



WEST CENTRAL EDUCATION DISTRICT
Collaborating for a Stronger Educational Community

Beacon Program 2026-2027 Student Handbook

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The West Central Education District's mission is to maximize every student's educational experience by providing high quality services to students, families, and member districts.

Introduction

The Beacon Program is a Setting IV special education program designed for students whose primary educational needs center around developing self-regulation and social skills.

Beacon Program Mission: To provide students with the life skills necessary to become healthy, successful individuals through social skill development, mental health awareness, and academic instruction.

Established by the West Central Education District, the Beacon Program offers an increased level of intervention for students receiving special education services. The program focuses on strengthening social skills, self-regulation, and coping strategies. We serve students from our member districts—Albany, Melrose, Paynesville, and Sauk Centre—and also welcome students from other districts.

The Beacon Program is grounded in the following guiding principles:

- Students will be provided with a structured, consistent, and predictable environment.
- Students will be supported in realizing their full potential.
- Collaboration with families, home schools, and community agencies is essential to student success.
- Parents and guardians are integral members of the planning and decision-making team.

Enrollment Process

Enrollment at the Beacon Program is determined by a student's IEP team.

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Accidents

All accidents must be reported to staff if injuries occur in the classroom, the school building, or school grounds. If the student requires immediate medical attention, administration or designee will call 911 or seek emergency medical treatment and then contact parents/guardians. All incidents will be documented in the student cumulative file. The school does not provide accident insurance plans for students.

Annual Notifications

West Central Education District provides annual notifications to families as required by Minnesota and federal law. These notifications are available on the WCED website and include information regarding:

- Homeless Student Rights (McKinney-Vento Act)
- Lead in School Drinking Water
- Postsecondary Enrollment Options (PSEO)
- Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)
- Asbestos Management Plan

Families are encouraged to review these notices annually. Copies may also be requested from the West Central Education District office.

Assessments

It is the policy of the school district to implement procedures for testing, test security, reporting, and documentation, notification to students and parents and student record keeping in accordance with Minnesota law.

The Parent/Guardian Participation Guide and Refusal Information form is located in the appendix. Additional information can be found on the Minnesota Department of Education website.

Attendance/Truancy

West Central Education District recognizes class attendance is a joint responsibility to be shared by students, parents/guardians, teachers and administrators. These attendance procedures are designed to support students in maintaining consistent class attendance and outlines the responsibilities of all parties.

Absences, regardless of a student's age, must be verified by a parent or guardian. A student enrolled as a senior plus will be able to verify their own absences. Final authority in determining whether an absence is excused, unexcused, or unapproved rests with the program administrator. .

Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Section 120A.37, any student who is absent for 15 consecutive school days will be withdrawn from enrollment. To re-enroll, the student, their parent/guardian, a representative from the resident school district, and West Central Education District staff must participate in a re-enrollment meeting to determine next steps and review attendance expectations.

Absence Procedures

When a student is going to be absent from school, the parent/guardian will

- Notify district transportation
- Call the attendance line prior to 8:00am 320-256-6139

Excused Absences

Absences will be excused if they fall into one of the categories: A) Illness, B) Family Emergency, C) Medical/Dental appointments, D) Court Appearances, E) Religious instruction not to exceed 3 hours per week, F) Physical emergencies such as flood, fire, etc., G) Pre approved Trips. H) In School Suspension.

A written note from the medical provider is encouraged and will be required if the student has had 8 or more absences or truancy has previously been filed. Pre-approved trips will not be granted if the student has already accumulated 8 or more absences.

Unapproved Absences

These are absences excused by the parent but not excused by the school. The student will not receive disciplinary consequences for these absences but the student will not have a time extension to complete their school work. Unapproved absences may be counted as unexcused absences for the purpose of determining truancy.

Unexcused Absences

The following excuses are illegal and unexcused: babysitting, work, rest due to work, travel (unless pre approval), missing the bus or getting kicked off the bus, weather (unless school is officially cancelled), keeping a parent company, oversleeping, or helping at home.

Tardy

When a student is late to school, the student needs to report to the office prior to entering class. A designated staff will determine if the tardy is excused or unexcused. The student may be subject to consequences as determined by the program administrator. Three unexcused tardies will result in one unexcused absence.

Habitual Truancy

After the third unexcused/unapproved absence, a letter will be sent to parents/guardians informing them of the issue. After the 5th unexcused/unapproved absence a student will be referred to the Stearns County Truancy mediation program.

Bags

All backpacks, bags, purses or other carrying devices must be stored in the student's assigned locker during the school day. Administration and/or teachers may impose additional restrictions if such items pose a health, safety, or educational disruption concern.

College Visits

Juniors may receive up to 1 excused absence and seniors up to 2 excused absences for post-secondary campus visits. To qualify, students must submit a parent/guardian note at least three days in advance and provide verification from the campus upon return. Students are responsible for making up all missed coursework.

Communication

The West Central Education District uses the Remind messaging system to notify parents/guardians of school closings, late starts, early dismissals, and other important updates.

