

Dell Rapids Elementary School



Elementary Staff Handbook 2023-2024



Approved by the Dell Rapids School District 49-3 Board of Education August 2023

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PREFACE

Non-Discrimination

The Board reaffirms the principle that every child – regardless of race, creed, sex, cultural or economic background, or disability should be given maximum educational opportunity for educational development.

Further, no student will, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participating in, denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity conducted by the district. The school district will treat its students without discrimination on the basis of sex as this pertains to course offerings, athletics, counseling, employment assistance, and extracurricular activities.

Students, their parents, and employees of the Dell Rapids District are hereby notified that this school district does not discriminate on the basis of sex and is required by Title IX not to discriminate on the basis of sex in its education activities and employment practices. Any person having inquiries concerning the Dell Rapids School District’s compliance with Title IX is directed to contact John Silvernail at (605) 428-5473. John Silvernail has been designated by the Board of Education to coordinate the school district’s effort to comply with Title IX.

FOREWORD

This handbook is to help staff understand the many procedures and policies used to run a safe, healthy, and happy school for our students. While written guidelines, rules, and policies are useful, they can’t replace common sense or be all-inclusive. This handbook summarizes procedures to make our school safe and educationally effective for our students. As an elementary school we have a special responsibility for the education and well-being of the youngest learners as they begin their educational journey in our school district.

Linda Merkwan
Dell Rapids Elementary Principal
Linda.Merkwan@k12.sd.us
(605) 428-5473 opt 6

DISTRICT INFORMATION

Dell Rapids Public School 49-3

Statement

We Empower Each Other to Excel

Board of Education

Troy Randall, President
Matt Weiland, Vice President
Jeff Trail
Paula Harvey
Lee Bollock

Administration

Dr. Donovan DeBoer	Superintendent
Drew Bunkers	High School Principal
Larry Baker	Middle School Principal
Linda Merkwan	Elementary Principal
Melissa Larsen	Special Education/Special Service Director
Jeff Krumm	Technology Director
John Silvernail	Activities Director/Facilities Manager
Barb Littel	Business Manager

School Contact Information

Dell Rapids District Office
1216 N. Garfield Avenue
Dell Rapids, SD 57022
(605) 428-5473 Opt 1
Fax: (605) 428- 5609

Dell Rapids High School
1216 N. Garfield Avenue
Dell Rapids, SD 57022
(605) 428- 5473 Opt 2
Fax: (605) 428-5609

Dell Rapids Middle School
1216 N. Garfield Avenue
Dell Rapids, SD 57022
(605) 428-5473 Opt 5
Fax: (605) 428- 5609

Dell Rapids Elementary School
309 W. 15th Street
Dell Rapids, SD 57022
(605) 428-5473 Opt 6
Fax: (605) 428-5631

District Website

<https://www.dr-k12.org>

District Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/DellRapidsHighSchool>

DELL RAPIDS ELEMENTARY STAFF

Office Staff

Linda Merkwan, Principal
Heidi Adams, Secretary
Lindsey Peters, Counselor
Ashley Henderson, School Nurse

Kindergarten Prep Teachers

Tasha Davis

Kindergarten Teachers

Jessica Hendrickson
Erin Matthiesen
Nichole North
Jody Stone

First Grade Teachers

Faith Miller
Shannon Pederson
Jenna Reiff
Kelly Steckler

Second Grade Teachers

Emma Huntimer
Jailyn Weier
Katie Wolff

Third Grade Teachers

Karla Gruis
Theresa McMahon
Bobbi Snyder
Kennedy Sweeter

Fourth Grade Teachers

Brooke Hall
Ryan Kooima
Lisa Kuck
Stacy Kvale

Activity Teachers

Kim Gaul, Music
Shannon Tjaden, Physical Education
Staci Simons, Art

Title I Teacher/Interventionist

Sherry Koopman – Title I
Katelyn Haisch – Interventionist

ELL

Erin McInroy

Special Education Teachers

Peggy Hancock
Allie LaFave
Virginia Wick (Early Childhood)

Speech Therapists

Katie Diez
Abby LeBrun

Library

Christy Lee

Educational Associates

Samantha Dishman
Brittany Goodale
Holly Killion
Darcie Kringen
Angela Montgomery
Yesenia Mora
Carrie Nirva
Teresa Peterson
Sara Schoeberl
Laurie Schultz

Custodians

Brett Gruis
Kaleb Bunkers

TEACHER WORKDAY

The regular teacher workday is an eight-hour day. Teachers may arrive any time between 7:30 am and 8:00 am, but are expected to be here no later than 8:00 a.m. Promptness is not suggested, it is required. Teachers may leave the school any time after 3:30 as long as they have put in the required eight hours. Teachers who need to be late or to leave early should obtain permission from the principal and sign out in the office.

