

**RIPPLESIDE
ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL
&
AITKIN CHILDREN’S CENTER**



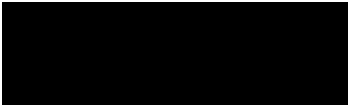
UDENT

HANDBOO

2026-2027

**Aitkin Independent
School District #1**

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WELCOME MESSAGE Welcome to

the 2026–2027 School Year at Rippleside Elementary School! Dear

Rippleside Families,

Welcome to Rippleside Elementary! I am honored to serve as your principal and excited to partner with our students, families, staff, and community. With 15 years of experience in education, I believe strong relationships are the foundation of student success. Together, we will continue building on Rippleside's tradition of excellence while providing a safe, supportive, and engaging learning environment for every student.

This handbook is designed to help students, parents, and guardians become familiar with the policies, procedures, and expectations that guide our school community. We encourage you to review it together, as a shared understanding of these guidelines helps ensure a safe, supportive, and engaging learning environment for all.

Thank you for your support and partnership. I look forward to a successful and rewarding school year at Rippleside Elementary.

Here's to a great 2026–2027 school year!

Leah Olk
Principal
lolk@isd1.org
218-927-7720

MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to inspire and prepare our students with the tools and skills to succeed in an everchanging world.

CORE VALUES

Excellence - empower students to be their best self

Responsive - able to adapt to the changing educational environments

Safety - provide for a safe school environment

Respect - appreciate the uniqueness of each individual in our thoughts, actions, and relationships

Integrity - doing what is right - even when it is not easy

BELIEF STATEMENTS

We believe in academic excellence for all.

We believe compassionate and curious minds are developed when students are engaged socially, emotionally, academically, and physically.

We believe building caring relationships with students and families are the foundation for successful schools and communities. **We believe** in individualized and innovative educational experiences.

DISTRICT CALENDAR

2026 - 2027 Aitkin Public Schools	AUG							1		
		W = Workshop	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Aug 10-13 PBEC New SpEd Staff In-service
		NS = No School	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	Aug 17-18 Operations/Bus Training
		C = Conferences	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	Aug 25 New Teacher In-service
		Staff Days	26	24	25	26	27	28	29	Aug 31 -Sep 2 Back to School In-service (AHS/RES) (3.0)
		STUDENT DAYS	30	31					29	Sep 3 Kindercamp
	SEP	7-Labor Day			1	2	3	4	5	Sep 8 AHS First Day of Class
			6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Sep 11 RES First Day of Class
			13	14	15	16	17	18	19	Sep 8, 9, 10 RES Entrance Conference, TU-TH 7:30-3:30, WE 11:30-7:30
			20	21	22	23	24	25	26	
			27	28	29	30				
	OCT	12-Columbus Day					1	2	3	OCT 15-16 NO SCHOOL / MEA
			4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
			11	12	13	14	NS	NS	17	
			18	19	20	21	22	23	24	
			25	26	27	28	29	30	31	
	NOV	1st Qtr Ends 11/16/25 (46)								NOV 5-6 NO SCHOOL for STUDENTS
		2nd Qtr Begins 11/9/25	1	2	3	4	C	W	7	Nov 5- AHS/RES (1.5) Conferences 7:30 to 7:30
		11-Veteran's Day	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Nov 6 AHS/RES (.5) Data Day/Staff Workshop
		26-Thanksgiving	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	NOV 26-27 NO SCHOOL
		22	23	24	25	NS	NS	28		
	DEC	25-Christmas	29	30						
					1	2	3	4	5	
			6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
			13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
			20	21	22	NS	NS	NS	26	DEC 23-DEC 31 NO SCHOOL
	JAN	1-New Year's Day 2nd Qtr Ends 1/21/26(43) 3rd Qtr Starts 1/25/26 18-Martin L. King Day	27	NS	NS	NS	NS			
								NS	2	JAN 1-4 NO SCHOOL
			3	W	5	6	7	8	9	JAN 4 AHS/RES (1.0) Teacher Workshop
			10	11	12	13	14	15	16	
			17	18	19	20	21	W	23	JAN 22 AHS/RES (1.0) Teacher Workshop
			24	25	26	27	28	29	30	JAN 22 NO SCHOOL for STUDENTS
	FEB	15-Presidents' Day	31							
				1	2	3	4	5	6	
			7	8	9	10	11	W	13	FEB 12 AHS/RES (1.0) Teacher Workshop
			14	NS	16	17	18	19	20	FEB 12 & 15 - NO SCHOOL
			21	22	23	24	25	26	27	
	MAR	3rd Qtr Ends 3/23/26 (40) 4th Qtr Starts 6/30/26 28 - Easter	28							
				1	2	3	4	5	6	
			7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
			15	16	17	18	19	20	MAR 24-29 NO SCHOOL for STUDENTS	
			21	22	23	C	C	NS	NS	27
	APR		28	NS	30	31				Mar 24 AHS/RES (1) Conferences 7:30 to 3:30
							1	2	3	
			4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
			11	12	13	14	15	16	17	
			18	19	20	21	22	23	24	
	MAY	4th Qtr Ends 6/3/26 (46) 31-Memorial Day	25	26	27	28	29	30		
									1	MAY 7 NO SCHOOL for STUDENTS
			2	3	4	5	6	W	8	May 7 AHS/RES (1.0) Teacher Workshop
			9	10	11	12	13	14	15	MAY 31 NO SCHOOL
			16	17	18	19	20	21	22	JUNE 3 Last Day with Students
			23	24	25	26	27	28	29	JUNE 4 AHS/RES (.5) Staff / GRADUATION
		30	NS	1	2	3	4	30		

