

**STUDENT HANDBOOK OF
NORTHWESTERN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (Revised August 2015)**

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

It is the philosophy and purpose of the Northwestern Area School District to give each individual student the best education possible. **Our mission statement is: Empowering all students to become lifelong learners.** Therefore, the Board will provide an educational environment that promotes and enhances learning as a life-long endeavor. In addition, the Board believes that education is not just the development and refinement of mental capacity but a process that assists the students in meeting their physical, social, aesthetic, and emotional requirements.

The philosophy is to consider each student separately, giving consideration to different attitudes and abilities with the welfare of the student the most important factor. We will strive to provide a good environment for learning by providing good instructors, up to date materials, and classroom atmosphere conducive to learning. The Northwestern Area School Board and Administration will continue to improve by searching for new ideas and methods to provide the learning environment in the school that fosters maximum student growth.

It is further realized that mutual rapport among the home, student, staff, administration, School Board and total community is necessary to implement this policy.

SCHOOL HOURS

The school day begins at 8:30 a.m. and ends at 3:30 p.m. **Students are asked not to come until 8:00 in the mornings as there will be no supervision prior to this time.**

KINDERGARTEN & NEW STUDENTS

All kindergarten and new students entering Northwestern Area School District will need 1) A copy of an official birth certificate, 2) A social security number, and 3) Immunization records (South Dakota Law requires that any pupil entering school shall, prior to admission, be required to present to school authorities certification that he or she has received adequate immunization for childhood diseases).

CHILD CUSTODY

In most cases when parents are divorced, both Mom and Dad continue to have equal rights where their children are concerned. If you have a court order that limits the rights of one parent in matters such as custody or visitation, please bring a copy to the office. Unless your court order is on file with us, we must provide equal rights to both natural parents.

ATTENDANCE & ABSENCES

The Northwestern Area Elementary School requests that parents of elementary students call the school by 9:00 a.m. if their children are staying home because of illness. This is a way to make sure that no child has fallen victim to any foul play on the way to school. A student absent by reason of illness will bring a note from a parent or guardian on their return to school and present the note to the teacher. *Please send separate excuse notes for elementary, junior high and high school students when they have been absent. This will eliminate delays and miscommunication of the messages to the teachers.*

If a student is to be absent for any other reason than illness, we assume that their parents know about it before hand. In that case the student should bring a written note from their parents and present it to the teacher for her/his approval, prior to the date of absence.

Students who are able to attend a school activity or other public gatherings in the evening, after having been absent during the day due to illness, are assumed to have been unnecessarily absent from school.

Good school attendance is important for success. Students missing 5 or more school days of a nine weeks period may have their parents contacted by the principal concerning the reasons for the absences. Parents may view their students' attendance on DDN Campus.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

For each quarter (Grades K-5):

1. Students missing 5 or more days in a quarter will have their parent or guardian contacted by the Principal concerning the absences.
2. If a student is absent for more than 15 days in the school year, a truancy (Child in Need of Supervision) petition will be filed with the State's Attorney, parents will receive a letter of notification of the truancy, and a counselor or principal will be assigned to monitor absences.

Communicable disease guidelines have been included in this handbook to aid parents in determining when a child may attend or return to school after an illness.

CLOSED DOOR POLICY

For the safety of the students, all doors will be locked during and after school hours. Visitors may be buzzed in at the main entrance. Parents may check into the main office to pick up students early for appointments. Children will not be allowed to leave from another door unless accompanied by a parent or guardian. For the safety of the children, please check in at the main office and then come to the room to pick up your child if leaving school early. **The child will not be allowed to leave class and go out to the vehicle alone.**

MEDICATION

Northwestern Area School District staff will not participate in the administration of medication. A complete copy of the medication policy is available at the school office.

SCHOOL INSURANCE

The school does not carry insurance on your child. School insurance will be offered each year. Interested families will be sent a form to fill out and begin coverage. Coverage begins the day that the form is received by the school. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated by Northwestern Area School District.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

SPECIAL TEACHERS -In addition to the regular education teacher in each classroom the school also employs a Title I reading teacher, speech teacher, and a Resource Room teacher. The Title I teacher assists and instructs children that need extra help with reading problems they might have. The speech teacher works on remediation of speech problems in the areas of expressive and receptive language. The Resource room teacher assists students with learning disabilities so they may better function in the regular education classroom.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

The Northwestern Area School District in compliance with Public Law 94-142 provides Individual Education Programs for district children who have a disability. Included are those persons who may be mentally challenged hard of hearing, speech impaired, visually impaired, orthopedically impaired or other health impaired or children with specific learning disabilities. Educators implement this law using the Individual Education Program. Parents, teachers, administrators and school psychologist are all part of the team that helps organize and individualize a written plan for the disabled child. If there is any child in your family that should receive such attention and is not receiving it please contact the school administration at 887-3467, ext. 1002.

PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES

Conferences will be held twice on a formal basis. Please see school calendar for dates/times.

REPORTING PUPIL PROGRESS

Kindergarten

- E - Excellent Achievement Shown
- S - Satisfactory Progress According to Ability

I - Improvement Shown
N - Needs to Improve
Q - Quality of Work is Decreasing

Grades 1 & 2

E - Excellent Achievement Shown
S - Satisfactory Progress According to Ability
I - Improvement Shown
U - Unsatisfactory Effort Shown
Q - Quality of Work is Decreasing

Grades 3, 4, 5

A - 90 - 100 - Excellent
B - 80 - 89 - Above Average
C - 70 - 79 - Average
D - 60 - 69 - Below Average
F - 0 - 59 - Failing

MUSIC

Instrumental music lessons and band class begin in grade 5 for those interested in some day being in the high school concert band. Lessons are given on standard concert band instruments only. There will be a \$7.00 a month rental fee for those students who play a school-owned instrument and do not already own their own instrument.

Also, students that are renting instruments from the school will be required to leave a \$50.00 deposit at the beginning of the school year. If at the end of the school year, there is not any major damage to instruments, it will be returned to the student.

If you already own your own instrument and you are asked by the music director to play a school-owned instrument, you will not be required to pay a rental fee.

If a student would like to keep their instrument at home over the summer, summer rental will be \$10.00.

Students in grades 1 through 5 receive one hour (two 30 minute periods) of general music instruction per week. Kindergarten receives 30 minutes a week. In addition, the regular classroom teacher also conducts kindergarten music.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION -

The elementary school students participate in physical education classes. In grades K through 5 these classes meet 20 minutes daily. **It is necessary for each child to have a pair of clean, non-marking shoes to be kept at school in the classroom for PE.**

HOMEWORK

Homework may include: memorization, practice exercises, outside reading, art projects or family activities.

Three major purposes for which homework may be used are as follows:

1. As an extension of class work -- to practice and reinforce skills or concepts introduced in class. Homework is used to deal with different ability levels, with work missed because of

absences and to encourage students to correct errors.

2. As preparation for class work -- to prepare for in-class discussions or experiments. Upper elementary students are often asked to read or study materials. Other activities may include collecting materials or information to bring to class, studying spelling words or math facts.
3. To expand and enrich -- to allow students to explore in-depth subjects of personal interest and to allow individual creative forms of expression. Activities may include reading, research or art projects.

MAKE-UP WORK POLICY

1. Students shall be allowed to complete all assignments and tests missed which can be reasonably provided during an excused absence.
2. The student has the responsibility to make arrangements with the classroom teacher for make-up work. Upon parent request the classroom teacher will provide information on make-up during the student absence in a reasonable and timely manner. The teacher will use the following make-up schedule in determining the minimal amount of time the student will be allowed for make-up assignments.
 - a) Work assigned or tests given during an absence:
When one to two days of absence has occurred an equivalent amount of days will be allowed to make up the work. If 3 or more consecutive days have been missed a parent should contact the teacher to arrange a make-up schedule. The student whose first day of absence is the day a test was given will take the test on the day he/she returns to class.
 - b) Work assigned just prior to an absence:
Assignments made prior to an absence will be given no additional time but are due on the day the student returns to class. Additional time may be given at the classroom teacher's discretion.
**Under unusual circumstances, the principal has the authority to extend all the above time schedules or waive any portion of the above restrictions.

RULES OF CONDUCT

Northwestern Area School District endorses the Character Counts Program. The following areas are encouraged behavior at Northwestern:

RESPECT: Treat others with respect; follow the Golden Rule Be tolerant of differences Use good manners, not bad language Be considerate of the feelings of others Don't threaten, hit or hurt anyone Deal peacefully with anger, insults and disagreements

RESPONSIBILITY: Do what you are supposed to do Persevere: keep on trying! Always do your best Use self-control Be self-disciplined Think before you act – consider the consequences Be accountable for your choices

CARING: Be Kind Be compassionate and show you care Express gratitude Forgive others

- Help people in need

CITIZENSHIP: Do your share to make your school and community better Cooperate Stay informed; vote Be a good neighbor Obey laws and rules Respect authority Protect the environment

FAIRNESS: Play by the rules Take turns and share Be open-minded; listen to others
Don't take advantage of others Don't blame others carelessly

TRUSTWORTHINESS: Be honest Don't deceive, cheat or steal Be reliable – do what you say you'll do Have the courage to do the right thing Build a good reputation Be loyal – stand by your family, friends and country

STUDENT DISCIPLINE REFERRALS

As most behavior problems will be handled independently from the office, excessive or extreme circumstances will be referred by written notice to the office. Those behaviors include: bullying, disrespect or obscene language, name-calling, disruptive in the classroom, pushing and shoving, stealing, disobedience, fighting, vandalism, threats and other non-specific offenses.

