

**Early Childhood Center  
and  
Elementary Schools Student Handbook**

**Welcome**



**School Wide Expectations**

**Respect, Integrity, Empathy and Leadership**

## Mission Statement

The Mission of the Fort Dodge Community School district is to provide quality learning experiences and build relationships that develop productive citizens ready for their futures.

This handbook is an extension of Board policy and is a reflection of the District goals and objectives. The Board, administration and employees expect students to conduct themselves in a manner fitting to their age level and maturity and with respect and consideration for the rights of others. Students are expected to treat teachers, other employees, students, visitors and guests with respect and courtesy, and vice-versa. Students shall not use abusive language, profanity or obscene gestures.

This handbook and District Board policies, procedures, rules, and regulations are in effect while students are on school grounds; district property, or on property within the jurisdiction of the district; while on school-owned and/or operated buses, vehicles or chartered buses; while attending or engaged in school activities; and while away from school grounds if the misconduct directly affects the good order, efficient management and welfare of the District.

District policies, procedures, rules, and regulations are in effect 12 months a year. Students who fail to abide by District policies, rules, and regulations shall be disciplined for conduct which: disrupts or interferes with the education program;

- ◆ disrupts the orderly and efficient operation of the District or school activity;
- ◆ disrupts the rights of other students to obtain their education or to participate in school activities; or interrupts the maintenance of an appropriate educational environment.

Disciplinary measures include, but are not limited to, removal from the classroom, detention, suspension, probation and expulsion. The discipline imposed will be based upon the facts, the circumstances surrounding the incident, and the student's discipline record.

The District reserves and retains the right to modify, eliminate or establish policies,

rules, and regulations as circumstances warrant, including those contained in this handbook. Students and their families are expected to know the contents of this handbook and comply with the expectations. Students and/or parents with questions or concerns may contact the school's office or the Administration Office about the information provided.

**For complete school district information and Board Policies visit our website at [www.fdschools.org](http://www.fdschools.org)**

RELEASE OF STUDENT INFORMATION: The information listed below may be released to the public in regard to any individual student of the district as necessity or desirability arises. Any student, parent, or guardian not wanting this information released to the public must make objection in writing to the principal or other person in charge of the school which the student is attending at the beginning of each school year.

- Name, address, and/or telephone number
  - Date and place of birth
  - Parent name
  - Participation in officially recognized activities
  - Dates enrolled
  - Awards received
  - Name on the building or district web page
  - Photograph for education publications

ABSENCES AND SCHOOL ATTENDANCE LAW: Board Policy concerning student attendance states that all students be in attendance 180 days. When a student is unable to be at school, please call the school by 8:30 a.m. to explain the reason for the absence. A telephone call will be made to your home if we don't hear from you. A doctor's note to explain prolonged or frequent absences may be requested. When absences are frequent and/or unexcused, a home visit will be made. When you know ahead of time the specific date(s) when a student is going to be absent, please inform the school. When it is necessary for a student to leave school early (for a doctor's appointment, etc.), a written excuse must be provided. Arrangements will be made to send homework home ahead of such absence(s). All schoolwork missed during any absence is to be made up. School starts at 8:00 and students are considered tardy if they arrive after 8:00.

**TARDINESS:** Students are expected to be at school on time. A note from the family giving the reason for the tardiness is to be sent with students who arrive at school late. Excessive tardiness is a serious matter.

**ACCIDENT AND EMERGENCY INFORMATION:** Each year at registration time you need to provide the school with accident and emergency information (e.g., home and work phone number, a phone number to contact in case of an emergency.) If the information changes during the school year, please notify us.

**BUS PROCEDURES:** At times, all students could be transported on a school bus. Bus-rider rules, for safety reasons, must be followed. Elementary students who live two (2) miles or more from their assigned school are eligible for free bus transportation to and from school. The student must be signed up for riding a specific bus. Please read the rules and discuss them with your child(ren).