COMMUNICATION

Email

All District employees can be reached at firstinitiallastname@isd1.org, e.g., lolk.isd1.org

Contacting Your Student's Teacher

Your student's teacher will share their preferred method of contact at Entrance Conferences at the beginning of the year. A staff directory can be found on our school website. It includes email addresses and phone extensions. Teachers may not check their emails or voicemails during the school day, so if you need immediate assistance, please contact the front office at 218-927-4838.

Contact Information

We ask that you update the office if you change any of your primary contact information (address, phone number, email) during the school year. If you add or remove any household members or would like to change your student's emergency contact information, please contact the office staff with these changes as well. You will be asked to review your contact information twice a year during our fall and spring conferences. If this information is not updated, you may miss important communications.

Infinite Campus

Infinite Campus is a parent/guardian portal that gives families secure, electronic access to their student's records. Visit the App Store or Google Play and Infinite Campus or Campus Parent to download the app. You will need the activation key from your school to access your account for the first time (from the web and/or the app). One account will allow access to the information of all school-age students in your family. Printed directions are available at the office. If you need assistance signing up for the portal, please contact the office staff.

District/School Messengers

Rippleside, Aitkin Children's Center, and Aitkin Public Schools communicate mass messages primarily via the Infinite Campus messaging system. These notifications may include helpful reminders or announcements, after-school activity changes, and notices regarding student absences and lunch account balances. Most messages are sent to families via text message and/or email. Voice calls are typically sent to all of the family's home, work and cell phone numbers provided to the school and are typically reserved for school closings, emergencies, and district-wide messages.

COMMUNICATION

Newsletter

Monthly newsletters are sent via email to the email address the school has on file for you. This includes a variety of information about activities going on at our school and in the area, important upcoming dates, and our monthly lunch calendar.

Website/Social Media

Please visit our district website at isd1.org. You can find a wide range of information about the District. Rippleside, Community Education, and Aitkin Children's Center have pages on our website with helpful information and links. You can also find us on Facebook.

Report Cards

Report Cards will be accessible to families at the end of each quarter via Infinite Campus. If you desire a paper copy of this report, please contact the front office.

Conferences

Rippleside has 3 conferences per year. Entrance Conferences are held right after Labor Day prior to the first day of school. Here you will have a chance to meet with your student's teacher, complete all yearly paperwork, drop off school supplies, and access information regarding some activities, busing, etc. We also hold parent/teacher conferences in the fall and spring.

Communicating with your student during the school day

We ask that you make arrangements with your student prior to the school day. However, if plans change and you need to get a message to your student during the school day, please leave the message with the office personnel and they will get the message to your student before the end of the school day. Please do not plan to use cell phone communication with your student during the school day. Students are not allowed to use their cell phones during the school day for the safety of all students. Please refer to page 15 in our District Handbook for our detailed cell phone and other device policies.

