

Menahga Elementary School E-6th Grade



Student / Parent / Guardian Handbook 2026-2027

***Menahga Public School District 821
216 Aspen Avenue SE
P.O. Box 160
Menahga, Minnesota 56464
218-564-4141
www.menahga.k12.mn.us***

Mission:

The Mission of the Menahga School District is to build strong partnerships with stakeholders and ensure all learners succeed.

Vision:

The Menahga School District exists to engage all learners on a lifelong path to success.

SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTHORITY

All employees and students at Menahga Elementary have the responsibility to enforce school regulations. The principal, teachers, secretary, nurse, librarian, cooks, custodians, bus drivers, student supervisors, paraprofessionals and fellow students have the right and responsibility to correct those who violate school rules.

This handbook and its contents were approved by the Menahga School Board of Education at its August, 2026 meeting. This handbook may be changed or amended at any time during the school year. Changes will be posted in the office of the principal. If you have any questions about a provision, contact the principal. Students at Menahga Public School will have access to school handbook online at www.menahga.k12.mn.us and will receive a handbook when they begin attending school each year. Students do not need to sign a sheet of receipt.

Table of Contents

<i>Page 2</i>	<i>School Responsibility and Authority</i>
<i>Page 3</i>	<i>Welcome Message, School Board, Administration</i>
<i>Page 4</i>	<i>Elementary Staff</i>
<i>Page 5</i>	<i>School Calendar</i>
<i>Page 6</i>	<i>Accessibility, Accident Insurance, Alcohol/Tobacco/Chemicals, Attendance</i>
<i>Page 7</i>	<i>Background Check Procedures, Bicycles, Bullying/Harassment, Buses</i>
<i>Page 8</i>	<i>Cell Phones/Smart Watches/Electronic Devices, Complaint of Services, Directory Information/ Data Privacy/Student Records</i>
<i>Page 9</i>	<i>Discipline, Dress Code</i>
<i>Page 10</i>	<i>Field Trips Food and Beverages</i>
<i>Page 11</i>	<i>504 Support Services, Food Services, Health Services</i>
<i>Page 12</i>	<i>Homebound Instruction</i>
<i>Page 13</i>	<i>Internet Acceptable Use , Interviews of Students, Library/Media , Money/Valuables, Pledge of Allegiance, Posters/Flyers, Recess</i>
<i>Page 14</i>	<i>Report Cards/Family Access, School Closures, School Hours, School Premises, School Treats, Search of Students/ Desks/ Personal Possessions, Special Events, Telephone Calls</i>
<i>Page 15</i>	<i>Testing Requirements, Title I Parent Involvement Policy, Title IX Law, Visitors</i>
<i>Page 16</i>	<i>Volunteers, Weapons</i>
<i>Attachments:</i>	



Dear Families,

I extend a warm welcome to all our students and their families as we embark on what promises to be an exceptional school year, 2026-2027! The dedicated staff at Menahga Elementary has been diligently preparing to ensure a year filled with enriching and enjoyable learning experiences for each student.

At MES, we believe in the power of collaboration for a robust educational journey. It is through the collective efforts of parents, the community, and our staff that we can deliver the highest quality education to every student. We are thrilled to have you as essential members of our team.

This handbook is tailored with you in mind. Its contents outline the policies and procedures that govern our elementary school, and are designed to share information regarding the key operations of our school community.

Our entire elementary staff is committed to providing your child(ren) with an outstanding education. Please feel free to reach out to us with any questions or concerns, as we are here to assist in any way possible.

Welcome to Menahga Elementary School! It is going to be an amazing school year!

Sincerely,

Stephanie Mercil

Principal, Menahga Elementary School

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Chair	Mrs. Andrea Haverinen	ahaverinen@menahga.k12.mn.us
Vice-Chair	Mrs. Cherie Peterson	cpeterson@menahga.k12.mn.us
Clerk	Mrs. Katie Howard	khoward@menahga.k12.mn.us
Treasurer	Mrs. Julia Kicker	juliakicker@menahga.k12.mn.us
Director	Mrs. Sara Makela	smakela@menahga.k12.mn.us
Director	Mr. David Treinen	dtreinen@menahga.k12.mn.us

ADMINISTRATION

Superintendent	Mr. Jay Kjos -564-4141 ext 1403	jkjos@menahga.k12.mn.us
Elementary Principal	Mrs. Stephanie Mercil-564-4141 ext 1101	smercil@menahga.k12.mn.us
High School Principal	Mrs. Michelle Koch-564-4141 ext 1301	mkoch@menahga.k12.mn.us
K-12 Assistant Principal	Mr. John Hedstrom- 564-4141 ext. 1404	jhedstrom@menahga.k12.mn.us

ELEMENTARY STAFF

Staff phone numbers and email addresses can be found online at www.menahga.k12.mn.us.

