McKinley Early Childhood Center

November Newsletter

2026

Your child's attendance is the most important factor to their success in school. Please make sure your child is in school, on time, every day. We understand that illness happens. If your child has a temperature of 100 or higher, they should not be in school.

November can bring colder weather. Remember to send hats, gloves and coats. Please write your child's name on their winter gear. We ask that students bring snow pants and snow boots when there is snow on the ground.

In November, we count our blessings. I am so very thankful for your children. They make us laugh, smile and enjoy every day we come to work. Happy Thanksgiving to you and your family!

Mrs. Hatton

Reminders

For the safety of your child, please make sure that they are leaving school grounds after school. There is no after school supervision on the playground, or on school grounds. Thank you for helping us keep our kids safe!

If your child is ill, or is going to be gone for a doctor appointment, etc., please call the school office (882-6350) or send a Remind to Mrs. Lunde by 9:00 am. If you would like to pick up homework after school hours, please indicate that when you call.

Communication is the key to success - if your address, work place or phone numbers change, please communicate that with the office, or email Administrative Assistant Timberly Lunde, with your information (timberly.lunde@k12.sd.us).

Thanks for keeping the lines of communication open!

Upcoming Events

11/5/26 Parent Teacher Conferences - NO PRESCHOOL THIS DAY

11/25-11/27 No school -Thanksgiving

Set your clocks back 1 hour on 11/1/26

Winter Weather Decisions: How Watertown Schools Make the Call

by Dr. Jeff Danielsen, Superintendent

As we approach the winter season in northeastern South Dakota, I want to take a moment to explain how decisions are made regarding late starts, early dismissals, and school cancellations due to winter weather. As Superintendent, your child's safety is my highest priority. We take these decisions seriously and carefully consider the weather conditions, road conditions, and forecasts before determining whether school can safely beheld. We monitor several television stations, drive both city and rural roads, and consult with the National Weather Service to gather as much information as possible. Although we make every effort to reach the best decision, weather forecasts are not always 100% accurate, and conditions can change quickly. I also recognize that families may not always agree with a weather-related decision. If you feel conditions are unsafe for your child, you may keep your child home or pick them up from school early.

Late Starts

Late starts are called for two primary reasons: to allow additional time for road crews to clear snow and improve road conditions, and to give us more time to evaluate the weather forecast. On a normal school day, our bus drivers are ready to begin their routes around 6:30–6:45 a.m. With a 10:30a.m. late start, drivers can delay their routes until approximately 8:30–8:45 a.m., allowing additional daylight for road crews to begin plowing and improving conditions on both city and rural roads. A late start also gives us additional time to monitor the weather and determine whether conditions are expected to improve enough to safely begin school at 10:30 a.m. If conditions are not improving or the forecast indicates that travel will remain unsafe, we may change the decision to a school cancellation. I understand that late starts can create challenges for families, particularly when arranging childcare. Please know that the additional time is used to evaluate conditions and make the safest decision possible for our students and staff.

Early Dismissals

Early dismissals during the winter months are primarily used to help students get home safely during daylight hours before weather conditions deteriorate. Depending on the circumstances, we may dismiss school at 12:30, 1:30, or 2:30 p.m. The dismissal time depends on the forecast, current road conditions, and how quickly we anticipate conditions may worsen. Our goal is to get students home safely before snow, wind, or other hazardous conditions make travel more difficult.

School Cancellations

School may be canceled when road conditions make it too difficult to transport students safely on our buses, even if roads within Watertown appear to be in better condition. We may also cancel school when the forecast indicates that weather conditions are expected to worsen throughout the day. The decision-making process often begins around 4:30–5:00 a.m. Several of us evaluate road conditions in town and in the surrounding rural areas. We also consult with meteorologists in Aberdeen regarding expected snowfall, wind speeds, and other weather conditions. We use the information available to us to make the best decision possible. Unfortunately, weather predictions are not always exact, and conditions may change after a decision has been announced.

What About Extremely Cold Temperatures?

