

Mississippi Heights Elementary

Student Handbook

2021–2022



SAUK RAPIDS-RICE
PUBLIC SCHOOLS



A path for every student.

Mississippi Heights Elementary School
2021-2022
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Welcome to Mississippi Heights Elementary School!

We are excited for the 2021-2022 school year and we are so glad that you will be learning and growing with us throughout the year. We believe that MHES is a special place and we want this to be a great school year for everyone!

Our staff is committed to helping every student grow and learn to their potential. We are invested in each students' success and wellbeing. Because of this, it is our goal is to have a strong partnership with parents/guardians and families as we work to support our students. Our teachers are focused on providing strong academic rigor and building confidence in our students.

Our district staff and School Board have committed to providing equal access for students to access educational resources. In this effort, they have made technology available to all students to increase their experience with using technology for learning and exploring in an appropriate and supported manner. This will continue to benefit our students during their educational journey.

This student handbook was created for all students and parents/guardians, to provide a clear understanding of our process and procedures in an effort to inform of expectations for students, parents/guardians and staff. This document is reviewed annually to accurately reflect changes as we grow and change.

We want your family to have a great experience during your time at MHES. Please let us know if you have any unique situations or needs as we will work with you to find solutions that will promote positive educational opportunities for each student. A positive learning environment is our top priority for each student, thank you for your support and partnership in the 2021-2022 school year.

Tanya Peterson, Principal
Megan Foley, Assistant Principal

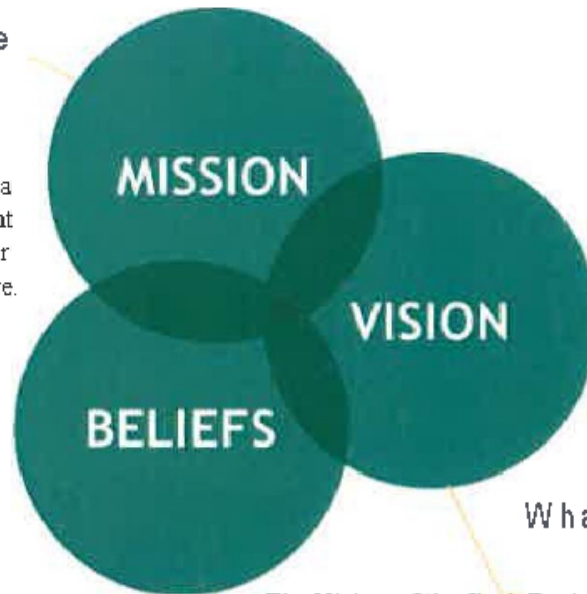
Mission, Vision, Beliefs



MISSION

Our Core Purpose

The Mission of Sauk Rapids-Rice Public Schools is to provide a world-class education in a collaborative environment that inspires every learner to think, achieve, and care.



BELIEFS

Stimulus for the District's Words and Actions

Sauk Rapids-Rice Public Schools believe in:

1. A culture of continuous learning and growth in a caring, collaborative, and supportive environment.
2. Effective partnerships between students, staff, families and community members.
3. An inclusive, safe, caring and stimulating learning environment that promotes shared responsibility for performance and innovation.
4. Effective and ongoing communication with and outreach to students, staff, families and community members.
5. Transparency and good stewardship of resources.

VISION

What We Intend to Achieve, Create, and Experience

The Vision of the Sauk Rapids-Rice School District is to prepare learners for an interconnected and changing world through nurturing, collaborative educational experiences, while providing equal access and opportunity to inspire a lifetime of curiosity and discovery.

In accordance with the vision, the District will:

- Promote and celebrate high achievement and equal access for every learner.
- Create positive, enjoyable, and challenging learning environments for every learner.
- Ensure student achievement is not predictable by any demographic classification (i.e. race, socio-economic status, gender, or disability).
- Identify and address barriers to learning
- Advocate for high quality academic and activity programs. Provide outstanding early childhood programs so that all children enter Kindergarten ready to learn.
- Foster and encourage ownership of learning.
- Measure growth and achievement, while being accountable for performance.
- Align time, talent, funds and space to learning standards and systems.
- Partner with community and businesses to enhance instructional achievement and effectiveness. Provide ongoing, relevant communications.
- Develop knowledgeable critical thinkers, communicators, collaborators, creators and contributors.
- Cultivate a high-performing team of professionals focused on our mission and goals.
- Deliver effective and efficient support for all learners, which includes providing mental health services.
- Promote a culture of active and healthy living.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES (2017-2022)

Focused Allocation of Resources

ACHIEVEMENT

- Upon entering Kindergarten, children will be prepared for their educational journey and continued success.
- By the end of the third grade, students will achieve at or beyond grade level expectations in reading and math.
- Racial and economic achievement gaps between students will be closed, while achievement will not be predictable by any demographic classification.
- Students will graduate from high school prepared for college, career, and life.

COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT

- Students, families, staff, and community members will communicate, foster positive and supportive relationships, and be positively engaged.

FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY

- Employees will fulfill professional responsibilities with honesty and integrity, while pursuing good stewardship of the District's resources.

WELLNESS

- Students, families, staff, and community members will feel and promote a sense of belonging to the school district where social-emotional, physical, and mental health needs are nurtured, respected and met.

LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS

- District leaders will promote and foster continuous learning through intentional goal setting, allocation of resources, implementation, and evaluation of systems, programs and self to maximize effectiveness.

PERSONALIZED LEARNING

- Learners will have access to appropriate support and resources, taking ownership for their educational journey through continuous and purposeful collaboration, communication, critical thinking, and creativity.

Academics

Academic Honesty

All students are expected to exhibit personal honesty in their work and expect the same from others. Students are expected to do their own work in all cases except when teachers give explicit instruction or permission to work with others.

Academic dishonesty is any attempt to secure an assignment or assessment score that does not reflect the original, authentic work of the student. As a guiding principle, academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating on school assessments (formative or summative), plagiarism or collusion.