**CELL PHONES:** The use of cell phones at school is discouraged. In the rare occurrence that a student needs to have their phone at school, the student will be required to turn off the phone prior to entering the building and place it in the student's backpack for the remainder of the school day. The cell phone cannot be used until the student exits the school building. If a phone is found or heard anywhere in the building it will be confiscated and turned in to the principal. The phone will be held in the principal's office until a parent comes to pick it up. The school will not be held responsible for lost or stolen cell phones. Parents, we really need your support on this issue. All communication between student and parents should be done through office phones, not personal cell phones.

**CHANGE OF ADDRESS:** Please notify us in advance when you plan to move to another attendance area in the District, or out of the District. When registering outside the District, that school will need to send a request for student records to us before records will be released.

**CHILD CUSTODY:** When parents are divorced, both parents have rights regarding their children. If a court order exists that limits the rights of one parent, a copy of the court order must be provided to the school(s). If the court order is not on file at the school(s), we must provide equal rights to both parents.

**COMMUNICABLE DISEASES:** The rules and regulations of the Iowa Department of Health pertaining to the control of communicable diseases in school are available from the school nurse. Students with any of these diseases should be under a

physician's care. The school nurse should also be contacted.

**CONFERENCES AND EVALUATIONS:** Parent/teacher conferences are held once in the first semester or when requested. They are scheduled online. A link will be available on the school website to sign up. This information will be communicated to all families. During the second semester, family engagement events will be held to share data, build family partnerships and learn how to support learning at home. At any other time, a conference may be needed and will be scheduled. Please feel free to call the teacher if you want to schedule a conference. Students are encouraged to attend any such conference.

**DISCIPLINE:** Effective discipline is necessary for quality education to occur. A goal of each Fort Dodge school is to meet the unique needs of each student. To meet that goal, it is essential for the home and school to work closely together in promoting student self-discipline, responsibility, and appreciation of the rights of others. The District has a comprehensive discipline policy. Please call the teacher or Principal when you sense unusual home conditions may be particularly upsetting to your child. The information may help facilitate our understanding of problems that may arise. Good discipline begins at home. We want every student to behave in a manner that will let all students get the most from school. At school, we must see that students are not denied learning opportunities due to behavior problems that occur in the classroom. The District has adopted the policy that any student who brings a firearm or dangerous object onto school property, at a school event, or in school vehicles, or knowingly possesses a firearm or dangerous object on school property, at a school event, or in school vehicles, shall be considered for expulsion for a period up to twelve (12) months.

**Reminder:** The District is responsible for student behavior, only while students are on school property or on school buses and school is in session, or at school sponsored events. The District is not responsible for student behavior walking to and from school or while waiting at bus stops, etc.

**WEAPONS/DANGEROUS OBJECTS:** Weapons, dangerous objects, "look-a-likes", and other items used as weapons are not allowed in school, on school grounds, at school events, or in school vehicles.

**DRESS CODE:** Students are expected to dress in a manner that meets standards of cleanliness, health, and safety. Clothing, apparel, and accessories that promote products that are illegal for use by minors (advertising of drugs, alcohol, or tobacco)

or that display obscene materials or profanity, or reference prohibited conduct are not allowed. Clothing or accessories that are dangerous or could be used as a weapon are prohibited. (e.g., chains and studded collars). Hats/hoods are not allowed to be worn inside the building.

When the student's appearance interferes with school work or creates a disruption in the learning environment, appropriate steps will be taken. Based on the requirements stated here, the student may be required to make modifications in that appearance or style of dress.

**DRILLS:** Fire and tornado drills are held periodically throughout the year. These drills are to prepare all of us for an actual fire or tornado. Please stress the importance of these drills with your child(ren).

**EARLY DISMISSAL-DUE TO WEATHER:** It is sometimes necessary to dismiss school early due to bad weather. During district-wide registration you signed up for the automated calling system. This system automatically calls your home phone, cell phone or sends a text message when school is being dismissed due to inclement weather. If you need to revise any numbers you have submitted please contact your school office. Individual student forms are filled out each year to communicate the plans for early dismissal to the teacher.

**ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS:** A birth certificate, proof of address and certificate of immunization are required for each student enrolled in the District. It is required that all Pre-kindergarten students have a physical exam, a dental screening and have a Lead Level test before starting school. Iowa law states "no child shall be admitted to any public school for the year immediately preceding the first grade unless she/he is five years of age on or before September 15 of the current school year."

