Elementary Handbook Master



Parent-Student Handbook 2026-2027

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Western Dubuque County Community School District

Strategic Plan 2024 - 2029

VISION

Better Every Day

MISSION

Develop individuals through lasting education and opportunities.

VALUES

People First



We prioritize all people; students, staff, families, and community members are the driving force behind our success.

Continual Growth



We embrace improvement in academics, activities, engagement, environment, and mindset.

Opportunities for All



We promote opportunities for personal, professional, and collective advancement.

COMMITMENTS

Provide a safe environment that supports student social, emotional, and behavioral development.

Ensure a satisfying and productive partnership with families and communities.

Enhance student growth and achievement in all content areas and career-readiness skills.

Create a productive learning environment that utilizes exemplary professional practices.

Secure efficient, effective, and equitable use of resources to support district unity and maintain fiscal integrity.

ATTENDANCE

Students are expected to be at school except in case of illness or emergency. In the event your student(s) will be absent from school for any reason, please call the office before 8:30 a.m. School attendance is very important. The state requires 148 days per year - 37 days per quarter.

ABSENTEE ASSIGNMENTS

Cascade Elementary School	563-663-9639
Dyersville Elementary School	563-663-9641
Epworth Elementary School	563-663-9653
Farley Elementary School	563-663-9652
Peosta Elementary School	563-663-9320

In case of an absence, please contact your student's teacher to make arrangements for receiving materials and make-up work.

ANTI-BULLYING/HARASSMENT

Western Dubuque Community School District (WDCSD) is committed to providing all students with a safe and civil school environment in which all members of the school community are treated with dignity and respect. To that end, the WDCSD School Board has in place policies, procedures and practices that are designed to reduce and eliminate bullying and harassment as well as processes and procedures to deal with incidents of bullying and harassment. Bullying and harassment of students by other students, by school employees, and by volunteers who have direct contact with students will not be tolerated in the school or school district.
Individuals who feel that they have been harassed should:

- Communicate to the harasser that the individual expects the behavior to stop, if the individual is comfortable doing so. If the individual wants assistance communicating with the harasser, the individual should ask a teacher, counselor or principal to help.
- If the harassment does not stop, the individual should:
    - Tell a teacher, counselor or principal; and
    - Write down exactly what happened, keep a copy and give another copy to the teacher, counselor or principal including;
    - What, when and where it happened;
        - Who was involved;
        - Exactly what was said or what the harasser did;
        - Witnesses to the harassment;
        - What the student said or did, either at the time or later;
        - How the student felt; and
        - How the harasser responded.

Any individual who believes they have been harassed or bullied should follow the district complaint procedures, and the complaint will be investigated.

BIRTHDAYS

The safety of our students is of utmost importance and, in alignment with the district health policy, food is not an option.

Non-edible treat suggestions for birthdays include:

- donate a book to the school library or classroom in honor of your student's birthday with his/her name inside
- have your student bring a favorite book for the teacher or your student to read to the class
- donate a ball or jump rope to the classroom for recess
- provide other students in the class a colorful pencil, sticker, eraser, bookmark, chalk, etc.

Recognition of birthdays or other special events with the delivery of flowers, balloons, stuffed animals, etc. is not allowed.

If a family wishes to distribute invitations at school, each student in the student's class must be invited to attend. Family names, addresses or other demographic information are unable to be provided.

CLASSROOM PARTIES

Classes may have room parties to celebrate various activities (i.e. the end of a trimester). If a family wishes, for personal or religious reasons, their student(s) may be excused from any party and an alternate location and activity will be provided.

BUS

Drivers will be contacting families of students riding the bus about a week before school begins to let each family know what time their student(s) will be picked up and returned.

Students riding the bus are expected to conduct themselves in an acceptable manner. Misbehavior will be reported and may result in a conference with the Transportation Director. If the problem persists, it will lead to a family conference and possible suspension of riding privileges.

Students may not bring guests on the bus due to safety and security concerns. Please see Transportation Handbook for further information.

CHILD CUSTODY

If there is a court order (i.e. custody or visitation) which limits the rights of a family member, the school office must have a copy of the court order. If the school does not have a copy of a court order, it is assumed adult family members and other designated adults listed in Campus have the right to pick up a student(s) at school and other contact situations.