Students are responsible for knowing and avoiding the various forms and levels of academic dishonesty which may include, but are not limited to the classifications below:

- Copying homework or allowing someone to copy your homework.
- Letting a project partner do all the work and just putting your name on the final project.
- Sharing test questions and/or answers what is on a test with other students either verbally or electronically.
- Looking on another's test/quiz or allowing another to copy a test/quiz.
- Submitting other's work as your own with or without the other person's knowledge (i.e., plagiarism).
- Submitting the same paper or substantially similar papers to meet the requirements of more than one or the same course without the prior approval of instructors concerned.

In addition, a student who allows others to use their work in fulfillment of class requirements will also be held accountable. Work in question will be confiscated.

Academic dishonesty will be assessed as a Code of Conduct violation for those students involved in activities (MSHSL or CLC), where penalties will be distributed to the student, and violations will be served. Penalties assessed will be determined by the principal and activities director.

Homework

Students are required to do quality work, which is thoughtful, accurate, and completed on time. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to monitor homework for quality and completion.

Make-up work will be sent home on the second day of an absence provided that office personnel are contacted by 9:00 a.m. Students are given two school days to complete work for an excused absence. One additional school day is allowed for each day missed thereafter. Family vacations are sometimes scheduled when school is in session.

When this occurs, make-up work will be assigned upon return and may be modified by the teachers.

Parents/Guardians are encouraged to schedule vacations when school is not in session.

Media Center

The media center is available to classes and students during the school day. Students who wish to use the facilities before or after school will need staff permission and supervision. Books and materials may be checked out by students, but must be returned or renewed by the due date. Students will be charged for damaged or lost materials.

During the school year, your student may be part of activities or events that are photographed. the district may want to use your child's name and/or photograph for educational or promotional purposes on the district website, newsletters, multimedia projects or other publications. Each school publishes student names and photographs in their yearbook. Every parent/guardian of a Sauk Rapids-Rice Public School student has the opportunity to opt out of the publishing of their student's name, photographs, or any other type of publicized information. This should be done in writing using the district [Opt Out form](#).

Physical Education Participation

If students are in school, they are expected to attend physical education class and to go outside for recess. Exceptions apply to students with medical excuses signed by their physicians.

Student Assessments

At Sauk Rapids-Rice Public Schools, a quality education for our students is our highest priority. Statewide assessments are used to ensure that our curriculum and instruction are aligned with Minnesota's academic standards, ensuring an equitable education for all students. Statewide assessments, in conjunction with other formative and summative assessments, help Sauk Rapids-Rice Public School staff to monitor instruction as we prepare students to enter the workforce and to be engaged citizens.

Students in grades three (3) through eleven (11) will take the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA) in reading, math and science. As a district, we encourage students to do their best on these assessments as they are used to improve classroom teaching and learning. Teachers and principals look for areas where students do well so they can reinforce the way they teach specific skills. They also look for areas that need improvement so they can increase instructional time or modify their instruction to better support student learning. MCAs are one of three benchmarks students can use to demonstrate proficiency towards high school graduation.

State tests are given to students once a year, based on a student's grade level and subject area. Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.31, Subd. 4a, requires the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) to publish a form for parents/guardians to complete if they refuse to have their student participate in state-required standardized tests. A family that decides to decline their student's participation in these assessments needs to sign and return the [Parent/Guardian Guide and Refusal for Student Participation in Statewide Testing](#) to their student's school office by January 15.

Activities

Community Education

Research shows that families that are involved in school related activities are more successful at school. Community Education offers a variety of seasonal activities throughout the year. These activities range from youth sports,

cooking, robotics, and many more youth, adult and family opportunities. Families are encouraged to go online to view the [ISD 47 Community Newsletter](#) to get involved in youth and adult activities.

Spectator Behavior

Storm Pride is an important part of our district. We encourage all students and families to attend Storm activity events. All spectators represent our schools and community and are expected to comply with school rules, the Central Lakes Conference (CLC) sportsmanship code, and the rules of the Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL). All students and spectators are expected to show respect towards fellow students, opponents, players, coaches, and officials. Profanity, inappropriate or obscene gestures, and vulgar cheers are not allowed. Consequences for inappropriate behavior may include warnings, removal from the contest, suspension of attendance at future activities, and other school consequences as deemed necessary.

Attendance

Attendance Regulations, Procedures and Truancy

Students are expected to be at school no later than 7:40 a.m. for Mississippi Heights Elementary. Due to limited supervision, students should not arrive more than 20 minutes before the start of the school day. School hours are 7:40 a.m.–2:10 p.m. for Mississippi Heights Elementary. The office is staffed from 7:00 a.m.–3:30 p.m.

Regular school attendance is mandated by state law and is the responsibility of the student and parents/guardians. It is important parents/guardians support their child(ren) and the school by making regular attendance a high priority.

For the safety of students, it is important to verify all absences. Parents/Guardians are asked to confirm all absences from school by calling the office before 7:30 a.m. If parents/guardians do not verify absences and their child does not arrive at school, school personnel will attempt to contact parents/guardians. If contact with a parent/guardian does not occur, absences are unexcused.

Students who are tardy must report to the office to receive a pass and the pass must be presented to the teacher when arriving in the classroom. Tardies can be disruptive to all students' learning experience, so please do your best to have your child to school on time. Any students who arrive after 7:40 a.m. are considered late.

The school reserves the right to refuse excusing an absence when absences become excessive. An excused absence indicates an absence from school with parent/guardian and school permission. The following absences are considered excused:

- Illness of the student;
- Serious illness or death in the family;
- Funeral;
- Family emergency or special circumstances;
- Medical/Dental/Chemical health/Psychological appointments that cannot be arranged at another time with physician's note validating the appointment;
- Religious instruction not to exceed three hours a week (per district policy);
- Vacations/Out of town trips; and

- Parent/Guardian requested and approved absences should not exceed five (5) total days per school year.

Please notify the main office AND the child's teacher of such absences prior to the absence.

For each absence, the parent/guardian should call the main office prior to 7:30 a.m. stating the reason for the absence. Students are required to make up all work due to an absence. Students are responsible for making up all missed work for such absences. An unexcused absence indicates that the student is absent from school for reasons other than those listed above and/or does not have approval of the parent/guardian and/or school. Minnesota Statute 260A.05, Subd. 3 states, "Continuing Truant" means a child who is subject to the compulsory instruction requirements of section [120A.22](#) and is absent from instruction in a school, as defined in section [120A.05](#), without valid excuse within a single school year for:

- (1) three (3) days if the child is in elementary school; or
- (2) three (3) or more class periods on three days if the child is in middle school, junior high school, or high school.