In addition to Remind, the district will communicate via phone and email regarding academic progress, behavioral concerns, special education services, and other student-related matters.

Credits, Graduation and Diplomas

The Beacon Program provides academic instruction in Language Arts, Math, Social Studies, and Science. For students in grades 9–12, Transition Skills are also emphasized. The IEP team determines which content areas are addressed and the level of instructional focus.

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) is integrated throughout the school day, supporting skill development in self-awareness, self-management, relationship skills, responsible decision-making, and connecting emotions, thoughts, and behaviors. As students demonstrate growth, IEP teams consider transition opportunities, with the ultimate goal of returning students to their home school district.

Secondary Beacon students' IEP teams will determine whether the student is working toward their home district's credit requirements or the West Central Education District (WCED) credit requirements for graduation.

To receive a diploma based on the West Central Education District credit requirements, students must complete a minimum of 86 quarter credits. These credits must include the following high school-level course requirements:

- Language Arts:
16 quarter credits
Must be sufficient to meet all academic standards in English Language Arts.
- Mathematics:
12 quarter credits
Must include Algebra II, Integrated Mathematics III, or an equivalent course aligned to Minnesota high school math standards.
- Science:
12 quarter credits
 - 4 credits in Earth and Space Science (grades 9–12 standards)
 - 4 credits in Life Science (grades 9–12 standards)
 - 4 credits in Chemistry or Physics (grades 9–12 standards)
- Social Studies:
14 quarter credits
Must include the following content areas to meet state academic standards:
 - United States History
 - World History
 - Geography
 - Government and Citizenship
 - Economics
- Physical Education and Health:
4 quarter credits
- *Personal Finance*
 - *Students who begin grade 9 in the 2024–25 school year or later must successfully complete 2 quarter credits of personal finance during grade 10, 11, or 12.*
- Electives:
Remaining credits to total *86 quarter credits*
 - May include additional coursework in core academic areas and electives
 - At least 4 quarter credits must be in the arts

Report Cards

The Beacon Program uses letter grades, percentage scores, and rubric-based assessments to measure and communicate student achievement. Report cards are issued quarterly and reflect the final grade earned in each class.

Credits

Secondary students' credit requirements for graduation are reviewed annually at the IEP meeting. Students earn credits by successfully completing course requirements and demonstrating mastery of the standards. All credits are recorded on the West Central Education District transcript.

Incomplete Classes

Students will be given a grade of incomplete if the student has excused absences and has not had enough time to make up the coursework that was missed (one day for every missed day plus one; i.e. absent 2 days would allow for 3 days to make up the work). Coursework not completed within timelines will result in a zero for the identified assignments and the letter grade will be issued accordingly.

Graduation and Diploma

Students earn a high school diploma from member districts by completing the credits as outlined in their IEP. Students earn a certificate of attendance from the Beacon Program. Graduates will receive their diploma from their home district following that district's policies and procedures.

Participation in the home district's graduation ceremony is determined by that district. Students and families are responsible for working with the home district to understand and meet eligibility requirements.

Crisis Behavior Awareness

In the event that a student is expressing or displaying suicidal, homicidal, or terrorist intentions/suggestions, the following may occur depending on the severity of the action.

- notification of parent while other actions are being taken,
- assessment of risk by West Central Education District staff,
- police notification, and/or
- notification of county social services

If a student displays behaviors that are an immediate threat to themselves or others, staff will use de-escalation techniques in which they have received training to minimize trauma and injury which may include the use of a restrictive procedure to ensure the safety of all students and staff. Additional information can be found in the Restrictive Procedure Plan, available by contacting the West Central Education District Office.

Suicide Prevention Information

Suicide and Crisis LifeLine: **988**

Crisis Text line: **741741**

Four County Crisis Response Team: **320-253-5555 or 1-800-635-8008**

Daily Schedule

The school building will be open from 7:50 AM - 2:45 PM, on all days that school is in session. Students should not arrive before 7:50 AM. The school day begins at 8:00AM and ends at 2:30PM.

Dress Code

Student appearance and/or dress needs to be supportive to the learning environment. Classroom temperature can often vary throughout the day. A lightweight jacket or sweatshirt can be helpful when rooms are cooler. Winter gear (such as snow pants, boots, coat, mittens, and a hat) is needed for outside play during cold weather days.

If your child has difficulty with bathroom accidents, please send a complete change of clothes; shirt, pants, and underwear. Please label these extra clothes. For safety reasons, students need to wear tennis shoes to school. Boots, crocs, flip-flops or sandals are not allowed. Belts and neck ties can also be unsafe and are not permitted at school..

Clothing (shirts, hats, or other) that contain profanity or slogans which are degrading to any group (including gang related images), or which promote alcohol or other drugs, will not be tolerated. Grooming or dress that prevents a student from doing his/her best work because of blocked vision, restricted movement, or clothing which exposes them or any other students to danger, and items that could potentially be used as a weapon are not acceptable.