DAILY SCHEDULE & ARRIVAL

PROCEDURES

7:50 AM-8:25 AM Students enter building and breakfast

is served

8:25 AM Classes begin-Pledge of Allegiance and morning announcements

10:30 AM Tardy cut off, students arriving after this time are marked absent for the morning period

11:10 AM-1:05 PM Lunch (time varies by grade level)

1:30 PM Students leaving for the day prior to this time will be marked absent for the afternoon period

3:02 PM Grades K-3 bus students are dismissed

3:04 PM Grades 4-6 bus students are dismissed

3:10 PM Walkers and pick up students are dismissed

A.M. Drop off

For the safety of all students, parents/guardians are asked to travel down 1st Street SW/Potter Blvd, turn

south on 2nd Avenue SW, and stop along the sidewalk in front of Woock Field to drop off students. This is a drop-off zone ONLY. If you must enter Rippleside, you must find alternate parking (2nd Street SW or 3rd Street SW). The main entry is our bus drop-off zone from 7:55-8:20. Do **NOT** drop your students here at this time.

Drop-Off Procedures

Parents and guardians should drop off students between 7:50 a.m. and 8:15 a.m. at the designated drop-off zone on 2nd Avenue SW in front of Woock Field. School doors open at 7:50 a.m., when student supervision begins.

To promote a smooth transition into the school day and allow staff to begin morning routines, families are expected to say goodbye at the door rather than accompany students into the building. Students arriving before 7:50 a.m. must be enrolled in Kids Club, as supervision is not available before that time. Students dropped off early may be sent to Kids Club, and parents/guardians will be responsible for any associated fees

RIPPLESIDE STUDENT DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

To ensure a safe and orderly dismissal, Rippleside follows the procedures below for buses, parent pick-up, walkers, and after-school activities.

Dismissal Changes

Notify your child's teacher of any dismissal changes before the school day begins whenever possible.

If you cannot reach the teacher, contact the school office.

Staff must be notified of all dismissal changes. Otherwise, your child's usual dismissal plan will be followed.

Students may not use cell phones to make or change dismissal plans.

Bus Riders

Primary students dismiss at 3:02 p.m.; Intermediate students at 3:04 p.m.

Students report directly to their assigned bus.

Bus changes must be approved through the office by 12:00 p.m.

Parent/Guardian Pick-Up

Parent pick-up begins after buses depart at 3:10 p.m.

Pick up Grades 4–6 at the main entrance and Grades K–3 at Door #2.

Please avoid early pick-ups whenever possible, as instruction continues until dismissal. Students should be picked up by 3:30 p.m. If a parent or guardian cannot be reached, the school will follow established late pick-up procedures, which may include Kids Club (if available) or contacting local law enforcement.

After-School Activities

Students remaining after school must be participating in a school-sponsored activity or be under adult supervision.

Parent/guardian permission is required.

Students with activities beginning later in the afternoon must go home or attend Kids Club until the activity begins.

Parents/guardians are responsible for transportation after activities.

Walkers

Written parent/guardian permission is required for students who walk home. A yearly note is sufficient for regular walkers; occasional walkers require a note each time.

Staff supervise students across designated intersections, including the Highway 169 crossing. School rules remain in effect during dismissal, and students may not use cell phones to

change plans.

Student Release

Students will only be released to parents, legal guardians, or approved emergency contacts listed in Infinite Campus.

To release a student to someone else, the school must receive written or verbal permission from the parent or guardian.

Notify the principal if there are individuals who are not authorized to pick up your child.

RIPPLESIDE ELEMENTARY

PBIS PROCEDURES

Please note: District Wide Policies and Procedures can be found on the district website <http://home.isd1.org/district-policies.htmls>

PBIS “CATCH THE WAVE”

Mission Statement: The mission of Rippleside’s Catch the Wave program is to create an effective learning community in which all members are actively contributing through the consistent practice of respect, responsibility, safety, and positive attitudes.

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports is an approach to teaching and supporting positive behaviors and meeting the needs of all students. This schoolwide approach to discipline focuses on building a safe and positive environment in which all students can learn. The foundation of PBIS at Rippleside Elementary School is Catch the Wave which has four building wide expectations:

- We are Respectful
- Always Responsible
- Very Safe
- Excellent Attitude

In addition to our behavior expectations PBIS has five other components:

1. a behavior matrix which explains behavior expectations in each school setting
2. direct teaching of the expectations
3. Catch the Wave reinforcement
4. consequences for minor and major behavior
5. behavior tracking to record and address inappropriate behaviors

BEHAVIOR MATRIX

The school behavior matrix is a detailed description of expected behavior in each setting of the school. For example, in every setting it is respectful to use self-control of our body and words. It is very safe to keep your hands, feet, and body to self. The matrix will be posted in classrooms, around school, and sent home. The home behavior matrix was created to provide a detailed description of behaviors that will help children be successful at home, school, and in our community. For example, it is respectful to say “please” and “thank you”. It is responsible to have a quiet place to complete homework. The home matrix can be found on page 12. Opportunities to learn more about home expectations will be available in the Rippleside Elementary School’s monthly newsletter.