A letter will be sent to the parents/guardians after the fifth (5th) unexcused absence, with a copy of this letter also being forwarded to the respective County Social Services and/or the County Attorney's office. The school has the legal responsibility to file Educational Neglect for students who have seven (7) or more unexcused absences to the appropriate County Social Services and/or the County Attorney's office. Benton, Stearns, and Sherburne counties all have truancy programs with different criteria. The Sauk Rapids-Rice Elementary Schools will follow county guidelines.

*School personnel reserve the right to make amendments or changes to these expectations and procedures as needed, with regards to unexcused absences/truancy. For more in-depth information regarding the Minnesota Statute, you can read more [here](#).

The following absences are considered unexcused:

- No reason provided;
- No contact made by parent/guardian; and
- Other incidences as determined by administration.

Picking Your Child Up Early

If you are picking your child up early, please send a note unless an emergency arises. Please arrive ten (10) minutes early to allow time for your child to be excused from class, to gather their belongings, and to be signed out in the office by parents or guardians. End of day transportation changes, including picking up your child early should be communicated to the office no later than 1:45 p.m.

School Hours and Schedule

Students are expected to be at school no later than 7:40 a.m. Due to limited supervision, students can start arriving at 7:20 a.m. School hours are 7:40 a.m.– 2:10 p.m. and the office is staffed from 7:00 a.m.– 3:30 p.m.

School Procedures/Guidelines

Birthday Celebrations

At Mississippi Heights we want to help celebrate every student's special day. When thinking about bringing in birthday treats please be considerate of healthy food choices for students. We are a peanut aware school so please communicate with your child's teacher at least one day in advance to check for any classroom allergies. All items need to be store bought and checked in with the office. Students are still learning throughout the day so the least amount of disruption in the day is ideal for student learning.

Cell Phones

Cell phones are not allowed outside of the acceptable times of use (morning arrival until 7:40 a.m. and after school at 2:15 p.m.). Parents/Guardians are asked to contact the main office rather than text or message their student directly. Cell phones will be kept with the classroom teacher or the office if they become a distraction during the school day.

Dress Code

Students are expected to be dressed and groomed appropriately for school. Any style of grooming which presents a safety or health hazard or fosters disruptions is prohibited. For example, weather appropriate clothing is required for daily recess. Likewise, tennis shoes with ties or Velcro are required for physical education class. Students are reminded that headwear, outerwear, and purses are to be kept in lockers or on assigned hooks during the school day. Headwear includes hats, bandanas, kerchiefs, and do-rags. Any clothing or grooming which presents a safety concern, health hazard or fosters disruptions are prohibited. Wearing face coverings (often called masks) that cover the nose and the mouth for the purpose of reducing the risk of infection and/or maintaining the health and wellbeing of the student or others is acceptable.

The content of this section shall not infringe on an individual's right to dress in accordance with sincerely held religious observance and practice.

Fees

Fees may be charged for field trips, admission to school events, after school activities, and for lost or damaged library books, textbooks, workbooks, and other materials. There are scholarships available for families to utilize. Please contact your child's classroom teacher for more information.

Field Trips

Field trips are considered part of the school day for which school policies and procedures apply. Parent/Guardian permission must be obtained before a student will be allowed to participate in field trips. Field trips are experiences that are selected to enhance students' learning experiences. We ask that parents/guardians that are not chaperoning, do not join in with the field trip at the location. See Volunteers to reference background check requirements.

Lockers and Desks

Lockers and desks are the property of the Sauk Rapids-Rice School District. School personnel may inspect lockers at any time, without notice, without student consent, and without a search warrant. Personal locks are not allowed. Students are expected to use assigned lockers and to keep them orderly. Locker damage should be reported to staff immediately. Students are discouraged from bringing valuable items and toys to school and from storing them in lockers.

Lost and Found

Due to the large volume of lost items, it is important to clearly label coats, boots, notebooks, and book bags. Items not claimed will be donated to a charity.

The school will charge a replacement fee for lost or damaged iPads, textbooks, library materials, assignment books, or other school property.

Lunch and Recess

Students are expected to go outdoors for recess unless the actual air temperature or, in some cases, the wind chill is 10 below or lower. If there are health reasons why a child cannot go outside, please send a note to the classroom teacher stating the reasons your child must stay indoors. A doctor's letter is required if this is extended beyond three (3) days. For exceptions, please call the building principal or classroom teacher.

During lunch and recess, students are expected to abide by discipline and safety guidelines. It is important for students to feel safe and to experience a pleasant recess.

Media

During the school year, your student may be part of activities or events that are photographed. The district may want to use your child's name and/or photograph for educational or promotional purposes on the district website, newsletters, multimedia projects or other publications. Each school publishes student names and photographs in their yearbook. Every parent/guardian of a Sauk Rapids-Rice Public School student has the opportunity to opt out of the publishing of their student's name, photographs, or any other type of publicized information. This should be done in writing using the district [Opt Out form](#).

Playground Equipment and Toys

Students may bring jump ropes, baseballs, gloves, footballs, etc. However, playground safety rules will apply. Examples: Students may play football, but may not tackle. Students cannot bring collectible items of any type to school, as the risks are too great for damage, loss, or theft. Toys and collectibles brought into classrooms may be

confiscated by teachers and returned to parents/guardians. Weapons, “look alike” weapons, and sharp or dangerous items are forbidden.

Volunteers

Parents/Guardians are welcome to volunteer in our schools. All volunteers must report to the office to check in, present identification and receive a school issued badge. To ensure the safety of students, office personnel and administration reserve the right to deny admittance.

For security purposes and to keep classroom disruptions to a minimum, visitors are not allowed to enter classrooms or hallways. Families are asked to drop off their students at the safety zone. In the event you need to speak to your child’s teacher, please stop in the office to leave a message.