<u>Grade K</u> Nick Jasmer Emily Peterson Ashley Walvatne	<u>Grade 1</u> Lisa Novak Logan Redetzke Cassidy Bera Emily Huotari
<u>Grade 2</u> Diana Jettmann Alexa Mann Paige Pietila	<u>Grade 3</u> Mary Jo Brockpahler Megan Geisler Darcie Orlando Madison Vierre
<u>Grade 4</u> Melody Rasmussen Katri Haapala Cory Kapphahn Keylee Sommers	<u>Grade 5</u> Daniel Besonen Megan Huus Molly Peterson Adam Justin
<u>Grade 6</u> Tyler Butler Becky Nemeth Cody Pulju	<u>School Social Worker</u> Christa Palubicki
<u>Title I/Interventionist/Reading Specialist</u> Pam Allebach Steve Rader Josh Roiko Lakyn Johnson <u>Teaching and Learning Coordinator</u> Andria Bristow	<u>Physical Education</u> Katie Smith Lindsey White <u>Music</u> Tanya Carney <u>Technology</u> Christine Lake Katie Steiner
<u>Special Education</u> Rae Bayman- SLP Karen Miska-SLPA Pam Johnson Nathan Leutgers Melissa Marsden Chelsey Pederson	<u>ECFE / School Readiness</u> Jamie Etzler TBD <u>Lead Mentor</u> Kerry White

Support Personnel

Stephanie Ness (School Nurse) and Susie Hillstrom (Elementary Secretary)

Paraprofessionals

LaRae Anderson, Ramona Anderson, Shelly Franklin, Maddie Horsma, Amy Hillukka, Julia Hillukka, Chris Hoffman, Jodi Jackson, Lisa Mickelson, Colleen Niska, Shelly Ollila, Samantha Pfeifer, Kate Pinoniemi, Kayla Snyder, Katie Walsh, Melissa Wurdock, Kim Ylitalo, Add

Menahga Public Schools 2026-27 Calendar

August 2026						
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September 2026						
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December 2026						
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January 2027						
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February 2027						
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March 2027						
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April 2027						
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May 2027						
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June 2027						
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27	28	29	30			

KEY DATES

August 31, September 1, 2 - Staff Development
September 8 - First Day of School
October 15, 16 - No School
October 19 - Staff Development - No School
November 6 - Last Day of Quarter 1
November 12 - (K-12 Conferences) - No School
November 13 - Staff Development - No School
November 25 - Early Release
November 26, 27 - No School
December 22 - Early Release
December 23 - January 1 - No School
January 4 - Staff Development - No School
January 22 - Last Day of Quarter 2
January 25 - Staff Development - No School
February 15 - Staff Development - No School
March 24 - (K-12 Conferences) - No School
March 25 - Staff Development - No School
March 26, 29 - No School
April 2 - End of Quarter 3
April 5 - Staff Development - No School
May 28 - Last Day/End Qtr 4 / Early Release / Graduation
June 1 - Staff Development

Month	Student Days	Teacher Days	Total Student Days
August	0	1	0
September	17	19	17
October	19	20	36
November	17	19.5	53
December	16	16	69
January	18	20	87
February	19	20	106
March	19	21.5	125
April	21	22	146
May	20	20	166
June		1	
Totals	166	180	166

Staff Development - No School
Early Release
No School
First Day of School
Last Day of the Quarter
K-12 Conferences - No School



ACCESSIBILITY

Policy 521

A student with a disability who qualifies under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act will not be excluded from any school program, services, or activities at Menahga Public School District 821 due to an inaccessible classroom or basement. Programs, services, or activities will be relocated to rooms that are accessible on the main floor of the school building in order to accommodate a qualifying person with a disability.

ACCIDENT INSURANCE

The district does not carry insurance on students on an individual basis. Parents/guardians have the opportunity to purchase an individual insurance policy at group rates. This insurance is strictly voluntary. Information is sent home during the first week of school.

ALCOHOL/TOBACCO/CHEMICALS

Policy 418 Policy 419

The misuse of any mood-altering chemical constitutes a hazard to the learning environment and the positive development of all students, and is not allowed on school grounds.

