



Student & Parent Handbook

Kids First

Partnership

Knowledge

Stewardship

Mission: NSCS excels in connecting our students' academics and learning with their natural and social environments in a nurturing community setting.

2026-2027

NSCS Parent & Student Handbook

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About Our School

North Shore Community School is a public rural charter school nestled in the woods near the north shore of Lake Superior half way between Duluth and Two Harbors. Established in 2002, the school serves approximately 390 students in grades pre-k through six. **The mission of the school is to excel in connecting our students' academics and learning with their natural and social environments in a nurturing community setting.**

This mission is driven by four core values:

Kids First: Students' diversity and needs drive decisions and actions

Partnership: Together we achieve more than alone

Knowledge: Skilled in accessing, navigating, and using a broad array of facts and viewpoints from a global perspective

Stewardship: Care and responsibility for our natural and social environments

A Message from the Director

Welcome to a new year at North Shore Community School! Our teachers and staff have been preparing for amazing learning opportunities this fall and they cannot wait for students to arrive!

The foundation of our school begins with fostering strong relationships with our students, our families, and our community. Together, we can accomplish so much more in support of all of our students. Along with building strong relationships, effective communication is of high priority. We have developed several avenues for communication; including school and classroom newsletters, parent-teacher conferences, volunteer opportunities, and more. If you ever have any questions, the best place to begin is with your child's teacher.

This handbook offers information to help you navigate NSCS. The handbook, intended to be a living document, is available on our website at www.northshorecommuintyschool.org.

We are looking forward to an amazing year. North Shore Community School is a special place to be, and we are excited to have you as a part of our family!

Warmest Regards,

Shelly Pierson Evans
Executive Director

Governance and Vision

The School Board

North Shore Community School (NSCS) is governed by an elected board that functions independently of surrounding districts. Board members are elected to serve three-year terms. The seven-person Board of Directors is made up of three or four licensed teachers employed by the school; one parent/guardian of a student enrolled in the school; one community member; and one or two at large members.

The NSCS Board of Directors meets the fourth Monday of each month at 5:00 p.m. in the school library. Monthly meetings are generally rescheduled if school is not in session to the third Monday of the month. The public is invited to attend. For a list of our current board members, please visit our website.

Strategic Plan

The NSCS Board, in cooperation with employees, parents, and the community, is in the process of updating our Strategic Plan, after our current plan was extended during COVID. The Plan is rooted in our values (listed on page 2) and is carried out by pursuing specific directions that ultimately lead us to our vision. You may access the [Strategic Plan HERE](#).

Strategic Directions

- Integrating social and natural environments into our curriculum
- Differentiation of instruction to meet student needs
- Integrating technology within the learning environment
- A culture of innovative partnerships
- School identity and brand
- Flexibility in facilities and funding

Vision 2026-2027

- The natural world is integral to who we are, what we do and how we learn.
- Children and adults co-learn together with respect, ownership of learning, compassion, and acceptance.
- Technology is an integrated tool for learning in preparing our students for a broader world.
- Collaboration and collegiality is experienced in our daily work and relationships.
- Our enrollment, facilities, and programming is intentional, planned, and sustainable.

NSCS Key Documents and Evaluations

NSCS Families can access evaluation documents from our authorizer, Osprey Wilds, on our website:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/16EzRwLGPWtKoSaLUhFjQEmar6YgtRuz2>

General Information

School & Office Hours

School Day: 8:00 a.m. – 2:40 p.m. **Students are welcome to arrive at school starting at 7:40 a.m.**

Early Release Fridays: Students will be released at 12:35 p.m. for buses and 12:45 p.m. for parent pickup three times during the school year (October 2, May 28, and June 9).

Office Hours: 7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

End of Day Arrangements

Parents/guardians are asked to send a dated note to school in the morning if your child's after school plan is not going to follow his/her typical routine (e.g. have another adult pick up your child after school, ride the bus, etc.). **If no note or phone call is received, your child will be sent to their usual destination.**

Students may not make their own plans during the day to go someplace other than their usual destination after regular school hours.

Simply said, we want to be certain that students arrive where they are expected and that they are safe in the supervision of a parent or another caregiver after school.

Signing Students In and Out

For safety reasons, please contact the office if your child is coming or going from campus outside of regular start/end school hours.

Lost and Found

Lost and Found is maintained at the school. It is helpful to label boots, gloves, mittens, hats, sweaters and other items brought to school. A black or silver sharpie works well for labeling. Items are held in the Lost and Found until the end of each quarter. Any items remaining are donated to a social service agency.

Fees

At times, NSCS collects fees for field trips, Wolf Ridge, lost books, 2nd meals or milk, after school care, etc.

Emergency School Closings

In the event that school will be closed or the start time delayed due to severe weather or poor road conditions, an announcement will be made on television stations WDIO 10/13, KBJR 6, and radio station KDAL 610 AM. The posting will be specifically **for North Shore Community School**. You will also receive a call from our instant alert system. Administrators will make every effort to make this type of announcement by 6:00 a.m.