To further ensure the safety of our students, we require comprehensive background checks for all volunteers. As is the case in neighboring school districts, volunteers will be responsible for paying for the background checks, which will be valid for three (3) years. We recognize the important role our volunteers play in the success of our children and feel strongly that the safety of our children must continue to be our top priority. Volunteers are expected to apply and/or pay for the background checks through the district website. Volunteers must complete and pass the background check two (2) weeks prior to their visit or the field trip. If you require financial support for a background check, please contact the office.

District Policies

Bullying Prohibition

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

An act of bullying, by either an individual student or a group of students, is expressly prohibited on school premises, on school district property, at school functions or activities, or on school transportation. This policy applies not only to students who directly engage in an act of bullying but also to students who, by their indirect behavior, condone or support another student’s act of bullying. This policy also applies to any student whose conduct at any time or in any place constitutes bullying or other prohibited conduct that interferes with or obstructs the mission or operations of the school district or the safety or welfare of the student, or other students, or materially and substantially interferes with a student’s educational opportunities or performance or ability to participate in school functions or activities or receive school benefits, services, or privileges. This policy also applies to an act of cyber bullying regardless of whether such act is committed on or off school district property and/or with or without the use of school district resources.

The Bullying Policy (#514) can be [read here](#).

Harassment and Violence

The purpose of this policy is to maintain a learning and working environment that is free from harassment and violence on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, familial status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, including gender identity or expression, or disability. The school district prohibits any form of harassment and violence. If harassment occurs, students must report the situation to an adult, and school personnel will make every effort to stop the harassment.

The Harassment and Violence (#413) policy can be [read here](#).

Mandated Reporting Policy

As professionals in the school setting, it is our legal responsibility to ensure the safety of all children. The state dictates that school professionals are mandated reporters of physical or sexual abuse and neglect. According to Minnesota Statute 626.556 "... it is the policy of this state to require the reporting of neglect, physical or sexual abuse of children in the home, school, and community settings; to provide for the voluntary reporting of abuse or neglect of children; to require a family assessment, when appropriate, as the preferred response to reports not alleging substantial child endangerment; to require an investigation when the report alleges substantial child endangerment; and to provide protective, family support, and family preservation services when needed in appropriate cases."

Additionally, persons who are mandated to report are "a professional or professional's delegate who is engaged in the practice of the healing arts, social services, hospital administration, psychological or psychiatric treatment, child care, education, correctional supervision, probation and correctional services, or law enforcement."

You can read more regarding the Minnesota mandated reporting policy [here](#).

Safety and Security

Criminal Background Checks

In accordance with Minnesota State Statute 123B.03 Subd. 1e., and School Board Policy #404, the Sauk Rapids-Rice School District requires criminal background checks of applicants who receive an offer of employment with the school district. The district also requires background checks of volunteers and visitors. School Board Policy #404 may be found [here](#).

Situational Awareness/Safety and Security

The state of Minnesota requires schools to perform at least eleven (11) situational awareness drills. In partnership with local emergency responders, the district will perform five (5) fire drills, five (5) active threat drills, and one (1) severe weather drill per school year.

Active Threat procedures of run, hide, and fight back are used to protect building occupants from potential dangers in the building (i.e., threats, intruders). Sheltering in place will be implemented if there is a threat outside the building.

Searches

Administrators and/or administrative designees have the authority to conduct a search. The scope of a search may include, but is not limited to backpacks, lockers assigned to the student by the school (see Lockers/Desks), and/or any areas that the student(s) have access to or control over. The administrator must have reasonable cause to believe that, under the circumstances, the student has concealed evidence of misconduct in areas under their control. As one of many tools we use to keep our school safe, the schools work in conjunction with local law enforcement to have trained canines' complete random searches of student lockers and school buildings during and after school hours. If a canine identifies a locker as having a prohibited item in it, the locker, its owner and their possessions will be searched. Elementary buildings may or may not be included in these searches. We include this information here so that parents/guardians of all students are aware of district efforts to keep all students safe.

Trespass Notice

Sauk Rapids-Rice Public Schools reserves the right to deny any person access to the district's buildings or property for just cause. Just cause may include but is not limited to threatening or disruptive behavior, improper or illegal behavior, or any activity by a person which materially and/or substantially interferes with district programs, classes, activities, or other events. Upon determination by school district authorities that a person's behavior represents a danger or a serious disruption, such a trespass notice can be served on that person limiting access to district buildings and grounds for a specific period of time. Notification of such trespass notice will be given to local law enforcement authorities. If the person served the trespass notice fails to leave and respect the trespass order, police will be called and trespass charges will be filed.

General Information

Accidental and Dental Insurance

Two accident plans are available to students attending Sauk Rapids-Rice Public Schools. One is related to dental protection and the other is medical protection in case of accidental injuries. These programs are in no way mandatory; it is up to each parent/guardian to decide the merit of such a plan. The school district does not provide insurance coverage for students. Insurance coverage is the responsibility of the parent/guardian. More information can be found [here](#).

Equity, Inclusion and Respect

Sauk Rapids-Rice Public Schools remains committed to preparing all learners for post-secondary success, creating a culture of academic achievement, and fostering an informed public through increased communication and outreach. Through successful partnerships and continued collaboration, we work to ensure that every child is successful.

In addition to the goals mentioned above, ISD 47 remains committed to maintaining a learning environment that is free from harassment and violence as evidenced by Board Policy #413. In particular, district officials acknowledge its obligation under the Minnesota Human Rights Act to prevent harassment on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, familial status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation including gender identity or expression, or disability.

To accomplish our goals and to meet the commitment of School Board Policy #413 will require the attention of our students, parents/guardians and district staff, working together to create welcoming and respectful environments for all members of the school district community. The school district affirms that it does not tolerate acts of harassment and will promptly respond to concerns or complaints.

Any student or staff member who believes he/she has been subjected to harassment is encouraged to report the harassment to the school district through a building administrator or through the school district's Human Rights Officer. Complaints of harassment will be investigated and appropriate corrective action will be taken in response to any findings of harassment in violation of school district policy. Action by the school district will be targeted to stop the harassment and to prevent it from recurring. Students or staff members found to have engaged in acts of harassment will be subject to discipline up to and including suspension and expulsion or termination.

School Board Policies can be found [here](#).

Face Painting

No full or partial face painting is allowed during the school day with the exception of school sponsored spirit days.