ATTENDANCE

Minnesota Statute 120A.22 requires every student between the ages of seven and sixteen receive an education. Students are required to attend all assigned classes every day that school is in session or have a valid excuse for absence. **Parents/guardians should notify the school by 8:30 AM if a student is going to be absent. Any absences unreported by parents/guardians will be marked as unexcused.** If a student plans to leave school early, with the permission of a parent/guardian, he or she must bring a note to the office that morning before school starts. The student has the right and obligation to make up any work missed for full credit. Arrangements are to be made to make up work in advance when students know they will be gone for several days. Administration will determine the legitimacy of all absences. Students who are not in attendance during the entire school day will not be allowed to participate in the sporting event or activity on that day. This includes concerts, practice, or events, whichever takes place that day.

Excused absences are issued for illness, injury, medical, dental appointments, funerals, required church attendance, work done directly for and/or with parents, family emergencies and cases where there is agreement between home, school, and student as to the purpose and validity of the absences, and prior approval through the office. After **15** excused absences throughout one school year, additional absences will only be excused upon receipt of a valid service provider's documentation (i.e. courts/doctor/social services). For excused absences, a student will be allowed two school days for each day absent to complete assignments. Arrangements need to be made with the teachers.

Unexcused absences are all absences which can be avoided or delayed, and for which prior arrangements and approval has not been made through the principal's office. These absences indicate that the student is absent from school without parent consent, or with parent consent, but the excuse given is not acceptable to the school administration. Daily participation grade based on attendance may be part of courses offered. Students will lose all participation if absence is unexcused. ***Students with 7 or more unexcused absences will be reported as truant or filed under educational neglect.***

Tardies are defined as **5** minutes or less late for the start of class, **8:15**am. Students who are tardy, must notify the office upon arrival with a valid excuse.

Truancy: A student absent without the consent of the parent/guardian is truant. This is an unexcused absence and the student will be subject to the district attendance policy. After three unexcused absences, a letter will be sent to parents/guardians. Under Minnesota law, students with seven or more unexcused absences qualify as truant and parents/guardians are required to meet to develop a Truancy Plan as a final

attempt to compel the student to attend school. If the Truancy Plan is not followed and the student continues to have unexcused absences, the matter will be referred to the County Attorney's Office.

BACKGROUND CHECK PROCEDURES

In compliance with Minnesota Statute 123B.03, Subd. 1(e), the Menahga School District is required to notify parents / guardians at the beginning of each school year of our hiring authority's policy requiring a criminal history background check on employees and other individuals who provide services to the school.

Parents/Guardians that volunteer on field trips or in the classroom, must have a background check on file. The background check for volunteers and parents should be renewed every other year.

BICYCLES

Students may ride bikes to school; however, they are not allowed to ride the bike on the school grounds during the school day. The school will not be responsible for bike security and requires that they be parked in the bike racks and locked. Students riding bikes to school must follow responsible operating procedures to ensure their personal safety during high traffic times for vehicles and school buses.

BULLYING/HARASSMENT

[Policy 514](#)

The school district is committed to providing a safe and respectful learning environment for all students. Acts of bullying, in any form, by either an individual student or a group of students, is prohibited on school district property, at school-related functions, and by misuse of technology. For detailed information regarding the school district's "Bullying Prohibition" policy, go to:

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

Menahga Elementary uses the PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports) model to teach anti-bullying and positive behaviors. Students will have class meetings each week throughout the school year, with the classroom teacher, grade level, and/or administration. Students are encouraged to report incidents to an adult staff member.

General Statement of Policy

An act of bullying, by either an individual student or a group of students, is expressly prohibited on school premises, on school district property, at school functions or activities, or on school 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 district 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 school functions or activities or receive school benefits, services, or privileges. This policy also applies to an act of cyberbullying regardless of whether such act is committed on or off school district property and/or with or without the use of school district resources.

BUSES

[Policy 709](#)

Students who ride the bus to school must ride the bus home unless the office receives a signed note from the parent/guardian or receives a phone call. Please ensure address and full names are indicated on the notification to the office. All calls for transportation changes must be made before 1 p.m. each day to ensure that your child's teacher can be notified. The school will only transport children to their designated locations, and will not be able to take another bus, unless pre-approval from the administration. (This includes students taking a different bus to a friend's house, this will not be permitted.) **If your child will be**

attending a large gathering at another child's home, parents/guardians will be responsible for transportation.