RIPPLESIDE PBIS MATRIX

RIPPLESIDE PBIS PARENT MATRIX

RESOURCES

RIPPLESIDE PBIS

BEHAVIOR FLOWCHART



WALKING & BIKING TO RIPPLESIDE ELEMENTARY

Rippleside encourages students to walk or bike to school when possible. These healthy, active choices help reduce traffic and build lifelong safety habits.

Walking

Students who walk to school should:

- Use sidewalks and crosswalks whenever available.
- Look left, right, and left again before crossing streets.
- Never cross between parked cars.
- Follow all traffic laws and school behavior expectations.
- Wear bright or reflective clothing when walking in low-light conditions.

Recommended Supervision

- Grades K–3: Walk with an adult.
- Grades 4–6: Walk with a group or adult whenever possible.

Biking

Students who bike to school should:

- Wear a properly fitted helmet.
- Follow all traffic laws and ride safely.
- Ride on the right side of the road and obey traffic signs and signals.
- Yield to pedestrians.

On school grounds, students must:

- Walk bikes on sidewalks.
- Park bikes in designated racks.
- Keep bikes off the playground.
- Lock bikes and store helmets securely.
- Respect others' bicycles and property.

Recommended Supervision

- Grades K–3: Ride with an adult.
- Older students should demonstrate safe riding skills before biking independently.

Safe Routes

Students should use sidewalks on 1st St. SW, 2nd St. SW, 3rd St. SW, and 2nd Ave. SW and cross streets only at marked crosswalks. The preferred crossing of Minnesota Avenue (Hwy. 169) is at 2nd St. SW, where the Aitkin Police Department provides assistance during arrival and dismissal. Walking and biking to school are shared responsibilities between families and students. Parents and guardians are responsible for determining whether their child is ready to walk or bike independently and for reviewing safe travel practices. The District is not responsible for incidents that occur off school property.

FOOD, WELLNESS, & ALLERGY GUIDELINES

School Meals

Minnesota provides one free complete breakfast and lunch each school day for all students. Students who take only milk or juice without a complete meal will be charged \$0.45, including students who qualify for free or reduced-price meals.

For information about meal account management, please refer to District Policy 725.

Healthy Snacks

Families are encouraged to send nutritious snacks that support student learning and wellness. Healthy choices include:

- Fresh fruits and vegetables
- Low-fat yogurt and cheese
- Whole-grain crackers, cereals, granola bars, and popcorn
- Unsweetened applesauce or fruit packed in juice
- Water, low-fat milk, or 100% fruit or vegetable juice

Please check with your child's teacher regarding classroom food allergies before sending snacks. Birthday treats are discouraged.

Farm to School

Rippleside participates in a Farm to School program that provides students with opportunities to enjoy locally grown foods and learn about agriculture through classroom and cafeteria experiences. The program supports healthy eating, local farmers, and nutrition education.

Peanut-Aware School

Aitkin Public Schools is a peanut-aware, not peanut-free, district.

Peanut butter and nut-containing foods are not served as school lunch options. Families are strongly encouraged not to send foods containing peanuts or tree nuts. In classrooms with students who have peanut or tree nut allergies, snacks and party foods containing nuts are not permitted.

Parents should provide safe foods and any required medications for students with food allergies.

School staff receive annual training on recognizing and responding to allergic reactions, including the use of emergency medications. Families are encouraged to work closely with the school nurse to develop an individualized health plan when needed.

ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES & PROCEDURES

Pets

Pets brought to Rippleside Elementary School during the school year should be cleared with the classroom teacher. Due to the increasing amount of allergies, it is necessary to make these arrangements. Pets may be viewed outside on school property, with the owner present and supervising the activity.

Dress Code

See district policy in the district handbook on Pg. 15

Winter Playground Expectations (Snow)

AREA Note:

Students in Grade 5-6

Students in Grades K-4

Boots
Snow Pants
Coat
Gloves
Hat

ENTIRE PLAYGROUND

Students in Grades K-4

Hat
Gloves
Coat

Hat
Gloves
Coat

ENTIRE PLAYGROUND AREA

BLACKTOP ONLY

5th and 6th Grade students can use hoods as alternatives. Use your judgment. Below Freezing and NO Snow—ALL K-6 students must have a coat/gloves/hat. Above freezing and NO Snow—Dress according to weather. The entire playground is open unless muddy areas are closed by adult supervisors.
Encourage all students to wear mud boots/extra shoes for spring weather.
Students must keep all clothing on at all times.