Personal Property

Personal possessions are the responsibility of the student. It is suggested that those items stay at home. The school is not responsible for any lost items.

Pledge of Allegiance

Students in Sauk Rapids-Rice Public Schools may recite the Pledge of Allegiance one or more times each week. The recitation shall be conducted by each classroom teacher or the news broadcast. Students will be instructed in the proper etiquette for the recitation. Students or staff may decline to participate.

Student Records

ISD 47 regulations on student information kept by the school complies with the Federal and State laws guaranteeing parents/guardians the right to examine and challenge the contents of their children's records.

Others having access to student records include: school staff having a legitimate educational interest in the student; another school district, college or educational institution in which the student may enroll; and the court system when the records are requested by judicial subpoena. Other third parties may have access to records only with written permission of the student, parent, or legal guardian. Before records (other than directory information, i.e., name and address) are sent to any other person, agency or institution, written consent is required from parents/guardians or eligible students.

A law enforcement agency shall notify the principal or chief administrator's officer of a juvenile's school of an incident occurring within the agency's jurisdiction if the agency has probable cause to believe that the juvenile has committed an offense that would be a crime if committed as an adult.

Watch Dogs

Watch D.O.G.S. (Dads of Great Students) is a volunteer program inviting fathers to volunteer at least one day in their child's school during the school year. Dads assist with a variety of tasks during their volunteer day. The students in the halls, classrooms, lunchroom and playgrounds love it! The school is positively influenced by the committed involvement of fathers and father figures in the lives of their children and students they are in contact with during their time here. Key findings from surveys conducted in participating schools nationwide show that the Watch D.O.G.S. program is a valuable component for promoting safe and positive learning environments and increasing parental involvement in schools.

To learn more about the Watch D.O.G.S. program or to sign-up call 320-252-0122.

PTA/PTAC

The Mississippi Heights Elementary PTAC helps to support a variety of functions and activities throughout the school year and serves in an advisory capacity on issues related to Mississippi Heights and/or the district. The PTAC assists with fundraising activities and helps to sponsor special events such as Cabin Fever and May Madness. In addition, the council assisted students in fundraising to provide support to the artist in residence and families in need during the holiday season.

If you are interested in being involved in your child's school, please consider joining the PTAC. All parents/guardians are welcome to attend any of the meetings. Meeting dates are posted on the [school calendar](#).

Standards of Behavior

Code of Conduct

In order to support our school climate initiatives, Sauk Rapids-Rice Public Schools use evidence-based strategies to support positive student development. Some of these strategies include Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), Social Emotional Learning Competencies (SEL), Conscious Discipline, and Restorative Practices.

The elementary staff is committed to the education, wellbeing, and safety of all students. Our student management program is based on the following principles, which set clear expectations that students must be responsible for their behavior. Students who do not comply with the rules and regulations will face appropriate consequences. Consequences may range from a simple reminder and/or calling home to suspension and/or expulsion. The severity of the consequence will depend upon the degree and frequency of the student's behavior.

PATH

The PATH of the Storm has four areas of focus:

P=Prepared

- Be ready at all times
- Allow others space
- Be safe at all times
- Be a kind friend

A=Accepting

- Be respectful
- Be kind and listen
- Accept all outcomes

T=Trustworthy

- Clean up messes
- Sanitize and wash hands often
- Follow directions
- Speak well of others
- Do school work to the best of your ability

H=Helpful

- Be polite, use words like “please” and “thank you”
- Voice levels 1 or 2
- Keep little problems little
- Walk on the right side of the hallway

There are PATH expectations for all areas of the school and throughout the school day. *(The description of specific expectations in particular areas of the school can be viewed on the [school website](#)).* As students and staff go through their academic day, they are encouraged to display PATH behaviors. PATH tickets are used to reinforce students as they display positive PATH behaviors.

Office Referrals for Behavior

Behaviors that create a safety concern or are illegal in nature are referred to the office immediately. Specific behaviors that typically result in an office referral include but are not limited to: persistent disruption of student learning, disrespect or insubordination, abusive language or profanity (including inappropriate gestures), physical contact or aggression, property destruction or vandalism, harassment or bullying, or theft.

Removal from Class

Disruptive or insubordinate students may be removed from class and sent to the office. Staff will contact parents/guardians when this occurs. Parent conferences may be required to evaluate the situation and future actions.

Reasonable Force

In accordance with Minnesota State Law and in order to maintain a safe environment, staff are permitted to use reasonable force to restrain or correct a student when that individual is in danger of hurting himself/herself, others, or property.

Suspension

The suspension process will follow the provisions of the *Pupil Fair Dismissal Act*. Examples of why students may be suspended include, but are not limited to defiance/refusal, assault, harassment, violence, weapon possession, fighting, threats, and possession or use of alcohol, drugs or tobacco. A conference with the principal may be held before a student is allowed to return to school.

Communication

Change of Address or Telephone

Any changes in address, telephone number, work phone number or daycare address and phone number should be changed via [Skyward Family Access](#) as soon as they occur.

Chain of Command

Parents/Guardians with questions or concerns are encouraged to contact teachers directly. After contact with the teacher, please contact the building principal if the issue has not been addressed. To contact our staff, please access our [staff directory](#) on the district website.

Conferences

Parent conferences will be held two times during the school year. Each classroom will use an online registration process. Information will be shared with you when the registration window is open.

If you have questions or concerns throughout the school year, please contact the Mississippi Heights Elementary office at 320-252-0122 to leave a message with your child's teacher. Or you may [email](#) your child's teacher directly.

Emergency Closing

In the event of emergency school closing, due to inclement weather, mechanical malfunction, disaster, potential disaster alert, or similar, students and parents/guardians should first check the [school website](#). This website will have the most current information available posted.

Additional information may be obtained through the following radio stations and websites: WCCO, WVAL, WWJO, KNSI, WJON, WCCO.COM, KARE11.COM, KSTP.COM, FOX9NEWS.COM

e-Learning Days

e-Learning Days will be utilized during the 2021-2022 school year after the third (3rd) full day cancellation. The fourth (4th) and subsequent full day cancellations will be replaced with e-Learning days. When an e-Learning Day occurs, students and parents/guardians will be informed that the day is an e-Learning Day via Schoology, email and/or social media. For elementary students, a "choice board" will be available on the district website. The "choice board" will provide learning activities that align with grade-level content. Attendance will be tracked by completion of assigned activities. Students will be provided adequate time to complete the work including time after returning to school if needed.