If school is released early due to unexpected circumstances, you will receive a call from the instant alert system. Kids & Co. will be open for up to two hours after the announced closing time on the day of emergency closings.

NSCS serves students within a 250 square mile area in which road conditions and weather varies significantly. The decision to close school is made in the best interest of the majority of our students. In the end, the choice to send or not send your child to school in inclement weather is up to you; if you choose not to, your child's absence will be excused.

Soliciting at School

While students may ask staff members to buy items associated with their organizations (e.g. scouts, sports), they may not sell items for personal profit at school.

Communication

Staff Email

All email addresses at the school have the same format: first initial and full last name followed by @nscsk6.org. For example, to send an email to Kristi Lounsberry, her email address is klounsberry@nscsk6.org.

Staff Telephone Directory

The staff telephone directory can be accessed by dialing 525-0663 and choosing option 2.

E-News

All of the NSCS office communications are available via email. If you would like to receive news and information in paper-form, rather than electronically, simply send an email to nscsinfo@nscsk6.org.

Connections

North Shore Community School distributes a newsletter, *Connections*, for the school community every Thursday via email. The *Connections* can also be found on our [website](#).

Instant Alerts

NSCS utilizes an instant alert system for notification and communication. School officials use our instant alert system to deliver a message to parents or guardians by telephone, cell phone, text, or email. School personnel have already set up your account with your selected phone number and email, as provided on your Enrollment or Student Information Form.

Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA): FERPA, a federal law, generally requires that NSCS obtain your written consent before disclosing personally identifiable information from your child's education records. However, NSCS may disclose directory information without your consent, unless you have advised us otherwise. The Parent Permissions section of the Emergency Contact Form has a yes/no box to let us know if you do not wish NSCS to disclose directory information from your child's education records.

Parents Right to Know: Parents have the right to request and receive timely information on the professional qualifications of their child's classroom teacher(s). When this type of information is requested, NSCS will respond to the request within ten school days and, at a minimum, report the following:

- Whether or not the teacher has met Minnesota's licensing requirements for the grade level(s) and core academic subject(s) they teach.
- Whether or not the teacher is teaching under a variance status;
- The education level and subject area of the teacher's college degree major and any graduate degree or certificate held;
- Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals, and if so, their qualifications.
- In addition, when a student has been assigned, or has been taught for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher, who is not highly qualified, the school will notify parents within five school days by mail.

Surveys: NSCS may administer surveys to students in special situations. A letter outlining the survey and requesting parent permission will be sent prior to the survey being administered. NSCS will not be participating in the Minnesota Student Survey.

Software Notification: NSCS uses a variety of software programs as part of daily operations and in support of learning. You can review the different programs and data elements here:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1KANygiqhclZcleFkvztONhZFGHGckpmjyxETa1iJyn0/edit?usp=sharing>

Educational Program

Curriculum

Learning at North Shore Community School is cooperative, child-centered, and active. This provides hands-on opportunities to develop skills in all subject areas and allows students to meet and work with local experts. The school's curriculum is aligned with standards set by the Minnesota Department of Education. These standards can be found on the [Minnesota Department of Education's website](#).

- **Reading/ Language Arts** –NSCS incorporates an integrated, literature-based language arts program that includes reading skills, phonics, grammar, speaking, and listening skills. We use Scott Foresman Reading Street as a foundational text in K-6, and From Phonics to Reading in grades K-3 for phonics instruction. Teachers work with students in whole group and in small groups to implement curriculum and to supplement reading materials. Words Their Way is used for spelling and word work in grades 3rd-6th.
- **Mathematics** – *Houghton Mifflin Math Expressions* in grades K-5 and *Macmillin-MacGraw-Hill Math Connects* in grade six help students understand mathematical concepts in number system, computation, data, statistics/probability, graphing, fractions, geometry, and measurement. Teachers also work with students on using and developing mental math problem solving strategies through Number Talks.
- **Social Studies** – Our *Houghton Mifflin Social Studies* curriculum includes geography, history, economics, civics, and current events. We also make use of *Northern Lights* from the Minnesota Historical Society and *Roots in the Past – Seeds for the Future: A History of the French River and Clover Valley*.
- **Science** – Our emphasis is hands-on science through Mystery Science online resources, and *FOSS* and *Delta Science* kits. Our teachers also teacher through integrated units developed by our staff or adapted from other educational providers and evaluated by North American Association for Environmental Education's *Guidelines for Excellence*. Students practice the scientific method to explore physical, earth and life science topics in the classroom and outdoor study areas.
- **Technology** – Students have supervised and filtered internet access on classroom computers. All of our classrooms are equipped with interactive whiteboards. In addition, iPads and Chromebooks are used to integrate technology into instruction.
- **Health/Physical Education** – Our curriculum emphasizes knowledge, skills, and practices including informed decision-making that leads to lifelong fitness and personal well-being. Our outdoor area is utilized in all seasons to teach sports and fitness. Students participate in Physical Education approximately 80 minutes per week.
- **Music** – Our curriculum focuses on music literacy concepts, practical performance skills, and emphasizes music as a pleasurable life-long skill and art form. Students receive approximately 80 minutes per week of music instruction, with 5th and 6th graders having the opportunity to participate in elective band.
- **Art** – An art specialist works with students and staff to deliver integrated art lessons based upon art concepts and principles. Students participate in art for an average of 135 minutes every three weeks.