Fees & Fines

Textbooks, workbooks and other materials are furnished free to students and they are held responsible for their condition. If students lose or damage a book, they will need to pay for it.

Selling

No student selling during school hours of 8:05 AM- 3:05 PM, unless it supports planned Rippleside programs.

ADDITIONAL

PROCEDURES

Grading

Grading varies depending on grade level. Any questions or concerns regarding grading should be discussed with your student’s teacher.

Late Work

A late assignment is one not completed on the day it is due. The consequence for late work is a daily deduction that is at the discretion of each grade level.

Incomplete Work

A student will not be allowed to take an “F” in lieu of unfinished work. Rather, an “I” (Incomplete) will be given and this will be carried over to the final grade if the student refused to complete the work. An “I” as a final grade reverts to an “F” if not complete within two weeks from the end of the

grading period unless prior arrangements are made with the instructor. **Vandalism or Damage to School Property**

Students that intentionally damage school property or are involved in an incident that could have been avoided by demonstrating better judgment will be required to pay for damages (e.g. lockers, doors, broken backboards, windows, iPads, bee bots, or other technology devices etc.). The only exception where a student will not have to pay for a broken backboard is if the incident occurs during a scheduled athletic contest.

Internet Use Policy

Please see page 17 in the district handbook.

Cell Phones and Personal Electronic Devices

Rippleside Elementary is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged personal electronic devices brought to school or on the bus. Families are encouraged to leave these items at home. If students bring cell phones, smartwatches, earbuds, headphones, or other personal electronic devices to school, they must be turned off and stored in their locker upon arrival. Devices may not be used during the school day and should remain stored until dismissal. Parents/guardians who need to contact their child during the school day should call the school office.

Lockers

School lockers are the property of the school district. At no time does the school district relinquish its exclusive control of lockers provided for the convenience of students. School authorities for any reason may conduct inspection of the interior of the lockers at any time, without notice, without student consent, and without a search warrant. The personal possessions of students within a school locker may be searched only when school authorities have a reasonable suspicion that the search will uncover evidence of a violation of law or school rules. As soon as practicable, after the search of a student's personal possessions, the school authorities must provide notice of the search to students whose lockers were searched unless disclosure would impede an ongoing investigation by police or school officials. Locks are not allowed on lockers; special circumstances must be approved by the Principal.

ATTENDANCE & TARDINESS

Student Attendance

Regular attendance is essential for student learning, participation, and success in school.

Importance of Attendance

Students benefit most when they are present for:

- Instruction and classroom learning
- Discussions and group activities
- Interaction with teachers and peers

Shared Responsibility

Attendance is a shared responsibility of students, families, teachers, and school staff. Families play an important role in ensuring students attend school regularly.

Reporting Absences

All absences are recorded as excused or unexcused.

A written note from a parent/guardian is required within two (2) school days of an absence.

Absences without a note will be marked unexcused.

Excused Absences

Examples include:

- Illness or medical/dental appointments

- Family emergencies, funerals, or weddings
- Pre-arranged absences approved by the school
- Suspension (students may complete missed work)

Unexcused Absences

Absences without parent/guardian verification are unexcused.

Follow-up steps for unexcused absences:

- 3 absences: Parent/guardian notification
- 5 absences: Second notification
- 7 absences: Referral to Aitkin County Health and Human Services (may be considered educational neglect)

Excessive Absences

Students with repeated absences may be required to provide a doctor's note or meet with the school nurse. Excessive absences may also be referred to county services when appropriate.

Truancy

When a student is identified as truant, the school will notify the parent/guardian by mail or other communication.

Tardiness

Students arriving late must provide a note from a parent/guardian.

Excused tardies: medical appointments, late buses, illness

Unexcused tardies: oversleeping, missing the bus, or leaving home late

Consistent attendance helps students build strong academic and life skills. We appreciate your partnership in supporting daily school attendance.

TRANSPORTATION & BUS EXPECTATIONS

Bus transportation is a privilege. School buses and activity buses are extensions of the school, and all school rules apply while riding the bus and at bus stops.