**EXCUSES RELATED TO ACTIVITIES:** Students are required to participate in outdoor recess activities unless they bring a written excuse for a specific day or days. A student that is too sick to go outdoors for a few minutes is probably too sick to be in school. The Principal may require a doctor's note if such requests are received for more than a few days in a row. Participation in physical education class is required. A written excuse from a doctor will be needed for a student to be excused from physical education.

**FIELD TRIPS:** Field trips are well-planned educational experiences for our students. Such trips are extensions of the classroom and have educational value. A signed

permission slip is necessary for a student to be able to go on a field trip. Permission slips will be sent home prior to the trip. If this written permission is not returned to the school, the student will miss the field trip and remain in the building.

**HARASSMENT/BULLYING:** The District is committed to the belief that employees and students have a right to an environment that is free of harassment/bullying and discrimination. Harassment/Bullying including electronic harassment of employees and students will not be tolerated. See Board Policy.

**HOMELESS FAMILIES:** Anyone who, due to lack of housing, lives

- in emergency or transitional shelters
- in motels, hotels, campgrounds, abandoned in hospitals, or awaiting foster care
- in cars, parks, public places, bus or train stations, or abandoned buildings
- doubled up with relatives or friends

Also includes migratory children living in these conditions.

**Contact: Kirsten Doebel, 515-574-5640 or Stephanie Anderson, 515-576-5678**

**HOMEWORK:** Assigned homework is an extension of the daily school program. Homework assignments are to be completed and returned the following day. A homework assignment may be completion of school assignments, work on basic skills, or make-up work. If you have homework questions, contact the teacher.

**IMMUNIZATION LAW:** Children 4 years of age and older must have the following immunizations:

- 5 doses of Diphtheria/Tetanus/Pertussis with 1 dose after 4 years of age if born on or after 09/15/2003 or 4 doses, with 1 dose received after 4 years of age if born after 09/15/2000 but before 09/15/2003; or 3 doses, with 1 dose received after 4 years of age if born on or before 09/15/2000.
- 4 doses Polio, with 1 dose after 4 years of age if born on or after 09/15/2003; or 3 doses with 1 dose received after 4 years of age if born on or before 09/15/2003.
- 2 doses of Measles/Mumps/Rubella; 1st dose received after 12 months of age; 2<sup>nd</sup> dose no less than 28 days after the first dose.
- 3 doses Hepatitis B if born on or after July 1, 1994.
- 1 dose Varicella after 12 months of age if born on or after 09/15/2003 or 1 dose received after 12 months of age if born on or before 09/15/1997, but before 09/15/2003, unless the applicant has a reliable history of natural disease.

Other requirements for entry of school:

- Kindergarten requires a dental and vision screening.
- Third grade requires a vision screening before entering 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.

One of the following must be completed and presented to the school upon enrolling: a) Certificate of Immunization; b) Provisional Certificate or c) Certificate of Immunization Exemption

Students who have a Provisional Certificate must have the immunization completed within 120 days. Medical exemptions are granted only by a doctor. If you have any questions, please contact the school nurse.

**INCLEMENT WEATHER AND OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES:** Students will go outside for recess unless it is raining or extremely cold. During cold weather, students should come dressed warmly, including hats and mittens. Wearing boots during wet or snowy weather is recommended.

**ITEMS FROM HOME:** If children bring electronics, snacks or toys, etc., from home, all items must be stored in their bags upon entering school. These items must stay in the bag until students leave the building. Toys may not be brought from home to play with during recess. The school is not responsible for lost or broken items.

**LIBRARY MEDIA CENTER (LMC):** Books and other resources are available in the LMC for use by students. Students will be informed how the LMC is arranged and how to locate books and materials. Students are expected to return checked out items in a timely manner. If any item becomes overdue, students will be given an overdue notice. At the end of the school year, parents or guardians will be notified of any missing materials. The LCM also provides extensive MakerSpace materials, learning and creating centers, and a reading space for students to use during scheduled library times. All materials and activities within the LMC program are designed to encourage an appreciation of reading and to support academic achievement in our students.