- clothing needs to provide full coverage and show no undergarments
- winter coats must be stored in lockers
- Cowboy boots/steel toed shoes are not allowed
- Belts when removed to use as a weapon are not allowed

Students who violate any of the above listed guidelines will be required to change into clothing that meets the guidelines. Students will remain in the designated space until they make the appropriate change. Further consequences may result based on how the student accepts responsibility. Repeat violations will result in additional consequences. Parents/guardians will be notified when there are concerns/violations with these guidelines.

Electronic Devices

Both personal devices and school issued procedures and guidelines are outlined below.

Students are encouraged not to bring cell phones or other electronic devices including smart watches and earbuds/air pods to school.

If students choose to bring a cell phone/device to school the expectations are as follows:

- Cell phones, electronic devices (including smart watches) and earbuds/air pods will be turned in prior to entering the building. Devices will be stored in a locked location and will be returned to students at the end of the academic day.
- Students who need to be in contact with their family during the academic day are to ask permission to use one of our school phones. Parents are welcome and encouraged to contact our main office if there is a message that needs to be relayed.
- Students assume the risk of damage, theft, or loss when choosing to bring a phone to school.
- Cell phone use of any kind is not permitted in locker rooms or bathrooms.
- Corded earbuds/headphones may be allowed at designated times for instructional purposes on school approved devices.
- Phone usage during lockdown and fire drills is prohibited.
- Students are prohibited from photographing, recording or making any electronic record of other students, staff, or visitors without express consent of the individual that is the subject of the recording, photograph, or electronic record. This policy applies to students during the school day, instructional and non instructional time, or while participating in school events
- Cell Phone Guidelines for off-campus school activities (i.e. extracurricular activities, outdoor and service trips, school field trips) will be individualized depending on the specific trip and activities. These expectations will be addressed at pre-trip meetings and/or on trip-specific permission slips.

Chromebooks, Internet, and Email

The Beacon Program is a Google School. While enrolled, students will be issued a West Central Education District email account to communicate regarding school expectations; such as but not limited to, announcements, school assignments, and teacher/student feedback. Computer cases are required for school issued computers. Stickers, student markings are not allowed on school issued devices and/or cases. Students are responsible for appropriate behavior on the school computer network. **The chromebook is intended for participation in school; not for personal use.** Communication on the network is often public in nature. General rules for behavior and communication apply. *Gaming and listening to music needs staff approval.* Access to the network is a privilege, not a right. Student chromebooks are monitored for appropriate use; inappropriate use will result in a consequence such as but not limited to a warning, closing the site, loss of technology access. Upon graduation or leaving the Beacon Program, the gmail account will be disabled.

The following uses of email and internet are not permitted:

- sending/displaying offensive messages or pictures
- obscene language
- harassing/insulting others
- damaging computers/computer systems/computer networks
- violating copyright laws
- using another's password
- trespassing in another's folders/work/files
- intentionally wasting limited resources
- accessing social media

Damaged, lost, or stolen items are subject to a fee paid for by the student/family. Specific cost amounts will be listed on annual permission/agreement form parents/guardians complete.

Emergency Contacts

It is required that all students have completed registration paperwork, which includes emergency contact. Any changes to this information are the responsibility of the parent/guardian or student and must be communicated to the office.

Emergency Procedures

This is an abridged version of the West Central Education District's policy 806 Crisis Management Policy. The full version of applicable policies are available on the school website.

West Central Education District has developed a "Crisis Management" plan. Each school building has its own building-specific crisis management plan. The plan addresses a range of potential situations and includes procedures for securing buildings, classroom evacuation, campus evaluation, sheltering and communication procedures. The school district will conduct fire and tornado drills pursuant to Minnesota Statutes 299F.29.

Employment Background Checks

The school district will seek criminal history background checks for all applicants who receive an offer of employment with the school district. The school district also will seek criminal history background checks for all individuals, except enrolled student volunteers, who are offered the opportunity to provide athletic coaching services or other extracurricular academic coaching services to the school district, regardless of whether compensation is paid. These positions include, but are not limited to, all athletic coaches, extracurricular academic coaches, assistants, and advisors. The school district may elect to seek criminal history background checks for other volunteers, independent contractors, and student employees.

Extra-Curricular

Students are encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities with their home district. Students must meet their home district's academic eligibility criteria. Contact your home district for more information.

Fees

Materials that are part of the basic educational program are provided with state, federal, and local funds at no charge to a student. Students are expected to provide their own pencils, pens, paper, erasers, notebooks, and other personal items. Occasionally there may be activities and/or projects that go beyond the basic educational program, such as field trips, where a small fee will be requested.

Food

Breakfast and lunch is offered through the Melrose Area School District. There is no cost for student breakfast and lunch for the 2026-2027 school year. Additionally, students may opt to bring a lunch from home; there is a microwave and fridge available for student use.

Students need to receive permission from staff to have food/beverages during class.

At no time during school hours will students be allowed to order or have food delivered to the school. This includes parents/guardians delivering restaurant food to students.

Health and Nursing Services

The Beacon Program does not have on-site nursing staff but a licensed school nurse is available if needed on a consulting basis.