Elementary school teachers are provided planning time during each day to:

1. Lesson planning to implement essential elements of instruction and principles of learning and should align to SD DOE adopted standards for each content area. Planning time could be time for the creation of learning targets, (daily, teachable objectives), design of teacher activities congruent to the objectives, planning for student activities, creation of formative and summative assessment, etc.
2. Small group work with the principal or with other teachers
3. Expansion, update, revision of current curriculum documents
4. Occasional staff meetings
5. Grading of student work to provide students feedback on achievement and progress
6. Meetings with the guidance counselor regarding utilization of test results or student needs/concerns
7. Remediation, re-teaching, and re-testing of students
8. Peer coaching and mentoring activities
9. IEP meetings
10. Other activities as directed by the Principal

LESSON PLANS

All teachers are required to make out weekly lesson plans beginning with the second week of school. These plans should be accessible to the principal's office or on your website no later than 8:30 Monday morning of the week of implementation. A lesson plan book will be provided upon a teacher's request. These lesson plans should contain a complete description of specific student learning targets. The plans submitted via book or on-line should not be considered to be all-inclusive. They should, however, be complete enough for a substitute to conduct your classes in the event you must be absent.

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

Teachers should thoughtfully select materials to enhance the learning by students. Materials must be appropriate for students at their age level. Lessons must be designed with all components incorporated to teach a concept. These include textbooks, handouts, videos, technology and any other items selected to enhance classroom instruction.

TEACHER LEAVE/STAFF ABSENCES

The Board of Education has established leave policies for all staff. Staff should reference the Dell Rapids negotiated agreement (certified staff) or the classified staff handbook (classified staff) for the appropriate use of leave.

SICK LEAVE

Staff needing to take sick leave should complete the necessary forms from the elementary office. In the event you need to use planned sick leave (i.e. doctors appointments), please complete the form as soon as you are aware of the leave time you will be using. For unplanned sick leave (i.e. staff illness, family illness, etc.), please contact the building secretary as soon as possible so that a substitute can be secured for coverage. Morning calls/texts are preferred before 6:30 a.m. the day of absence so that there is enough time contact those on the substitute list. Understandably, there can be circumstances when you may not be able to call in prior to 6:30 a.m. In such situations, please contact either the building secretary or principal as soon as possible so we are aware of your need for sick leave.

Sick leave can be used in quarter hour increments and will be deducted for any time missed for medical purposes during the eight hour work day.

PERSONAL LEAVE

Requests for personal leave will be submitted in writing to the building principal five (5) teacher working days prior to the date the leave is requested. The building principal will provide a response, in writing, within three (3) teacher working days of receiving the written request. Granting the personal leave request will be contingent upon the availability of a substitute. The decision to deny personal or additional personal leave days cannot be aggrieved. Such leave shall not be granted for the first or last day of the school year nor the first working days preceding or following a vacation or holiday, or the day of an in-service. However, extenuating circumstances may exist which require a teacher to request the building principal to consider making an exception to this section. Such requests might include, but are not limited to, the following: allowing a teacher to attend state sanctioned events, special occasion of an immediate family member, weddings, or graduations.

For extenuating circumstances, the Superintendent may grant additional personal leave days. A request, in writing, for these additional personal leave days must be submitted to the Superintendent. Additional “non-allowable” personal leave days that are granted will be without pay.

Only two (2) staff members per building will be granted personal leave on any one given school day. Therefore, if you are aware of future days you will need to take personal leave, it is best to request them early. Personal leave may be taken in quarter-hour increments.

SUBSTITUTE FOLDER/SUB PLANS

Teachers will create a folder in which to keep materials which may be needed in the event you must be absent. The folder must contain the following:

1. Class lists
2. Suggested staff to go to for questions
3. Your schedule
4. Safety information (fire, tornado, stay put, secured perimeter, lockdown)
5. General directions for a substitute
6. Information relating to the location of equipment, supplies, materials, and lesson plans

All teachers should prepare sub plans which are adequate for a substitute to understand and complete and provide meaningful and educationally engaging activities/lessons for the students. Exceptions will be given in emergency situations when teachers were not allotted enough time to prepare for an unexpected leave.

SUPERVISION DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

All teachers and staff are asked to take an active part in the supervision of students in and outside of the classroom. This is a non-negotiable and everyone's responsibility. As you move throughout your day, please take an active role in monitoring students as they travel throughout the building to assure they are upholding expectations and are not causing unsafe situations.

As a staff member, you will be assigned to specific supervision duties throughout the day, which may include breakfast, lunch, recess, before/after school, and bus duties. These duties are spread among all to make the load more balanced. It is expected that all staff report to their assigned duties on time and take into account the importance of their supervision to ensure the safety of all of our students. Recess supervisors should space themselves apart so there is equal coverage of all areas of playground.