DAILY TIME SCHEDULE

School	Teacher Arrival	Breakfast	Instructional Day	Dismissal	1 hr early out	2 hr early out	3 hour early out	1 hr late arrival	2 hr late arrival
Cascade Elementary	7:45	7:40-8:05	8:05-3:00	3:00	2:00	1:00	12:00	9:05	10:05
Farley Elementary	8:00	7:35-8:10	8:10-3:05	3:05	2:05	1:05	12:05	9:10	10:10
Dyersville Elementary	7:45	7:30-8:05	8:05-3:00	3:00	2:00	1:00	12:00	9:05	10:05
Epworth Elementary	8:00	7:50-8:10	8:10-3:10	3:10	2:10	1:10	12:10	9:10	10:10
Peosta Elementary	7:45	7:45-8:05	8:05-3:05	3:05	2:05	1:05	12:05	9:05	10:05

The school operates on a Monday through Friday schedule. On Wednesdays, as noted in the district school calendar, there will be a one-hour early dismissal.

Buses take priority in front of the school during arrival and dismissal times. Please do not park in bus lanes at those times.

If families bring their student(s) to school, he/she/they should arrive during the time identified by the respective school.

DISMISSAL AT THE END OF THE SCHOOL DAY

Families are expected to follow dismissal procedures identified by the respective school.

A phone call to the office, prior to the last hour of the school day, or note from home is necessary if there is a change in your student's/students' normal dismissal routine.

DISMISSAL DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

For student safety, when dismissed during the day, a phone call to the school secretary or an email to the student's teacher and school secretary needs to state the time when the student(s) should be dismissed and who is picking up the student(s). The school secretary will notify the teacher and the student(s) will be sent to the office when needed. If the office staff are not familiar with the family member or adult picking up the student(s), the office staff will request identification. These procedures are in place to ensure the safety of all students in our school.

DAMAGED OR STOLEN SCHOOL PROPERTY

Families will be responsible for the willful damage to the school building, furniture, grounds, textbooks or other school property caused by the student. The damage or theft will be assessed by the principal at the replacement cost.

DRESS CODE

We encourage students to dress for comfortable learning and freedom of play. For safety, students are encouraged to wear close-toed shoes for recess. During physical education class, students are expected to wear tennis shoes and clothing that allow for freedom of play.

We encourage families to talk with their student(s) about appropriate attire for school. Students are not permitted to wear clothing advertising or promoting items illegal for use by minors (i.e. monograms or writing referring to drugs or alcohol, sexual or racial references or profanity). Clothing should appropriately cover private areas of the body. Students are not permitted to wear shoes with cleats or wheels in the building.

Students should plan for the weather on the way to school, during recess and on the way home. Warm clothing, coats, hats, mittens/gloves and boots are needed when the weather is cold. To play in the snow, students must wear snowpants and boots. Families are asked to label each student's personal belongings (i.e. coats, hats, mittens, boots, etc.) to diminish loss. Labels with names allow misplaced items to be returned to the respective student.

ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT

Students may not use electronic equipment such as cell phones, wearable technology, wifi-enabled SMART devices or devices Bluetooth enabled, or any other device capable of making calls, sending or receiving text messages or connecting to the internet on school property during the school day. The entire school day is classified as instructional time, from arrival through dismissal. On the first violation, the student may retrieve the electronic item (i.e. cell phone, etc.) from the office at the end of the school day. On the second violation, the electronic item (i.e. cell phone, etc.) will be kept in the office and returned only to an adult in the family. On the third violation, the electronic item (i.e. cell phone, etc.) will be kept until such time as an adult in the family retrieves it and disciplinary action for failure to follow the guidelines may occur. The school assumes no liability for lost or stolen items.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are an extension of the students' learning experiences. Families are asked to indicate permission during the registration process allowing the student(s) to attend school field trips and activities with his/her/their class during the school year. Prior to each event, classroom teachers will inform families of upcoming field trips and any need for adult involvement as chaperones.

FOOD AND NUTRITIONAL SERVICES

All accounts are set up as "Family Accounts" which means each family has an account that contains each student attending one of the Western Dubuque Schools.

