

# **Verda James Elementary School**



***Learning Today, Leading Tomorrow***

***Staff/Student/Parent Handbook  
2016-2017***

***Verda James Elementary School empowers all learners to excel  
academically and socially on life's journey.***

***Verda James Elementary School  
701 Carriage Lane  
Casper, Wyoming 82609***

**Phone: 307.253.1100 Fax: 307.253.1150**

**School Website - <http://www.verdajameselementary.weebly.com>**

Verda James Elementary School  
Mission Statement:  
“Learning Today, Leading Tomorrow”

The Vision of Verda James Elementary:  
*Verda James Elementary School empowers all learners to excel academically and socially on life’s journey.*

Pledge  
“In all I do, I do my best, and make kindness cool. I think before I act, and respect my school.”

Verda James Elementary School encourages all students to Make Kindness Cool at School: Be Safe, Be Responsible, Be Respectful, and Be Nice. Our goal is to develop and revise procedures for managing behavior and motivating students by reducing misbehavior, increasing student motivation, and insuring a safe and respectful environment for students and adults alike.

Welcome to the “BEST” school in Casper!

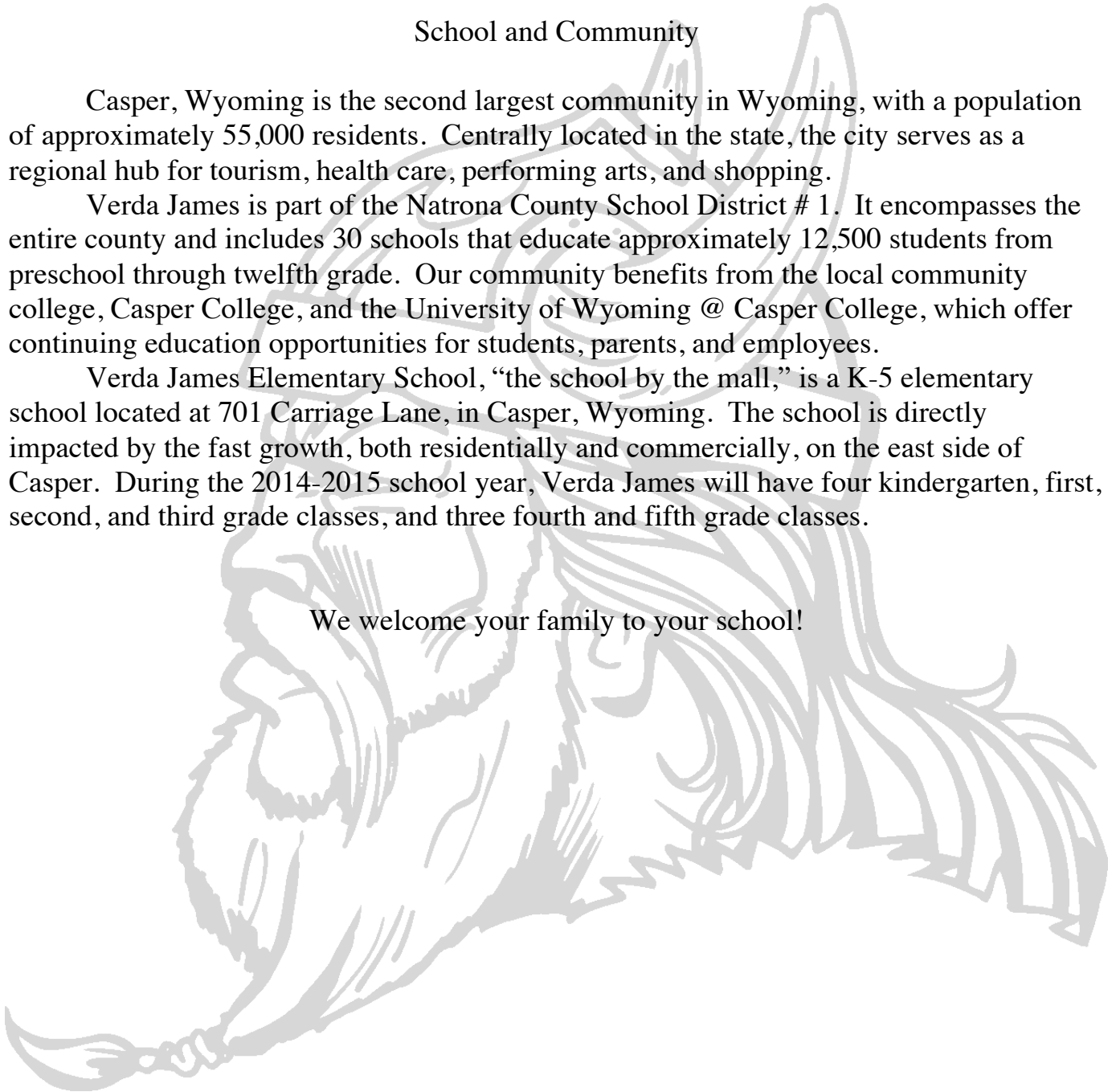
## School and Community

Casper, Wyoming is the second largest community in Wyoming, with a population of approximately 55,000 residents. Centrally located in the state, the city serves as a regional hub for tourism, health care, performing arts, and shopping.

Verda James is part of the Natrona County School District # 1. It encompasses the entire county and includes 30 schools that educate approximately 12,500 students from preschool through twelfth grade. Our community benefits from the local community college, Casper College, and the University of Wyoming @ Casper College, which offer continuing education opportunities for students, parents, and employees.