Supervision also includes staff's own children. Before school, staff's own children need to be in the staff member's room/work area until the recess supervisor is on duty. They then should go outside with the rest of the elementary students. After school, staff's own children should refrain from going onto the playground until all students have been dismissed and the last buses have left.

DISCIPLINE

Classroom teachers are responsible for maintaining good discipline and appropriate behavior in the classroom. Effective teachers understand that you can use a variety of strategies within your classroom before finally sending a student to the office. In more serious cases or in repeated offenses, the principal/building administrator should be consulted. This may result in the need

for a parent contact and/or conference. Disrespect for adults, other students, school property, or property of others will not be allowed. The discipline procedure for misconduct beyond a normal classroom disruption will be as follows (1) minor offenses will be handled by teacher and student and (2) major offenses will be handled by principal, teacher, student, and communication to parents. Major offenses may include, but are not limited to fighting, physical aggression, intimidation, verbal threat, bullying, repetitive defiance, cheating, intentional damage to property, non-compliance after a warning, weapons, vandalism, inappropriate use of technology that violates district policy, harassment, and stealing.

If as a staff member you are struggling with chronic student behaviors, it is important that you seek help, ideas, and suggestions from other professionals, peers, and administration in your building. Additionally, communication between home and school is crucial when considering concerning behaviors of students. Establishing positive communication with families early on will help support the fact that we are working together to help the student be successful in the classroom.

PROFESSIONALISM/DRESS CODE

All staff members are required to maintain appropriate communications with all students and their families regardless of whether school is in session or not. This includes face-to-face communication. All communication from staff to parents should be written as a professional representing the Dell Rapids School District. This includes word choice, tone, grammar and subject matter that model the standards and integrity of a district professional. Always choose words that are courteous, conscientious, and generally professional in manner.

Confidentiality is of the greatest importance. Federal laws, state laws, and school policies prohibit you from disclosing information any student information or data that you know or are accessible to as part of your employment at Dell Rapids schools. If you need to have a confidential conversation, remember the hallways and the workroom are not the place to have them. Kids and other adults are always listening. Parents and students do not expect or want to hear about themselves because school employees have communicated to inappropriate persons either at or outside of school. Staff should feel free to hold fellow staff members to high standards of confidentiality.

In addition, it is important for all the adults in the school system to set the example for what is proper and appropriate language and dress. For this reason, employees of the Dell Rapids District are expected to dress in a professional manner when at school. Staff should refrain from wearing blue jeans during working hours unless given specific permission by the building principal or other supervisor. Please note, some activities or events require staff members to dress more casually.

LEAVING YOUR ASSIGNED AREA UNATTENDED

Teachers must not leave students assigned to them unsupervised in classrooms, on playgrounds,

hallways, or other settings of the school. Doing so creates the potential for situations of misbehavior and raises safety concerns. It also may place the teachers, as well as the school district, in an indefensible position and is not allowed. If you need to leave your area for a period of time, please reach out to available staff member to supervise your students or call the office for assistance.

CELLULAR PHONE USE

It is important to set a professional example as a school employee. Teachers and staff should restrict their cell phone use to school and educational purposes only if and when students are not present. During recess supervision, cell phones are encouraged for emergency purposes. Personal use of cell phones should be done during prep period or lunch. Extenuating circumstances should be discussed with building administration.

NEW TEACHERS/STAFF

Staff new to the system will be asked for the following for their personnel file:

- Income tax withholding certificate
- Teacher's certificate (if applicable)
- Official transcript of credits (if applicable)
- Fingerprinting, DCI, and FBI forms

BUILDING USE RULES

NO ONE IS TO GIVE STUDENTS OR NON-SCHOOL EMPLOYEES KEYS/FOBS TO THE SCHOOL! If you have an activity that requires use of school facilities, you must be present at the school at all times the students are present. When using the building in the evening for practices or non-public activities, the outer doors should be locked and latched behind you upon entering. If students are working with you, see that the door is secured after your group assemblies.

PURCHASING/DONOR'S CHOOSE/GRANTS

Prior approval from the building principal is required for all purchases – no exceptions. Requisition forms, which must be used for all purchases are available at <https://suiweblink.dellrapids.k12.sd.us/> Teachers are required to fill out purchase requests for the following year prior to leaving at the end of the year. Questions on requisitions and budget items should initially be directed to the building principal.

It is great when teachers look to seek out additional funding sources for items and resources for their classrooms. Teachers wishing to apply for grants or seek funding through other resources (such as Donor's Choose) should first speak with building principal prior moving forward with outside funding sources.