Medication

Nonprescription/over-the-counter (OTC) medications: The school will not provide OTC medications. A secondary student (grades 7-12) may possess and use non prescription pain relief in a manner consistent with the labeling, if the school district has received written authorization from the student's parent/guardian and physician orders permitting the student to self-administer the medication.

Prescription medications: The administration of prescription medication at school requires a completed signed request from the student's parent/guardian. A "Prescription Medication Administration" form must be completed annually and/or when a change in prescription or requirements for administration occurs. The Prescription Medication Administration form requires a physician's signature and dosing instructions. Prescription medication must come to school in the original container labeled for the student by a pharmacist in accordance with the law, and must be administered in a manner consistent with the instructions on the label. Prescription medications are not to be carried by the student, but will be kept in a locked location. Exceptions to this requirement are: prescription asthma medications self-administered with an inhaler, and medications administered as noted in a written agreement between the school and the parents or as specified in an individual health plan.

Immunization Records

All students must provide proof of immunization or submit appropriate documentation exempting them from such immunizations. Students may be exempted from the immunization requirement when the immunization of the student is contraindicated for medical reasons, laboratory confirmation of adequate immunity exists; or due to the conscientiously held beliefs of the parent/guardian or student. The school district will maintain a file containing the immunization records for each student in attendance at the school district for at least 5 years after the student reaches age 18. West Central Education District will request immunization records from the member school district upon student enrollment.

Leaving Campus

West Central Education District programs are closed campus programs. Students are not permitted to leave campus during the school day without prior approval. Permission must be obtained by checking in and out through the office.

If a student leaves without parent/guardian permission, their parent/guardian will be notified, and disciplinary action will be determined by the school administrator. If a parent/guardian cannot be reached, law enforcement may be contacted.

Students who leave without permission may not return to campus until the following school day unless accompanied in person by a parent or guardian.

Lockers

School lockers and/or cubby space are the property of the school district. At no time does the school district relinquish its exclusive control of lockers provided for the convenience of students. Inspection of the interior of lockers may be conducted by school authorities for any reason at any time, without notice, without student consent, and without a search warrant. The personal possessions of students within a school locker may be searched only when school authorities have a reasonable suspicion that the search will uncover evidence of a violation of law or school rules. As soon as practicable after the search of a student's personal possessions, the school authorities must provide notice of the search to students whose lockers were searched unless disclosure would impede an ongoing investigation by police or school officials. Minn. Stat. §121A.72.

Students are expected to put coats, backpacks, purses, and other items not needed for classroom activity in their locker. Students may not switch lockers and are recommended not to share. Individuals are responsible for what is in their locker and how it looks at all times. Students are not permitted to bring a lock from home for their locker.

Non-Discrimination

It is the policy of the West Central Education District not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, age, marital status, disability, sex (including sexual orientation and gender identity) and status with regard to public assistance or in its educational programs or employment policies as required by Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Equal Pay Act of 1973, Title IX (1972 Education Amendments), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The District will identify, evaluate and provide an appropriate public education to learners who are disabled within the definition of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Inquiries regarding compliance with Title IX, Section 504, or the Americans with Disabilities Act should be directed to the respective Director of the West Central Education District, 9 2nd ST So W Melrose, MN or to the office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC.

Parent Right to Know

If a parent requests it, the school district will provide information regarding the professional qualifications of his/her child's classroom teachers, including, at a minimum, the following:

1. whether the teacher has met state qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction;
2. whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or other provisional licensing status through which state qualification or licensing criteria have been waived;

3. whether the teacher is teaching in the field of discipline of the certification of the teacher;
4. whether the student is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

In addition, the school district will provide parents with information as to the level of achievement of their child in each of the state academic assessments. The school district will provide notice to parents if their child has been assigned to, or taught for four or more consecutive weeks by, a teacher who does not meet applicable State certification or licensure requirements at the grade level and subject area in which the teacher has been assigned.

Photo Release

The West Central Education District may take photos or videos of students during school-related activities and events. These images may be used for educational, informational, or promotional purposes, including but not limited to:

- The district website
- Social media accounts
- Campus displays
- Local newspapers or other media outlets

Student names will not be used in any public materials. Permission is obtained upon student enrollment. A parent or guardian may change their permission at any time by contacting the office.

Pledge Of Allegiance

In accordance with state law, the Pledge of Allegiance will be recited weekly. Participation is voluntary; students who choose not to participate are expected to remain respectful during the pledge. Likewise, all students must respect the rights of others to either participate or abstain.

Searches and School Safety

The West Central Education District Beacon Program is committed to maintaining a safe, respectful, and drug-free learning environment. To ensure the safety and well-being of all students and staff, school officials may conduct searches on campus when there is reasonable suspicion of a violation of school rules or the law.

Search Authority and Procedures

In accordance with state law and district policy, school officials may search student property, lockers, desks, vehicles on school property, and other areas within the school setting. These searches may include, but are not limited to, inspections of:

- Student lockers
- Desks
- Backpacks and personal items
- Vehicles parked on school grounds
- The student's person (when justified by reasonable suspicion)

Searches will be conducted based on reasonable suspicion and will be appropriate in scope and intrusiveness. When necessary, law enforcement will be contacted, and legal officials may become involved.