Class Size

North Shore Community School strives to keep a student to teacher ratio that is similar or lower than that of other public schools in the area.

Environmentally Integrated Curriculum (EIC)

North Shore Community School's curriculum is based on a national EIC model, using the *Environment as an Integrated Context* for learning opportunities for students and faculty alike. It forms the foundation for North Shore Community School's status as a public charter school. With EIC, there is an emphasis on connecting the students with nature through an integrated environmental curriculum. Students also learn about local history and the lives of previous generations that can help them gain a sense of place in this changing world.

Caring Classrooms

NSCS strives to provide a safe and caring learning environment for students. Many steps go into the creation of a responsive classroom, the core of which is a daily reinforcement of a respectful, cooperative relationship between students, the teacher, as well as staff and visitors to NSCS. The Caring Classroom approach based on Responsive Classroom (RC) principles involves six components - classroom organization, morning meeting, rules and logical consequences, academic choice, guided discovery, assessment, and reporting. RC is based on these premises:

- The social curriculum is as important as the academic curriculum.
- How children learn is as important as what they learn.
- The greatest cognitive growth occurs through social interaction.
- To be successful academically and socially, children need a set of social skills:
cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, and self-control.
- Knowing the children we teach—individually, culturally, and developmentally is as important as knowing the content we teach.
- Knowing the families of the children we teach and working with them as partners is essential to children's education.
- How the adults at school work together is as important as their individual competence. Lasting change begins with the adult community.

Differentiation

Students learn in different ways and at different paces, so North Shore Community School teachers make sure they address those variables in their classrooms. The process of differentiation lets students work at their own level of readiness and uses the approach in which they are best able to learn. As a result, students are more engaged and retain more of the material taught in class.

Conferences and Report Cards

All teachers at North Shore Community School have implemented a unique and creative system of reporting to parents during conferences, in which specific levels of achievement will be communicated for each child. The decision was made to do away with the traditional report card format and move toward more of a "Conference Report Sheet", where teachers can show more examples of student work, explain scoring on school wide assessments, and essentially give parents more in-depth information regarding their child in the academic, behavioral, and social-emotional categories. As a school, we also feel that it is important that we have this opportunity to conference with parents two-three different times over the course of the school year. Hopefully all parents find this time to be valuable, thorough, and relevant to their child's performance and overall education. We strive for 100% participation and will call to reschedule if you are unable to attend.

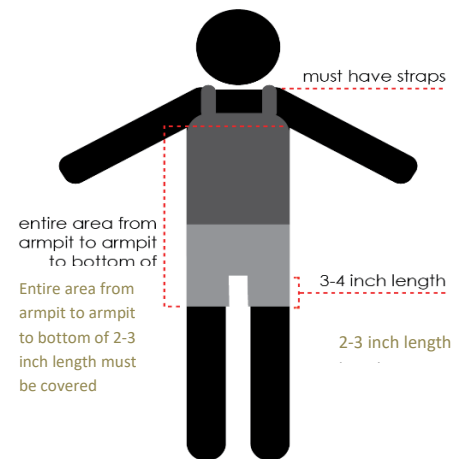
Indoor & Outdoor Dress

Dress Code

A dress code is in place to create a positive learning environment, decrease classroom disruptions, and increase student health and safety by establishing expectations that support educational goals.



- Appropriate clothing includes, but is not limited to, clothing appropriate for the activity and does not create a health or safety hazard.
- Clothing must cover areas from one armpit across to the other armpit, down to approximately 2 to 3 inches in length on the upper thighs (see image).
- Pants, shorts, and skirts must be worn around the waist and/or held up by a belt, if necessary.
- Clothing may not promote products or activities that are illegal for use by minors and/or religious or sexual harassment.
- Clothing may not reflect gang affiliations.
- Clothing may not reflect abusive or suggestive language or symbolism, lewd, vulgar, or obscene messages.
- Heads must be free from caps, hats, hoods, and sunglasses. Students may wear headgear for a medical or religious reason.
- Clothing or footwear may not damage school property.
- Shoes must be worn at all times.



When, in the judgment of the administration, a student's appearance, grooming, or mode of dress interferes with or disrupts the educational process or school activities, or poses a threat to the health and safety of the student or others, the student will be directed to make modifications or may be sent home for the day.

Cold Weather Wear & Guidelines

Winter weather temperatures combined with wind in Minnesota can be quite harsh. As part of the educational process and learning experience students are expected to go outside at recess. In the winter, children should dress warmly and wear boots, snow pants, warm jackets, hats, and mittens. When children wear proper winter apparel and winter conditions are appropriate, children enjoy recess outside for approximately twenty-five minutes.