The negative balance policy will be set up on a per-student basis. Students may charge any combination of meals up to a negative balance of $5.00 per student. In a family with one student, the limit is $5.00, three students is $15.00 and so on. Once this limit has been reached, each student will be given a sandwich (either peanut butter & jelly or cheese) and milk for lunch or toast and milk for breakfast. This lunch or breakfast will not be charged to the student's account.

If negative, students that qualify for free meals will be allowed one breakfast and one lunch per day only and will not be allowed to make any additional purchases. Students MUST have funds available in their account to purchase a second meal, an extra item or ala carte.

Deposits brought to school are usually not recorded the same day. We suggest that you pay in advance or pay online so funds are available. Any cash or check must be taken to the school's office. No money will be accepted in the lunch line. All payments will first be applied to any outstanding negative balance on the account. Students are notified verbally when their account falls below a positive balance of $5.00.

If you have an email address and wish to be notified when your account balance is low, make sure we have your current email address on file. All account information, including student activity, online payments and low balance notifications are available online at http://www.lunch.wdbqschools.org. If you need account information or assistance, please call the Food Service at (563) 663-9626.

Clif Cameron, Food & Nutritional Services, is available to assist with questions or concerns and can be reached at 563-663-9626 or clif.cameron@wdbqschools.org

HEALTH

BLOOD PRESSURE

Blood pressure will be checked at the request of parents/guardians or healthcare providers.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE

Please report any communicable disease to the School Nurse as soon as it is diagnosed. Be sure your student is fully recovered before returning to school. Western Dubuque Community School policy on staff or students who contact communicable diseases is contained in the School Policies #403.3 and #507.3. If you need any specific information on this, please contact the Superintendent or School Nurse.

MEDICATION POLICY

507.2_Administration_of_Medication_to_Students.pdf

Prescription medication will not be administered without the completed Medication Permission Form from the health care provider that includes family signature. All prescription medication must be in the original container which is labeled by the pharmacy or the manufacturer, with the name of the student, name of the medication, the time of day when it is to be given, the dosage and the duration. When administration of the medication requires ongoing professional health judgment, an individual health plan will be developed by the licensed health personnel, the student, and the student's family. A written record of the administration of medication procedure must be kept for each student receiving medication including; the date, student's name, prescriber or

person authorizing the administration, the medication and its dosage, the name, signature and title of the person administering the medication, the time and method of administration, and any unusual circumstances, actions or omissions. Administration of medication records shall be kept confidential.

A limited selection of over-the-counter medications will be available and administered as needed for students in PreK-12 grades based on student self-assessment. Students who request over-the-counter medication must have a written approval from their family on file with the School Nurse before the student can receive the non-prescribed medication. Annual written family approval is required. Family contact will be made by the person administering the medication prior to administration, to confirm dosage for students in PreK-6 grades. Consent forms will need to be completed online by a family at the start of each school year. An administration log of over-the-counter medication will be maintained at each school.

REQUIRED DENTAL SCREENING, VACCINATIONS, IMMUNIZATIONS, BLOOD LEAD TEST
Please click below link for more information from the Iowa Department of Public Health.

Student Health Requirements for Schools | Department of Education

HEALTH CONCERNS
The following is helpful information for families concerning health matters:
Accidents/Emergencies: Families are asked to provide the school with home and work phone numbers, as well as another emergency number, which could be used in case of an accident or emergency. Please include cell phone numbers, if applicable. Families will be notified of any injury in need of immediate medical care as soon as possible. If we are unable to contact families, we will notify the person listed as the emergency contact. Please remember to keep us informed of any changes throughout the school year to facilitate this communication.

HEALTH CURRICULUM
As required by State Law, schools must provide you with the health topics that will be covered at most grade levels. They are: nutrition, dental health, safety and survival skills, human growth and development, consumer and community health, environmental health, personal health care, substance use and non-use, prevention and control of disease, and emotional and social health.

If you wish to inspect any health materials prior to their use in your student's classroom, please contact the principal's office to arrange a scheduled time when you can look at them. The law also states "a pupil shall not be required to take instruction in human growth and development if the pupil's family files with the appropriate principal a written request that the pupil be excused from the instruction." If, after a family has inspected the curriculum, they want their student excused from certain parts of the program, forms to make this request are available in the principal's office.