Student Expectations

Students are expected to:

- Follow the driver's directions at all times.
- Remain seated while the bus is moving.
- Use respectful language and behavior.
- Keep hands, feet, and belongings to themselves.
- Keep the bus clean.
- Respect school property and the property of others.
- Avoid behavior that distracts the driver or creates an unsafe environment.

The school district is not responsible for personal items left on the bus.

Bus Stop Safety

Students should:

- Arrive at the bus stop at least 5 minutes before pick-up.
- Stay out of the roadway until the bus stops.
- Wait for the driver's signal before crossing the street.
- Show respect for others and nearby property.
- Refrain from fighting, horseplay, bullying, or the use of alcohol, tobacco, or drugs.

Parents/guardians are responsible for student behavior at bus stops before pick-up and after drop off.

Bus Discipline

Unsafe or inappropriate behavior may result in:

- Parent/guardian notification

- Assigned seating

- Suspension of bus privileges

- Required conference with parents, school staff, and transportation personnel
- Loss of bus privileges for the remainder of the school year for repeated or serious violations

Serious behaviors such as fighting, vandalism, throwing objects, or actions that endanger others may result in immediate suspension from the bus.

For complete transportation rules and disciplinary procedures, please refer to the District Transportation Handbook or contact the Transportation Department.

STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT OPT OUT

Statewide Assessments:

Parent/Guardian Participation Guide and Refusal Information

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

Assessments Connect to Standards

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

Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA)

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

ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS for English Learners

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

Statewide Assessments Help Families and Students

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

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

English learners who take the ACCESS or WIDA Alternate ACCESS and meet certain requirements, have the opportunity to exit from English learner programs.

Taking Statewide Assessments Helps Your Student's School

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

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

Student Participation in Statewide Assessments

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

Consequences of Not Participating in Statewide Assessments

- The student will not receive an individual score. For ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS, the student would not have the opportunity to exit their English learner program.
- School and district assessment results will be incomplete, making it more difficult to have an accurate picture of student learning.
- Since all eligible students are included in some calculations even when they do not participate, school and district accountability results are impacted. This may affect the school's ability to be identified for support or recognized for success.

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

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

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

Additional Information

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

Statewide Assessment: Parent/Guardian Decision Not to Participate

By completing this form, you are acknowledging that your student will not participate in statewide assessments and will not receive individual assessment results.

First Name: _____ Middle Initial: _____ Last Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Current Grade in School: _____ Student ID Number (if known): _____

School: _____ District: _____

Parent/Guardian Name (print): _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Reason for Refusal: _____

Please indicate the statewide assessment(s) you are opting your student out of this school year:

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

Contact your school or district for more information on how to opt out of local assessments.

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



2025-2026

**Aitkin Independent
School District #1**

ACC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

MISSION STATEMENT

"To offer high quality early childhood programs that meet the developmental needs of young children and families from birth through pre-kindergarten age." **GUIDING**

PRINCIPLES:

Parents/Guardians are a child's first and most important teachers.

Development proceeds at varying rates from child to child.

Experiences that a child has during early childhood have a profound impact on a child's development and his/her approach to learning now and in the future.

Play is the most important vehicle for developing cognition, communication, social emotional

competence, and motor skills.

Social emotional competence is the foundation for all learning. The use of intentional teaching strategies is essential for children to gain these skills.

PROGRAMMING OPTIONS:

Early Childhood Family Education Classes

(non-separating & separating classes available)

ECFE classes offer the building blocks for family and school success. A typical class includes: parent/guardian/child activity time, teacher directed activity time, circle, snack, and parent/guardian discussion times.

Day/Evening multi-age classes on Mondays

Transition to kindergarten classes

Special Events (Fall Party, Valentine Party, etc.)

Junior Jakes (3's Preschool)

Children who are 3 years of age as of September 1st can enroll in the Center's Junior Jakes Classes. These classes offer learning opportunities that foster growth in the following areas: cognition, communication, motor, self-help, and social-emotional skills.

Early Childhood Special Education

Trained and licensed staff are available to provide specially designed instruction to children from birth through pre-kindergarten age who have been identified as having a disability. Services may be provided in a home setting or center-based setting dependent upon a child's age and needs.

Jakes (4's Preschool):

Children who are 4 years of age as of September 1st can enroll in the Center's Jakes Preschool Classes. Classes include a 2, 3, or 4 full day option. Curriculum focuses on cognition, communication, social-emotional skills, motor skills, and self-help skills with an emphasis placed on skills that will help your child be prepared for kindergarten.