**LOST AND FOUND:** Please put the student's name on all items coming to school (e.g., coats, hats, mittens, boots). Labeling items will help identify found items and settle questions regarding ownership. Each building has a "Lost and Found" area.

**MEALS AND LUNCHROOM:** Breakfast and hot lunch are available to students. One



carton of milk is provided with each breakfast and hot lunch. Additional milk may be purchased. Students may bring money to school to put into their dining account or their parents may go online to their Infinite Campus Parent Portal and click the food service option to pay with a credit card, debit card or electronic check. Applications for free or reduced meals are available. Parents may log into their Infinite Campus and fill out the Free and Reduced Application in the form sections and fill it out electronically. Parents may also print out the application and return the form to Ursuala Roberts at the Central Administration Office, 109 North 17th Street, Fort Dodge. We feel that every child should have the opportunity to have school lunches. Good behavior is expected in the lunchroom at all times. Good manners are a must. Inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated. If you have questions regarding the Food Service Department contact Nick Sells, 515-574-5673 or if you have questions about your lunch account contact Ursuala Roberts, 515-574-5677.

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## MEAL CHARGES

In accordance with state and federal law, the Fort Dodge Community School District adopts the following policy to ensure 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, prevent the overt identification of students with insufficient funds to pay for school meals, and maintain the financial integrity of the nonprofit school nutrition program.

### **Payment Options:**

- Payment can be made online through the Infinite Campus parent portal link  
<https://campus.fort-dodge.k12.ia.us/campus/portal/ftdodge.jsp>
- Cash and Checks will be accepted at each building.
- Checks should be made out to FDCSD- Food Service (Fort Dodge Community School District) and should have your (students) first and last name on the memo line.

Students who have qualified for free meals shall never be denied a reimbursable meal. Students with outstanding meal charge debt shall be allowed to purchase a meal if the student pays for the meal when it is received.

Employees may use a dining account for meals, and must maintain a positive balance. No charging allowed.

**Negative Account Balances** The school district will make reasonable efforts to notify families when meal account balances are low. Additionally, the school district will make reasonable efforts to collect unpaid meal charges classified as delinquent debt. The school district will coordinate communications with families to resolve the matter of unpaid charges. Families will be notified of an outstanding negative balance once the negative balance reaches \$-10.00. Families will be notified by letter sent via US mail and the Infinite Campus automated calling system. If you are not receiving email notifications regarding low lunch account balances and would like to, please contact Ursuala Roberts at 515-574-5677.

**MEDICATION:** Students with a doctor's prescribed medication may have it given at school. Parents are required to bring the medicine to school. The medicine must be in a container marked with the pharmacist's label and must include the student's name and the amount prescribed. The medicine must be kept in the school office, and the student will have to come to the office to take the medicine. To administer this medication, the school will need to have a school form signed by the family. We urge you to discuss with the doctor prescribing a medication whether it is absolutely necessary to receive the medication during school time.

**NEWSLETTERS:** Newsletters will be accessed electronically throughout the year on the building page of the district website [www.fdschools.org](http://www.fdschools.org). If you prefer, a hard copy please contact your building office. They provide important information about school issues and happenings.

**NON-CUSTODIAL FORMS:** The non-custodial parent is asked to complete a form in order to receive report cards, attendance information and any other communication regarding their child. These forms are kept in the principal's office at each building. Please contact the school if this form is needed.

**NON-BUS STUDENTS:** Students walking to school or being dropped off at school should not arrive until 7:30 AM. Walking students should use the safest and most direct

route. If there are streets with no sidewalks on the route, remind the student to walk as close to the curb as possible. There is no playground supervision provided after school. For that reason, we insist students go directly home.

NOTES: A note or phone call from home is required when a student is to leave during the school day (e.g., doctor or dentist appointment, funeral, etc.) We encourage families to keep the school office and teachers informed about anything that is an exception to your normal routine and could affect learning.

NURSE: A school nurse will spend a portion of each four day cycle at each elementary school and is on call the other days. A full time school nurse is at Cooper Elementary. When you have a health-related question, please contact the nurse. Nurses will not diagnose illnesses.