Contraband

Students violate school policy when they possess contraband on their person, in their personal possessions, or store such items in desks, lockers, or vehicles on school property. "Contraband" includes any unauthorized item prohibited by school district policy or law. If a search yields contraband, the item(s) will be confiscated by school officials and may be turned over to law enforcement for appropriate legal disposition. Students found in violation of this policy are subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the school district's Student Discipline Policy, which may include suspension, exclusion, expulsion, and legal referral.

Use of Detection Dogs

To take a proactive and preventative stance on the presence of prohibited items, trained detection dogs may be used to conduct random searches throughout the school year. These searches are scheduled in collaboration

with law enforcement and do not require prior notice.

Lockers and Desks

Lockers and desks are the property of the school district and are provided for student use. At no time does the district relinquish its exclusive control over them.

- Lockers: May be inspected at any time, without notice, student consent, or a search warrant.
- Personal items within lockers: May be searched when there is reasonable suspicion of a violation. Students will be notified of such searches as soon as reasonably possible, unless doing so would impede an ongoing investigation.
- Desks: May be inspected at any time, without notice, student consent, or a search warrant.

Vehicles on School Property

Routine patrols and exterior inspections of vehicles in student parking areas may be conducted without notice or consent.

- The interior of a student's vehicle may be searched with reasonable suspicion that a violation has occurred. This includes the glove compartment and trunk.
- Refusal to unlock or grant access to a vehicle may result in disciplinary action and loss of parking privileges.

Personal Searches

A student's person and personal possessions may be searched when school officials have reasonable suspicion that the search will reveal evidence of a violation of law or school policy. All searches will be conducted respectfully and appropriately based on the circumstances.

Student Conduct, Behavior Expectations, and Disciplinary Actions

This is an abridged version of the West Central Education District's policies related to student conduct and discipline. The full version of applicable policies are available on the school website.

The West Central Education District Beacon Program is committed to providing a respectful, safe, and secure learning environment where all students can thrive academically and socially. Bullying, harassment, violence, hazing, and other behaviors that interfere with learning, safety, or the rights of others are prohibited. Students are expected to demonstrate responsible behavior, academic honesty, respect for others, and compliance with school rules and applicable laws. Violations may result in disciplinary action in accordance with district policies.

For detailed information, please refer to:

- WCED Policy 506 – Student Discipline
- WCED Policy 514 – Bullying Prohibition
- WCED Policy 413 – Harassment and Violence
- WCED Policy 526 – Hazing Prohibition

Expectations for Behavior

Students are expected to:

- Attend regularly and engage actively in learning.
- Respect the rights of peers, staff, and visitors.
- Follow school rules, staff directives, and all applicable laws.
- Maintain a school environment free of violence, harassment, and illegal or harmful substances.

Students are encouraged to demonstrate self-respect, self-regulation, and positive citizenship. Disciplinary efforts will focus on positive interventions and restorative practices whenever possible.

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.

Student Rights and Responsibilities

Rights:

- Freedom of expression within appropriate boundaries.
- Safety and protection from threats or harassment.
- Fair treatment and due process in disciplinary matters.

Responsibilities:

- Respect the learning environment and all individuals within it.
- Follow school rules and procedures.
- Cooperate with staff and peers to maintain a positive atmosphere.

Behavior Violations

Behavior that undermines the educational environment, threatens safety, or disrupts school operations will result in disciplinary action. Violations include, but are not limited to:

- Insubordination, harassment, bullying, or physical aggression.
- Use or possession of illegal substances, tobacco, weapons, or imitation items.
- Vandalism, theft, or other violations against property or persons.
- Repeated classroom disruptions or refusal to comply with staff requests.

Consequences will be progressive and may include conferences, detention, loss of privileges, removal from class, suspension (in-school or out-of-school), and in severe cases, expulsion. School authorities retain the right to notify law enforcement as appropriate.

Removal from Class or School

*Students attending the Beacon Program are working on individual behavior skills and increasing positive behaviors to remain in the learning environment throughout the school day. It is expected that there will be times when a student requires a safe space away from peers for emotional regulation. **"Removal from class" and "removal" does not include instances where the student is working in an independent space within the program area.** Specific procedures addressing disruptive behaviors, identifying replacement behaviors, as well as rewards and consequences for behaviors are developed by the IEP team and outlined in the student's IEP.*

Period of Time for Which a Student May Be Removed from Class

A teacher may initiate the removal of a student from class when the student's behavior disrupts instruction or interferes with learning, endangers themselves or others, or willfully violates school rules or policies. Brief removals of less than one class period may be utilized as a classroom management strategy. The Program Administrator or designee shall determine the length of any formal removal from class in consultation with the teacher. No removal from class shall exceed five (5) class periods for a violation of a rule of conduct, unless otherwise permitted by law.