District 821 has established formal bus policies, rules, and regulations. Riding the bus is a privilege; thus, students are expected to behave in the same manner as in the classroom. Behavior problems will be addressed by the driver first, with written write ups provided to the principal. The driver, transportation director, and principal will address serious and persistent situations. Offenses that are dangerous or destructive will result in immediate suspension and may include notification of legal authorities. Students damaging school buses are liable for damages. Failure to initiate payment will result in loss of riding privileges until damage is paid for.

All students are provided with bus safety instruction during the first two weeks of school and are required to demonstrate understanding of bus safety lessons.

Late Bus-Late buses run at 5:00 p.m. as announced. The late bus is for students who are participating in a sport practice or activity or receiving assistance from a teacher. If a student is riding the late bus, a pass will need to be obtained from the office.

CELL PHONES/SMART WATCHES/ ELECTRONIC DEVICES

The use of cell phones (including watches that are capable of calling or texting) is prohibited during the school day. Use of cell phones will result in confiscation by school administration. If the cell phone/smart watch is **seen** or **heard** during school hours (8:00-3:10), it will be confiscated and turned into the office. A parent will be required to pick up the device after school hours that day or any day thereafter.

Parents are asked to cooperate with the school in this matter and not text or call their child during class time. If a student needs to make a call in an emergency, they need to report to the office to request permission.

The school principal has the right to regulate electronic device usage. Menahga Elementary School prohibits any member of the school to use electronic devices (including cell phones) to take a picture of a staff member or student for the purpose of displaying it on the internet or in any other public place without the permission of the person photographed. If students take pictures with cell phones or technology, students may be subject to discipline which can include suspension or expulsion. This is a confidentiality issue.

COMPLAINT OF SERVICES

Constructive criticism can be helpful to the district. At the same time, the Board of Education has confidence in its staff and programs and shall act to protect them from unwarranted criticism or disruptive interference. The procedures are intended to resolve concerns of the citizens, parents, and students of Menahga School District. Most problems can be resolved by an informal meeting between the citizen and the staff member. If the problem cannot be resolved at that level, it can be appealed through administrative channels to the School Board if necessary. Written complaints must be filed within ten working days from the date of the incident. Please contact the district office for more information on the district's complaint of services policy and to obtain a complaint of services form.

DIRECTORY INFORMATION/ DATA PRIVACY/STUDENT RECORDS

[Policy 515](#)

Menahga Elementary School will maintain directory information relative to all students. This information is determined to be public. District 821 complies with federal and state laws governing the release of student record information that require the District to release "directory information." Directory information includes the student's name, parent's / guardian's name, address, phone number, student's date and place of birth, gender, dates enrolled in District 821, grade level, special honors and achievements, participation in officially recognized activities, weight and height of members of athletic teams, degrees and awards

received, the most previous educational institution attended, and a photo of the student if available. Class lists are also considered directory information. It does not include individual grades, test results, race, religion, or other personal facts. Parents/guardians may request in writing that directory information not be released by completing a District Request to Exclude Student Directory Information form anytime. Forms are available in the elementary office.

All permanent student records, e.g. transcripts, health records, IEP's, are on file and available upon request. Parents/guardians, and students are allowed to inspect and review official student records, files and data including all material in the cumulative record. An appointment must be made through the office by those eligible to examine records. A written request stating the records to be reviewed is required. Students needing any of these documents may secure them by filling out a request form in the office or by calling (218) 564-4141.

DISCIPLINE

[Policy 506](#) [Policy 507](#) We ask that all students and staff treat themselves, each other, and school property with RESPECT. Should the need arise for disciplinary action, students, parents, teachers, interventionists, and administrators work together to improve the behaviors of the student(s) involved; the school staff decide the consequence(s) for the student. Consequence possibilities include, but are not limited to, verbal warnings, student and/or parent conference, loss of bus riding privileges, detention, student dismissal, and out of school suspension. For additional information, see the school district's policy manual which is found on the school district's website.