PARENT RIGHTS: As a parent, you have the right to review your student's permanent school record. An appointment is necessary to make such a review. Only important, factual information will be included in the permanent records. Board Policy limits access to that information. Permission by the parents is needed for such records/information to be given to outside District sources.

PETS AT SCHOOL: Permission must be obtained from the teacher and the Principal before any pet is brought to school. An adult must bring the animal to school, show it to the class, and then take it home. Pets must have rabies vaccinations before being brought to school.

PICTURES: All students will have their picture taken each year. You will be informed as to the date and picture-packages available for purchase. You will need to decide which package, if any, you want to purchase and send the money to school. The school must have the money when the pictures are ordered.

PLAYGROUND: The school playground has space for many different activities. Supervision is provided during recess periods. Teachers will make students aware of the playground rules at the beginning of school. We do not allow roughhouse play at any time. Students are to respect the rights of others and play fairly. Students will be expected to line up when the bell rings to enter the building. During wet weather, boots will be needed for students who wish to play off the black topped areas. Students who are unable to behave in an appropriate way will lose recess privileges. Toys may not be brought from home to play with during recess.

REPORT CARDS: Report cards are sent home at the end of each semester. Face-to-Face conferences/family engagement events are held twice a year: Prior to the start of school and in the Fall. At these conferences, parents will review work students have completed relevant to the district standards and benchmarks. When you have a question regarding a mark or about your child's educational progress in general, please contact the teacher.

**Title IX:** Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX) prohibits discrimination based on sex in education programs and activities in federally funded schools at all levels. If any part of a school district or college receives any Federal funds for any purpose, all of the operations of the district or college are covered by Title IX.

Title IX protects students, employees, applicants for admission and employment, and other persons from all forms of sex discrimination, including discrimination based on gender identity or failure to conform to stereotypical notions of masculinity or femininity. All students (as well as other persons) at recipient institutions are protected by Title IX - regardless of their sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, part or full time status, disability, race, or national origin - in all aspects of a recipient's educational programs and activities.

## **SPECIAL SERVICES PROVIDED BY PRAIRIE LAKES AREA EDUCATION AGENCY 8**

AUDIOLOGISTS: Pre-kindergarten and Kindergarten students will have his/her hearing checked. Students with special needs and students who are referred by their teachers also qualify for this service.

SPEECH/LANGUAGE SERVICES: Referrals for speech and language services can be made by teachers and parents to the principal. These services include:

1. Identification of communication problems (ex. articulation, mispronouncing speech sounds, language, difficulty in understanding and/or using words,

unusual voice characteristics, hoarseness or loudness, fluency, repetitions, blocks or prolongation of words) 2. Remediation of communication problems; and 3. Prevention activities.

**SPECIAL NOTE:** Occupational and Physical Therapists, Social Worker, and Psychologist Services can be available upon request.

**STUDENT FEES AND FEE WAIVER:** The Board on an annual basis shall determine student fees, fines, and charges. Fees may be assessed for: a) textbook rental or the textbook may be sold to students at cost, b) eye protective devices, c) ear protective devices, d) driver's education instruction, e) summer school tuition, f) transportation for resident students not entitled to free transportation, and g) school supplies (items deemed not essential to the instruction of a course/subject.)

A fee waiver shall be granted for students whose families meet the financial eligibility guidelines for free meals, the Family Investment Program (FIP), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), transportation assistance under open enrollment, or if the student is in foster care. The fees may be partially waived if the student's family meets the financial eligibility criteria for reduced priced meals.

A waiver request for total or partial fee reduction must be officially documented to school officials. Families who believe they may qualify for a waiver should contact the building principal and request a waiver-request form.

Students whose families are experiencing temporary financial difficulty may be eligible for a temporary waiver of the fees. Families who believe they may qualify for a temporary waiver should contact the building principal and request a waiver-request form. Fee waivers do not carry over from school year to school year. They must be annually requested.

**TECHNOLOGY:** Students in grades PK-4 have supervised use of the Internet. Students who do not use the Internet for the educational purposes for which it is intended will lose Internet access and as a result, the student will be required to use traditional resources to complete assignments. Please contact the school office if you DO NOT want your son or daughter to be allowed to use the Internet. A complete copy of the Acceptable Use of Telecommunications/Computer Resources policy and its procedures can be found on the District's website.