When a student is removed from class, the student shall report to a location designated by the teacher or administrator. Designated locations may include the main office, Program Administrator's office, school social worker's office, or another supervised area determined appropriate for the student's needs.

Students will generally proceed independently to the designated location unless the teacher or administrator determines that an escort is necessary for safety, behavioral, or supervision reasons.

During the removal period, the student may be assigned academic work, regulation activities, restorative tasks, problem-solving activities, or other interventions intended to support the student's successful return to the learning environment.

The student shall remain under the supervision and authority of designated school staff while removed from class.

Procedures for Return of a Student to Class

The Program Administrator or designee shall determine the conditions for a student's return to class on a case-by-case basis. Factors considered may include the nature of the behavior, the student's readiness to return, and the impact on the learning environment.

Requirements for return may include, but are not limited to:

- Student conference with staff;
- Parent/guardian conference;
- Completion of restorative or problem-solving activities;
- Development or review of a behavior support plan; and/or
- Other interventions deemed appropriate by school administration.

Students removed for assaultive, threatening, or dangerous behavior may be required to satisfy additional re-entry conditions before returning to class.

Procedures for Notifying Students and Parents/Guardians

Students shall be informed of the behavior that resulted in disciplinary action and any expectations for returning to class.

For minor infractions resulting in removal of one class period or less, the classroom teacher shall notify the student's parent or guardian. For more significant disciplinary incidents, removals exceeding one class period, or incidents involving safety concerns, the Program Administrator or designee shall notify the parent or guardian.

Notification may occur through telephone contact, electronic communication, including Remind, written correspondence, or a parent conference. Documentation of disciplinary actions and parent communication shall be maintained in accordance with district procedures.

Students with Disabilities; Special Provisions

When a student with a disability is removed from class or otherwise disciplined, the student's case manager and Program Administrator shall review the circumstances to determine whether the behavior may be related to the student's disability or whether additional supports may be necessary.

Repeated removals, patterns of disciplinary incidents, or concerns regarding a student's educational needs may result in referral to the district's Child Find process, review of the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP), consideration of additional assessment, development or revision of a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP), or convening of the IEP team.

Students suspected of having a disability who are not currently identified for special education services may be referred for evaluation in accordance with district Child Find procedures and applicable state and federal laws.

Procedures for Detecting and Addressing Chemical Abuse Problems

West Central Education District shall maintain a Chemical Health Team in accordance with Minnesota law.

Any staff member who has reason to believe a student may be using, possessing, distributing, or under the influence of alcohol or controlled substances while on school premises or participating in school activities shall report the concern to the school social worker or designated team member.

The Chemical Health Team shall review reports and determine appropriate next steps, which may include student interviews, parent/guardian contact, referral for a chemical health pre-assessment, referral to community resources, or other interventions designed to support student health and safety.

The district recognizes that disciplinary responses should be paired with non-exclusionary interventions designed to teach, restore, and support positive student behavior. Depending on the nature and severity of the behavior, interventions may include:

- Restorative conversations or restorative practices;

- Behavior contracting and problem-solving activities;
- School social work services;
- Mini-courses or targeted instruction addressing specific behavioral concerns;
- Schedule adjustments;
- School-wide social-emotional learning instruction;
- Restitution or restorative actions;
- Alternative programming or alternative schedules; and
- Other individualized interventions deemed appropriate by school staff.

The district shall seek to implement interventions that address the underlying causes of behavior while maintaining a safe and orderly learning environment.

For serious infractions, or when non-exclusionary discipline measures have been ineffective, the district may pursue detention and/or suspension.

- Lunch Detention: Students attend classes as scheduled;
- In-School Suspension (ISS): Students remain at school under staff supervision and complete coursework in a separate setting.
- Out-of-School Suspension (OSS): Students are temporarily removed from school. A re-entry meeting with school staff and family is required.

Certain behaviors, such as bringing a firearm to school, result in mandatory expulsion under state law. Other serious or repeated offenses may result in expulsion, subject to administrative and school board review.

Additional Notes

- Confiscated nuisance or illegal items may be retrieved by a parent/guardian. Students 18 or older may retrieve legal items if not using district transportation.
- Students are expected to cooperate in all investigations and will be informed of any violations and corresponding actions.
- Violations may affect extracurricular eligibility per MN State High School League rules.

Discipline Complaint Procedure (DCP)

Students, parents and other guardians, and school staff may file a complaint and seek corrective action when the requirements of the Minnesota Pupil Fair Dismissal Act, or the implementation of the behavior and discipline policies are not being implemented appropriately or are being discriminately applied.

The process is initiated by submission of a complaint in writing to the West Central Education Director. The complaint must be submitted in writing and dated by the person making the complaint.

A Discipline Complaint form is on the District website, in the handbook appendix and is available in administration offices. The process is initiated by filling in the form and submitting the form to the West Central Education Director.