BUILDING EMERGENCIES

In the event that the building principal is out of the building and unable to be reached for building level issues/emergencies, the charge of the building will fall in the following order: (1) Superintendent, (2) Middle School/High School Principal, (3) Elementary School Counselor

DISTRICT LINE OF AUTHORITY

In the event that the building principal is out of the building and unable to be reached for issues requiring district level administrative decisions or action, administrative assistance should be sought through the following line of authority in the respective buildings: (1) Middle School Principal, (2) High School Principal, (3) Superintendent.

SCHOOL VISITORS

All visitors must first check in with the office and must be identified with a visitor lanyard. Please ask visitors if they have done so. If they have not, direct them to report to the office or escort them there and notify the office of visitors. Please inform building principal/secretary prior to inviting any special visitors.

LOCAL SOLICITING

Public soliciting, in which tickets or merchandise are sold or donations of cash or merchandise are sought may be carried on by school organizations only after permission is granted by the principal.

ATTENDANCE/LUNCH COUNT/MORNING ANNOUNCEMENTS

In order to maintain accountability for students, teachers are required to take attendance at the beginning of each school day. Please make sure your attendance is accurate and submitted to the office in a timely manner first thing in the morning. Lunch count should also be sent to the office each morning. Please make sure lunch count is accurate as this information generates the quantity of food that is prepared.

Morning announcements will be read each morning shortly after the 8:30 a.m. bell. The school will also recite the Pledge of Allegiance each day during this time.

ACCIDENTS AND INJURIES

In the event a student is injured while under your supervision, please complete the accident report form on the district intranet or with office personnel (secretary/nurse). Supply as much information as possible. In the event of an emergency, render whatever assistance is necessary

first, contact the office or send a student for help, and complete the Accident Report as soon as possible. If the accident is not an emergency, complete the form and turn it in at the office at the end of the school day during which the accident occurred.

If you are injured here at school contact the principal AND the business manager to complete applicable workman's compensation documentation to start the incident timeline properly.

PERSONNEL RELATED SCHOOL BOARD POLICIES

All staff members are responsible for knowing and adhering to all School Board of Education adopted policies. These policies are provided for you on the school website and in paper form within the district office.

CRISIS PLANNING

All staff members have been provided crisis plan materials and instructions. All staff members are responsible for knowing and adhering to the instructions provided them and following all district and building instructions in case of crisis drill or crisis event. Any staff member who is not confident of the proper procedures is required to speak with the principal and receive additional instruction. Regular drills (announced and unannounced) will be held during the school year. Staff members must be aware of the location of all crisis materials within each room they frequent (i.e., computer labs, classrooms, library). For example, teachers must be sure to know the location of the name sign, all class rosters, and crisis bucket.

All staff should have a device accessible to them with the Crisis Go app downloaded and logged into. This app is used by all district staff during all crisis drills and actual crisis situations.

WORKROOM/MAIN OFFICE AREA

Elementary office hours are from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. during regular school days. Hours may vary depending on in-service days, inclement weather, and during the summer. The main office area will remain locked outside of these hours or when the building principal or secretary is not present. Due to the confidential nature of what is housed within the main office, school staff (other than principal/school secretary) will not have access to this area. Should a staff member have an extenuating circumstance and need immediate access to the main office area outside of school hours, they will need to contact the building principal.

Due to the confidential nature of materials that could be found in the teacher work area, please do your best to pick up items from copiers and the color printer in a timely manner. Students (including staff's own children) should not have access to the teacher workroom during school hours. If a teacher needs copies made during the day, they are welcome to send a student down

to the mail office and the secretary can make copies for you.

It is all of our responsibility to see that the workroom is left clean and orderly. Please avoid leaving items behind and clean up messes that you make. If you use dishes/silverware from the workroom, please make sure you wash your own dishes. If you use the refrigerators, please remember to check them occasionally to avoid food items from spoiling.

Many times unwanted classroom items find their way to the workroom with a “Free” sign on them in a way to give these unused items to others who may be able to use them. This is a great opportunity to share items with one another, but often leaves our workroom left with things nobody wants. If you choose to bring any unwanted classroom items to the workroom as “free” to others, please make sure you also take back what is left and dispose/donate accordingly.

REPORT CARDS/TESTING

Report cards are sent home with students in 1st through 4th grades at the ends of each quarter. These will contain up to date academic grades, attendance, study habits, social-emotional growth areas, and comments as needed. The building principal will send out dates towards the end of each quarter when grades are due and when reports will be sent home. Communication is essential to the success of all activities within education. Parents and students should not be surprised by poor grades. Phone calls and notes home to parents promote communication and alleviate further issues.

All students in grades 1st through 4th will be required to complete beginning, middle, and end of year testing through STAR math and STAR reading. Testing windows will be as follows:

Beginning of Year	First day of School to September 30
Middle of Year	December 1 to February 15
End of Year	April 1 to Last day of School

All students in 3rd and 4th grade will be required to complete the annual state assessment in English Language Arts and math during the testing window set by the SD Department of Education.