DISCIPLINE PROCEDURE

Depending on the type, severity and frequency of the offense, the following discipline may result: out of classroom time, clean-up detail, limited lunchroom privileges and out of or after school time. Administration will notify parents by mail or phone concerning the discipline referral.

LUNCHROOM BEHAVIOR

Character Counts Conduct Rules are upheld.

1. Everyone walks single file to the lunchroom.
2. Be polite in the lunch line.
3. Do not scowl or make sarcastic remarks about certain foods that might not be your favorites. Sample all the food. If there is something you don't particularly like, ask the cooks to give you a small portion of it.
4. No one is allowed to eat food from another person's plate or make trades. Eat what food you have, and if you want more, the cooks sometimes have enough of certain things to give you a second helping.
5. Talk with a normal voice. You don't need to shout to be heard in the lunchroom.
6. Anybody that spills milk or food on the floor will clean it up. The cooks or the janitor can give you what you need to clean it from the floor.
7. When you are finished eating neatly stack your plate to be washed at the counter.
8. When leaving the lunchroom, you must walk.
9. Students may return for second helpings of fruits and vegetables at any time. If a student would like to return for a second helping of the main entrée, they must be finished with their first main entrée.
10. Students will engage in 5 minutes of silenced and focused eating after being seated (Power

Chow). Students will have a minimum of 20 minutes to eat after being seated.

BUS CITIZENSHIP

Character Counts Conduct Rules are upheld.

1. Students must realize that safety is based upon group conduct. Such action as pushing, scuffling, and fighting in the bus while it is loading, moving or waiting may cause injury to someone or distract the driver and cause an accident. Upon climbing into the bus in an orderly manner, the student should go directly to a seat and sit down. The student must not leave that seat until the bus has stopped at the school or his/her home where he/she is to get off.
2. After the bus has arrived at its destination, depart by the front exit. Do not use the rear exit except in case of emergency.
3. When meeting the bus or leaving the bus, a student should always walk in front of the parked vehicle so that the driver can see you. A student should always be on time to meet the bus.
4. While riding the bus, all passengers must keep their hands, head, arms, and feet inside the bus, not outside the window.
5. Students should not throw objects out or about the bus while it is standing still or moving.
6. Talk should be in a conversational tone.
7. NO eating or drinking is allowed on the school bus. Food and drink from class parties must be eaten at home rather than on the school bus.
8. For the safety of all, the bus driver has the authority to maintain order and discipline.

Unsatisfactory bus conduct reports will be sent to the parents of those that cannot abide by the rules. The second unsatisfactory conduct report will result in parents being asked to transport their child/children to and from school for one week. Continued problems on the bus may result in the student being expelled from school transportation at the discretion of the administration.

SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

1. Students **WILL NOT** be allowed to stay after school to wait for **any** school activity to start.
2. When attending all school activities, students are expected to act in an appropriate manner. Throughout the school year the school will sponsor activities in which students will participate. These activities are football, basketball, volleyball games, track meets, parties, plays, and music concerts. Please see that when your children attend these events they stay seated. **Children should not become a nuisance by running around in the gym, stage and building halls during these activities. Parental supervision is expected.**

SCHOOL SPIRIT

School spirit is a term we apply to that enthusiasm and loyalty for the school. A student should behave in such a manner that it will always reflect honor and credit on the school. A student who is loyal to their school will uphold it at all times by work and deed.

PLAYGROUND BEHAVIOR (Revised 2010)

1. No game may be played in which a ball must be thrown to get a person out. **
2. Football must be touch football, not shove/push/tackle football...Regardless, of the weather conditions or playing surface.**
3. Proper use of the playground equipment will be expected. Playing tag on the equipment is not allowed. The slide will be used sitting feet first, one person at a time. There will be **NO HANGING UPSIDE DOWN ANYWHERE!** You may stand and climb on top of things that are