Menahga Braves Behavior Matrix

	ABOVE THE LINE	BELOW THE LINE Stop and Think Card Teacher contacts parent/guardian and issues consequence	BOTTOM LINE Stop and Think Card Direct Office Referral Office staff contacts parent/guardian and issues consequence
Put Downs / Teasing	Positive and encouraging language that is kind to others	Name calling, hurtful teasing	Repeated BELOW THE LINE behavior, in a short time period, warrants an office referral
Inappropriate Language / Gestures	Language and actions that are socially appropriate and respectful	Swearing, words or gestures used to harass, intimidate, show defiance or create an unsafe climate	
Disrespect/Refusing to Cooperate	Follow directions in a cooperative and respectful manner Respond appropriately when talked to by adults and/or peers	Repeated refusal, ignoring reasonable requests and school/classroom expectations that lead to an escalation of behavior and an unsafe situation (Throwing of food/classroom materials)	
Pushing / Hitting /Tripping / Kicking	Self-control, keep hands and feet to self	Intentional pushing, hitting, tripping or kicking	
Other			
Verbal Threat / Harassment	Positive and encouraging language that is kind to others		Threat; disrespectful remarks based on race, culture, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, religion or disability; continued pattern of minor offenses; continued proximity after separation; cyber-bullying/intimidation
Bullying	Positive and encouraging language and actions that are respectful to others		Imbalance of power, intentional, repeated, over time
Physical Fighting (2 or more people engaged in physical aggression)	Respect others' personal space Walk away from conflict/report to an adult		Hitting, kicking, punching; encouraging another to fight, retaliating
Inappropriate Touch	Respect others' personal space, keep hands and feet to self		Sexual harassment, intentional inappropriate touch
Theft/Vandalism	Respect personal and school property Use equipment/materials in appropriate manner Return items to appropriate places		Theft; purposefully damaging or defacing property
Weapons Violation	Weapons-free, safe environment		Possession of an actual or look-alike gun, knife, or other weapon

DRESS CODE

[Policy 504](#) It is our belief that people feel better about themselves when dressed neatly. We also believe that when students feel good about themselves they will learn better. Therefore, we encourage parents to see that their children come to school neat and clean. Children should also come to school wearing

sufficient clothing to play outdoors during noon recess. In winter, children should be dressed appropriately to play outside during the recess period. Students in grades kindergarten through third must wear snow pants and snow boots (not hiking) during winter weather. Students in grades four, five, and six must wear appropriate snow gear during winter weather. No child will be allowed to remain in the building during lunch period for more than three days without a written excuse from a doctor. Students wearing clothing with inappropriate messages, or advertising alcohol, tobacco, or drug use will be asked to wear other clothing. Students should not wear clothing that would expose any undergarments or midriff area. We ask that students dress comfortably with clothing that will not cause potentially embarrassing situations.

Students are EXPECTED to be dressed appropriately for school activities and in keeping with community standards.

Appropriate clothing includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Clothing appropriate for the weather and daily activity (e.g., physical education or the classroom).
- Clothing that does not create a health or safety hazard.

Inappropriate clothing includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- “Short shorts,” skimpy tank tops, exposed midriffs, and other clothing that is not in keeping with community standards.
- Clothing bearing a message that is lewd, vulgar, or obscene.
- Apparel promoting products or activities that are illegal for use by minors.
- Objects such as chains, studded jewelry such as bracelets, rings, etc., that could cause injury or damage to the wearer, other individuals or property.
- Objectionable emblems, badges, symbols, signs, words, objects, or pictures on clothing or jewelry communicating a message that is racist, sexist, or otherwise derogatory to a protected minority group, evidences gang membership or affiliation, or approves, advances, or provokes any form of religious, racial, or sexual harassment and/or violence against other individuals as defined in school district policy.

The intention of this policy is not to abridge the rights of students to express political, religious, philosophical, or similar opinions by wearing apparel on which such messages are stated. Such messages are acceptable as long as they are not lewd, vulgar, obscene, defamatory, profane, or do not advocate violence or harassment against others.

- Any apparel or footwear that would damage school property.
- Hats (baseball and winter caps) are allowed to be worn in the building, provided they represent “Menahga affiliated spirit wear” and do not cover the ears. (A Menahga Braves logo or Cooperative Agreement, Board Approved Activities Programs). Administration does have the ability to approve other headgear if needed (example: medical related situations).
- Hoods are not to be worn, as they minimize staff’s ability to identify students when needed. Hoods are a safety concern.

If the administration believes a student’s appearance, grooming, or mode of dress interferes with or disrupts the educational process or school activities or poses a threat to the health or safety of the student or others, the student will be directed to make modifications, offered an alternative to wear or will be sent home for the day. A parent or guardian will be notified.

FIELD TRIPS

Educational field trips may be taken during the school year under the teacher’s direction with administrative approval. Parents may be asked to assist with these field trips. Students are required to have a signed permission slip from a parent or guardian prior to each field trip. Permission will not be granted over the phone. When students are on field trips, all rules of student conduct and discipline apply.