School staff monitors weather conditions at 0 degrees and below to determine if students need to remain indoors due to air temperatures and/or wind speeds. Students will not go outside for recess if the wind chill is -18° F or colder.

Volunteer Opportunities

Statistics show that schools are stronger when parents are involved. At North Shore Community School, parents are encouraged to be involved in all aspects of their child's education. Parents and community members are invited to visit the school and share their time and talents to enhance the education of our students. Volunteer opportunities include, but are not limited to: listening to students read, reading a story to students, tutoring students, challenging high achieving students, assisting with projects, speaking to a class, or assisting a teacher with housekeeping needs. Parents and other family members are encouraged to volunteer as often as their schedule allows. Watch for opportunities listed in the school newsletter, or talk to your child's teacher directly.

Visitor Sign-in and Sign-out

For the protection of students, all visitors, including parents and guardians, must sign in and out at the office. In addition, volunteers and visitors must get a visitor or volunteer tag before going to the classroom.

Visitors are to:

1. Access the building through the front doors, via the intercom system.
2. Enter the office and sign-in with their name, date, and the time.
3. Receive a Visitor Badge to wear while in the building.
4. Sign-out and return the visitor badge when finished with their business.
5. Ensure they follow parking signs, and refrain from parking along the sidewalk between 7:40-8:10 a.m. or 2:20-3:00 p.m.

Visitors not complying with any NSCS policies, including Visitor Procedures, will be asked to leave the premises.

In the event a visitor refuses to leave the premises, or staff deem the situation to be a safety concern, the school will begin lockdown procedures, and law enforcement will be notified through calling 911.

Background Checks

In an effort to ensure the safety of North Shore Community School students, all volunteers who will be supervising students while not in the presence of an employee (e.g. on field trips) must pass a comprehensive background check before volunteering. Volunteers attending fieldtrips or volunteering for more than one time must also pass a background check. Background checks are valid for three years and cost \$25.00.

Parent/Teacher Association

The Parent/Teacher Association (PTA) at NSCS has a long tradition of supporting the school with their fundraising projects that finance special programs at the school, volunteer programs and special events. If you would like to become involved in the Parent/Teacher Association, contact one of the officers at <https://northshorecommunityschool.org/nscs-pta/>

High School Volunteers

North Shore Community School is pleased to offer volunteer opportunities for students in grades 7-12. Positions are available 8:00-2:50 pm on Fridays, or other days high school volunteers may not have school.

Student Health & Wellness

School Health Office

Parents, guardians, and student's medical providers are responsible for the care of ill students. School health service staff provides support to assist families with caring for their children.

Infectious Diseases

Infectious diseases are caused by viruses, bacteria, fungi, or parasites and can be spread from one individual to another. Parents will be notified when a communicable illness has been identified in their child's classroom and/or are widespread throughout the school.

Emergency Contact Information

At the beginning of the school year, you will receive a Student Information Form. The form includes your contact information as well as information for two emergency contacts that can be called in case of an emergency. Be sure the individuals you list on the form know that the school may contact them and they are willing to pick your child up if you are unavailable. Please notify the office immediately of any changes to your child's information during the school year.

When students should stay home:

- Follow the MDH Self-check found on our website:
- If a student has any symptoms, keep them home until symptoms are improving.
- Reach out to the office at 218-525-0663 X100 to notify them of any illness and symptoms and to discuss next steps.
- If a student or family member has tested positive for an infectious disease, please monitor all other family members for symptoms.

Prescription & Over the Counter Medications

Whenever possible, medication should be given at home. However, there are times when a student's health requires medication be given during the school day. When sending any medication to school, parents must fill out an Administration of Medication/Medical Treatment form:

- The medication must be in the original prescription or over-the-counter labeled container. For prescription medication, ask the pharmacist for a duplicate labeled container so one can be kept at home and one can be kept at school.

All medication administered in school must be kept in the Health Office. Exceptions are students who use an asthma inhaler or emergency epinephrine, if they have a written physician's order, written parent permission, and have demonstrated to the school health service staff that they are competent in administration. **Permission for any or all of these circumstances must be documented on our Medication Treatment Forms which are available in the office.**

Lead in Water Management Plan and Test Results: NSCS's Management Plan and Test Results can be found at: <https://northshorecommunityschool.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Lead-in-Water-Annual-Notification.pdf>. This information will be updated annually.

Pesticide Application: NSCS does not apply pesticides on school property.

Food & Nutrition

Nutritious school meals are a vital link to the physical and intellectual fitness of students. The NSCS Food Service Program provides students with quality, nutritious meals at an affordable price.

Meal Times

- **Breakfast: 7:40 – 8:05**
- **Lunch: 11:05 – 12:55**

Lunch Menus

Lunch menus are planned in advance and can be accessed from the school's [website](#). Menus are also printed and sent home with students on the Thursday prior to each new month.