- meant to be stood on or climbed upon. Standing on top of the hanging bars is NOT ALLOWED. They are not meant to be used in this way. **
4. Picking up wood chips for ANY purpose is not allowed. The wood chips are there to soften a fall not for ANY OTHER PURPOSE. **
 5. Playing on the area east of the High School entrance sidewalk is not allowed. Snow is NOT allowed to be taken from this area to another area. Stay off this ground.
 6. All fences are off limits. Do not climb them, hang from them, or push people into them.**
 7. NO THROWING OF SNOW! **
 8. If a snow fort, igloo etc. has been constructed by others, you MAY NOT destroy it.
 9. All playground equipment brought from the school must be returned to the school by the same person who brought it out. If you bring your own personal things to play with at recess, you must receive permission to use them from your classroom teacher.
 10. If a ball leaves the playground and crosses the street or is in a parking lot, permission to retrieve it must be obtained from the playground supervisor. **
 11. If you do not have boots or snow pants, you must stay on a dry surface.
 12. If you do have boots and snow pants, you may not STOMP THROUGH MUD PUDDLES!
 13. It is not permissible to write on the school bricks. **
 14. You must ask for permission to re-enter the school before recess is over.
 15. Fighting, hitting, slugging, punching, slapping, kicking, pushing, shoving, biting, and tripping another person on purpose anywhere on the playground is NOT ALLOWED EVER! **
 16. Pretending to use anything as a weapon, performing an action of violence, or verbally threatening another person is prohibited. **
 17. Any problems on the playground must be reported to the playground supervisor not the Principal. The playground supervisor will involve the Principal if needed.
 18. Playing on the grounds before school will not be allowed without a teacher to supervise.

STAYING INDOORS – Children will be expected to go outside for recess unless a doctor's note is provided. If one is too ill to go outdoors that student should probably stay home until well.

VALUABLE TOYS

Personal electronic devices (i.e. tablets or gaming systems) or other valuable items **are to be left at home**. Elementary will follow High School cell phone policy.

DRESS CODE

Children should be dressed appropriately.

Caps and hats should not be worn inside the school building unless we are celebrating a "Hat Day". Because it is impossible to list all offensive clothing, please keep in mind this statement, "**When you bend forward 90 degrees does your top still cover everything it is intended to cover? When you squat down do your pants still cover the lower half of your body?**" Some examples of unacceptable dress would be boxer shorts, cropped tops, low cut tops, shirts with alcohol, tobacco advertisements or vulgar statements, clothing with holes in them. Clothing should be nonrestrictive, non-disruptive and respectful.

Elementary students should wear shoes that are appropriate for indoor/outdoor play and do not leave black marks on the floor.

INCLEMENT WEATHER REQUIREMENTS

Snow boots or overshoes are required when snowy and/or wet conditions exist.

A policy has been established whereby all **children in grades kindergarten through five will be**

required to have snow boots or overshoes at school for recess times from December 1 through March 31. This will prevent wet and cold feet on many days and is also a safety consideration if a bus should stall. During the remaining months it will be left to parents to decide on a day to day basis how they will clothe their children for school.

Please make sure your child's clothing is labeled. Hats and gloves, even snow pants can easily become lost or mislaid. We cannot locate the owner when clothing is not labeled. Also, it is easy for one child to mistake someone else's black snow pants or red mittens for their own, they have even taken home another child's clothing because it was mistaken as their own.

Because of past head lice outbreaks, school will not provide extra hats and gloves.

INCLEMENT WEATHER - APPTEGY

School closing will be broadcast over the following Aberdeen radio stations: AM: ESPN 1420 AM, KSDN - 930 AM; FM: Pheasant Country 103.7 FM, KOOL 97.7 FM, The Rock 94.1 FM, The Point 106.7 FM, Dakota 105.5 FM, Aberdeen's Best 107.7 FM. TV stations (KABY/KFSY, KDLT, KDLO/KELO) will be used in the evening in the event of known closing for the following day. Apptegy Alert Center has been implemented to keep you informed within minutes of an emergency or unplanned event that causes early dismissal, school cancellation or late start. This service may also be used periodically to communicate announcements or reminders.

WINTER PREPAREDNESS

Families should establish a plan for days when school is called off early due to weather. Parents should discuss this plan with their children. If necessary, send a note to the child's teacher. These plans need to be in place BEFORE school is called off. Many children do not react well in unknown circumstances and become easily upset. **The office is extremely busy when school is dismissed early.** There are bus drivers to call and numerous radio stations to contact. Parents with special circumstances need to be notified or back up bus drivers reached. **Special instructions that are phoned in to your child during this time may not reach your child due to this hectic activity.** Often phone lines are not even available. If your emergency plans may vary from day to day, then discuss it each morning before your child leaves for school. Again, send a note to the teacher. Please keep in mind that each class size averages 20 students. That is 20 students to make sure are quickly dressed in their coats, boots, hats, and mittens. That is 20 students that a teacher must make sure to get on the right bus or are picked up or comforted if upset. Bus drivers are often given alternate houses that children must be dropped at. All of this must be coordinated. Please help us take the best care of your children by helping to avoid the confusion and not by adding to it.