Media/Publishing

During the school year, your student may be part of activities or events that are photographed. The district may want to use your child's name and/or photograph for educational or promotional purposes on the district website, newsletters, multimedia projects or other publications. Each school publishes student names and photographs in their yearbook. Every parent/guardian of a Sauk Rapids-Rice Public School student has the opportunity to opt out of the publishing of their student's name, photographs, or any other type of publicized information. This should be done in writing using the district [Opt Out form](#).

Parent/Guardian Messages for Students

Good parent/student communication is essential! With our busy lives, it is sometimes necessary to get messages to students at school. With approximately 1,000 students at school, this can become a difficult task. In order to serve both parents/guardians and students, and make this a manageable service, the following procedure will be in effect:

- Students will not be called out of class or given a direct message unless it is an emergency.
- All messages called in for students will be noted. Students will be given messages during their lunches or during the end-of-day announcements.
- All messages must be received by 1:45 p.m. to use this service.
- Note: Because cell phones are not allowed outside of the acceptable times of use (morning arrival until the 7:40 a.m. bell and after school ends at 2:10 p.m.), parents/guardians are asked to contact the main office rather than text or message their student directly.

Telephone & Email

Parents/Guardians are encouraged to call or email staff with questions or concerns. All Sauk Rapids-Rice Public School staff members have email. You may reach a staff member by using the first name.last name@isd47.org. We encourage you to use email as a form of contact with your child(ren)'s teachers for non-emergency issues.

Report Cards

Report cards will be sent home at the end of each trimester. Final report cards will be mailed in June. Teachers will notify parents/guardians when academic concerns arise. Likewise, parents/guardians are encouraged to contact teachers at any time.

Web Pages

Web pages are updated regularly. A calendar of events, announcements, news, menus, school forms and a variety of resources can be found on the [district website](#).

Services

Hot Lunch Program and Food Service

A complete hot lunch and supplemental milk are available. Students may deposit lunch money in the office before school begins. Deposit envelopes and checks should include students’ first and last names. Cashiers remind students of low account balances. Parents and guardians will be notified by email when account balances are \$20.01 or less.

Educational Benefits applications must be submitted yearly at the beginning of the school year. Please call the business office at 320-253-4703 if you have any questions or visit our [website](#).

Family members in the Sauk Rapids-Rice School District share a computerized meal account. One payment can be made at any building; this balance can be accessed by family members enrolled at any school in the district. Meal accounts must maintain a positive balance and students are encouraged to monitor their accounts. If families have questions regarding their meal accounts, they can call the food service office at 320-253-3628.

Meal prices are:

<u>Breakfast</u>		<u>Lunch</u>	
All students K-5	FREE	All students K-5	\$ 2.75
Adult	\$ 2.45	Adult Lunches	\$ 4.05
Milk	\$.40	Milk	\$.40

At the discretion of cafeteria supervisors, students may purchase seconds if they have finished their entire lunch. Students are not allowed to eat from other students’ lunch trays for health reasons.

Students who qualify for the Free and Reduced Lunch Program through Educational Benefits are charged for additional food or beverages.

Unpaid Meal Charge and Debt Collection

The purpose of this policy is to establish consistent district practices for the provision of meals to students who have insufficient funds in their school meal accounts and the collection of unpaid meal debt.

The goal is to provide nutritious meals to students and to promote healthy eating habits, while enhancing learning, maintaining the financial integrity of the National School Breakfast and Lunch program, and eliminating the stigmatization of children who are unable to pay meal charges.

It is the policy of Sauk Rapids-Rice Public Schools to offer breakfast and/or lunch meals that meet state and federal guidelines.

Payments by cash or check can be made in each school building except Hillside Early Childhood & Adult Basic Education Center. Payments can also be made in the food service office, the district office, or online through a student's [Skyward Family Access](#) account.

Families may apply for Educational Benefits (which may include free/reduced-price meal benefits) anytime during the school year. Meal applications are distributed to all families in the district prior to the student's first day of classes. In addition, applications are available at the district office and food service office between 7:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, as well as [online](#).

Notification of Account Status

- Families can check their student's meal account balance via [Skyward Family Access](#).
- Families can contact the office for account balances.
- The food service department will send an email, text or initiate a phone call to all parents/guardians advising them of the student meal account balance(s) when it falls below \$20.01
- The food service department encourages parents/guardians to complete the [Educational Benefits Application](#) (which may include free/reduced-price meal benefits) as appropriate.
- A letter/invoice will be sent via US Post to the household requesting payment.

Collection of Unpaid Meal Debt

- The school district will make reasonable efforts to notify families when meal account balances are low or fall below zero.
- The school district will make reasonable efforts to collect unpaid meal charges classified as delinquent debt.

See [School Board Policy #534](#) (Unpaid Meal Charge and Debt Collection).

Health Office

A health assistant will be on site during the school day to administer medications and deal with illnesses and injuries. To assist the school nurse with emergencies and illnesses, parents/guardians are requested to complete and return the *Emergency Form and Health Information*. A licensed school nurse provides services to all buildings and is available for consultation with parents/guardians at 320-253-4700. Hearing and vision screenings will be conducted, and parents/guardians will be informed via letter if there is a concern.

Wearing face coverings (often called masks) that cover the nose and the mouth for the purpose of reducing the risk of infection and/or maintaining the health and wellbeing of the student or others is acceptable.

Medications

A Medication Authorization Form is on the district website and is also available in the health office. For information regarding the distribution of medications and parent/guardian responsibilities, the Student Medication Policy (#516) can be [read here](#).

Aerosol Products

Any product such as deodorants and/or hair sprays, which use an aerosol propellant, may not be used in the school due to airborne allergens.

Balloons

Latex balloons are not allowed in any of the buildings. They can cause serious allergic risks to students and staff.