Verda James Elementary School, “the school by the mall,” is a K-5 elementary school located at 701 Carriage Lane, in Casper, Wyoming. The school is directly impacted by the fast growth, both residentially and commercially, on the east side of Casper. During the 2014-2015 school year, Verda James will have four kindergarten, first, second, and third grade classes, and three fourth and fifth grade classes.

We welcome your family to your school!



**Verda James Elementary School  
Faculty and Staff 2015 - 2016**

Principal - Kevin Pagett  
Admin. Specialist - Karin Galloway  
Office Assistants - Tina Bihr  
- Sherry Richards

Kindergarten - Stacie Folchert  
- Liz Harris  
- Chris Wilcox  
- Ashley Williams

First Grade - Lydia Bell  
- Tracee Coleman  
- Kathy Finch  
- Kim Jennings

Second Grade - Whitney Lovelace  
- Kelly Umbach  
- Jill Vance  
- Debi Womack

Third Grade - Sarah Deschenes  
- Valerie Honken  
- Carrie Pexton  
- Ashley Ujvary

Fourth Grade - Jill Ellenbecker  
- Brystal Keser  
- Claudia Grigg

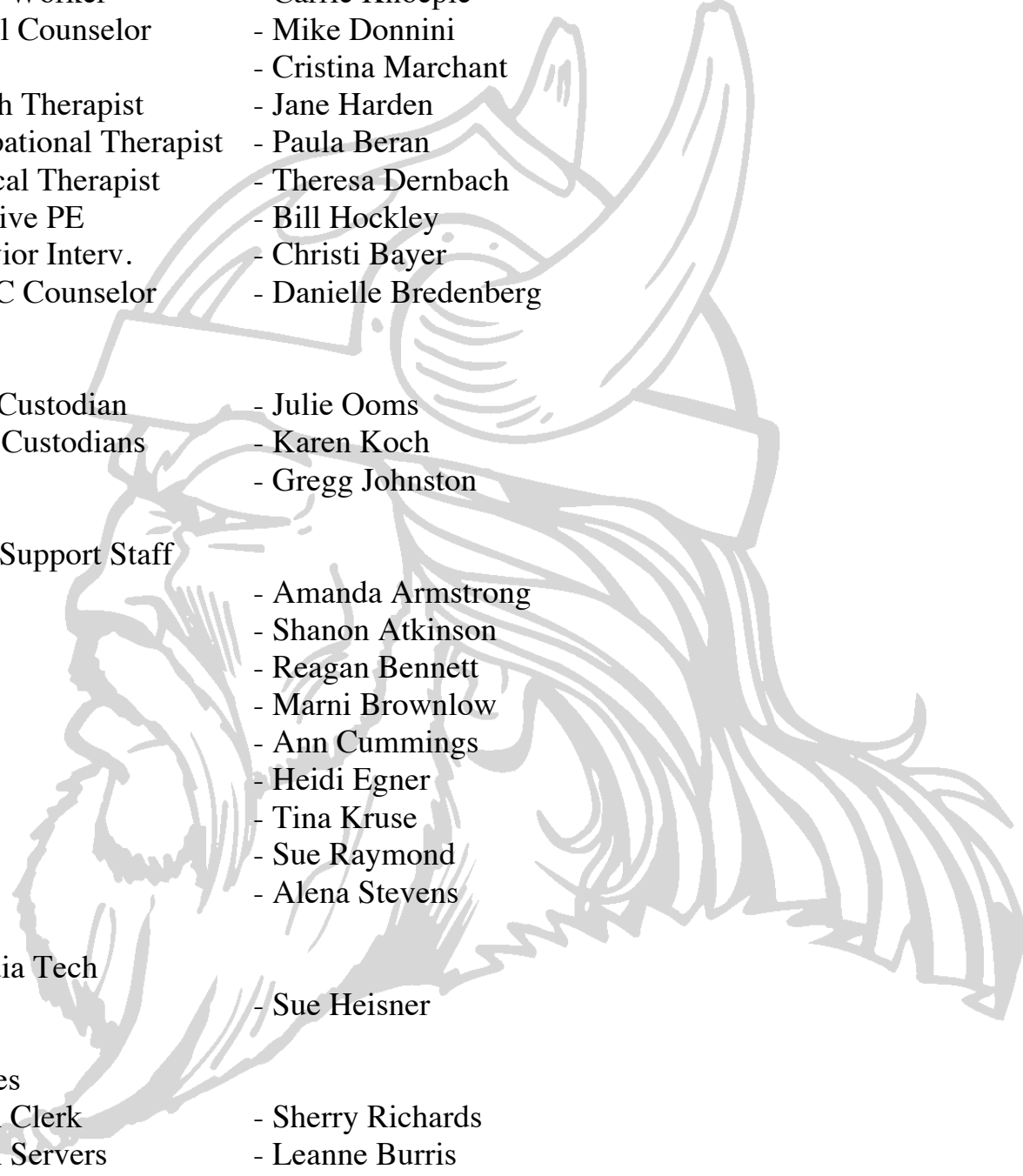
Fifth Grade - Bridget Fink  
- Susan Schilling  
- Ciera Sivertson

Special Education Specialists  
- Tara Kronland  
- Stephanie Watkins

Instructional Facilitator  
- Jill Sutherland

Instructional Tutor  
- Allison Keller  
- Lauri Rail

Specialists  
Art - Mary Fair Whitlatch  
P.E. - James Garbutt  
Music - Kim Skatula - Vocal  
- Ryan Bell - Instrumental Band  
- Anna Fasken - Strings



