

Changes to the 2023-24 Elementary Student Handbook

Pages 3-4 Excused and Unexcused Absences.

Language added to provide clarity and consistency about prior approval needed. Also aligning all areas related to attendance communication—written or contact needed, and defining “24 hours” for pre-approval.

Current:

When calling your child in, give the following information: name of student, grade, name of teacher, and length of and reason for absence. If reporting your child ill, please include symptoms.

Excused Absences

- Personal illness – once a student reaches ten (10) absences due to illness in a year, parents may be notified that any additional absences will not be excused unless a school nurse verifies the illness or documentation from a doctor is provided.
- Medical appointments.
- Illness in the immediate family.
- Death in the immediate family.
- Legal obligations.
- Religious holidays.
- Family vacations – you are strongly encouraged to take family vacations during winter or spring break. In the event this is not possible, the elementary office as well as your child’s teacher should be informed in advance of any vacation that will cause student absence from school.
- 24-hour notification to the office is required for any planned absences. Examples include an out of town trip, attending a funeral/wedding or other family event, sporting events (tournaments, hunting, etc.). It is important to contact the school office in advance, but prior to 8:45 a.m. the day before the absence occurs to allow the classroom teacher an opportunity to prepare instructional materials that would be missed in his/her absence.
- Suspensions.

Unexcused Absences – These absences are counted!

- An absence not recognized as an excused absence will be considered unexcused.
- Any absence without a written or verbal explanation by the parent/guardian by 8:45 a.m. to the school office will be considered unexcused.
- Examples of unexcused absences are: out-of-town guests, oversleeping, “running late,” shopping, taking care of younger brother or sister, hair appointments, family trips without prior approval, or any duty/errand which can be done outside of the normal school day.

Proposed:

When calling your child in, give the following information: name of student, grade, name of teacher, and length of and reason for absence. If reporting your child ill, please include symptoms.

Excused Absences

- Personal illness – *once a student reaches ten (10) absences due to illness in a year, parents may be notified that any additional absences will not be excused unless a school nurse verifies the illness or documentation from a doctor is provided.*
- Medical appointments.
- Illness in the immediate family.
- Death in the immediate family.
- Legal obligations.
- Religious holidays.
- Family vacations **and planned absences**– you are strongly encouraged to take family vacations during winter or spring break. In the event this is not possible, the elementary office as well as

your child's teacher should be informed in advance of any vacation that will cause student absence from school.

- 24-hour notification to the office is required for any planned absences. **Examples of planned trips** include an out of town trip, attending a funeral/wedding or other family event, sporting events (tournaments, hunting, etc.). It is important to contact the school office in advance, but **prior to 8:45 a.m. on the school day before** the absence occurs to allow the classroom teacher an opportunity to prepare instructional materials that would be missed in his/her absence.
- Suspensions.

Unexcused Absences – These absences are counted!

- An absence not recognized as an excused absence will be considered unexcused.
- Any absence without a written or verbal explanation by the parent/guardian by 8:45 a.m. to the school office will be considered unexcused.
- Examples of unexcused absences are: out-of-town guests, oversleeping, “running late,” shopping, taking care of younger brother or sister, hair appointments, family trips without prior approval (**see above**), or any duty/errand which can be done outside of the normal school day.

Page 5 (and 16) Arrival times

Change made for consistency about the appropriate arrival time to school. Students should arrive no earlier than 15 minutes before the official start of school. (one section had 20 minutes, one had 15; Page 16 was adjusted to 15 minutes.)

Current:

Students who walk, ride bicycles or are dropped off by parents should not arrive more than 20 minutes before school starts due to supervisory reasons.

Proposed:

Students who walk, ride bicycles or are dropped off by parents should not arrive more than **20** 15 minutes before school starts due to supervisory reasons.

Page 5 Cell Phones

Added details specific to Smart watches.

Smart watches should remain in lockers during the school day. Parents should contact the office in an emergency to reach their child. We also bolded the section about appropriate use of cell phones, smart watches and other technology specific to photos, videos and texts.

Current:

Cell phones are strongly discouraged at the elementary schools due to potential learning distractions, as well as possible theft. If you feel your child must have a cell phone for emergency purposes, we expect that it will be kept in your child's locker on silent mode (or off) during the school day. Students will not be allowed to use them in class, on the playground or any time during school hours, unless given permission by the classroom teacher. Please contact the school in case of emergencies and not your child's cell phone as we may need information to assist you accordingly. At no time are students to record pictures or videos of students or adults without consent. The use of a personal electronic device or any device capable of taking photographs and videos is not allowed in restrooms, locker rooms or dressing rooms. These devices include, but are not limited to, cell phones, cameras, PDA devices, and other such technology.

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Cell phones are strongly discouraged at the elementary schools due to potential learning distractions, as well as possible theft. If you feel your child must have a cell phone for emergency purposes, we expect that it will be kept in your child's locker on silent mode (or off) during the school day. **This includes Smart watches with phone/texting capabilities.** Students will not be allowed to use them in class, on the playground or any time during school hours, unless given permission by the classroom teacher. Please contact the school in case of emergencies and not your child's cell phone as we may need information to assist you accordingly. **At no time are students to record pictures or videos of students or adults without consent.** The use of a personal electronic device or any device capable of taking photographs and videos is not allowed in restrooms, locker rooms or dressing rooms. These devices include, but are not limited to, cell phones, **Smart watches**, cameras, PDA devices, and other such technology.

Page 8 Snacks/Celebratory treats

Added to the home prepared food line to include a nutrition label to assist with identification of allergens (limiting risk of reaction for students/classmates) with special snacks.

Added a hot-link to a snack list that would include "peanut/tree nut safe" snack list.

Current:

Howard Lake-Waverly-Winsted abides by State Health Department recommendations and regulations regarding the serving of food in school.

Howard Lake-Waverly-Winsted prohibits the distribution and service of food items including treats which are prepared in individual homes. Food for classroom parties, or any occasion, must be purchased from a store which is subject to state food inspection regulation. All food to be shared with other students must be commercially prepared, pre-packed, unopened, and when possible, individually wrapped. This action is needed in order to take a firm preventative stand against the spread of germs and disease.

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Page 9 Lost and Found

Deleted concerts (old verbiage that has been missed. We no longer host concerts in our buildings.

Current:

Please label your children's boots, gym shoes, caps, scarves, mittens, etc., so we can return them if they become lost. Each elementary school has a lost and found container. Parents are welcome to check the lost and found for articles at any time. A good time to do so is during conferences, concerts and other school activities. Lost and found items will be discarded at the end of each quarter.

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Page 9 Milk Break

Added no pop or energy drinks to allowable beverages in class.

Current:

Milk is available to every child in kindergarten at no cost. Please send a note to your child's kindergarten teacher if your child will not be drinking milk on a daily basis.

Milk is available to grades one through four for "classroom milk break" and is optional. You may pay for half a year or for a full year. For families that pay per half of year, money is due the first week of school for the first half and the last day of the second quarter for the second half. After these dates your child will not be able to participate in the program. Milk payment should be given directly to your classroom teacher.

For any student with lactose intolerance, the school will make available upon written request from a parent, lactose reduced milk, milk fortified with lactose in liquid, tablet granular or other forms of milk to which lactobacillus acidophilus has been added.

For students who bring a lunch, deductions will be made from the family account for milk.

Students are not allowed to bring pop for classroom milk break or for their lunch.

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