There are many concerns in today's society about health and safety, particularly as it pertains to the future health and safety of our children. We recognize the important roles of you, as the family, in this challenge. It is our hope that we can assist you in meeting that challenge so that our students can realize a healthy and safe future.

HEIGHTS AND WEIGHTS
Heights and weights will be done at the request of providers or parents/guardians.

HEARING SCREENING

The goal of hearing screening is to detect any hearing losses that can interfere with academic success. Keystone Area Education Agency (AEA) personnel will do screenings on students in identified grades as well as students with known hearing losses and out-of-district transfer students. Any student may also be referred for a hearing screening any time during the school or if it seems they may be having hearing difficulty.

PARENT CONTACT REGARDING HEALTH ISSUES

Periodically a family questions what criteria is used to notify them that their student was in the health office during the course of the school day. As most of you are aware, we do not have full-time coverage in the health office. Not every student that comes to the health office is seen by the School Nurse and students often come to the health office to rest with minor headaches, stomachaches or take ice packs for bumps and bruises. When it is apparent a student has a significant health problem, every attempt will be made to contact the family, yet you will not be called each time your child is in the health office. A significant health problem would include the following situations:

- a child who is vomiting
- a child with recurrent diarrhea stools
- a child with a fever 100.4 or higher
- a child with difficulty breathing
- a child sustaining an injury or other illness that may require medical attention
- a child with a health concern that does not allow them to perform in the classroom similar to their peers per teacher report.

An adult family member will always be contacted before administering any over-the-counter medications as per school policy. Students will be playing outside during recess and physical education classes. It is important that our students engage in all types of activities. Exercise and a break from class have been proven to benefit students in many ways both physically and mentally. As during outdoor play at home, students can experience minor bumps, bruises, and scrapes while playing. An adult family member will be notified of serious incidents. In most cases we will try our best to contact you if your student experiences a significant bump on the head or face. In the event your student has special health care considerations, this will be taken into account and staff will be instructed on proper procedure via a written Healthcare Plan. Please understand that with the number of students visiting the health office during a given day it is impossible to contact every family and may cause problems for some to be repeatedly contacted while at work. We also have non-medical personnel working with students who cannot be expected to make medical decisions, so often it is a judgment call.

The health and safety of the students is our primary concern and we will do everything possible to keep them safe. Together we will continue to work to make our Western Dubuque Community Schools a healthy and safe learning environment for all. Feel free to contact your school if you have any questions.

HOME/SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

Families will frequently receive communication from school. We will communicate with families in varied ways, including learning management systems, newsletters, emails, phone calls, notes, report cards, family conferences, and more. We encourage and appreciate family engagement and responses.

HOMELESS CHILDREN

The Western Dubuque Community School District strives to provide appropriate and successful services for the education of homeless children.

Chapter 22 of Iowa Administrative Code defines "Homeless child or youth" as a child or youth from the age of 3 years through 21 who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and includes the following:

1. A child or youth who is sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; is living in a motel, hotel, trailer park, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; is living in an emergency or transitional shelter; is abandoned in a hospital; or is awaiting foster care placement;

2. A child or youth who has a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;

3. A child or youth who is living in a car, park, public space, abandoned building, substandard housing, bus or train station, or similar setting; or

4. A migratory child or youth who qualifies as homeless because the child or youth is living in circumstances described in paragraphs "1" through "3" above.

Please contact the building school counselor for questions and to support education of the homeless. You may also contact Amber Blum, the District's liaison for homeless children and youth, at 563-663-9471 or amber.blum@wdbqschools.org

NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

Pursuant to Title IX and other appliable state and federal laws, it is the policy of the Western Dubuque County Community School District not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, creed, age (for employment), marital status (for programs), sexual orientation, gender identity and socioeconomic status (for programs) in its educational programs and activities and its employment practices, including applicants for employment.