Nutrition Requirements

North Shore Community School participates in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). Menus are planned according to NSLP requirements, with each meal consisting of two ounces of meat or meat alternate, two or more servings of different fruits and vegetables, at least one serving of grain or bread and 8 ounces of milk. Serving sizes are recommended in the USDA Food Guide Pyramid. Choices of entrees are offered at each level to try to meet the food preferences of students. Lunches must meet 1/3 of the calories and RDA for key nutrients (protein, iron, calcium, vitamin A, vitamin C) based on age/grade group. They must also meet the Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommendations for percentage of calories from fat (no more than 30%) and saturated fat (no more than 10%) for each day's menu.

NSCS participates in “offer versus serve” for Enhanced Food Based Menu Planning. Students may decline one or two of the five required food items offered for lunch daily; students have the option of which items to decline as long as they choose at least a ½ cup of fruits or vegetables. Students may decline one of the four required food items offered for breakfast daily; students have the option of which item to decline as long as they chose at least a ½ cup of fruit or vegetables. As a sponsor of USDA nutrition programs, meal and milk substitutions will be provided for medical or dietary reasons within the USDA policy limitations that require that substitutions are deemed necessary by a medically diagnosed, disabling conditioning.

Meals

With the introduction of Free Meals for All, NSCS does not charge for breakfast or for the first meal. Students may have a second meal with prior approval by parents/guardians. The second meal is charged the adult daily rate. Students with home lunch may purchase milk at the daily milk rate. NSCS uses a computerized system to record meal and milk purchases. Students purchasing milk or a 2nd lunch will be charged for their purchases. Make sure all funds are clearly labeled with amount and account/children's names. You can also access your child's account and deposit money online. Contact the Food Service Department or front office for more information.

Low Account Balances

If your child is purchasing a 2nd meal or milk, please monitor their account balances to make sure that there are enough funds in your account(s) at all times. Bills are not sent, but when funds are low, families are notified by the instant alert system.

End of Year Account Balances

Any money left in the account at the end of the year will remain in the system for the next school year. Families moving out of the district with a balance of five or more dollars in their account will be provided a refund.

Free & Reduced Price Meals

With the introduction of Free Meals for All, all students will receive a free breakfast or lunch if they so choose. NSCS may receive additional funds for students who qualify for Free & Reduced Price meals. To help NSCS receive additional funds, please complete the Educational Benefits Application if your family meets any of the following: have one or more children who receive MFIP, Food Stamp, or FDPIR benefits; have a foster child; or have a household income within certain guidelines. Applications for Education Benefits are emailed over the summer, are available in the office, and are on our website. Anyone may apply or reapply for free and reduced price meals at any time during the school year. Increase to the size of your household, a decrease in household income, unemployment, a newly placed foster child, or approval for MFIP, Food Stamps or FDPIR benefits may result in a change of your status.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Bringing Snacks to Class?

In the event that you are bringing snacks to share at school, they must be purchased at a store. This is a state recommendation for health and safety reasons. These products contain a clear ingredient list for classmates with special diets or allergies. Our Wellness Policy states that snacks must be healthy, for example veggies, fruit, or cheese and crackers.

Teachers may be sharing general information regarding any food allergies in the class. If there is a food allergy in your child's class, please consider sending an alternative snack to include all students.

Transportation

Along with the Voyageur Bus Company, we welcome you to play a part in keeping our school buses safe and student-friendly. Everyone can make an important difference in the safety of our students as they board, ride, and exit school buses.

Route Questions: Buses may be used only by students regularly assigned to a route. Students may get off at a different stop on their assigned route if guardians send a note to the school. If you have questions or concerns about bus routes, pick-up times, etc., please contact the bus coordinator, **Kate at 525-0663 x 207**. If you have a last minute stop change, please contact the front office at 525-0663 ext. 100.

Planned Vacations: If you have a planned vacation, please notify **Voyageur at 724-1707 from 5am-6pm**.

Sports Equipment/Large Projects: In addition to our buses being at full student capacity, keeping students safe means we cannot allow snowboards or large projects on buses. For everyone's safety, ice skates need to be carried in a sturdy bag or have skate guards.

Bus Behavior: Safety at bus stops and on the school bus depends on the cooperation and responsible behavior of every student. Bus drivers have a tremendous responsibility when transporting students. Any student behavior that distracts the driver's attention from the road places all riders in potential jeopardy from having a safe trip. As a rule, school bus drivers correct or report misbehaviors as soon as possible after they are observed. However, there may be times when behavior related problems occur which are unpleasant for a student, but not readily evident to a driver. Please do not hesitate to report, or encourage your child to report, incidents of misbehavior which may not have come to our attention through everyday communication.

Consequences for Misbehavior

Progressive discipline is usually, although not always, followed. Any of these steps may be repeated or skipped, depending on the offense.

- **FIRST OFFENSE:** Warning, which may include moving student to a new seat, parent contact, etc.
- **SECOND OFFENSE:** 3 school-day suspension from riding the bus. Parents are responsible for transporting a child to and from school for the duration of the bus suspension.
- **THIRD OFFENSE:** 5 school-day suspension from riding the bus. Parents are responsible for transporting a child to and from school for the duration of the bus suspension.
- **FOURTH OFFENSE:** 10 school-day suspension from riding the bus and a meeting with a parent/guardian. Parents are responsible for transporting a child to and from school for the duration of the bus suspension.
- **FURTHER OFFENSES:** Individually considered. Students may be suspended for longer periods of time, including the remainder of the school year. Parents are responsible for transporting a child to and from school for the duration of the bus suspension.

