of alternative placement and subsequently unenrolled from Lakes Country Academy.

HAZING

"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, in order for the student to be initiated into or affiliated with a student organization, or for any other purpose. The term hazing includes, but is not limited to:
1. Any type of physical brutality such as whipping, beating, striking, branding, electronic shocking, or placing a harmful substance on the body.
2. Any type of physical activity such as sleep deprivation, exposure to weather, confinement in a restricted area, calisthenics or other activity that subjects the student to an unreasonable risk of harm or that adversely affects the mental or physical health or safety of the student.
3. Any activity involving the consumption of any alcoholic beverage, drug, tobacco product, or any other food, liquid, or substance that subjects the student to an unreasonable risk of harm or that adversely affects the mental or physical health or safety of the student. Any initiation related activity that intimidates or threatens the student with ostracism, which subjects a student to extreme mental stress, embarrassment, shame or humiliation, which adversely affects the mental health or dignity of the student or discourages the student from remaining in school.
4. Any activity that causes the student to perform a task that involves violation of state or federal law or of the Lakes Country Academy policies or regulations.
5. Any initiation related activity that intimidates or threatens the student with ostracism, which subjects a student to extreme mental stress, embarrassment, shame or humiliation, which adversely affects the mental health or dignity of the student or discourages the student from remaining in school.

No student shall plan, direct, encourage, aid, or engage in hazing.

Any person who believes s/he has been the victim of hazing or any person with knowledge or belief of conduct which may constitute hazing shall report the alleged acts immediately to an appropriate Lakes Country Academy official designated by this policy.

Upon receipt of a complaint or report of hazing, the program shall undertake or authorize an investigation by school district officials or a third party designated by the school district.

Upon completion of the investigation, Lakes Country Academy will take appropriate action. Such action may include, but is not limited to warning, suspension, exclusion, expulsion, transfer, remediation, termination, or discharge. Disciplinary consequences will be sufficiently severe to deter violations and to appropriately discipline prohibited behavior. District action taken for violation of this policy will be consistent with the requirements of applicable statutory

authority, including the Minnesota Pupil Fair Dismissal Act, Lakes Country Academy policies and regulations.

The Lakes Country Academy will discipline or take appropriate action against any student who retaliates against any person who makes a good faith report of alleged hazing or against any person who testifies, assists, or participates in a proceeding or hearing relating to such hazing. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment.
This is a shortened version of policy which may be found on the school's website under School District Policy. Policy #521 - Hazing Prohibition

HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE

Lakes Country Academy is to maintain a learning and working environment that is free from harassment and violence on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, protected classes, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, or disability.

Lakes Country Academy prohibits any form of harassment or violence on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, protected classes, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, or disability.

A violation of this policy occurs when any pupil, teacher, administrator, or other personnel of the agency harasses a pupil, teacher, administrator, or other personnel or group of pupils, teachers, administrators, or other personnel through conduct or communication based on protected classes as defined by this policy. (For purposes of this policy, personnel include board members, employees, agents, volunteers, contractors, or persons subject to the supervision and control of the cooperative.)

A violation of this policy occurs when any pupil, teacher, administrator, or other personnel of the agency inflicts, threatens to inflict, or attempts to inflict violence upon any pupil, teacher, administrator, or other personnel or group of pupils, teachers, administrators, or other personnel based on protected classes as defined by this policy.

The agency will act to investigate all complaints, either formal or informal, verbal or written, of harassment or violence based on a person's race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, protected classes, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, or disability, and to discipline or take appropriate action against any pupil, teacher, administrator, or other personnel who is found to have violated this policy.
This is a shortened version of policy which may be found on the school's website under School District Policy. Policy #509 - Harassment and Violence

BULLYING/CYBERBULLYING

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. Lakes Country Service Cooperative 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 agency personnel. However, to the extent such conduct affects the educational environment of the agency and the rights and welfare of its students and is within the control of the agency in its normal operations, the agency 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 agency in its goal of preventing and responding to acts of bullying, intimidation, violence, reprisal, retaliation, and other similar disruptive and detrimental behavior.

An act of bullying, by either an individual student or a group of students, is expressly prohibited on agency premises, on agency property, at agency functions or activities, or on agency transportation. This policy applies not only to students who directly engage in an act of bullying but also to students who, by their indirect behavior, condone or support another student's act of bullying. This policy also applies to any student whose conduct at any time or in any place constitutes bullying or other prohibited conduct that interferes with or obstructs the mission or operations of the school or the safety or welfare of the student or other students, or materially and substantially interferes with a student's educational opportunities or performance or ability to participate in agency functions or activities or receive agency benefits, services, or privileges.

This policy also applies to an act of cyberbullying regardless of whether such act is committed on or off school property and/or with or without the use of school resources. No teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor, or other employee of the Agency shall permit, condone, or tolerate bullying. Apparent permission or consent by a student being bullied does not lessen or negate the prohibitions contained in this policy. Retaliation against a victim, good faith reporter, or a witness of bullying is prohibited. False accusations or reports of bullying against another student are prohibited. A person who engages in an act of bullying, reprisal, retaliation, or false reporting of bullying or permits, condones, or tolerates bullying shall be subject to discipline or other remedial responses for that act in accordance with the Cooperative's policies and procedures. The Cooperative may take into account the following factors:

1. The developmental ages and maturity levels of the parties involved;
2. The levels of harm, surrounding circumstances, and nature of the behavior;
3. Past incidences or past or continuing patterns of behavior;
4. The relationship between the parties involved; and
5. The context in which the alleged incidents occurred.