School Psychologist - Trent Moore  
Diagnostician Asst. - Sharon Peabody  
Social Worker - Carrie Knoeple  
School Counselor - Mike Donnini  
Nurse - Cristina Marchant  
Speech Therapist - Jane Harden  
Occupational Therapist - Paula Beran  
Physical Therapist - Theresa Dernbach  
Adaptive PE - Bill Hockley  
Behavior Interv. - Christi Bayer  
CWCC Counselor - Danielle Bredenberg

Custodians

Head Custodian - Julie Ooms  
Night Custodians - Karen Koch  
- Gregg Johnston

Educational Support Staff

- Amanda Armstrong  
- Shanon Atkinson  
- Reagan Bennett  
- Marni Brownlow  
- Ann Cummings  
- Heidi Egner  
- Tina Kruse  
- Sue Raymond  
- Alena Stevens

Library/Media Tech

- Sue Heisner

Food Services

Lunch Clerk - Sherry Richards  
Lunch Servers - Leanne Burris

## VERDA JAMES ELEMENTARY TEACHERS AND ROOM NUMBERS

### GREEN POD

Kindergarten	Mrs. Folchert	Room	192
Kindergarten	Mrs. Harris	Room	191
Kindergarten	Mrs. Williams	Room	131
Music	Mrs. Skatula	Room	26
Art	Mrs. Whitlatch	Room	24
Physical Education	Mr. Garbutt	Room	33
Special Education	Mrs. Kronland	Room	31
Special Education	Miss Watkins	Room	31

### RED POD

First Grade	Mrs. Coleman	Room	175
First Grade	Mrs. Bell	Room	174
First Grade	Mrs. Finch	Room	173
Second Grade	Mrs. Womack	Room	171
First Grade	Mrs. Jennings	Room	172
Second Grade	Mrs. Lovelace	Room	170

### YELLOW POD

Second Grade	Mrs. Vance	Room	166
Second Grade	Mrs. Umbach	Room	165
Third Grade	Mrs. Pexton	Room	164
Third Grade	Mrs. Ujvary	Room	163
Third Grade	Miss Honken	Room	162
Third Grade	Mrs. Deschenes	Room	161
Tutor	Mrs. Rail	Room	154
Tutor	Mrs. Keller	Room	163

### BLUE POD

Fourth Grade	Mrs. Grigg	Room	127
Fourth Grade	Miss Keser	Room	126
Fourth Grade	Miss Ellenbecker	Room	125
Fifth Grade	Miss Fink	Room	124
Fifth Grade	Mrs. Schilling	Room	123
Fifth Grade	Miss Sivertson	Room	122
Counselor	Mr. Donnini	Room	183
Kindergarten	Mrs. C. Wilcox	Room	149

## **ACADEMICALLY AT RISK POLICY**

A student in the Natrona County School District is considered to be “academically at risk” if:

1. The student is not achieving proficiency on local performance benchmarks, or
2. Is not making satisfactory progress toward high school graduation.

The goal of the policy is early identification and early intervention. At Verda James, the policy is implemented through PROMISE meetings held quarterly. At these meetings the progress of each child is reviewed. The classroom teacher or parent can also make a request for review. Once a student is identified as needing assistance, interventions are determined and implemented, with progress reviewed quarterly by intervention checks.

## **ACCREDITATION**

If you would like to know more about the accreditation process and / or serve on a school team please contact the principal or talk to your child’s teacher. The goal of the process is to increase student achievement. It is important that we communicate to you and involve you in every step of the way. Please watch your *Viking Express* for articles and announcements about the progress toward improving student achievement at Verda James.

## **ADMISSION**

See NCSD Student/Parent Handbook.

## **ADVERTISING**

Commercial advertising material or religious material will not be distributed to the students. Information that relates to the students and the school such as Scouting, Brownies, PTO, YMCA, community recreation, and 4-H will be permitted with approval. Information must be cleared through the School / Community Relations Office at the Central Service Facility.

## **AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM**

The Boys and Girls Club of Central Wyoming will be providing after school care for students on the east side of town at Verda James School. Students from Manor Heights, Sagewood and Verda James will be included at the Verda James site. The program will be offered from 3:35 – 6:00 daily. The program will include homework support during Power Hour, organized games, art lessons and a variety of other supervised activities. For further information please contact the Boys and Girls Club at 234-2456 or contact the Verda James Site Director at 253-1151.

## **ANIMALS**

See NCSD Student/Parent Handbook.

## **ASSEMBLIES**

During the school year several assemblies will be presented. Assemblies vary in nature; musicals, drama events, speakers, and dance groups are just some examples.

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Verda James adheres to the Natrona County School District’s attendance policy adopted in April 2007. The Natrona County School District Elementary principals believe that ***regular attendance is crucial for students to succeed academically and socially in school, and to develop positive learning attitudes.***

The NCSD Policy defines “failure to attend” as a student who has ten (10) total absences (excused, unverified or unexcused) *per semester*. Failure to attend is “an educational issue and that all

reasonable and educationally sound corrective actions should be undertaken by the school district . . .” This may include developing an intervention plan for improving student attendance. The intervention plan must include contacting the District Attendance Officer. If a student misses ten (10) consecutive days of school for any reason, the student will be dropped from enrollment per District policy.