ACC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

TRANSPORTATION:

Parents are responsible for providing transportation to and from the Center for children enrolled in Junior Jakes (3's Pre-school).

Jakes (4's Pre-school) students have the option for busing by Aitkin Public Schools. Busing is available both ways for full day sessions provided a new bus stop is not created. Bus transportation is a privilege, not a right. School buses are extensions of the school and all school rules apply to anyone being transported by Aitkin Public Schools. See bus conduct on page 32 for more information.

CLASS SIZE:

Class sizes may vary. The majority of preschool classes will be staffed by a Lead Teacher, Special Education Teacher, and paraprofessional (aide).

EARLY CHILDHOOD FIELD TRIPS:

4's Preschool Classes will have periodic field trips. Parents/Guardians will be asked to sign a "blanket" permission slip in advance.

PRESCHOOL SNACK PROGRAM:

The Center's preschool snack program aligns with the District's Wellness Policy. Center staff

will be responsible for planning and preparing snacks for all children who attend preschool. Monthly snack menus will be posted in the Center. Please notify staff of any dietary restrictions. Snack fees are collected one time per year. Fees are as follows: \$50 for 4x/week sessions, \$38 for 3x/week sessions, and \$25.00 twice/week sessions.

Snack fees will be waived for families who qualify for free and reduced lunch.

COMMUNICATION:

A child's teacher will have their own personal system to promote effective communication. This may include emails, notes, and weekly bulletins.

Parents/Guardians should read notes, monthly newsletters and emails received from the Center.

FIRE/WEATHER/LOCK DOWN DRILLS:

Fire, lockdown, and severe weather drills are held regularly.

DRESS:

Shoes must be worn in the Center at all times

Dress your child appropriately for indoor, outdoor, creative and messy play. This includes tennis shoes for gross motor time as well as jackets, snow pants, boots, hats and mittens during the winter months for 4's Preschool.

The Center is not responsible for permanent stains on clothing

Please label outdoor clothing and backpacks.

ACC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Early Childhood Screening

The Aitkin Children's Center in collaboration with Aitkin County Public Health and Lakes & Pines Head Start provides two free early childhood screenings each year to all children who are three years of age. This free screening is a quick and simple check of a child's overall development. It identifies possible learning or health concerns so that children can get needed help before starting school. Please note: Children must be screened one time prior to entering kindergarten and within 90 days of preschool enrollment.

HEALTH INFORMATION:

Children who are suspected of being ill or injured during the school day will be seen by the school nurse. First aid will be administered in an emergency. The child will be transported to the Aitkin hospital if necessary.

Your child must be appropriately immunized for his/her age. The Center must have an immunization record on file for all students registered.

In order to ensure the health of other children, children should not be brought to the Center if they are ill. Please keep children home if they have any of the following symptoms: diarrhea, persistent cough, fever, earache, stomachache, or vomiting. Please note: Children must be fever free for 24 hours(without medication) before being sent to school.

Please notify the Center if your child develops a communicable disease so that we can inform parents of exposure. i.e. strep throat, lice, pink eye, etc.

For suspected cases of lice or nits (eggs), school staff will bring students to the nurse to be checked.

If your child has any medical needs, please notify the school nurse's office at 927-2115 ext.

2104. **ABSENCES:**

When absent, please notify the Children's Center office staff or your child's teacher by calling 218.927.7735. A parent or doctor's note is not necessary.

A child who is absent for 3 consecutive weeks with no parental contact will be removed from class lists.

Absences will not result in tuition reduction.

TUITION:

Tuition for 3's preschool is based on a sliding scale fee. Tuition for 4's preschool is covered by Voluntary Prekindergarten funding through the State of MN.

Patrons must meet with the Center Secretary to make financial arrangements which include the child's first month's tuition or a signed Pathway I or II scholarship application. This must occur prior to the child's first day of preschool.

Tuition may be paid in one lump sum or in monthly payments. Monthly payments should be received the first day of each month.

Tuition statements and receipts for payments will be emailed to parents directly each month. If no email address exists, other arrangements will be made.

Families should contact the Center to change/modify payment schedules if financial problems occur.

ACC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

TUITION CONTINUED

Delinquent accounts are those who have not made a payment for two or more months. Patrons who have not made payments for two or more months will be contacted by the Center Secretary. Continued attempts will be made to collect funds by the Center and may prohibit the family's ability to register for upcoming sessions of their choice.