Consequences for students who commit prohibited acts of bullying may range from remedial responses or positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension and/or expulsion. The Cooperative shall employ research-based developmentally appropriate best practices that include preventative and remedial measures and effective discipline for deterring violations of this policy, apply throughout the Cooperative, and foster student, parent, and community participation. Consequences for employees who permit, condone, or tolerate bullying or engage in an act of reprisal or intentional false reporting of bullying may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination or discharge. Consequences for other individuals engaging in prohibited acts of bullying may include, but not be limited to, exclusion from school property and events. The Cooperative will act to investigate all complaints of bullying reported to the Cooperative and will discipline or take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor, or other employee of the Cooperative who is found to have violated this policy.

For further additional information about the school district's response to preventing bullying, please refer to School District Policy #512 and MN State Statute 121A.031 .

COMPUTER/INTERNET USE

Internet access is a privilege offered each academic year to the staff and students of the Lakes Country Academy. Refer to LCSC ISD #926 Internet Acceptable Use and Safety Policy #511 for guidelines that apply to all Lakes Country Academy students regarding:

- purpose of internet use
- inappropriate or offensive material
- safety
- privacy
- liability and risk
- behavior and communications over networks and general school rules
- unauthorized use
- prohibited network interference or disruption
- vandalism, harassment or illegal purposes

Acceptable Use of Technology Agreement-must be completed by all employees as well as all students. Students also must have parent permission to use the internet. Permission is granted via signed form annually (available at Parent Night each August).

PUBLIC DISPLAYS OF AFFECTION/PHYSICAL CONTACT BETWEEN STUDENTS

Public displays of affection (PDA) are prohibited at Lakes Country Academy. All students are expected to keep every part of their body to themselves and not touch another student in any manner. Such events will be dealt with progressively at the individual level of the student's behavior program and may result in disciplinary actions as well as IEP re-convening to discuss placement appropriateness.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT AND INTERVENTIONS

All Lakes Country Academy staff are trained in the use of approved crisis prevention techniques. Every attempt is made to de-escalate student's behavior through redirecting, one-on-one conferencing, calming techniques, etc. Lakes Country Academy staff are trained in the use of Professional Crisis Management (PCM) and Ukeru.

Ukeru

is a trauma-informed intervention that is non-invasive and does not result in a physical/restrictive procedure. The use of Ukeru techniques foster an environment that is physically and psychologically safe for both students and staff. Lakes Country Academy utilizes Ukeru techniques as a first response to escalating student behavior. Most instances of developing and active crisis situations can be addressed effectively through these techniques.

PCM

provides individuals with a continuum of painless physical procedures and techniques that can be utilized to intervene in a crisis situation that has become particularly unsafe for the student or other students in the vicinity.

- Uses Evidence Based Strategies of Shaping, Fading, Feedback and Reinforcement
- Constantly Changes to Ensure the Least Restrictive Step is Used
- Includes Individuals as Active Participants and Facilitates Choice
- Preserves Individual Dignity and Relationships
- Avoids Discomfort, Pain, Disorientation and Unnecessary Coercion

In PCM, if prevention and de-escalation strategies are not successful in keeping an individual or others safe during a behavioral crisis, and if the criteria for applying physical procedures are met, Dynamic Holding© is applied in transportation of an individual (sometimes called escort), vertical immobilization and, if necessary and appropriate, horizontal immobilization. See

subsequent section on “Restrictive Procedures” for more information on physical restraint/interventions.

Restrictive Procedures

Restrictive Procedures means the use of physical holding or seclusion in an emergency. Restrictive procedures may only be used or in an emergency situation. “Emergency Situation” is defined below.

Physical holding is a restrictive procedure that is physical intervention intended to hold the child immobile or limit a child’s movement and where body contact is the only source of physical restraint. A Physical hold is NOT:
• Physical contact that helps a child respond to complete a task.
• Assisting child without restricting movement.
• Needed to administer an authorized health-related service or procedure.
• Needed to physically escort a child when the child does not resist or the child’s resistance is minimal.

Any behavior intervention(s) not covered in the IEP must be consistent with the Lakes Country Academy’s discipline policy affecting all pupils within the district. Continued and repeated use of any element of the Lakes Country Academy’s discipline policy must be reviewed in development of the pupil’s IEP.

Emergency Situation:

An emergency situation is an immediate intervention to protect a pupil or other individual from physical injury. The emergency intervention must be the least intrusive intervention possible to reasonably react to the emergency situation. Emergency does not mean circumstances such as; a child who does not respond to a task or request and instead places his or her head on a desk or hides under a desk or table; a child who does not respond to a staff person’s request unless failing to respond would result in a physical injury to the child or other individual; or an emergency incident has already occurred and no threat of physical injury currently exists. The special education director, site administrator, and parents must be notified immediately when a restrictive procedure is used in an emergency situation and documentation must be completed.