The District has grievance procedures for processing and resolving discrimination complaints, including formal and informal Title IX sex discrimination and sexual harassment complaints, and will respond to complaints accordingly. Discrimination employment grievances that do not fall under Title IX should be directed to Dan Butler, Equity Coordinator, 310 4th Street SW, Farley, Iowa 52046, 563-744-3885 x 6004, Dan.Butler@wdbqschools.org. Grievances related to this policy for employment matters that fall under Title IX and grievances for any program/student matters should be directed to Dan Butler, Title IX and Equity Coordinator, 310 4th Street SW, Farley, Iowa 52046, 563-663-9471, Dan.Butler@wdbqschools.org. If you have any questions related to this policy, please contact Dan Butler Title IX inquires may also be referred to the U.S. Department of Education, attn. Assistant Secretary, Office for Civil Rights, 400 Maryland Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20202, 800-421-3481, OCR@ed.gov.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical Education (P.E.) is a required class for all students and regular participation is expected. All students should have tennis shoes and wear appropriate clothing for P.E.

Students who are under a doctor's care should request a written excuse from their care provider to be given to the school nurse or principal's office. When a student experiences an illness/injury but is not under a doctor's care, they may be excused from P.E. class if they receive a school nurse's medical excuse.

An excuse for medical reasons provided by a doctor or the School Nurse permits the student to be excused from classes requiring physical activity.

RECESS

All students are expected to participate in outdoor recess activities. The only exception would be a health/injury documented by a physician or the school nurse. Please be sure your student dresses appropriately for outdoor play. Snowpants and boots are required when snow is on the ground.

SCHOOL CANCELLATIONS/DELAYS

School cancellations and delays are broadcast on local television and radio stations.

SCHOOL TELEPHONES

Student use of school phones will be limited to emergencies and students will be assisted by school personnel.

SECLUSION & RESTRAINT

State law (Chapter 103) forbids school employees from using corporal punishment against any student. School employees may use "reasonable and necessary force, not designed or intended to cause pain" to do certain things, such as prevent harm to persons or property. State law also limits school employees' abilities to restrain or confine and detain any student. If a child is restrained or confined or confined and detained, the school must maintain documentation and must provide certain types of notice to the child's parent. If you have any questions about this state law, please contact your school. The complete text of the law and additional information is available on the Iowa Department of Education's web site:www.iowa.gov/educate.

STUDENT PICTURES

All students will have the opportunity to have their pictures taken early in the fall. Notification of the day pictures will be taken, along with order information, will be provided for families and students in advance.

STUDENT PROGRESS

Student progress will be communicated through report cards and family-teacher conferences. Conferences will be held two times per year. Families or teachers may request additional conferences whenever they feel a need. If a family wishes to speak with the teacher at any time, please call her/him to set up an additional conference

STUDENT RECORDS

Families have the right to:
1. Inspect and review their student's/students' educational records.

2. Request an amendment of the educational records.
3. Consent to disclosure of personally identifiable information in the education records.
4. Obtain a copy of the district's record policy by contacting the principal's office.
5. Withdraw a student's directory information from general release. This request must be submitted in writing to the building principal.
6. File a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education regarding alleged non-compliance with the law.

STUDENT RECORDS (RELEASE)

Families have access to their student's/students' permanent and cumulative records. We will provide equal access to student information for each adult family member when requested unless a copy of a court order which limits the rights of one of the family members is on file.

Certified school staff, clerical personnel responsible for the custody and keeping of the records, and certified staff of Keystone AEA who have legitimate educational interest will have access to student records. Other persons must have family permission to view or copy student records.

The following information may be released to the public in regard to any individual student of the school district as necessity or desirability arises:

- Name
- Telephone number listing
- Date and place of birth
- Dates of attendance
- Most recent previous school or institution attended by student

Any student or family not wanting this information released to the public must make objections in writing to the principal or other persons in charge of the school in which the student is attending. It is desirable to renew this objection at the beginning of each school year. Copies of report cards or other records may be released to the home district of an open-enrolled student if it's requested. If your student(s) transfers/transfer from the Western Dubuque Community School District, cumulative reports will be sent to the enrolling school upon a receipt of a request from that institution.

VALUABLES

Each student may be provided a locker. Students are discouraged from bringing money or valuables to school. The school will not assume responsibility for loss, theft, or damage to such items. If a student is to bring an article/item from home the teacher or school will notify you.

WEAPONS POLICY

School Board Policy #502.6 prohibits students from bringing weapons or other dangerous objects to school. Such weapons and/or dangerous objects shall be taken from students and others who bring them onto school property. Families of students who violate this policy shall be notified of the incident. Although toy weapons may not be harmful, they too, are not to be brought to school.