Verda James’ attendance policy also includes tardies. Five tardies equal one absence. It is important that students arrive to school on time and remain in school for the entire day. If a student arrives after 9:20 a.m., they are considered absent. Often times it is the first part of a day that will set the learning pace and tone. It is difficult to “catch” up students who arrive late. All students arriving late must check in at the office. In addition, blocks of time have been established for students to receive uninterrupted literacy and math instruction. Any student who is checked out of school after 2:50 p.m. will be marked as tardy. Any student who is checked out of school before 2:50 p.m. will be marked as absent for the afternoon. We ask parents to consider before and after school appointments whenever possible. We also ask that parents avoid school wide testing events for appointments or vacations. A listing of testing dates will appear in the calendar and the *Viking Express*.

At the end of the month recognition, students with no tardies and/or no absences will receive a sticker acknowledging their achievement.

### **BICYCLES/SKATEBOARDS/ETC.**

If a child chooses to ride a bicycle to school **he/she must wear a helmet**. We believe helmets to be a critical element for riding safety. Bikes must be parked in the area provided. No supervision of that area is maintained during the school day, so locks are a necessity. Students will not be allowed to ride their bikes during any recess period. **ONLY STUDENTS** in the third, fourth and fifth grades may ride their bicycles to school. This rule has been put into effect for the safety of the children. We have a great deal of traffic around and near the school. Younger students with an older sibling may ride their bikes to school. Students who do not follow traffic and safety rules face losing their bike riding privileges for one week on the first offense, one month for the second offense, and for the remainder of the school year on the third offense. This includes the rule not to ride on campus. All bikes are to be walked off campus and across streets with safety and the consideration of our younger students and patrons in mind.

**Skateboards, roller blades, roller skates, and scooters** are permitted as a means of transportation to and from the school grounds only. Students using this mode of transportation must follow the same rules as bicycles: helmets, **NOT** riding or rolling on school grounds, following traffic safety laws. There **IS NO STORAGE** area for these items and they cannot be kept in the classrooms so they are asked to store them in the Main Office. Lost or stolen items are not the responsibility of the school and will not be investigated. The Natrona County School Transportation Department does not allow these items to be brought onto the buses at any time. **Shoes with built in wheels are not permitted at school.**

### **BIRTHDAY TREATS**

Parents wishing to bring treats for student in Grades K-5 may do so. Treats may be distributed to every class member and the principal at the end of the day. Students will not be allowed to deliver treats to other staff members to protect learning time. Please make arrangements with the teacher and be aware that some students have allergies.

We will no longer accept deliveries for students, such as: balloons, flowers, stuffed animals, etc. If you send party invitations, please give them to the teachers who will distribute them in Thursday Folders.

### **BOOK FINES**

Natrona County School District #1 Board Policy states that a pupil shall be held responsible for damage to, loss of, or failure to return books. The following applies to all students:



- books that have been damaged by water or are torn;
- lost textbooks, library books; replacement cost shall be charged;
- report cards will be held if library fines are not paid;
- the student must pay fines when assessment has been made;
- authorized school personnel may assess a fine for a damaged book or lost book on a judgmental basis;
- we are always happy to have a 'lost' book returned rather than receiving the money. Money will be refunded if a book is found.

## **BREAKFAST AND LUNCHESES**

Verda James participates in the School Breakfast and Lunch Program. The program includes serving breakfast and lunch each day the school is open for students and attendance is required past noon. Breakfast is served at 8:20 am each morning and lunches are served between 11:30 and 1:00 during **two different periods**. All meals are served in the Park Commons unless otherwise notified. Students will enter the Commons from the hallway and sit at their assigned tables.

Prices:	Child	Adult	Milk
Breakfast	\$ 1.55	\$ 2.30	\$.40
Lunch	\$ 2.55	\$ 3.80	\$.40

**(Prices subject to change over the summer.)**

A student may accumulate up to \$10.00 in credit before parents will be contacted for payment. As result of unpaid balances, students may be asked to eat an alternative lunch until balance is paid. Families wishing to apply for free and reduced meals will find an application in the packet sent home during the first week of school or in the office. All information is confidential.

At the beginning of each day, students will give their classroom teacher money for meals. The Lunch Clerk will collect the money and record payment. If a parent pays for several meals at a time a student will not have to bring money on a daily basis. Please feel free to contact the Lunch Clerk directly at 253-1152.

Once a week the Natrona County School District arranges for "Pizza Day" for all elementary schools. Local pizza businesses deliver the pizza to the school for hot lunch on a certain day. The cost is the same and extra pieces can be purchased for an additional \$ 1.75 (cash only). Pizza Day will be announced in early September in the *Viking Express*.

## **BUILDING SECURITY / SAFETY**

Verda James doors are locked (from the outside only) for security reasons. The main lobby doors are the only doors that remain unlocked from the outside. Our building is secured in this manner, not to inconvenience visitors, but to protect the children.

***TO PROTECT OUR CHILDREN***, parents and visitors, ***MUST*** report to the school office to sign in and receive a Visitor's badge before entering the classroom and hallways.

**ALL** visitors not wearing a visitor's badge will be asked to report back to the office to check in and obtain a badge. This is done for the protection of all the children.

With school in session and many children crossing busy streets as they travel to and from school we ask that you please discuss with your child(ren) the importance of obeying traffic laws and the safe routes to use when walking to and from school. Parents should advise their children on traffic safety, bicycle safety, pedestrian safety, and expectations on arrival and departure times.

When picking up or dropping off students, please assign a designated location that will not interfere with the bus loading zones. **Please DO NOT park in the bus lane. Please do not pick up or drop off students from the left lane of the circle.**

The circle contains a handicap zone that must remain available at all times. When moving along the circle while waiting for students **please be sure not to block the handicap zone for any reason for**

**any length of time** unless your vehicle has a handicap sticker. Blocking the zone for any reason is a City Ordinance violation and can result in a citation. Visitors must check in at the office if joining students for recess and/or outdoor activities.