NOTE: This rule/procedure should not be interpreted so as to prohibit staff from using reasonable force to protect themselves or other pupils.

Physical Hold or Seclusion

Physical holding or seclusion. (a) Physical holding or seclusion may be used only in an emergency. A school that uses physical holding or seclusion shall meet all requirements outlined in the Minnesota Statute 125A.0942 STANDARDS FOR RESTRICTIVE PROCEDURES. A complete copy of the statute can be found at https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/125A.0942.

Additionally, a copy of the procedure can be requested or found on the Lakes Country Academy website.

Seclusion is not used at Lakes Country Academy. Minnesota Department of Education defines seclusion as a means confining a child alone in a room from which egress is barred. Removing a child from an activity to a location where the child cannot participate in or observe the activity is NOT classified as seclusion, however, leaving a student in a classroom while holding the door closed from the outside or holding the door closed from the inside IS classified as seclusion.
The above is a shortened version of the Restrictive Procedures Manual which can be found on our website or a copy in the district office.

Lakes Country Academy staff use Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports and all staff are trained annually in trauma-informed behavior interventions.

PAYMENT FOR HEALTH RELATED SERVICES

Federal and state law require all public Minnesota schools to request payment for Individualized Education Program (IEP) health-related services from public and private health insurers. Minnesota Health Care Programs (MHCP) pays the federal share of covered health-related services described on a child's IEP or Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).
Schools are reimbursed when a child has a disability and an IEP or IFSP, requires health-related services in order to benefit from special education and is eligible for Minnesota Health Care Programs (MHCP) (which includes Medical Assistance (MA), MinnesotaCare and other public, government health programs).

The district will enter your child's name and date of birth into the Minnesota Medicaid System to find out if your child is receiving medical assistance or Minnesota Care. If you do not want the district to enter your child's name and date of birth into the Minnesota Medicaid System, please contact Lakes Country Academy and communicate your request to the Special Education Director.

MEDICATIONS/PRESCRIPTIONS

If your child needs to take a non-prescription (e.g., over the counter such as Tylenol) medication, you MUST:

1. Bring the medication in the **original** bottle to school. A student is not allowed to transport non-prescription medication to school themselves.
2. Parents must fill out a form provided by the contracted LCA Nursing Provider in order for the school to give the over the counter medication. Forms can be requested from the LCA Site Administrator.

This policy also includes sunscreen and/or bug spray for students. Parents who wish to have sunscreen and/or bug spray applied to their students before outdoor activities, must follow these non-prescription guidelines and supply LCA with appropriate items and documentation.* ***LCA does NOT supply sunscreen and/or bug spray to students.*

If your child needs to take prescription medications, you MUST:

1. Bring the medication in the original bottle to school. A student is not allowed to transport medication to school themselves without permission from parents and notification to our school nurse and/or administrator.
2. Complete the parent/guardian portion of the Authorization for Med Administration form and have your physician complete the other portion of the form.
3. Bring the completed Authorization for Med Administration form and the prescribed medication in the original pharmacy container to school.

This is a shortened version of policies which may be found on the school's website under School District Policy. POLICY 519: Student Medication

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Minnesota Statute 121A.11 mandates that the Pledge of Allegiance be recited once a week in public schools. Anyone 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.

This is a shortened version of policies which may be found on the school's website under School District Policy. POLICY 523: The Pledge of Allegiance

Additional Policies of Note and Minnesota Fair Pupil Fair Dismissal Act

Other Lakes Country Academy Policies are available on our website under School District Policies:

#524 Student Surveys

Purpose: Occasionally, the school district utilizes surveys to obtain student opinions and information about students. The purpose of this policy is to establish the parameters of information that may be sought in student surveys.

#522 Use of Peace Officers and Crisis Teams to remove students with IEP's from School Grounds

Purpose: To describe the appropriate use of peace officers and crisis teams to remove, if necessary, a student with an individualized education program (IEP) from school grounds.

Annual Notifications

Indoor Air Quality

Region 4 – Lakes Country Service Cooperative school district has written indoor air quality (IAQ) management plan that describes our on-going effort to monitor and improve the air quality in our buildings. Wayne Stephens is our IAQ coordinator, responsible for seeing that the management plan is implemented to prevent as many IAQ problems as possible and to quickly respond to any IAQ problems that may arise. The plan is available to the public during normal school hours. If you have any questions or concerns regarding indoor air quality, please contact Wayne Stephens at 1-888-401-4031.

Asbestos

In accordance with federal regulations, the Region 4 – Lakes Country Service Cooperative Public Schools have a management plan documenting the location and condition of all known or assumed asbestos containing materials (ACM) in the buildings. Every six months, an accredited inspector visually inspects the condition of the ACM. Also, every three years a re-inspection of the ACM is completed where all ACM is inspected, measured, and verified on maps with their locations. A six-month surveillance was completed in 2023 by an accredited inspector and management planner from Lakes Country Service Cooperative. The management plan is available for public inspection at the school office during normal business hours. Wayne Stephens is the designated person responsible for maintaining the asbestos management plans for the district. Wayne Stephens can be reached at 1-888-401-4031 with any questions.

Pesticide Use

A Minnesota state law went into effect in year 2000 that requires schools to inform parents and guardians if they apply certain pesticides on school property.