Candy, Gum, Pop, and Classroom Treats

The district Wellness Policy encourages healthy food choices, including celebrations such as student birthdays. Sweet snacks are allowed in the classroom on special occasions such as birthdays and celebrations. Students may not bring gum, candy, or pop for daily snacks. Due to the increasing number of students with food allergies, some snacks may be restricted. Students are allowed to bring commercially prepared treats for their classmates with permission from the classroom teacher. Please consult the health office before bringing bakery goods. Treats must be in the original wrapper and consumed within the classroom.

Pets

Due to the increasing number of students with allergies, students are generally not allowed to bring pets to school. If special circumstances arise and pets are allowed, immunization documentation will be required.

Social Worker/Family Advocate

The school social worker provides a variety of services to students including individual and group counseling and resources to outside agencies. Social work information will be included in family newsletters or on the website. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to call if they need additional information.

Special Education and Section 504

Students who have demonstrated a need for individual assessments may be referred to the special education team or the Section 504 Coordinator. Referrals are a team process with parental involvement and consent. To qualify for services, students must meet criteria.

Technology

Technology in Our Schools

The Sauk Rapids-Rice School District creates a culture of excellence while providing innovative programming to meet the changing needs and expanding opportunities of today's learners. Students, families and staff work collaboratively to ensure that students are well prepared for future educational and vocational endeavors in an ever-changing environment.

Student Technology

The school district and the Board of Education considers the financial realities of the future as well as the changing needs of each student. They also recognize the importance of providing the means to implement 21st Century skills that demonstrate measurable academic and behavioral results. To that end, the Sauk Rapids-Rice School District provides Increased Access and Opportunity through Technology for all students.

After signing the 1:1 Agreement, students have individual access to iPad devices that are the property of the school district and are expected to follow the guidelines outlined in that agreement. The agreement explains student responsibilities, parent/guardian expectations, terms of device loan, general care instructions, fees, security and theft prevention, and issues related to damage, theft, and repair. Please consult the [1:1 Agreement Handbook](#) for more information.

Responsible Use/Digital Citizenship

Students are encouraged to use electronic devices during their scheduled class times for educational purposes and with teacher permission. Students are reminded that these devices have a high potential of theft and should be closely monitored throughout the school day. While using electronic devices, all school rules and policies apply.

The faculty, staff, and students of Sauk Rapids Rice School District maintain a reasonable expectation of privacy while at school, on campus, and at school-related activities and events. Explicit permission must be obtained prior to recording other individuals in our building. A student identified as improperly using any device to take or transmit unrequested or unwanted images or recordings may face an immediate suspension, loss of privileges, and may be recommended for expulsion.

Any use of electronic devices (including texting, voicemail, internet communication or posting, etc.) to threaten, harass, bully, or encourage similar behavior will be subject to the provisions of the discipline policy and district policies on Bullying Prohibition (#514), Harassment and Violence (#413), and Internet Acceptable Use Policy (#524).

Any use of electronic devices to plagiarize, copy, or otherwise cheat academically, is strictly prohibited. School board policies may be viewed [online](#).

Personal Electronic Devices

Electronic devices such as cell phones, iPods, games, headsets, and laser pens are restricted. Such devices may be confiscated and returned to a parent/guardian.

Social Media Guidelines

All students need to use good judgement when posting online, texting, or using social media. Any posts that are related to school, harmful to students and/or staff, and/or cause disruption in school may be subject to school consequences.

Before posting, students should think about the following:

- Who will be able to see what I post?
- Will anyone be embarrassed or hurt by it?
- Am I proud of what I am posting?
- How would I feel if someone posted it about me?

Use of Online Resources

Sauk Rapids-Rice Public Schools is committed to providing a safe and positive digital learning experience for students and staff.

Sauk Rapids-Rice Public Schools uses online electronic resources (i.e. apps, services, and websites) to support a variety of instructional goals. These resources provide tools to transform and personalize the learning environment for all students.

These online electronic resources have limited access to student information which allows for the generation of and access to student accounts.

In compliance with federal educational guidelines and to assure that student data is not sold or compromised, all online electronic resources accessing student data must be approved for content quality and student data privacy guidelines.

Sauk Rapids-Rice Public Schools strives to hold these online electronic resources to federal guidelines and uses common criteria and resources to vet each online electronic resource.

Common criteria, such as not collecting unnecessary information and not selling student data, can be found at [The Student Privacy Pledge](#), a national clearinghouse for data privacy endorsed by National PTA, National School Board.

A list of approved online electronic resources for Sauk Rapids-Rice Public Schools can be accessed [here](#).

Transportation

Bus

Voigt Transportation provides transportation for the Sauk Rapids-Rice School District. Parents/Guardians with a concern, whether it is busing or behavior, should first contact the bus company at 320-258-1995.

Student Bus Behavior

Bus transportation is a privilege which provides convenience and safety. To maintain this privilege, students must exhibit appropriate behavior and obey school district bus rules and regulations.

A bus referral system informs parents/guardians of disciplinary incidents. The referrals are requests for students and parents/guardians to modify behavior in order to retain bus riding privileges. The school will be notified of these referrals and communication will come from the school not the bus company. Referrals in May carry over to the following school year.

Violations of bus rules may result in:

- Verbal or written warnings;
- Conferences with parents/guardians, students, drivers, and/or administrator;
- Written bus referral;
- Assigned seats;
- Bus suspensions; and/or
- Complete loss of bus riding privileges.

Student Ridership Training

Bus Safety Week occurs in September, and bus safety training will be provided in classrooms and on buses. Students are expected to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the following concepts:

1. District policies for student conduct and school bus safety;
2. Appropriate conduct while riding buses;
3. Danger zones surrounding buses;
4. Procedures for safely boarding and exiting school buses;
5. Procedures for safe vehicle lane crossing; and
6. Procedures for evacuation and other emergencies.

Bus transportation is a privilege – not a right.

Bicyclists and Walkers

Students who bike or walk to school are asked to follow traffic safety rules and to use designated areas. Bicycle racks are located near the front of the building. The school is not responsible for theft or damage of bikes.

Parking Lots/Handicapped Parking

The handicapped parking spaces are located in the front parking lot. When visiting school, please park in the front lots to come in the front door when you will need to check in the office.