**PLEASE DO NOT ARRANGE TO PICK UP STUDENTS IN THE BACK PARKING LOT!**

That area can be very dangerous. Frequently, visitors and staff must leave the building promptly at 3:30 and it adds to the congestion if parents are trying to pick up students. Donegal Court, across the bridge, is a great place to beat the congestion and the walk is great for the kids! The parking lot will be coned off from 8:20-8:50 in the morning and 3:25-3:45 in the afternoon in order to cross students safely.

**BULLYING/HARRASSMENT/INTIMIDATION**

See NCS D Student Discipline and Code of Conduct Handbook.

In addition and accordance with the district policy, “bullying, harassment, or intimidation” means intentional conduct, including verbal, physical, or written conduct or an intentional electronic communication that creates a hostile educational environment by substantially interfering with a student’s educational benefits, opportunities, or performance, or with a student’s physical or psychological well-being. First offense may range from student conference to suspension; repeated offense may range from parent involvement to expulsion.

**BUS STUDENTS**

See NCS D Student Discipline and Code of Conduct Handbook.

Activity Trips and Non Participant Riders:

COREGIS Insurance Incorporated is the Property and Casualty Insurance carrier for Natrona County School District #1. COREGIS discourages non-participant riders on any activity bus. Non-participant riders include but are not limited to: parents, friends, relatives, and/or the children of the coaches/sponsors, driver or chaperones on the activity bus. In keeping with the District’s insurance carrier, non-participant riders shall not be permitted to ride to or from activities/sporting events on any NCS D #1 Activity Bus carrying participants.

Activity Trips and the Return Trips:

Students riding to an activity/sporting event on any NCS D #1 Activity Bus shall be required to ride the Activity Bus on the return trip. A participant’s parent(s) and/or legal guardian shall be required to provide a written request and a face-to-face meeting with the activity sponsor/coach indicating the student will be returning with the parent. Student participants are not permitted to make the return trip with the parents of a friend or other relatives unless arrangements have been made in writing with the sponsor/coach PRIOR to the Activity Bus leaving Casper. Permission letters or notes requesting students to depart the Activity Bus at destinations other than the school where the activity concludes will not be honored.

**CELL PHONES**

Cell phones are allowed at the student’s own risk after school at Verda James School. Students are asked to turn them off when arriving on campus in the morning. In addition, cell phones are required to stay turned off, not be seen and/or be heard. The office will not take responsibility for cell phones and will not investigate if stolen or lost.

**CHANGE OF ADDRESS**

In case of an emergency it is important that the school have current information concerning residence, **home telephone, emergency numbers, and email address.** Please let the school office know if there is a change of residence, a change in telephone numbers, employment, home or emergency

numbers, or email address. Verda James also asks that a copy of divorce decrees with custodial information be placed in your child's file.

## COMMUNICATION

Every Thursday the students will be given a *"Thursday Folder"* which will contain all school to home communication. Please check with your child and let them know you are expecting this folder every Thursday. This folder will have information on classroom activities, parent involvement groups, news, student achievement, monthly calendars. Some of this information may be accessed on our Verda James website. Some teachers may ask for a parent's signature to be placed in the folder and returned on Friday. This helps us to know that the information is arriving home. The *Viking Express*, the Verda James newsletter is communicated through parent email, as well as our Verda James website.

## COMPUTER USAGE

See NCS D Student Discipline and Code of Conduct Handbook.

Students will have access to computers and the Internet at Verda James. Responsible and purposeful use includes:

- accessing appropriate, approved websites
- on-task usage at all times
- downloading only with teacher approval
- adjusting settings only with teacher approval

## CRISIS MANAGEMENT TEAM (CMT)

The Crisis Management Team is a group of interested teachers, parents, and staff who focus on the safety of the children during natural disasters, and other unforeseen events, e.g. violence in schools. The team reviews evacuation procedures and provides instruction for the teachers, who then instruct the children. Periodic practices occur during the year. Most practices are for fire drills, tornadoes, and lock downs. Each teacher has a copy of emergency procedures for your review at any time. For additional information see NCS D Student/Parent Handbook.

## DENTIST-DOCTOR APPOINTMENTS

Recognizing that appointments may not always be outside of regular school hours the following guidelines may be of assistance:

- Send the student to school before or after the appointment when at all possible. Students who arrive after 9:20 a.m. will be counted excused absent for the morning. If they arrive before 9:20 a.m. they will be counted as excused tardy. Those students who must leave early for an appointment will be counted as an excused tardy or absence until a medical note of explanation accompanies the child and then it is changed to a medical absence.

- Students/Parents must sign in and out in the office.
- Please try and send a note to the teacher in advance when possible.
- Please avoid school wide testing periods as advertised.

This will eliminate classroom interruptions and allow the teacher time to plan ahead for that student.

If it is necessary for a student to be picked up during the school day for an appointment or illness, **you are asked to please pick up the child at the Main Office**. If you pick up your child at noon or during recess the teacher and office personnel must be notified. If student pick-ups are not cleared properly, it may lead to confusion, as the teacher, office personnel, and principal, may not know what has happened to the child. ***Please do not call us on cell phones to send your child to the circle or parking lot.*** This is a safety precaution for your child.

## **DISCIPLINE POLICY**

Verda James Elementary School believes that one of our major objectives is to assist students in developing self-discipline and to help the student take pride in one's conduct both in and out of the classroom.