1. Upon receipt of the complaint, district representatives will investigate the complaint. The investigation will commence within three school days of receipt of the complaint. The Director will direct the investigation. The District may use outside counsel as it sees fit. The Director may designate staff responsible for any aspect of the process.
2. Upon completion of the investigation, written determination will be provided to the complainant addressing each allegation. The determination will contain findings and conclusions, with appropriate application of the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act.
3. If the investigation finds the requirements of Minnesota Statutes, sections 121A.40 to 121A.61, including any local policies that were not implemented appropriately, the Director will require a corrective action plan to correct a student's record and provide relevant staff with training, coaching, or other accountability practices to ensure appropriate compliance with policies in the future.
4. Reprisals or retaliation against any person who asserts, alleges, or reports a complaint is prohibited. District administration will apply appropriate consequences for a person who engages in reprisal or retaliation.

Student Records

West Central Education District has the responsibility to give notice to parents of students currently in attendance of their rights regarding pupil records. Annual notification of rights will be provided to those enrolled at the West Central Education District Beacon Program. While enrolled at the Beacon Program, records of course completion, behavior reports, attendance, and any special education records will be maintained. Once a student is no longer enrolled, their transcript and special education records are sent to the home district, who maintains the student's permanent record. The West Central Education District will maintain a summary of enrollment, transcript, and last IEP/ER when applicable. If you are seeking a copy of your official transcript, you need to contact your home district.

JMC

Parents/guardians can access student's in progress grades through our student information system, JMC. Login information is shared with parents/guardians and students at the intake meeting.

Student Surveys

Occasionally, the school district utilizes surveys to obtain student opinions and information about students. For complete information on the rights of parents/guardians and eligible students about conducting surveys, collection, and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical examinations, see West Central Education District Policy 520 Student Surveys.

Telehealth Space

West Central Education District provides a designated space for secondary students to access telehealth appointments for mental health care. To request access to the space, a student must:

- Provide a signed Release of Information to confirm the student is currently receiving mental health care.
- Request access to the space by contacting the school social worker.
- Space availability is on a first come first served basis.
- Students may utilize a school chromebook to access their telehealth appointment.
- In the event of behavioral or safety concerns, West Central Education District may determine, with input from the mental health provider, that the student is not able to access the telehealth space.

Tobacco Free Grounds

School district students and staff have the right to learn and work in an environment that is tobacco free. School policy is violated by any individual's use of tobacco, tobacco-related devices, or carrying or using activated electronic delivery devices in a public school, on school grounds, in any school-owned vehicles, or at any school events or activities. Students may not possess any type of tobacco, tobacco-related devices, or electronic delivery devices in a public school, on school grounds, in any school-owned vehicles, or at any school events or activities. Any student who violates this policy is subject to school district discipline. Refer to Board Approved Policy 419: Tobacco-Free Environment for additional information.

Transportation

Students riding district transportation are subject to local district policies. If a student loses transportation privileges they are still obligated to attend school. Students who ride the bus/van to school must ride the bus/van home from school unless permission is communicated to the office by 9:00 AM from parent/guardian. Students are not allowed to use district transportation services other than that provided by their own home district.

School bus safety expectations pertain to all transportation provided by school districts; including cars, vans, school buses, or other school vehicles. As per Minnesota Statute Sec. 4 (123.7991) School Bus Safety Training, all students K-10 and new students must be provided Bus Safety Training and demonstrate knowledge and understanding of at least the following competencies and concepts;

1. Transportation by school bus is a privilege not a right,
2. District policies for student conduct and school bus safety,
3. Appropriate conduct while on bus,

4. Procedures for safely boarding and leaving a school bus,
5. Procedures for safe vehicle lane crossing, and
6. School bus evacuation and other emergency procedures.

The transportation contract will be enforced until the parent/guardian provides written notification on the change.

Parking

Students who drive to school must park in the designated area. Responsible driving behavior is expected at all times when entering, exiting, and navigating the parking lot. All vehicles must be parked in an orderly manner. Parking on the street is not permitted.

Student drivers are required to follow Minnesota state laws and school guidelines regarding safe and respectful driving practices. Vehicles must not block other cars, encroach on snowbanks, or be parked in a manner that obstructs traffic or access.

Students who fail to park appropriately may face consequences, including but not limited to:

- A phone call to a parent/guardian
- A requirement to immediately move the vehicle into an appropriate space
- Notification of law enforcement if necessary

Repeated or serious violations may result in the loss of parking privileges.

Visitors

All visitors, including parents/guardians and former students, need to stop in the office to sign in and receive a Visitors Pass.

Weather-Related Closures and Delays

The West Central Education District Beacon Program follows all weather-related decisions made by the Melrose School District. If Melrose announces a weather-related closure, late start, or early dismissal, the Beacon Program will follow the same schedule.

Transportation for students will be provided based on the weather-related decisions of each student's home district. If a student's home district cancels transportation due to weather, the student will not be expected to attend in person that day.

In the event that the Melrose School District is not in session, weather-related decisions will be made by the West Central Education District Director.

All weather-related announcements will be communicated to families and staff via the **Remind** messaging system.