Specifically, this law requires schools that apply these pesticides to maintain an estimated schedule of pesticide applications and to make the schedule available to parents and guardians for review or copying.

State law also requires that you be told that the long-term health effects on children from the application of such pesticides or the class of chemicals to which they belong may not be fully understood.

An estimated schedule of pesticides is available at the Administration Office. Parents of students may request to receive, at their expense, prior notification of pesticide applications made on days other than those specified in the estimated schedule (excluding emergency applications).

Contact Wayne Stephens at 1-888-401-4031 with any questions.

Lead in Water

The Region 4 – Lakes Country Service Cooperative School District will follow the recommendations of the Minnesota Department of Health's "Lead Contamination Control in School Drinking Water Guidance Manual." The Region 4 – Lakes Country Service Cooperative School District completed lead in water testing during the 2025-2026 school year for the Alexandria Lakes Country Academy building and during the 2020-2021 school year for the Fergus Falls Lakes Country Academy building. The results of testing are available upon request. Re-testing will be completed during the 2030-2031 school year for Alexandria LCA and during the 2036-2037 school year for Fergus Falls LCA.

Lakes Country Academy #0926-83 reserves the right to revise and update the Student Handbook when necessary. When revisions are made to the handbook during the school year it is updated online.

MN PUPIL FAIR DISMISSAL ACT, revised August, 2016 **(2023 revisions to follow 2016 revision in this section)**

121A.40 CITATION. Sections 121A.40 to 121A.56 may be cited as the "Pupil Fair Dismissal Act."
121A.41 DEFINITIONS. Subdivision 1. Applicability. As used in sections 121A.40 to 121A.56, the terms defined in this section shall have the meanings assigned them.
Subd. 2. Dismissal. "Dismissal" means the denial of the current educational program to any pupil, including exclusion, expulsion, and suspension. It does not include removal from class.
Subd. 3. District. "District" means any school district.
Subd. 4. Exclusion. "Exclusion" means an action taken by the school board to prevent enrollment or re-enrollment of a pupil for a period that shall not extend beyond the school year.
Subd. 5. Expulsion. "Expulsion" means a school board action to prohibit an enrolled pupil from further attendance for up to 12 months from the date the pupil is expelled.

Subd. 6. Parent. "Parent" means (a) one of the pupil's parents, (b) in the case of divorce or legal separation, the parent or parents with physical custody of the pupil, including a noncustodial parent with legal custody who has provided the district with a current address and telephone number, or (c) a legally appointed guardian. In the case of a pupil with a disability under the age of 18, the parent may include a district-appointed surrogate parent.
Subd. 7. Pupil. (a) "Pupil" means any student:
(1) without a disability under 21 years of age; or
(2) with a disability under 21 years old who has not received a regular high school diploma or for a child with a disability who becomes 21 years old during the school year but has not received a regular high school diploma, until the end of that school year; and
(3) who remains eligible to attend a public elementary or secondary school.
(b) A "student with a disability" or a "pupil with a disability" has the same meaning as a "child with a disability" under section 125A.02.
Subd. 8. School. "School" means any school defined in section 120A.05, subdivisions 9, 11, 13, and 17.
Subd. 9. School board. "School board" means the governing body of any school district.
Subd. 10. Suspension. "Suspension" means an action by the school administration, under rules promulgated by the school board, prohibiting a pupil from attending school for a period of no more than ten school days. If a suspension is longer than five days, the suspending administrator must provide the superintendent with a reason for the longer suspension. This definition does not apply to dismissal from school for one school day or less, except as provided in federal law for a student with a disability. Each suspension action may include a readmission plan. The readmission plan shall include, where appropriate, a provision for implementing alternative educational services upon readmission and may not be used to extend the current suspension. Consistent with section 125A.091, subdivision 5, the readmission plan must not obligate a parent to provide a sympathomimetic medication for the parent's child as a condition of readmission. The school administration may not impose consecutive suspensions against the same pupil for the same course of conduct, or incident of misconduct, except where the pupil will create an immediate and substantial danger to self or to surrounding persons or property, or where the district is in the process of initiating an expulsion, in which case the school administration may extend the suspension to a total of 15 school days.
Subd. 11. Alternative educational services. "Alternative educational services" may include, but are not limited to, special tutoring, modified curriculum, modified instruction, other modifications or adaptations, instruction through electronic media, special education services as indicated by appropriate assessment, homebound instruction, supervised homework, or enrollment in another district or in an alternative learning center under section 123A.05 selected to allow the pupil to progress toward meeting graduation standards under section 120B.02, although in a different setting.
121A.42 POLICY. No public school shall deny due process or equal protection of the law to any public school pupil involved in a dismissal proceeding which may result in suspension, exclusion, or expulsion.