Outstanding balances at the end of a fiscal year will be carried over to the next fiscal year.

SCHOLARSHIPS:

Because the ACC is a four-star, Parent Aware rated center, a number of early learning scholarships are available to families. Scholarships may result in free preschool tuition for families. If you and your family are in need of a scholarship, please indicate that need to our center secretary and complete the necessary applications and forms at the time of enrollment. Notification of scholarship status will occur through a regional agency or by the Aitkin Children's Center.

Monthly balance statements will not reflect the scholarship until award notification has been received.

Parents are responsible for a child's tuition until award notification has occurred

ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE:

Doors to the center will be locked during classes and will remain locked until 5 minutes prior to all classes.

In the event of an emergency, parents/guardians may use the main entrance of Rippleside Elementary to enter the Center. Parents/Guardians must sign in when using the main entrance. Pick up your child promptly at the end of each class (within five minutes of the class ending time). If a child is picked up consistently late (3 times), a child care fee of \$20.00 will be assessed to a family's tuition statement.

Persons who are designated as authorized persons to pick up or drop off children will need to use the Sign In/Sign Out forms. If someone other than a parent/guardian is picking a child up, please document this change on the Sign In form.

In the event of child custody cases or other legal matters that may impact persons who can pick

up or drop off, please provide the Children's Center & Rippleside offices with pertinent legal documents.

WEATHER RELATED CLOSINGS:

Please listen to KKIN, KEZZ, WCCO for cancellation information. If the Aitkin Schools are closed, the Aitkin Children's Center is closed.

If there is a late start, there will be no morning preschool classes. Full day preschool class will start two hours late. Afternoon classes will be scheduled as normal.

AITKIN CHILDREN'S CENTER CALENDAR:

Please post the yearly Center calendar in your home.

Tuition will not be adjusted for classes that may meet less sessions due to the school calendar.

ACC POLICIES AND

PROCEDURES*PETS:*

Pets may be allowed to visit the center. Please consult with the classroom teacher before bringing in a pet due to allergies.

PERSONAL ITEMS/TOYS:

Do not send your child to school with personal items or toys. The Center is not responsible for lost/stolen items.

TOILETING:

Children who are enrolled in 3's and 4's Preschool should be toilet trained unless the child has a specific health concern or is receiving special education support services.

LENDING LIBRARIES:

The Center has children's books available to be taken home. This is an honor system. Families should return books when they are finished.

BOOK FAIRS/FUNDRAISERS:

Parents/Guardians at the Center may be asked to participate in periodic fundraisers. Participation is voluntary.

CONFERENCES:

Conferences will be held two times per year. Dates will coincide with Rippleside's conferences. Each student will get one 15-minute conference time.

GET ON BOARD

We are very excited to continue our "Get On Board" positive behavior program. The "Get on Board" Program is the early childhood version of Rippleside's "Catch the Wave." "Get on Board" emphasizes positive social emotional outcomes for children which are embodied in our classroom expectations in 3's and 4's Preschool:

- ★ We are friends
- ★ We are safe
- ★ We clean up
- ★ We use a talking voice

ACC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Each student in our program will spend time practicing these expected behaviors in each setting of the Aitkin Children's Center: snack, playground, hallway, circle time, center play, cubby room, and bathrooms. You will see posters that will describe the expected behaviors in the main areas of the Center.

It is our goal to create a safe, nurturing, caring classroom community for your child and all the children we serve. Behavior incident reports will be filled out for those students who exhibit persistent and challenging behaviors. If you have any concerns, please don't hesitate to contact your child's teacher.

PARENT/GUARDIAN INVOLVEMENT

Parents/Guardians can be involved in their child's education in the following ways:

Communicate effectively with your child's teacher through emails, notes, and phone calls.

Attend Parent/Teacher Conferences.

Volunteer or visit the classroom during special events or field trips. A volunteer form will be sent home during October.

Offer assistance to the teacher. She may need help with special projects or with filing.

Become a member of the Children's Center Parent Advisory Council.

Attend special events and activities sponsored at the Center.

QUESTIONS & CONCERNS

The Center is committed to partnering with parents/guardians to provide a high-quality early childhood experience. As the school year progresses, we know questions and concerns will arise. Please use the following steps as a guide:

1. Direct questions to your child's teacher or other staff in the classroom.
2. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Leah Olk, Building Principal, at 218-927-7720, or at lolk@isd1.org