FOOD AND BEVERAGES

Energy drinks or sugary drinks, such as pop, will not be permitted on the school grounds at any time. This includes all school and athletic buses. No pop or soda is allowed on the school grounds during the regular school day unless pre-approved by the principal. Students may not eat or drink in the classrooms, library, or halls during the school day except for specially permitted occasions. Students may have bottled water in class. Water bottles must be clear and shatter-proof.

504 SUPPORT SERVICES

The Menahga Public School District does not discriminate against any student on the basis of his or her disability and allows equal access to and participation in its programs and activities. The District also does not discriminate against anyone because he or she is associated with someone who is disabled. In addition, it is the District's responsibility to identify and evaluate students who, within the intent of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, need specially designed instructional or physical accommodations so those students may receive free appropriate public education. For this policy, a student who may be eligible within the intent of Section 504 is one who:

- Is eligible to attend the District's schools under federal and Minnesota law: and
- Has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one
- or more major life activities, including learning.

Students may be eligible for services under the provisions of Section 504 even though they do not require services pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Students who are identified as individuals with exceptional needs under IDEA criteria will have their rights and obligations determined by that law. Inquiries regarding compliance with Section 504 may be directed to the District 504 Coordinator: Lisa Parrish, Menahga Public School 218-564-4141 ext. 1101.

FOOD SERVICES

All students are scheduled for a 30-minute lunch period. Students must eat in the cafeteria, unless alternative locations are approved by the building principal. Students are expected to bus their own dishes and keep the lunchroom neat and orderly. Students are not to share their meal account numbers. Food services include breakfast and hot lunch. The board approves the prices set for school breakfast, lunch and the price of milk. Lactose reduced milk will be provided to any student upon the written request by the parent/guardian.

It is important that parents/guardians sign up for free or reduced meals **before school starts** or at any time their income or household size changes. Those qualifying not only help our lunch program, but help fund other programs. Applications are available from the office or can be **completed online through the Infinite Campus portal**. Please call the office if you would like assistance in completing the form. Applications do not carry over from year to year.

"In accordance with federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability." To file a complaint, write USDA, Director, Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 or (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TTY). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

HEALTH SERVICES

The school provides a nurse and health aide to assist students with health related concerns. Please contact the school with any information that may be helpful regarding your child's health needs. In the event a student becomes ill during the school day and needs to go home, it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to pick up the student. A child will be sent home if a temperature is greater than 99.9. **A student must be fever free for 24 hours before returning to school, (without the use of Tylenol/Ibuprofen).** These recommendations may change, per the CDC/MDH guidelines.

Immunizations and Health Records

MN State Regulations include keeping a health record on each student kindergarten through twelfth grade. This record contains the student's immunizations and results of hearing and vision screenings. If a student moves to a different school, the immunizations are forwarded to that school. A physical and/or dental exam is not required for school entrance; however it is highly recommended. A Medical Emergency Card must be completed for each student and is kept on file. Please inform the school of any changes in address, telephone numbers, or emergency information. This card is vital to reaching parents in an emergency.

Minnesota State School Law requires that prior to a child's initial enrollment in school in this state, the parent shall submit to the principal one of the following statements:

- A statement signed by a physician that the child has received immunization against Red Measles, German Measles or Rubella and Mumps, 4 Polio, 5 DTP, and 3 Hepatitis B immunizations as approved by the state board of health and that such immunizations are currently effective.
- A parent may substitute a statement in lieu of the doctor's, which shall indicate the month, day, and year of each immunization given.
- A statement signed by a physician, that the physical condition of the child is such that immunization would seriously endanger his/her life or health, or that lab tests indicate adequate immunity exists.
- A notarized statement signed by the child's parent or guardian that he/she is conscientiously exempting the child from immunization(s).

A child must be excluded from school if the immunizations are not completed by the specified time period or a notarized conscientious exemption is not on record in the health office.

Lice Policy

If untreated nits or live lice are detected on a student the parent will be notified. School Health Policies are available in the office upon request. Additional health information related to lice is available on-line at: <http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/schools.html>

Medication

Policy 516

According to Minnesota State School Law, any medicine may only be given with the written permission from the doctor and parents / guardians. Permission forms are available from the nurse's office and must be completed prior to administering medication at school.

Parents are requested to send written permission by the doctor and the parent stating what the medication is, when it should be given, and for how long. The medication should be supplied in the original pharmacy bottle, with the child's name, name of medicine, amount to be given and the exact time of day to be given. Duplicate bottles may be requested from the pharmacist, one for the school and one for home. Over the counter medications need to come in their original containers. The student medications are to be administered from the health office. We prefer the student not to transport the medication to and from school. Parents / guardians should bring the medication to school and leave with health office staff.