West Central Education District will utilize E-Learning Day instruction when appropriate. A copy of West Central Education District's E-Learning Plan can be found on the district website and in the appendix.

Statewide Assessments:

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. When all students participate in statewide assessments, schools and educators have more information to see how all students are doing. This helps schools continuously improve the education they provide and 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 (MCAs)

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

WIDA ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS for English Learners

The WIDA 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 gives families a snapshot of their student's learning so they can advocate for their success in school. High school students may use MCA results for:

- Postsecondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) enrollment eligibility in grade 10.
- 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 WIDA ACCESS or WIDA Alternate ACCESS and meet certain requirements have the opportunity to exit from EL services.

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 following page. 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 WIDA ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS, the student will not have the opportunity to exit from EL services.
- 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.

Explore the
[Statewide
Testing page](#)
for more
information.

(education.mn.gov > Students
and Families > Programs and
Initiatives > Statewide Testing)

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 October 1 each school year. Refer to your district or charter school's website for more information on assessments.

Statewide Assessments: 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.**

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:

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Reading MCA/Alternate MCA | ☐ Science MCA/Alternate MCA |
| ☐ Mathematics MCA/MTAS | ☐ WIDA ACCESS/WIDA Alternate ACCESS |

Contact your school or district for more information on participation decisions for local assessments.

(Note: This form is only applicable for the 20 to 20 school year.)

West Central Education District E-Learning Plan 2026-2027

According to Minnesota Statutes, an "E-Learning Day" means a school day where a school offers full access to on-line instruction provided by students' individual teachers due to inclement weather. A school district that chooses to have E-Learning days may have up to 5 E-Learning days in one school year.

The Beacon Program, SAIL Program, and WCED Area Learning Center will implement an E-Learning Plan for the 2026-2027 school year. This document is intended to provide background information and the process for an E-Learning day.

If the decision is made to close school and an E-Learning Day is scheduled, this decision will be communicated to staff, students, and guardians, via Remind.

The following information describes the E-Learning Day:

- Teachers will be available during the hours of 8:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. via Remind, email, or Google Meet.
- The E-Learning Day is considered a student contact day that requires attendance. Students and teachers are expected to participate in the E-Learning Day.
- Students who choose not to participate will be unexcused unless their guardian provides verification of absence.

Student and teacher expectations are specifically outlined in the attached E-Learning Day Expectations document.

If you have any questions about the E-Learning Plan, please contact:

Vanessa Hoffarth
Programs Administrator
West Central Education District
320-256-6026 x136



WEST CENTRAL EDUCATION DISTRICT
Collaborating for a Stronger Educational Community

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www.wced6026.org

Member School Districts:
Albany, Melrose, Paynesville, and Sauk Centre
Program Oversight:
Early Intervention, Beacon, ALC, and SAIL

Student and Staff Expectations

***If an E-Learning Day is scheduled, staff, students, and families will be notified by 6:15 a.m., or as soon as possible. In rare circumstances, the decision to go to an E-Learning day may need to be made after 6:15 a.m.

Paraprofessionals Behavioral Aides Transition Aides	Teacher Expectations	Student Expectations	Information
Teacher(s) and/or administrator(s) will assign tasks for the day, including student support, curriculum or material prep, and/or other tasks as assigned. Professional development opportunities in the form of Infinitec, Kognito, and/or Wellness will be available. Certificates of completion will be submitted. Staff will work their typically scheduled hours.	Assignments and Activities will be sent to students/families via Remind, email, or Google Classroom by 9:00 a.m. (in some situations, assignments/activities will have been previously sent home). Teachers will be available during the hours of 8:30 - 2:30 and will respond in a timely manner to any communication from guardians, students, staff, or administration. Attendance will be determined by completion of assigned work within 2 days of the E-Learning Day	Beacon-All students have an e-learning manilla envelope that is sent home in November. BINGO boards will be updated as needed. ALC- All assignments will be located in Google Classroom SAIL - All students have an e-learning TASK card that is sent home in November. TASK cards will be updated as needed. Students/families will contact their student's teacher using email, phone, Remind, or Google Meet if they have any questions. Students will return assignments/activities within 2 school days of being back in session	Proposed guidance for total amount of time worked for individual students are below: Beacon: 1-2 hours Area Learning Center: 30 minutes per class period. (2.5-3 hours total) SAIL Program: 2-3 hours All E-Learning days are considered student days requiring attendance. Students, teachers and support staff are expected to participate in E-Learning days. If a student is too ill to participate in E-Learning, absences must be reported following typical procedures.

West Central Education District # 6026

Discipline Complaint Form

Date of Complaint: _____ Name of Person Completing Form: _____

Email Address _____ Phone: _____

Student Name _____ Grade: _____

Applicable Governing Discipline Documents

- Pupil Fair Dismissal Act
- School District Discipline Policy

Describe your complaint(s) and/or allegation(s) regarding improper implementation of the Minnesota Pupil Fair Dismissal Act and/or the school discipline policy or how the procedures in these two documents are being discriminately applied.

List below any other information you would like the District to consider:

Signature _____ Date: _____