Cold temperatures are another concern during northeastern South Dakota winters. Our district generally does not cancel school solely because of cold temperatures unless the actual air temperature reaches approximately 25–30 degrees below zero. Our school buses are equipped with heating systems and can operate safely in very cold conditions, provided temperatures remain within the range considered manageable for our equipment. Wind chill is an important consideration for students outdoors, but it does not affect the mechanical operation of our buses in the same way it affects people. We also keep our school buildings open for students on extremely cold days. Students will not be expected to wait outside in bus lines or spend time on playgrounds in those conditions. I recognize that media coverage sometimes creates the impression that schools should close whenever temperatures become extremely cold. However, northeastern South Dakota is accustomed to extended periods of winter weather, and canceling school for every day of extreme cold could mean missing two or three weeks of school over the winter. That is why we use the actual air temperature, along with other safety considerations, when making these decisions. If your child walks to school, please plan ahead during periods of extreme cold. Consider reaching out to neighbors or friends to arrange a ride. Most importantly, please ensure your child is dressed appropriately for winter weather, including a warm coat, hat, mittens or gloves, and appropriate boots. If you believe the weather is too dangerous for your child, you may keep your child home. We will never ask you to disregard your concerns about your child's safety.

How Will Families Be Notified?

We make every effort, barring technical difficulties, to communicate weather-related decisions as quickly as possible through local television stations, radio stations, the district website, and phone notifications. To help ensure you receive these important announcements, please make sure your contact information is current with your child's school. Updated phone numbers and other contact information are essential when weather-related decisions must be communicated early in the morning or on short notice. Families are also encouraged to follow the Watertown School District's website and Facebook page for district announcements and updates.

Our Commitment to Student Safety

I hope this information helps families better understand the thought process behind late starts, early dismissals, school cancellations, and decisions involving extreme cold. These decisions are never taken lightly. We understand the impact they have on students, parents, staff, and the community, and we do our best to balance the need for students to attend school with the responsibility to keep them safe. As your Superintendent, I take that responsibility very seriously. Thank you for your understanding, cooperation, and continued support as we navigate another South Dakota winter together.

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PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES



Conferences will be held on Thursday, November 5th between 1:00-8:00pm for Jr. Kindergarten & Kindergarten and between 8:00am-8:00pm for Preschool.

Note: 11-5-24 is also an early dismissal for JK&KG students (12:20pm), please make arrangements for both things. No preschool this day.



Scan HERE to sign up!

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Arrows EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENINGS

For children **3-5** years old

- must reside in the **Watertown School District**
- Screen students for potential delays in **speech/language, motor, cognitive, and social/emotional development**

We screen for potential delays in:

- speech/language
- motor
- cognitive
- social/emotional development



SCREENINGS WILL BE OFFERED ON:

- September 25, 2026
- October 30, 2026
- January 29, 2027
- February 26, 2027

Every child.
Every opportunity.
Every day.

Consistent with federal and state regulations, the Watertown School District engages in ongoing "child Find" services to locate, identify and evaluate all students with disabilities residing within it's jurisdiction, age birth through 21 inclusive.

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NOVEMBER 2026

MENU IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE
FRUIT AND MILK IS OFFERED AT ALL BREAKFAST MEALS
VEGGIE BAR, FRUIT SELECTION AND MILK SELECTION ARE OFFERED AT ALL LUNCH MEALS.

MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI
WEEK 4				
2 BREAKFAST: CHOC. MUFFIN 29G GOGURT 8G H.S./M.S. VARIETY BREAKFAST CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE MILK LUNCH: PANCAKE 13G/26G OMELET FRUIT JUICE 15G CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE VEGGIES CHOICE MILK	3 BREAKFAST: APPLE FILLED DONUT 33G H.S./M.S. VARIETY BREAKFAST CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE MILK LUNCH: TOTCHO 16G CHURRO 25G CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE VEGGIES CHOICE MILK	4 BREAKFAST: PANCAKE STICK 17G H.S./M.S. VARIETY BREAKFAST CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE MILK LUNCH: BREADED CHICKEN SANDWICH 44G BAKED BEANS 30G CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE VEGGIES CHOICE MILK	5 BREAKFAST: CC FRENCH TST 37G H.S./M.S. VARIETY BREAKFAST CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE MILK LUNCH: PIZZA CRUNCHERS 21G/42G MARINARA CUP 7G GREEN BEANS 4G CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE VEGGIES CHOICE MILK	6 BREAKFAST: CARAMEL MINI 41G H.S./M.S. VARIETY BREAKFAST CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE MILK LUNCH: CHICKEN CUBES W/ GRAVY MASHED POTATOES 20G DINNER ROLL 23G CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE VEGGIES CHOICE MILK
WEEK 5				
9 BREAKFAST: MINI DONUTS 41G GOGURT 8G H.S./M.S. VARIETY BREAKFAST CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE MILK LUNCH: HAMBURGER 28G BAKED BEANS 30G CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE VEGGIES CHOICE MILK	10 BREAKFAST: FR. TST STIX 38G SAUSAGE PATTY H.S./M.S. VARIETY BREAKFAST CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE MILK LUNCH: CRISPITOS 23G/46G HASH BROWN COINS 21G CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE VEGGIES CHOICE MILK	11 BREAKFAST: BR. BURRITO 29G H.S./M.S. VARIETY BREAKFAST CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE MILK LUNCH: ORANGE CHICKEN 26G FRIED RICE 27G CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE VEGGIES CHOICE MILK	12 BB MINI PANCAKE 7G H.S./M.S. VARIETY BREAKFAST CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE MILK LUNCH: CHICKEN TENDERS 12G/18G MASHED POTATO/GRAVY 24G DINNER ROLL 23G CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE VEGGIES CHOICE MILK	13 BREAD LOAF 34G YOGURT CUP 15G H.S./M.S. VARIETY BREAKFAST CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE MILK LUNCH: SPAGHETTI 36G GREEN BEANS 4G GARLIC TOAST 24G CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE VEGGIES CHOICE MILK
WEEK 6				
16 BREAKFAST: FRUDEL 38G H.S./M.S. VARIETY BREAKFAST CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE MILK LUNCH: MINI CORN DOGS 20G/30G MAC & CHEESE 7G FR. FRUIT CUP 21G CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE VEGGIES CHOICE MILK	17 BREAKFAST: FUNNEL CAKE 38G YOGURT CUP 15G H.S./M.S. VARIETY BREAKFAST CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE MILK LUNCH: QUESIDILLA 33G FIESTA BEANS 17G CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE VEGGIES CHOICE MILK	18 BREAKFAST SAND. 24G/34G H.S./M.S. VARIETY BREAKFAST CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE MILK LUNCH: CHICKEN DRUMMIES 6G CHICKEN NUGGETS 13G/16G WEDGES 20G/BISCUIT 24G CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE VEGGIES CHOICE MILK	19 STR. MINI BAGEL 42G H.S./M.S. VARIETY BREAKFAST CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE MILK LUNCH: WAFFLES 7G SAUSAGE LINKS 4G JUICE CUP 15G CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE VEGGIES CHOICE MILK	20 BANANA MUFFIN 31G STRING CHEESE 15G H.S./M.S. VARIETY BREAKFAST CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE MILK LUNCH: LASAGNA ROLL UP 22G/42G MIXED VEGGIES 12G PLAIN BREADSTICK 14G CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE VEGGIES CHOICE MILK
C. CHOICE				
23 BREAKFAST: COOKS CHOICE H.S./M.S. VARIETY BREAKFAST CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE MILK LUNCH: COOKS CHOICE CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE VEGIES CHOICE MILK	24 BREAKFAST: COOKS CHOICE H.S./M.S. VARIETY BREAKFAST CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE MILK LUNCH: COOKS CHOICE CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE VEGIES CHOICE MILK	25 NO SCHOOL 	26 NO SCHOOL 	27 NO SCHOOL
WEEK 1				
30 BREAKFAST: CEREAL/CEREAL BAR 23G YOGURT CUP 15G H.S./M.S. VARIETY BREAKFAST CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE MILK LUNCH: CHEESEBURGER 28G FRIES 16G CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE VEGGIES CHOICE MILK				