121A.43 EXCLUSION AND EXPULSION OF PUPILS WITH A DISABILITY. (a) Consistent with federal law governing days of removal and section 121A.46, school personnel may suspend a child with a disability. When a child with a disability has been suspended for more than five consecutive school days or ten cumulative school days in the same school year, and that suspension does not involve a recommendation for expulsion or exclusion or other change of placement under federal law, relevant members of the child's individualized education program team, including at least one of the child's teachers, shall meet and determine the extent to which the child needs services in order to continue to participate in the general education curriculum, although in another setting, and to progress toward meeting the goals in the child's individualized education program. That meeting must occur as soon as possible, but no more than ten days after the sixth consecutive day of suspension or the tenth cumulative day of suspension has elapsed.
(b) A dismissal for one school day or less is a day or a partial day of suspension if the child with a disability does not receive regular or special education instruction during that dismissal period. The notice requirements under section 121A.46 do not apply to a dismissal of one day or less.
(c) A child with a disability shall be provided alternative educational services to the extent a suspension exceeds five consecutive school days.
(d) Before initiating an expulsion or exclusion under sections 121A.40 to 121A.56, the district, relevant members of the child's individualized education program team, and the child's parent shall, consistent with federal law, determine whether the child's behavior was caused by or had a direct and substantial relationship to the child's disability and whether the child's conduct was a direct result of a failure to implement the child's individualized education program. When a child with a disability who has an individualized education program is excluded or expelled under sections 121A.40 to 121A.56 for misbehavior that is not a manifestation of the child's disability, the district shall continue to provide special education and related services during the exclusion or expulsion.
121A.44 EXPULSION FOR POSSESSION OF FIREARM. (a) Notwithstanding the time limitation in section 121A.41, subdivision 5, a school board must expel for a period of at least one year a pupil who is determined to have brought a firearm to school except the board may modify this expulsion requirement for a pupil, on a case-by-case basis. For the purposes of this section, firearms is as defined in United States Code, title 18, section 921.
(b) Notwithstanding chapter 13, a student's expulsion or withdrawal or transfer from a school after an expulsion action is initiated against the student for a weapons violation under paragraph (a) may be disclosed by the school district initiating the expulsion proceeding. Unless the information is otherwise public, the disclosure may be made only to another school district in connection with the possible admission of the student to the other district.
121A.45 GROUNDS FOR DISMISSAL. Subdivision 1. Provision of alternative programs. No school shall dismiss any pupil without attempting to provide alternative educational services before dismissal proceedings, except where it appears that the pupil will create an immediate and substantial danger to self or to surrounding persons or property.
Subd. 2. Grounds for dismissal. A pupil may be dismissed on any of the following grounds:
(a) willful violation of any reasonable school board regulation. Such regulation must be clear and definite to provide notice to pupils that they must conform their conduct to its requirements;

(b) willful conduct that significantly disrupts the rights of others to an education, or the ability of school personnel to perform their duties, or school sponsored extracurricular activities; or
(c) willful conduct that endangers the pupil or other pupils, or surrounding persons, including school district employees, or property of the school.
Subd. 3. Parent notification and meeting. If a pupil's total days of removal from school exceeds ten cumulative days in a school year, the school district shall make reasonable attempts to convene a meeting with the pupil and the pupil's parent or guardian before subsequently removing the pupil from school and, with the permission of the parent or guardian, arrange for a mental health screening for the pupil. The district is not required to pay for the mental health screening. The purpose of this meeting is to attempt to determine the pupil's need for assessment or other services or whether the parent or guardian should have the pupil assessed or diagnosed to determine whether the pupil needs treatment for a mental health disorder.
121A.46 SUSPENSION PROCEDURES. Subdivision 1. Informal administrative conference before suspension. The school administration shall not suspend a pupil from school without an informal administrative conference with the pupil. The informal administrative conference shall take place before the suspension, except where it appears that the pupil will create an immediate and substantial danger to self or to surrounding persons or property, in which case the conference shall take place as soon as practicable following the suspension.
Subd. 2. Administrator notifies pupil of grounds for suspension. At the informal administrative conference, a school administrator shall notify the pupil of the grounds for the suspension, provide an explanation of the evidence the authorities have, and the pupil may present the pupil's version of the facts.
Subd. 3. Written notice of grounds for suspension. A written notice containing the grounds for suspension, a brief statement of the facts, a description of the testimony, a readmission plan, and a copy of sections 121A.40 to 121A.56, shall be personally served upon the pupil at or before the time the suspension is to take effect, and upon the pupil's parent or guardian by mail within 48 hours of the conference. The district shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parents of the suspension by telephone as soon as possible following suspension. In the event a pupil is suspended without an informal administrative conference on the grounds that the pupil will create an immediate and substantial danger to surrounding persons or property, the written notice shall be served upon the pupil and the pupil's parent or guardian within 48 hours of the suspension. Service by mail is complete upon mailing.
Subd. 4. Suspension pending expulsion or exclusion hearing. Notwithstanding the provisions of subdivisions 1 and 3, the pupil may be suspended pending the school board's decision in the expulsion or exclusion hearing; provided that alternative educational services are implemented to the extent that suspension exceeds five days.
121A.47 EXCLUSION AND EXPULSION PROCEDURES. Subdivision 1. Requiring a hearing; pupil may waive hearing. No exclusion or expulsion shall be imposed without a hearing, unless the right to a hearing is waived in writing by the pupil and parent or guardian. The action shall be initiated by the school board or its agent.
Subd. 2. Written notice. Written notice of intent to take action shall:
(a) be served upon the pupil and the pupil's parent or guardian personally or by mail;