Community Services

Kids & Co.

North Shore Community School offers supervised activities for children needing after school childcare. The service, Kids & Co., is provided by NSCS at a cost of \$2.00 per half hour or \$4.00 per hour per child, with a minimum charge of one hour per child.

It is available after school from 2:50 – 6:00 p.m. (5:30 on Fridays) and 12:50-5:30 p.m. on early release days aside from the last day of school. To register for Kids & Co., please contact the main office at 525-0663 extension 100.

Please notify Kids & Co. if there are any changes to your child's routine schedule.

Assessment Information

Parent/Guardian Participation Guide and Refusal Information

Your student's participation in statewide assessments is important as it allows your school and district to ensure all students have access to a high-quality education. In the past, students with disabilities and English learners were often excluded from statewide assessments. By requiring that all students take statewide assessments, schools and teachers have more information to see how all students are doing. This helps schools to continuously improve the education they provide and to identify groups, grades, or subjects that may need additional support.

Assessments Connect to Standards

Statewide assessments are based on the [Minnesota Academic Standards](#) or the [WIDA English Language Development Standards](#). These standards define the knowledge and skills students should be learning in K–12 districts and charter schools. Minnesota prioritizes high-quality education and statewide assessments give educators and leaders an opportunity to evaluate student and school success.

Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA)

MCA and the alternate assessments (Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS)/Alternate MCA) are the annual assessments in reading, mathematics and science that measure a snapshot of student learning of the Minnesota K–12 Academic Standards.

ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS for English Learners

The ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS are the annual assessments for English learners that provide information about their progress in learning academic English, based on the WIDA English Language Development Standards.

Statewide Assessments Help Families and Students

Participating in statewide assessments helps families see a snapshot of their student's learning so they can advocate for their success in school. High school students can use MCA results:

For Postsecondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) in grade 10.

For course placement at a Minnesota State college or university. If students receive a college-ready score, they may not need to take a remedial, noncredit course for that subject.

English learners who take the ACCESS or WIDA Alternate ACCESS and meet certain requirements, have the opportunity to exit from English learner programs.

Taking Statewide Assessments Helps Your Student's School

Statewide assessments provide information to your school and district about how all students are engaging with the content they learn in school. This information helps:

Educators evaluate their instructional materials.

Schools and districts identify inequities between groups, explore root causes and implement supports.

School and district leaders make decisions on how to use money and resources to support all students.

Student Participation in Statewide Assessments

Student participation in state and locally required assessments is a parent/guardian choice. If you choose to have your student not participate in a statewide assessment, please provide a reason for your decision on the form below. Contact your student's school to learn more about locally required assessments.

Consequences of Not Participating in Statewide Assessments

The student will not receive an individual score. For ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS, the student would not have the opportunity to exit their English learner program.

School and district assessment results will be incomplete, making it more difficult to have an accurate picture of student learning.

Certain statewide assessment calculations include all eligible students, including those who do not participate. Non-participation impacts accountability results, which may affect the school's ability to be identified for support or recognized for success

Check with your local school or district to see if there are any additional consequences for not participating.

Additional Information

On average, students spend less than 1% of instructional time taking statewide assessments each year.

Minnesota statutes limit the total amount of time students can spend taking other district- or school-wide assessments to 11 hours or less each school year, depending on the grade.

School districts and charter schools are required to publish an assessment calendar on their website by the beginning of each school year. Refer to your district or charter school's website for more information on assessments.

Statewide Assessment: Parent/Guardian Decision Not to Participate

By completing this form, you are acknowledging that your student will not participate in statewide assessments and will not receive individual assessment results. **This form must be submitted to your student's school or district office prior to testing.**

Please indicate the statewide assessment(s) you are opting your student out of this school year:

First Name _____ Middle Initial ____ Last Name _____

Date of Birth: _____ Current Grade in School: ____ Student ID Number (if known): _____

School: _____ District: _____

Parent/Guardian Name (print): _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Reason for Refusal: _____

Please indicate the statewide assessment(s) your student will not participate in this school year:

☐ MCA/MTAS Reading

☐ MCA/Alternate MCA Science

☐ MCA/MTAS Mathematics

☐ ACCESS/WIDA Alternate ACCESS

Contact the NSCS office or visit our website the for more information on how to opt out of local assessments.
<https://northshorecommunityschool.org/mcamtas-nscs-plan-procedure-test-security/>

(Note: This form is only applicable for the 2026 to 2027 school year.)

School Policies

Below you will find a summary of policies that pertain specifically to student or parent rights and responsibilities. Full versions of these policies, as well as policies not included here, may be found online at <https://northshorecommunityschool.org/policies/> or are available in hard copy in the school office.