MISCELLANEOUS

TEXTBOOKS - When textbooks or library books are issued to a pupil he/she assumes complete responsibility for them. If a pupil damages a book in such a way that it cannot be used again he/she will be charged for its cost. Also, a book that is lost by a pupil must also be paid for.

TELEPHONE CALLS -

1. After school arrangements need to be made prior to students leaving home each day.

Students will not be allowed to use the phone to make play dates or change bus arrangements.

2. Students will not be called from class to answer telephone calls except in case of emergency of extreme urgency by parents. At no time shall the office telephone be used for idle chatter.

3. Students are not to use any of the phones in the building unless permission has been received first. After receiving permission, make sure you understand how to call out and receive calls without cutting off incoming calls.

PERSONAL PHONE MESSAGES - The office phone is not a personal message service.

Please limit your calls to APPROPRIATE school business.

FIRE DRILLS - Always take fire drills seriously, the student never knows when it might be the real thing. The student should avoid panic and confusion, keep their head and follow the instruction of their teacher. Setting off a false alarm in South Dakota is considered a misdemeanor and shall upon conviction be punished by fine or by imprisonment or both.

BIRTHDAYS - If a parent wishes to observe a child's birthday by sending a treat for the entire room, please **refrain from** elaborate refreshments. If your child is having a birthday party, we ask that you either mail or phone the invitation rather than your child bringing them to school.

VISITORS - Students bringing visitors to school must first obtain from the office a visitor's permit, which will then be presented to the teacher of all classes, visited. Parents are welcome to visit at any time. Children are **not** permitted to visit unless accompanied by a parent. **ALL VISITORS MUST OBTAIN A VISITOR PASS FROM THE MAIN OFFICE!**

RESTROOMS - Please encourage your youngster to remember to use good hygiene when visiting the restroom. (Toilets flushed and hands washed). Poor hygiene is harmful.

Northwestern Area School District 56-7 Complaint Policy for Federal Programs

A parent, student, employee, or district stakeholder who has a complaint regarding the use of federal NCLB funds and is unable to resolve the issue, may address the complaint in writing to the district's superintendent.

Disputes addressing the enrollment, transportation (including inter-district disputes), and other barriers to the education of children and youth experiencing homelessness are also addressed under this procedure. Parents, guardians, and unaccompanied youth may initiate the dispute resolution process directly at the school they choose, as well as at the district or district's homeless liaison's office. The parent or guardian or unaccompanied youth shall be provided with a written explanation of the school's decision including the rights of the parent, guardian, or youth to appeal the decision. Students should be provided with all services for which they are eligible while disputes are resolved.

- *The superintendent will investigate, within one week, the circumstances of the complaint and render a decision, within two weeks, after receipt of the complaint.
- *The superintendent will notify the complainant of the decision in writing.
- *The complainant will be allowed one week to react to the decision before it becomes final.
- *The complainant will either accept or disagree with the decision and will provide such acknowledgment in writing, addressed to the district superintendent.
- *If the issue is not resolved with the superintendent, the complaint will be forwarded to the district's Board of Education for further review. The parent or guardian or unaccompanied youth shall be provided with a written explanation of the district's decision including the rights of the parent, guardian, or youth to appeal the decision.
- *Unresolved complaints may be forwarded by the stakeholder to the South Dakota Department of Education for review. (Consult SD Department of Education Complaint Procedure)

NCLB Statute (Section 1111(h)(6)

- (A) QUALIFICATIONS – At the beginning of each school year, a local educational agency that receives funds under this part shall notify the parents of each student attending any school receiving funds under this part that the parents may request, and the agency will provide the parents on request (and in a timely manner), information regarding the professional qualifications of the student's classroom teachers, including, at a minimum, the following:
- (i) Whether the teacher has met State qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction.
 - (ii) Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which the State qualification licensing criteria have been waived.
 - (iii) The baccalaureate degree major of the teacher and any other graduate certification or degree held by the teacher, and the field of discipline of the certification or degree.

Civil Rights Inquiries

Parents or students concerned about civil rights may contact:
 U.S. Department of Education
 Office for Civil Rights
 10220 North Executive Hills Blvd, 8th Floor
 Kansas City, Missouri 64153-1367
 Phone 816 – 880-4200
 TDD 816 – 891-0582
 FAX 816 – 891-0644

School Phone Numbers
(605) 887-3467
Toll Free 800-568-0909