(b) contain a complete statement of the facts, a list of the witnesses and a description of their testimony;
(c) state the date, time, and place of the hearing;
(d) be accompanied by a copy of sections 121A.40 to 121A.56;
(e) describe alternative educational services accorded the pupil in an attempt to avoid the expulsion proceedings; and
(f) inform the pupil and parent or guardian of the right to:
(1) have a representative of the pupil's own choosing, including legal counsel, at the hearing. The district shall advise the pupil's parent or guardian that free or low-cost legal assistance may be available and that a legal assistance resource list is available from the Department of Education;
(2) examine the pupil's records before the hearing;
(3) present evidence; and
(4) confront and cross-examine witnesses.
Subd. 3. Hearing schedule. The hearing shall be scheduled within ten days of the service of the written notice unless an extension, not to exceed five days, is requested for good cause by the school board, pupil, parent or guardian.
Subd. 4. Convenient time and place of hearing. The hearing shall be at a time and place reasonably convenient to pupil, parent or guardian.
Subd. 5. Closed or open hearing. The hearing shall be closed unless the pupil, parent or guardian requests an open hearing.
Subd. 6. Impartial hearer. The hearing shall take place before:
(1) an independent hearing officer;
(2) a member of the school board;
(3) a committee of the school board; or
(4) the full school board;
as determined by the school board. The hearing shall be conducted in a fair and impartial manner.
Subd. 7. Creating a hearing record. The school board shall record the hearing proceedings at district expense, and a party may obtain a transcript at its own expense. Testimony shall be given under oath. The hearing officer or a member of the school board shall have the power to issue subpoenas and administer oaths.
Subd. 8. Access to pupil's records. At a reasonable time prior to the hearing, the pupil, parent or guardian, or representative, shall be given access to all public school system records pertaining to the pupil, including any tests or reports upon which the proposed action may be based.
Subd. 9. Pupil's right to compel testimony. The pupil, parent or guardian, or representative, shall have the right to compel the attendance of any official employee or agent of the public school system or any public employee or any other person who may have evidence upon which the proposed action may be based, and to confront and to cross-examine any witness testifying for the public school system.
Subd. 10. Pupil's right to present evidence and testimony. The pupil, parent or guardian, or representative, shall have the right to present evidence and testimony, including expert psychological or educational testimony.

Subd. 11. Pupil not compelled to testify. The pupil cannot be compelled to testify in the dismissal proceedings.

Subd. 12. Hearer's recommendation limited to evidence at hearing; service within two days. The recommendation of the hearing officer or school board member or committee shall be based solely upon substantial evidence presented at the hearing and must be made to the school board and served upon the parties within two days of the end of the hearing.

Subd. 13. Basis of school board decision; opportunity for comment. The school board shall base its decision upon the recommendation of the hearing officer or school board member or committee and shall render its decision at a meeting held within five days after receiving the recommendation. The school board may provide the parties with the opportunity to present exceptions and comments to the hearing officer's recommendations provided that neither party presents any evidence not admitted at the hearing. The decision by the school board must be based on the record, must be in writing, and must state the controlling facts on which the decision is made in sufficient detail to apprise the parties and the commissioner of education of the basis and reason for the decision.

Subd. 14. Admission or readmission plan. (a) A school administrator shall prepare and enforce an admission or readmission plan for any pupil who is excluded or expelled from school. The plan may include measures to improve the pupil's behavior, including completing a character education program, consistent with section 120B.232, subdivision 1, and require parental involvement in the admission or readmission process, and may indicate the consequences to the pupil of not improving the pupil's behavior.

(b) The definition of suspension under section 121A.41, subdivision 10, does not apply to a student's dismissal from school for one school day or less, except as provided under federal law for a student with a disability. Each suspension action may include a readmission plan. A readmission plan must provide, where appropriate, alternative education services, which must not be used to extend the student's current suspension period. Consistent with section 125A.091, subdivision 5, a readmission plan must not obligate a parent or guardian to provide psychotropic drugs to their student as a condition of readmission. School officials must not use the refusal of a parent or guardian to consent to the administration of psychotropic drugs to their student or to consent to a psychiatric evaluation, screening or examination of the student as a ground, by itself, to prohibit the student from attending class or participating in a school-related activity, or as a basis of a charge of child abuse, child neglect or medical or educational neglect.

121A.48 GOOD FAITH EXCEPTION. A violation of the technical provisions of the Pupil Fair Dismissal Act, made in good faith, is not a defense to a disciplinary procedure under the act unless the pupil can demonstrate actual prejudice as a result of the violation.

121A.49 APPEAL.

A party to an exclusion or expulsion decision made under sections 121A.40 to 121A.56 may appeal the decision to the commissioner of education within 21 calendar days of school board action. Upon being served with a notice of appeal, the district shall provide the commissioner and the parent or guardian with a complete copy of the hearing record within five days of its receipt of the notice of appeal. All written submissions by the appellant must be submitted and served on the respondent within ten days of its actual receipt of the transcript. All written

submissions by the respondent must be submitted and served on the appellant within ten days of its actual receipt of the written submissions of the appellant. The decision of the school board must be implemented during the appeal to the commissioner.