413 HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE: The purpose of this policy is to maintain a learning environment that is free from religious, racial or sexual harassment and violence.

418 CHEMICAL USE AND ABUSE: The purpose of this policy is to assist the school district in its goal to prevent chemical use and abuse by providing procedures for education and intervention.

418 DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE/DRUG-FREE SCHOOL: The purpose of this policy is to maintain a safe and healthful environment for students by prohibiting the use of alcohol, toxic substances and controlled substances without a physician's prescription.

419 TOBACCO-FREE ENVIRONMENT: The purpose of this policy is to maintain learning environment that is tobacco free. Smoking and the use of tobacco products is prohibited in North Shore Community School facilities and on school property 365 days a year, 24 hours a day. This includes all school buildings and all school grounds including parking lots.

420 STUDENTS AND EMPLOYEES WITH COMMUNICABLE DISEASES AND INFECTIOUS CONDITION: Public concern that students and staff of the school district be able to attend the schools of the district without becoming infected with serious communicable or infectious diseases requires that the school board adopt measures effectively responding to health concerns while respecting the rights of all students, employees, and contractors, including those who are so infected.

423 BACKGROUND CHECKS: North Shore Community School (NSCS) is committed to the safety of its students and staff. In order to maintain a safe and healthful environment, the district should be assured that all employees and others having contact with students do not have criminal histories or engage in criminal behavior that threatens that well-being.

501 SCHOOL WEAPONS: No student or non-student, including adults and visitors, shall possess, use or distribute a weapon when in a school location except peace officers or as provided in this policy. The school district will act to enforce this policy and to discipline or take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator, school employee, volunteer, or member of the public who violates this policy.

502 SEARCH OF STUDENT LOCKERS, DESKS, PERSONAL POSSESSIONS & STUDENT'S PERSON: The purpose of this policy is to provide for a safe and healthful educational environment free from contraband. "Contraband" means any unauthorized item that is prohibited by school policy and/or law. It includes, but is not limited to, weapons and "look-alikes," alcoholic beverages, controlled substances and "look-alikes," overdue books and other materials belonging to the school district and stolen property.

506 STUDENT DISCIPLINE: The purpose of this policy is to ensure that students are aware of and comply with the school's expectations for student conduct. Such compliance will enhance the school's ability to maintain discipline and ensure that there is no interference with the educational process. The school will take appropriate disciplinary action when students fail to adhere to the Code of Student Conduct.

507 ATTENDANCE: NSCS staff and School Board believe that regular school attendance is directly related to students' success in academics, social learning and self-esteem. Coming to school every day, and on time, helps students establish regular habits of dependability which are important to becoming productive citizens. Regular and on time attendance enables and empowers children and reinforces positive values.

512 USE OF CELL PHONES, DIGITAL IMAGINE DEVICES, AND OTHER PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES: The purpose of this policy is to set forth expectations for appropriate use of existing and emerging technologies which students may possess including, but not limited to, personal electronic devices, such as cell phones, tablets, Smart watches, Chromebooks, digital cameras/camcorders, or other digital devices which can take and/or transmit videos or images.

Cell phones and other personal electronic devices shall be turned off, kept in a backpack, and out of sight during the school day and when riding on the bus. Cell phones, smart watches, and other personal electronic devices are not to be kept on the person. A smart watch is identified as a device that can be worn that also has games, texting, phone capabilities, etc. Fitness Trackers that do not have games or text/call capabilities may be worn.

514 BULLYING PROHIBITION: The purpose of this policy is to assist the school in its goal of preventing and responding to acts of bullying, intimidation, violence and other similar disruptive behavior.

Malicious and Sadistic Conduct: Malicious and sadistic conduct involving race, color, creed, national origin, sex, age, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, disability, religion, sexual harassment, and sexual orientation and gender identity as defined in Minnesota Statutes, chapter 363A is prohibited. This prohibition applies to students, independent contractors, teachers, administrators, and other school personnel.

Malicious and sadistic conduct and sexual exploitation by a school district or school staff member, independent contractor, or enrolled student against a staff member, independent contractor, or student that occurs as described in the Bullying Prevention Policy is prohibited.

"Malicious and sadistic conduct" means creating a hostile learning environment by acting with the intent to cause harm by intentionally injuring another without just cause or reason or engaging in extreme or excessive cruelty or delighting in cruelty.

515 PROTECTION AND PRIVACY OF PUPIL RECORDS: The school recognizes its responsibility in regard to the collection, maintenance and dissemination of pupil records and the protection of the privacy rights of students as provided in federal law and state statutes.

521 STUDENT DISABILITY NONDISCRIMINATION: The purpose of this policy is to protect disabled students from discrimination on the basis of disability and to identify and evaluate learners who, within the intent of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, need special services, accommodations, or programs in order that such learners may receive a free appropriate public education.

522 STUDENT SEX NONDISCRIMINATION: Students are protected from discrimination on the basis of sex pursuant to Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and the Minnesota Human Rights Act. The purpose of this policy is to provide equal educational opportunity for all students and to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex.