Authority to enact reasonable rules and regulations governing the conduct of students is granted by School Board regulations. It shall be the duty of the authorized adults, to develop and enforce rules that are consistent with policies, laws, and regulations used to enhance pupil conduct and to advance the purposes of education. A copy of the Board Policy is available in the school office.

In order to provide the optimum-learning environment for all students we have established expectations in each learning and living area on the school campus. Making Kindness Cool at School means: Be Safe, Be Responsible, Be Respectful, and Be Nice. Each expectation is defined and taught to each child in each area of the building and grounds. **Please see the Behavior Matrix and Viking Ship Behavior Guide in this handbook for specifics. These expectations are part of our BEST Program (Building Positive Behavior Support in Schools). Our program emphasizes the positive behavior of all students and recognizes the students who make every effort to make kindness cool in many different ways. The students can then save or redeem their tickets for small recognition and/or awards.**

Our goal is to Make Kindness Cool at School: Be Safe, Be Responsible, Be Respectful, and Be Nice. During the first few weeks of school each classroom will review the Behavior Matrix and the social skills will be taught/reviewed on a weekly basis.

The BEST Program and the skills emphasize positive reinforcement, in other words, 'catching kids being good'. The entire staff has been trained to notice and reinforce the positive behaviors of children. The Making Kindness Cool at School theme is based upon the child taking responsibility for his/her actions, accepting their role in those actions, the consequences involved in those actions, and then, being taught a skill or reviewing a skill in order to correct the problem and prevent it from happening again. When inappropriate behavior occurs we identify the behavior and tell the student what they need to do. For example: "Johnny, you are talking. You need to stop talking. Thank you."

In addition to BEST expectations, the 8 Keys of Excellence, a part of the Quantum Learning framework, will be implemented to help guide behavior and social skills. The 8 Keys Social/Emotional curriculum include eight practices that assist students academically and socially on life's journey. The following are the 8 Keys: Integrity, Commitment, Ownership, This Is It, Failure Leads to Success, Balance, Speak with Good Purpose and Flexibility.

*Parent concerns regarding Discipline - A parent who has concerns about any disciplinary matter involving a student should initially speak to the staff member involved. If unable to resolve the issue, the parent should contact the principal. If necessary, a meeting will be held. If no resolution can be reached, the parent may request the principal to involve the Human Resources Office at the District Level.*

## **EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

Verda James provides a variety of extracurricular activities through the After School Sports Program (see Sports) and club activities. The number and variety of activities change yearly based on the interests of the student population. In the past, we have hosted the following clubs: Young Authors, Robotics, and Science Fair. Watch for information in the *Viking Express* coming home in the **Thursday Folder**.

## **FERPA**

See NCS D Student/Parent Handbook.

## HIPAA Facts

### HIPAA - Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act

- enacted 1996
- applies to all public and private schools not already covered by FERPA
- provides national standards for protecting the privacy of health information
- covers the confidentiality of the student's medical information:
  - past, present, or future physical and/or mental health condition
  - provision of health care to the individual, including past, present, or future payment
  - other information that identifies the individual

### Parent/Guardian Responsibilities and Rights

- gives parents of minors and students 18 years or older, more control over their health information
- sets boundaries on the use and release of health records
- empowers an individual to control certain uses and disclosures of their health information

### School Responsibilities and Rights

- prior written consent is required before information can be released
- sets boundaries on the use and release of health records
- establishes safeguards that health care providers and others must follow
- limits release of information to the minimum reasonably needed for the purpose of the disclosure
- will determine whether the requesting agency or organization is allowed to have the information

The District may release educational records to other educational agencies providing service to a student without prior written consent.

## FIELD TRIPS

A teacher may use field trips during the school year to strengthen a student's knowledge of a particular subject by viewing a place of business, museum, state or national park, etc. All regular classroom and school rules/expectations apply to the student on a field trip. Parents will always be notified of an upcoming field trip activity. Parents will be asked to sign a permission form at the beginning of each school year that gives the child/children permission to attend. Please see information under "BUS STUDENTS."

It is permissible for parents to drive **only their own child** to and from a field trip. If parents are going along to assist and chaperone students on field trip learning experiences, other siblings distract from those responsibilities. Please consider making other childcare arrangements for siblings. Parents using their own automobile will be asked to provide a copy of their *certificate of insurance and driver's license*. Please make sure to have required documents completed prior to the day of the field trip. (Insurance cards are not sufficient.)

## GRADING

The Natrona County School District uses the following grading scale:

A > Excellent	90 - 100%
B > Above Average	80 - 89%
C > Average	70 - 79%
D > Below Average	60 - 69%
F > Unsatisfactory	Below 60%

Report cards will also indicate a child's progress toward State and District benchmarks. Those scores are reported as performance levels. The benchmark performance levels consist of three ranges within each of the following levels: Exceeded Benchmark, Met Benchmark, Not Met Benchmark

Students who are at risk of not meeting benchmarks can be identified at the Student Support Team Meetings. Parents are contacted and a plan of assistance is determined.

Report cards will be distributed at the end of each nine-week grading period. Report cards will be given to the parents during parent teacher conferences at the end of the first nine-week grading period and distributed to the student at the end of the other three grading periods. The report card dates will be advertised in the calendars and weekly newsletters.

## **HARASSMENT/DISCRIMINATION**

See NCS D Student Discipline and Code of Conduct Handbook.

In addition and accordance with the district policy, situations such as unwelcome touching or exposing body parts will automatically be considered a Level III offense. In accordance with Level III guidelines, any of the discipline management techniques may be administered. First offense, parent involvement to suspension; repeated offense, parent involvement to expulsion.