In an appeal under this section, the commissioner may affirm the decision of the agency, may remand the decision for additional findings, or may reverse or modify the decision if the substantial rights of the petitioners have been prejudiced because the administrative findings, inferences, conclusions, or decisions are:

(1) in violation of constitutional provisions;

(2) in excess of the statutory authority or jurisdiction of the school district;

(3) made upon unlawful procedure, except as provided in section 121A.48;

(4) affected by other error of law;

(5) unsupported by substantial evidence in view of the entire record submitted; or

(6) arbitrary or capricious.

The commissioner or the commissioner's representative shall make a final decision based upon the record. The commissioner shall issue a decision within 30 calendar days of receiving the entire record and the parties' written submission on appeal. The commissioner's decision shall be final and binding upon the parties after the time for appeal expires under section 121A.50.

121A.50 JUDICIAL REVIEW. The decision of the commissioner of education made under sections 121A.40 to 121A.56 is subject to judicial review under sections 14.63 to 14.69. The decision of the commissioner is stayed pending an appeal under this section.

121A.51 REPORTS TO SERVICE AGENCY. The school board shall report any action taken pursuant to sections 121A.40 to 121A.56 to the appropriate public service agency, when the pupil is under the supervision of such agency.

121A.52 NON-APPLICATION OF COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE LAW. The provisions of section 120A.22, subdivision 5, shall not apply to any pupil during a dismissal pursuant to sections 121A.40 to 121A.56.

121A.53 REPORT TO COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION. Subdivision 1. Exclusions and expulsions; physical assaults. The school board must report through the department electronic reporting system each exclusion or expulsion and each physical assault of a district employee by a student within 30 days of the effective date of the dismissal action or assault to the commissioner of education. This report must include a statement of alternative educational services, or other sanction, intervention, or resolution in response to the assault given the pupil and the reason for, the effective date, and the duration of the exclusion or expulsion or other sanction, intervention, or resolution. The report must also include the student's age, grade, gender, race, and special education status.

Subd. 2. Report. (a) The school board must include state student identification numbers of affected pupils on all dismissal and other disciplinary reports required by the department. The department must report annually to the commissioner summary data on the number of dismissals and physical assaults of district employees by a student by age, grade, gender, race, and special education status of the affected pupils. All dismissal and other disciplinary reports must be submitted through the department electronic reporting system.

(b) The commissioner must aggregate the district data reported under this section and include the aggregated data, including aggregated data on physical assaults of a district employee by a student, in the annual school performance reports under section 120B.36.
121A.54 NOTICE OF RIGHT TO BE REINSTATED. Whenever a pupil fails to return to school within ten school days of the termination of dismissal, a school administrator shall inform the pupil and the pupil's parents by mail of the pupil's right to attend and to be reinstated in the public school.
121A.55 POLICIES TO BE ESTABLISHED. (a) The commissioner of education shall promulgate guidelines to assist each school board. Each school board shall establish uniform criteria for dismissal and adopt written policies and rules to effectuate the purposes of sections 121A.40 to 121A.56. The policies shall emphasize preventing dismissals through early detection of problems and shall be designed to address students' inappropriate behavior from recurring. The policies shall recognize the continuing responsibility of the school for the education of the pupil during the dismissal period. The alternative educational services, if the pupil wishes to take advantage of them, must be adequate to allow the pupil to make progress towards meeting the graduation standards adopted under section 120B.02 and help prepare the pupil for readmission.
(b) An area learning center under section 123A.05 may not prohibit an expelled or excluded pupil from enrolling solely because a district expelled or excluded the pupil. The board of the area learning center may use the provisions of the Pupil Fair Dismissal Act to exclude a pupil or to require an admission plan.
(c) Each school district shall develop a policy and report it to the commissioner on the appropriate use of peace officers and crisis teams to remove students who have an individualized education program from school grounds.
121A.56 APPLICATION. Subdivision 1. Prohibition against discrimination remains in effect. Sections 121A.40 to 121A.56 shall not be deemed to amend or otherwise affect or change section 363A.13, subdivision 2.
Subd. 2. Portions of school program for credit. Sections 121A.40 to 121A.56 shall apply only to those portions of the school program for which credit is granted.

The Pupil Fair Dismissal Act (PFDA), contained in Minnesota Statutes, sections 121A.40 to 121A.56 and applicable to students with and without disabilities, was amended in the 2023 Legislative Session as follows:

- **Amends the definition of "pupil" under the PFDA** to mean "any student (1) without a disability under 21 years of age; or (2) **with a disability under 22 years old** who has not received a regular high school diploma; and (3) who remains eligible to attend a public elementary or secondary school," consistent with the amendment in Minnesota Statutes, section 120A.20, subd. 1, setting the age limitations for public school enrollment. Minn. Stat. § 121A.41, subd. 7 (2023).
- **Defines** "**nonexclusionary disciplinary policies and practices**" as "policies and practices that are alternatives to dismissing a pupil from school, including but not limited to evidence-based positive behavior interventions and supports, social and

emotional services, school-linked mental health services, counseling services, social work services, academic screening for Title 1 services or reading interventions, and alternative education services. Nonexclusionary disciplinary policies and practices include but are not limited to the policies and practices under Minnesota Statutes, sections 120B.12; 121A.575, clauses (1) and (2); 121A.031, subdivision 4, paragraph (a), clause (1); 121A.61, subdivision 3, paragraph (r); and 122A.627, clause (3).” Minn. Stat. § 121A.41, subd. 12 (2023).