524 INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE AND SAFETY: The purpose of this policy is to set guidelines for access to the school's computer system while providing guidelines of acceptable and safe use of the Internet and electronic communications.

526 HAZING PROHIBITION: The purpose of this policy is to maintain a safe learning environment for students that is free from hazing. Hazing involves convincing someone to do something dangerous, embarrassing, or ridiculous and is a form of bullying. Hazing activities of any type are inconsistent with the educational goals of North Shore Community School and are prohibited at all times.

529 STAFF NOTIFICATION OF VIOLENT BEHAVIOR BY STUDENTS: The purpose of this policy is to address the circumstances in which data should be provided to classroom teachers and other school staff members about students with a history of violent behavior and to establish a procedure for notifying staff regarding the placement of students with a history of violent behavior.

531 PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: The school board recognizes the need to display an appropriate United States flag and to provide instruction to students in the proper etiquette, display and respect of the flag. The purpose of this policy is to provide for recitation of the pledge of allegiance and instruction in school to help further that end. Anyone who does not wish to participate in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance for any reasons may elect not to do so and students must respect another person's right to make that choice.

533 WELLNESS: This policy is divided into a number of key areas including nutrition, nutrition education, health and wellness education, physical education, health promotion for staff, family and community involvement.

534 SCHOOL MEALS POLICY The purpose of this policy is to ensure that students receive healthy and nutritious meals through the school district's nutrition program and that North Shore Community School (NSCS) school district employees, families, and students have a shared understanding of expectations regarding meal charges. The policy seeks to allow students to receive the nutrition they need to stay focused during the school day and minimize identification of students with insufficient funds to pay for a la carte items or second meals as well as to maintain the financial integrity of the school nutrition program.

541 SCHOOL-SPONSORED STUDENT PUBLICATIONS AND ACTIVITIES: The purpose of this policy is to protect students' rights to free speech in production of school-sponsored media and activities while at the same time balancing the charter school's role in supervising student publications and the operation of public schools.

709 STUDENT TRANSPORTATION SAFETY: The purpose of this policy is to provide safe transportation for students and to educate students on safety issues and the responsibilities of school bus riders.

806 CRISIS MANAGEMENT: The purpose of this policy is to provide a structure for managing building crisis situations, maintaining the safety of the school community. Step-by-step procedures related to various crises will provide guidance to coordinate protective actions prior to, during, and after any type of universal or emergency situation.

School Security: NSCS is committed to providing a safe and secure environment. NSCS may use security cameras on school grounds, property, and/or school buses, as tools to maintain and enhance the safety and security of our students, staff, volunteers, and the community.

Drills: NSCS Will conduct 5 Fire Drills, 5 Lockdown Drills, 1 Severe Weather Drill, and 1 Cardiac Emergency Response Drill each year. General information regarding the drill procedures will be sent through Connections at the beginning of each year.

- The first Fire Drill will be conducted within the first 10 days of school.
- The Lockdown Drills will begin by early October.
- The Cardiac Emergency Response Drill will take place before December. While it will be held during the school day, it will not include students in the drill.

Students in Homeless Situations: Liaison: Louise Hanson, 218-525-0663 x140, lhanson@nscsk6.org

North Shore Community School is committed to supporting every student's success, regardless of housing circumstances. Children and youth experiencing homelessness receive equal access to all school services, including transportation to and from their school of origin whenever possible. Our homeless liaison works closely with families to safeguard student rights, remove barriers to learning, and ensure every child has the support needed to achieve academic excellence.

Suicide Prevention Information: Crisis services are available 24/7 if you or someone you care about is having a mental health crisis.

- Call, text, or chat 988 to contact the [988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](https://www.988lifeline.org/).
- Southern St. Louis County and Lake County: 844-772-4724
- NSCS School Social Worker: 218-525-0663 X140

Notice of Nondiscrimination: This charter school does not discriminate on the basis of sex, including discrimination on the basis of sex stereotypes, sex characteristics, pregnancy or related conditions, sexual orientation, and gender identity, in any education program or activity that it operates, including in admission and employment. This charter school does not discriminate in such a manner in its implementing regulations. This charter school is committed to maintaining an education and work environment that is free from discrimination based on sex, including sexual harassment. Inquiries about Title IX and its regulations may be referred to the Title IX Coordinator(s), the United States Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, or both.

Any student, parent, or guardian with questions regarding the application of Title IX and its regulations, as well as this policy and the related grievance process, should discuss them with the Title IX Coordinator, Shelly Pierson Evans, Executive Director. Contact information: mailing address: 5926 Ryan Road, Duluth, MN 55804, phone number: 218-525-0663, ext. 118, and email: Sperson@nscsk6.org.

To report information about conduct that may constitute sex discrimination or make a complaint of sex discrimination under Title IX, please refer to Policy 522 of our school website: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1inpW4SDlBYQaRc1VlqvGnnRZ8LiD9-8F?usp=drive_link

In addition to the above, this charter school does not discriminate on the basis of any other classification protected under local, state, or federal law.