## **ILLNESS**

If a child is picked up from school by the parents or parent designee, ***the student must be picked up from the main office.*** A child who is feeling ill is to contact the teacher and the teacher will then send the child to the nurse's office. If a student has a temperature of 100 or is vomiting the child's parent will be called and the child will be permitted to leave with the parent or parent's designee.

## **IMMUNIZATION**

See NCS D Student/Parent Handbook.

## **INSURANCE**

See NCS D Student/Parent Handbook.

## **LUNCH ROOM PRACTICES**

Parents are welcome to join their children for lunch. Please follow the procedures on our Lunch Room Practices sheet to model the social skills we ask our students to follow. While you are in the lunchroom at Verda James, we ask that you model these skills for all students in the lunchroom.

- Please have only your student and family join you at the Family Table.
- Please ask one of the lunchroom personnel where to sit if the Family Table is already full. Students sit in designated spots with little or no room for extra people at their tables.
- Please have your students and family sitting next to you at all times and not moving around on the stage or steps (for safety reasons).
- Please tidy your area after you are done eating so the table will be ready for the next family.
- Please observe the "Lights Off, Voices Off" rule.

## **MAKE - UP WORK POLICY**

A student is entitled to two (2) days for every day absent to complete make -up work. If a family is planning a trip, or extending a holiday, it is customary to check with the teacher in advance. Unless the teacher makes special arrangements, make-up work will be assigned after the child returns from the trip.

## **MEDICATION POLICY**

There is a district policy that applies to all medication given to students by school personnel. When your child must have medication of **any type**, including over-the-counter medicine (including cough drops), given during school hours, you have the following choices:

- You may discuss with your doctor an alternative schedule of medication so it can be given outside of school hours.
- You may come to the school and give it to the child at the appropriate time.
- You may get a medication form from the school and have your physician indicate on the form the diagnosis, drug, dose, and time to be given, and be sure the physician signs the form. This information can be faxed to the school from the doctor. (Fax # 253-1150) The medication must be in a pharmacy labeled or manufacturer's container. A parent signature should also accompany the request.

All medication will be stored in a designated area that is locked when not in use. Students must take all medication in the presence of designated school personnel. **EXCEPTION:** the student may carry Inhalers or EpiPens if the parent/legal guardian and physician have signed the "EXCEPTION" on the "Request for Administration of Medication Form" and is on file in the school nurse's office.

In fairness to those giving the medications and for the safety of your child, this policy must be followed strictly. We ask this, not to make things difficult for you, but to insure the health and well being of all students.

## **MESSAGES**

During peak times of 8:30-9:30, 11:00-1:00 and especially 3:00-3:30 it is very difficult to run messages to the classroom. We highly encourage you to contact the office prior to 3:00 pm to insure the messages can be delivered to your child(ren). Please be patient with us and try to make any arrangements you can prior to school beginning. Often during the lunch period because of other supervisory duties our office staff is down to one person. Thank you for your understanding.

## **MONTHLY RECOGNITION**

We recognize the importance of hope, engagement, and well being as influencing factors in a child's education. Students will be recognized monthly for having zero tardies and absences and for having good behavior. In alignment with our Viking Ship Behavior Guide, good behavior is defined as no more than five yellow days and zero red or below days throughout the month. A student may not have any Office Referrals. Our Behavior Goal Team determines additional ways to recognize student achievement.

## **NONDISCRIMINATION**

See NCS D Student/Parent Handbook.

## **PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES**

Conferences will be held twice each year. The first set of conferences is generally set for October while the second set is generally in February. The conferences are one of the most effective methods of collaborating with students and parents about achievement. It is our hope that parents always feel welcome in our school. We invite you to make an appointment with the teacher and schedule a time to come in to discuss your child's progress throughout the year, but especially at Parent Teacher Conferences.

## **PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION (PTO)**

The Verda James Parent Teacher Organization is very active and provides many programs and financial support to benefit our students and our school. Board meetings are scheduled monthly at alternating times in the library and are announced in the Viking Express. Please make sure to check the

Viking Express for the time for each month's meeting. Parents are *always welcome at the meetings*. We hope everyone will get involved and become active in our school.

## **RELEASE OF RECORDS / DIRECTORY INFORMATION**

All educational records maintained for students by Natrona County School District are treated as confidential and will not be shared or released to any non educational agency or person without specific written consent of the student's parent/guardian, except for information considered as "Directory Information." Directory Information includes the student's name, date of birth, address, classes taken, awards received, height, weight, etc. and may be released to the public unless Verda James School is specifically notified in writing that the parents do not want this information released.

Student records and cumulative records will not be released without the parent's written consent. Normally records are requested and sent directly to agencies. Parents, however, may certainly look at or request copies of their children's records. We require 24-hour notice for examination and copies of student records. If you would like to view your child's records, it is recommended that you call ahead and specifically request a time to examine the records.

## **ROOM PARTIES**

Special room parties are scheduled each year. These parties are planned and supervised as a joint effort of the teacher and the room mothers. Generally, these parties are held the last hour of the school day. Should a need exist for an individual room to deviate from this time schedule a note will be sent home for your information. The three yearly parties are: Halloween, Christmas, and Valentine's Day.

## **SAFETY POLICIES**

For the protection of the children, the school campus is closed at all times.

1. Playground supervision begins at 8:01 a.m. Students should not arrive before that time, unless the child has made prior arrangements and has a written pass, is participating in an extracurricular activity, or having breakfast. The students are to go directly to the playground upon arriving at school.