Screening

The school conducts periodic screenings including vision, hearing, scoliosis, lice, and early childhood screening. These are only screenings and if indicated, should be followed by medical examination for diagnosis. A parent has the right to determine if their child will participate. Please notify the office in writing in September if you would like your child exempt.

HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION

Homebound instruction is available for any student who is out of school due to illness (either at home or in the hospital) for an extended period of time. It is a valuable service offered to our students to ensure they do not fall too far behind their classmates due to an extended illness. Please contact the school office if you have any questions regarding homebound instruction.

INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE

[Policy 524](#)

Menahga School District offers 1:1 technology, for all students. The district has the right to place restrictions on the material accessed and has installed software that is designed to prevent students from accessing inappropriate or unacceptable websites. Device privileges are determined by the school principal. **Devices are to remain at school.** Students damaging devices may be liable for damages.

INTERVIEWS OF STUDENTS BY OUTSIDE AGENCIES

[Policy 519](#)

Generally, students may not be interviewed during the school day by persons other than a student's parents/guardians or school district officials, employees, and/or agents, except as provided by law and/or school policy. Requests from law enforcement officers and those other than a student's parents/guardians, school district officials, employees and/or agents to interview students shall be made through the principal's office. Upon receiving a request, it shall be the responsibility of the principal to determine whether the request will be granted. Prior to granting a request, the principal shall attempt to contact the student's parents/guardians to inform them of the request, except where otherwise prohibited by law.

LIBRARY AND MEDIA CENTER

Media Center materials are available for student use during the school day and are available for checkout, with the exception of reference materials and some audiovisual materials. Students with overdue materials are not allowed to check out additional materials.

MONEY, VALUABLES AND PERSONAL PROPERTY

The school is not responsible for valuables which get lost, stolen, or damaged at school or on the bus. There is no reason to bring any article to school that does not pertain to a school activity, as these items may distract from the education of self or others.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

[Policy 531](#)

Students will be asked to recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States of America at the beginning of each school day. Anyone who does not wish to participate in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance for any personal reasons may elect not to do so. Students and school personnel must respect another person's right to make that choice.

POSTERS / FLYERS

Posters and flyers shall not be placed in the building without permission from the principal. Approved posters may be displayed in the following areas: designated bulletin boards, and individual rooms with showcases with the permission of the teacher.

RECESS

All students will go outside for 30 minutes; there will be no inside recess option. Students are asked to dress according to weather conditions. Supervisors oversee activities in the hallways, playground and skating rink. If there are health reasons why a child cannot go outside, please send a doctor's note to the school nurse. If the weather, with the windchill, reaches -10 degrees, alternative activities inside will be planned. Denial of recess will not be used as a punishment for late work or other school issues without parent consent.

[Playground Rules](#)

REPORT CARDS/FAMILY ACCESS

Students in Grades K-6, will receive report cards home in January and May. Academic reports are available on Infinite Campus at any time for students in grade 4,5,6. Contact the office for your username and password.

SCHOOL CLOSURES

When school is dismissed early for inclement weather or other emergency reasons, all extra- curricular activities will be canceled. All students are to go home. When school is called off in the morning and conditions improve, the administration may approve practice, or team participation in local, subsection or section activities. Students will not be penalized for missing practice due to weather conditions or other emergency closings. The Menahga School District is linked to the Alert System. If you are signed up, this system will also alert you by an automated phone message to any school closing due to inclement weather. Menahga Elementary will implement the E-Learning Packets for school closures, due to weather, or other emergencies.

Notice of school cancellation will occur at least two hours prior to the start of the school day and will be provided through Campus messenger system, Facebook, TV and radio stations, and school and district social media.

Parents/guardians may decide whether it is safe for their child to attend school during inclement weather. Students who stay home will not be penalized, but they will need to make up for missed work. Please remember to **report absences by 8:30 a.m.**

SCHOOL HOURS

We ask that students not arrive before 7:55 AM. School buses arrive at 7:55, which gives children time to eat breakfast. At dismissal, all students will be asked to leave the building unless they have permission from a teacher or parent and are supervised by a staff member.

SCHOOL PREMISES

The school is responsible for students from the time they get on the school bus or (for non-bus students, when they arrive at school) until the time they step off the school bus after school (for non-bus students, once they leave the school grounds). No student is permitted to leave the school premises during the school day.