**TELEPHONE:** Use of the school telephone by students is permitted only in the case of an emergency. Students will not be allowed to use the phone to call about Brownies,

going to a friend's house, etc. Please do not call your child(ren) during the school day. Emergency messages may be left with the building secretary.

**TESTING:** Elementary students participate in state and district-wide assessments. You will be notified when testing occurs. Please make sure the student is well rested, properly fed, and has been encouraged to do his/her best.

**TITLE I:** All elementary buildings now function as School-wide Title I buildings which means that all children in the elementary may have the opportunity to work with the reading specialists in literacy blocks. During the literacy blocks children work with many trained professionals including the classroom teacher, Title I teacher, special education teacher and literacy associates in small groups based on guided reading levels. These groups are “flexible” groups and will change often to meet the needs of all students. The groups might meet in classrooms, in the library, or in the Title I room. Research has shown that when students receive instruction in small groups, at their instructional level, student achievement increases. There may be times when some students need additional time in reading instruction and that will be provided by Title I teachers.

**VANDALISM:** Any person(s) willfully damaging (vandalizing or destroying) school property is/are responsible for such damage. State law states that the parent(s) is/are responsible for the vandalism done by children who are minors.

**VISITORS TO SCHOOL:** Parents are welcome and encouraged to visit the school. We do ask you to report to the office before you go to a classroom. District policy does not allow outside District students to visit classes. The Principal will determine exceptions.

**VOLUNTEERS:** We welcome parents who wish to volunteer at school. Volunteers help in many ways (e.g., reading to children, library help, or helping children with problem areas.) If you are interested in volunteering, please call the school office.

**PUBLIC COMPLAINTS:** Any concerns should be resolved at the lowest organizational level by those individuals closest to the concern.

(a). Matters should first be addressed to the teacher or employee.

(b). Unsettled matters from (a) above or problems and questions about individual attendance centers should be addressed to the employee's building principal.

(c). Unsettled matters from (b) above or problems and questions concerning the

school district should be directed to the superintendent.

(d). If a matter cannot be settled satisfactorily by the superintendent, it may then be brought to the board for consideration. To bring a concern, the individual shall notify the board president or board secretary in writing, who may bring it to the attention of the entire board. (e). Parents, guardians or community members of the district who have concerns about the district or the board may refer to the additional guidance offered by the Iowa Department of Education: Parent, Guardian, and Community Concerns



It is the policy of the Fort Dodge Community School District not to discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, ancestry, age, gender, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability, physical attributes, religion, political party preference, political belief, socioeconomic status, veteran's status, actual or potential parental, family or marital status in its programs, services, and employment practices. If you have questions or grievances related to this policy, please contact Stephanie Anderson (Director of Student Services - Elementary), and Dr. Kirsten Doebel (Director of Student Services - Secondary), Central Administration Office, 109 North 25th Street, Fort Dodge, IA 50501, (574-5678) or contact the Civil Rights Midwestern Division for U. S. Department of Education Office, [500 W. Madison Street, Suite 1475, Chicago, IL 60661](#)-4544. (Alternate for Section 504 is Lynnae Harvey, Director of Special Education/Special Needs, [515-574-5675](#).) The District's Designated Investigators of Physical/Sexual Abuse of Students by School Employees are Stephanie Anderson (Director of Student Services - Elementary), and Dr. Kirsten Doebel (Director of Student Services - Secondary). They can be reached at 576-1161 or 109 North 25th Street, Fort Dodge, IA 50501. The alternate is Corey Moody. He can be reached at 574-5469 or 819 North 25<sup>th</sup> Street, Fort Dodge, IA 50501. The District's Officers for Harassment Complaints and Allegations are Stephanie Anderson (Director of Student Services - Elementary), and Dr. Kirsten Doebel (Director of Student Services - Secondary). They can be reached at 576-1161 or 109 N. 25th Street., Fort Dodge, IA 50501. The District's Compliance Coordinator for Affirmative Action is Kim Whitmore. She can be reached at 574-5657 or 109 N. 25<sup>th</sup> St., Fort Dodge, IA 50501.