- **Defines** “**pupil withdrawal agreement**” as “a verbal or written agreement between a school administrator or district administrator and a pupil’s parent to withdraw a student from the school district to avoid expulsion or exclusion dismissal proceedings. The duration of the withdrawal agreement cannot be for more than a 12-month period.” Minn. Stat. § 121A.41, subd. 13 (2023).
- **Adds pupils enrolled in** “**kindergarten through grade 3” to the pupils for whom disciplinary dismissals are prohibited** and for whom nonexclusionary discipline resources must be exhausted and “an ongoing serious safety threat to the child or others” must be present before expulsions and exclusions may be used, **effective July 1, 2023**. The amended statute states that “[t]his provision does not apply to a dismissal from school for less than one school day, except as provided under chapter 125A and federal law for a student receiving special education services.” This statute also continues to apply to pupils enrolled in preschool or prekindergarten programs, including, early childhood family education, school readiness, school readiness plus, voluntary prekindergarten, Head Start, or other school-based preschool or prekindergarten programs. Minn. Stat. § 121A.425 (2023).
- **Amends the statute requiring the provision of alternative programs before dismissal** to state: “No school shall dismiss any pupil without attempting to **use nonexclusionary disciplinary policies and practices** before dismissal proceedings or **pupil withdrawal agreements**, except where it appears that the pupil will create an immediate and substantial danger to self or to surrounding persons or property.” Minn. Stat. § 121A.45, subd. 1 (2023).
- **Adds a requirement to the suspension procedures that “[a]lternative education services must be provided to a pupil who is suspended for more than five consecutive school days.”** The amended statute also clarifies that the provision requiring alternative educational services when a pupil is suspended pending the school board’s decision in an expulsion or exclusion hearing applies “to the extent that suspension exceeds five **consecutive school** days.” Minn. Stat. § 121A.46, subd. 4 (2023).
- **Adds a new subdivision to the suspension procedures requiring “Minimum education services.** School administration must allow a suspended pupil the opportunity to complete all school work assigned during the period of the pupil’s suspension and to receive full credit for satisfactorily completing the assignments. The school principal or other person having administrative control of the school

building or program is encouraged to designate a district or school employee as a liaison to work with the pupil's teachers to allow the suspended pupil to (1) receive timely course materials and other information, and (2) complete daily and weekly assignments and receive teachers' feedback." Minn. Stat. § 121A.46, subd. 5 (2023).

- **Amends the exclusion and expulsion procedures to require that written notice "describe the nonexclusionary discipline practices accorded the pupil in an attempt to avoid the expulsion proceedings"** and to require that the district advise the pupil's parent or guardian "that a legal assistance resource list is available from the Department of Education **and is posted on their website.**" Minn. Stat. § 121A.47, subd. 2 (2023).
- **Amends the exclusion and expulsion procedures to make mandatory the requirement that an admission or readmission plan for a pupil who is excluded or expelled contain "measures to improve the pupil's behavior"** and expands the list of options to include **"social and emotional learning, counseling, social work services, mental health services, referrals for special education or 504 evaluation, and evidence-based academic interventions**" in addition to completing a character education program. The amended statute also clarifies: "**The plan must include reasonable attempts to obtain** parental involvement in the admission or readmission process, and may indicate the consequences to the pupil of not improving the pupil's behavior." Minn. Stat. § 121A.47, subd. 14(a) (2023).
- **Changes the definition of suspension under Minnesota Statutes, section 121A.41, subdivision 10, so that it "does not apply to a student's dismissal from school for less than one school day,** except as provided under federal law for a student with a disability." Minn. Stat. § 121A.47, subd. 14(b) (2023).
- **Expands reporting requirements to require school districts to report to the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) "each pupil withdrawal agreement within 30 days of the effective date of the . . . pupil withdrawal"** as well as "**a statement of nonexclusionary disciplinary practices**." Minn. Stat. § 121A.53, subd. 1 (2023).
- **Adds "nonexclusionary disciplinary policies and practices consistent with section 121A.41, subdivision 12" to the policies that must be established by each school board.** Minn. Stat. § 121A.55(a) (2023).
- **Adds the following policies that must be established by each school board "[f]or expulsion and exclusion dismissals and pupil withdrawal agreements** as defined in section 121A.41, subdivision 13:

(1) for a pupil who remains enrolled in the district or is awaiting enrollment in a new district, a school district's continuing responsibility includes reviewing the pupil's schoolwork and grades on a quarterly basis to ensure the pupil is on track for readmission with the pupil's peers. A school district must communicate on a regular basis with the pupil's parent or guardian to ensure that the pupil is completing the work assigned

through the alternative educational services as defined in section 121A.41, subdivision 11. These services are required until the pupil enrolls in another school or returns to the same school;

(2) a pupil receiving school-based or school-linked mental health services in the district under section 245.4889 continues to be eligible for those services until the pupil is enrolled in a new district; and

(3) a school district must provide to the pupil's parent or guardian information on accessing mental health services, including any free or sliding fee providers in the community. The information must also be posted on the district or charter school website." Minn. Stat. § 121A.55(d) (2023).