SCHOOL TREATS

Minnesota Department of Health regulations forbids the distribution of homemade treats in school. Classroom celebrations are held at the discretion of each teacher.

SEARCH OF STUDENTS, DESKS, PERSONAL POSSESSIONS

[Policy 502](#)

Lockers, desks, and students are subject to periodic searches by designated school personnel at any time, for any reason and without student consent or a search warrant. Personal possessions within a school locker or desk may be searched when school authorities have a reasonable suspicion that the search will uncover evidence that the student is in violation of the law or school policy.

SPECIAL EVENTS

If parents wish their students not to participate in attending athletic events or holiday movie celebrations during special occasions, they may complete the [Opt-out form](#) found in the Infinite Campus parent portal.

TELEPHONE CALLS

Students may not be interrupted during school hours by outside calls and messages except in the case of an emergency. If it is necessary to reach your child, dial 564-4141, the office will relay your message. Parents wishing to contact a classroom teacher should be prepared to leave a message requesting the teacher to contact them. Except during preparation time, teachers are not available to come to the telephone during the school day.

TESTING REQUIREMENTS

Minnesota state law requires that all 3rd through 8th graders take the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) III in reading and math in the spring unless exempt in an Individual Education Plan. In addition, grade 5 and 8 are tested in Science. Parents/guardians should make every attempt to ensure students' attendance on these dates. MCA scores will be sent home to all parents/guardians when received back from the Minnesota Department of Education. Elementary students will take the FASTBridge tests in the fall, winter, and spring to review student achievement in reading and math. The purpose of these tests is to individualize instruction, serve as a tool for staff development, and will be used in curriculum review. Copies of these results will be discussed at Parent/Teacher conferences. They are also available upon request from the teacher.

Please see the "Opt Out" policy, for the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments, attached to this handbook. [MCA Opt Out Form Link](#)

TITLE I PARENT INVOLVEMENT POLICY

Menahga Elementary School is a schoolwide Title I school which means any students that need supplemental services in reading and mathematics may receive additional instruction. When parents, school, and community work together as partners, student achievement increases and positive attitudes are developed about one's self and school. Parents/guardians can be involved in the planning, design, review, and improvement of the school wide Title I program through a variety of activities. Some of these activities include:

- A. A **Parent-Student-Teacher Compact** is shared as informational material and reviewed during fall conferences.
- B. A **Formal parent-teacher conference** and ongoing communication occur throughout the school year to discuss student placement and progress.
- C. The school provides **timely and accessible information** about programs and activities.
- D. **Coordination with other parent involvement initiatives** is pursued whenever possible to align efforts across programs.
- E. The **Parent-Student-Teacher Compact** is reviewed and revised as needed.
- F. The **school's Title I program is periodically reviewed and evaluated** with input from parents and the Title I committee.
- G. Staff provide **timely responses to parent questions or concerns** through notes, phone calls, or in-person communication.
- H. Parents may **request information about the professional qualifications** of their child's classroom teachers and paraprofessionals.
- I. A **strong partnership between home and school** is built through ongoing commitment and active participation from both families and school staff.

TITLE IX LAW

It is the policy of I.S.D. 821 not to discriminate on the basis of sex in its educational program activities or employment policies, as required by Title IX of the 1972 Educational Amendments. Inquiries regarding compliance with Title IX may be directed to: **John Hedstrom** - Title IX Coordinator-- Menahga Public School (564-4141).

VISITORS

All visitors including parents/guardians are required to report to the main office when entering the building to sign in and pick up a visitor identification label. Visitor identification labels are issued during

the school day 8:00 a.m. to 3:10 p.m. for a pre-approved appointment only. Student visitors are not allowed to accompany students to their classes. Anyone violating this policy may be charged with trespassing.

Occasionally, we have requests by students or parents to bring other children, relatives, or preschool brothers/sisters to visit school. We discourage this type of visitation by other children and ask that parents cooperate. Visiting children places an additional burden on the teacher and takes time away from the regular students. If you have unusual circumstances, please contact us.

VOLUNTEERS

Please contact your child's classroom teacher or the principal if you are interested in volunteering at the school. ***All volunteers are required to do a background check.***

WEAPONS

[Policy 501](#) A student shall not knowingly possess, handle, or transmit any object that can reasonably be considered a weapon: 1. on the school grounds at any time. 2. off the school grounds at a school activity.

Additional information in regards to other school policies may be found in the Elementary School Handbook, High School Handbook or the District #821 Policy Manual. The policy manual may be found by accessing the district's website at www.menahga.k12.mn.us.