Parent/Guardian Pick Up/Drop Off

At the beginning and end of the school day parents/guardians who are dropping off or picking up their children please think safety first. There are many students in these areas. We have staff outside to assist students so the flow of traffic can keep going. Please be watchful of all students and staff as you are entering into this area.

Visitors

Visitors during school hours with legitimate business are expected to enter the main door and register in the main office with a valid ID or driver's license. When done, visitors must sign out and exit from the main office. ISD 47 reserves the right to deny any person access to district buildings or property for just cause.

Appendices

Tennessen Warning

“Tennessen Warning” is derived from Minnesota Statutes, §13.04, subdivision 2, which requires that an individual receive certain information when a public entity is requesting private or confidential data from that individual. The information that must be provided is:

- a) The purpose and intended use of the requested data;
- b) Whether the individual may refuse or is legally required to provide the data;
- c) Any known consequences from supplying/refusing to supply the data; and,
- d) The identity of other persons or entities authorized by law to receive the data.

Sauk Rapids-Rice Public Schools
Handbook Addendum

School Board Policy 524 – *Internet Acceptable Use*, building and program handbooks, as well as the district's [Code of Conduct](#) expectations are applicable and effective for all students and staff regardless of the learning environment. Learning environments include, and may not be limited to, any/all of the three (3) following learning scenarios;

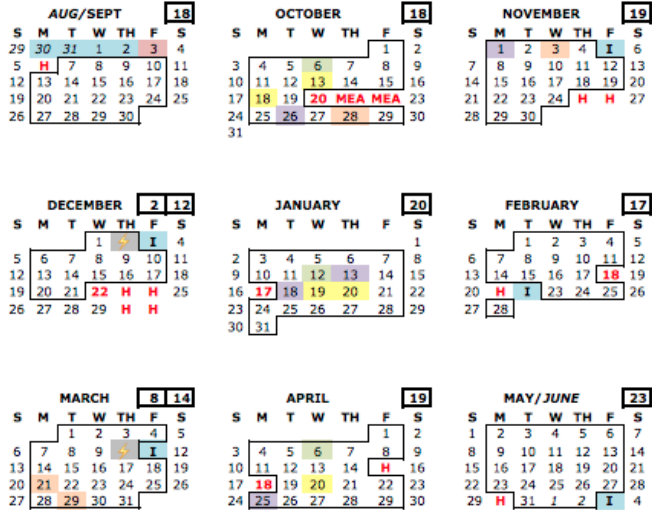
- In-Person Learning for all students;
 - Hybrid Learning;
 - Distance Learning;
 - Online Learning;
- e-Learning, which may be used for inclement weather/emergencies.

Here is an [interactive calendar](#).



2021-2022 School Calendar

Approved on 2/22/2021



Calculation of Teacher Work Days

1st Trimester	57
2nd Trimester	57
3rd Trimester	56
Total Instructional Days	170
Inservice Days	9.5
Conference Days	2.5
	12
Total Days	182

Please Note

This is a district-wide calendar. For information regarding a specific school, please visit www.isd47.org.

M	32
T	37
W	37
Th	35
F	29

Calendar Key

—	Days of student attendance
—	August Bldg Inservice Flex
—	High School Conferences
—	Middle School Conferences
—	Elementary Conferences
—	2-Hour Early Out
—	End of Trimester
I	Inservice
MEA	Teachers' Convention (unpaid)
H	Holiday; School Closed

EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

The first emergency closing of the year will not be made up.
The second and third emergency closing may be made up on 2/18/22, 4/18/22 or 6/3/22.
Additional emergency closings will be made up via eLearning Days.

Important Dates

August 1-August 27
.5 Day Flexible Inservice for Teachers
August 30-September 2
Back to School Teacher Inservice
September 3
August Building Inservice Flex-.5 day
September 6
No School; Labor Day
September 7-10
2021-2022 School Year Begins
Please check your students' building website for specific scheduling information.
September 13-17
Early Childhood Classes Begin
October 6
2-Hour Early Out
See building calendar for times
October 13
High School Conferences
4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
October 18
High School Conferences
4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
October 20-22
No School; MEA Break
October 26
Middle School Conferences
4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
October 28
Elementary Conferences
See building calendar for times
November 1
Middle School Conferences
4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
November 3
Elementary Conferences
See building calendar for times
November 5
No School; ALL STAFF Inservice
November 25-26
No School; Thanksgiving
December 2
End of Trimester 1
December 3
No School; Teacher Inservice
December 22-December 31
No School; Winter Break
January 12
2-Hour Early Out
See building calendar for times

Important Dates cont.

January 13
Middle School Conferences
4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
January 17
No School;
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
January 18
Middle School Conferences
4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
January 19-20
High School Conferences
4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
February 18
No School
February 21
No School; President's Day
February 22
No School; ALL STAFF Inservice
March 10
End of Trimester 2
March 11
No School; Teacher Inservice
March 21
Elementary Conferences
See building calendar for times
March 29
Elementary Conferences
See building calendar for times
April 6
2-Hour Early Out
See building calendar for times
April 15
No School; Holiday
April 18
No School
April 20
High School Conferences
4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
April 25
Middle School Conferences
4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
May 30
No School; Memorial Day
May 31
Tentative Graduation Date
June 2
Last Day of School
June 3
No School; Teacher Inservice

Building/Department Info

Adult Basic Education
Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Phone: 320-258-1111
Community Education
Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Phone: 320-258-1577
District Office
Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Phone: 320-253-4703
Early Childhood and Family Education
Office Hours: 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Phone: 320-255-8910
Food Service Department
Office Hours: 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Phone: 320-253-3628
Mississippi Heights Elementary
School Hours: 7:40 a.m. to 2:15 p.m.
Office Hours: 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Phone: 320-252-0122
Pleasantview Elementary
School Hours: 7:40 a.m. to 2:15 p.m.
Office Hours: 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Phone: 320-253-0506
Rice Elementary
School Hours: 8:50 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Office Hours: 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Phone: 320-393-2177
Sauk Rapids-Rice High School
School Hours: 8:20 a.m. to 3:15 p.m.
Office Hours: 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Phone: 320-253-4700
Sauk Rapids-Rice Middle School
School Hours: 8:10 a.m. to 3:05 p.m.
Office Hours: 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Phone: 320-654-9073