2. The first bell rings at 8:45 a.m. At that time, students will go to their designated door and proceed to their rooms. They will be met at the doors by one of the teachers to ensure a safe and orderly entry into the building. During inclement weather all students will be directed to their supervised designated area upon arrival at school.

3. ALL students should adhere to instructions given by all adults assisting with the arrival and departure of students, crosswalks, traffic lights, and stop signs. They should enter the school playgrounds by way of the sidewalk around the south end of the building.

**ONCE A CHILD HAS ENTERED SCHOOL GROUNDS THEY ARE NOT TO LEAVE WITHOUT CHECKING OUT OF THE OFFICE. THEY MUST OBTAIN PERMISSION TO COME INTO THE OFFICE FROM THE PLAYGROUND SUPERVISOR. LEAVING WITHOUT PERMISSION IS TRUANCY.**

**ALL STUDENTS MUST BE PICKED UP FROM SCHOOL GROUNDS BY 4:00 P.M. THANK YOU.**

Students eating lunch at school are restricted to the campus during the lunch period. Students violating this rule will face disciplinary action. Students are not permitted to take another student home for lunch unless both sets of parents have sent their written permission to school and the teacher(s) and principal approve these notes. Students living near school who wish to go home for lunch may do so but are expected to be back at school prior to the tardy bell.

**Students:** Please check in and out of the office each lunch period.

**Parents:** Please inform your child's teacher if your child will be going home regularly for lunch so he/she may be dismissed promptly to give him/her adequate time for travel and eating.



## **SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**

Verda James Building Leadership Team meets monthly. Their job is to review policy, student achievement and curriculum for the school. All recommendations from the Parent Involvement Group and staff are funneled to the Building Leadership Team for review and budget considerations. Each year it is the team's job to coordinate the School Improvement process. A written report of the school's progress is submitted to NCSD and the State Department of Education for approval and accreditation. ALL parents are welcome to attend.

## **SCHOOL NURSE**

A school nurse is provided for all schools in the Natrona County School District #1. The nurse is responsible for checking the general health of a student (eyes, hearing, ears, throat, teeth). She works in the area of communicable diseases, accidents, and illnesses that occur at school. The nurse is scheduled in the building on a part-time basis. During the school year the nurse also conducts general health screenings, growth and development films, and HIV films for all fifth and sixth grade students. She also conducts a short session of Choking Charlie. If you do not wish to have your children screened, view the films, or conduct the standard eyes, ears, hearing, throat, teeth checks, please notify the nurse in writing of your request. NCSD stipulates that any child having a temperature of 100 degrees or higher, vomiting or has diarrhea will be sent home. This is done to prevent the spread of illnesses.

## **SCHOOL PICTURES**

Individual packet pictures are taken of students each fall and spring. The purchase of the picture packets is completely voluntary. Every student has their picture taken whether or not they intend on purchasing the pictures so that their picture will appear in the school yearbook. A school yearbook will be offered for sale in the spring.

## **SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

See NCSD Student Discipline and Code of Conduct Handbook.

In addition and accordance with the district policy, situations such as unwelcome touching or exposing body parts will automatically be considered a Level III offense. In accordance with Level III guidelines, any of the discipline management techniques may be administered. First offense, parent involvement to suspension; repeated offense, parent involvement to expulsion.

## **SNACKS AND TREATS**

Each teacher has an individual snack and drink policy for the classroom. Some teachers allow nutritional treats and water bottles. Please check with your child's teacher for accurate information in this area. Students are not allowed to use microwaves. Please send prepared items. In accordance with NCSD Wellness Policy that was enacted on July 1, 2007, foods at school should be snack oriented, not treat oriented. "Snacks" are everyday foods that should contribute to meeting daily nutrient need and "treats" are lower nutrient, high calorie foods that are consumed on an occasional basis.

**Parents: We have several students with severe peanut allergies. Please check with your child's teacher before bringing treats for the class.**

## **SPORTS**

Verda James participates in the Elementary After School Sports Program through the Casper Recreation Center. This program consists primarily of girls' and boys' volleyball and basketball. This program is for the 5th grade boys and girls only. Practice is held in the school gym before and after school for no longer than one and one half hours. During practice sessions ONLY those students participating are allowed in the gym.

All participating students, coaches and spectators are expected to conduct themselves appropriately at practices and games. The objective of the program is to provide the students with the opportunity to learn team cooperation, the love of physical activity, sportsmanship, and the fundamentals of the games. Winning is good, playing like a team and having fun is better! Participating students must maintain a "C" average in order to be eligible.

## **STATE BENCHMARKS AND STANDARDS**

See NCS D Student/Parent Handbook.

## **STUDENT DRESS AND APPEARANCE**

Students shall not wear clothing that in the judgment of school personnel constitutes a health or safety hazard or is distracting or disruptive to the educational process. Clothing which advertises or promotes the use of drugs, including tobacco, and/or alcohol, are not permitted.

Coats, jackets, winter stocking caps, gloves, etc. are not to be worn about the building except for the coming and going of recesses. Shoes must be worn at all times. Clothing such as tube tops, spaghetti straps (shirt straps must be 2 inches or wider), see-through garments, fishnet tops, undergarment T-shirts, and clothing that allows for a bare midriff or pants that sag excessively will not be allowed since they are considered to be unsafe, hazardous to health, distracting, or disruptive to the educational process. Shorts must be longer than a person's fingers when they hold their arms straight down at their sides. Baseball caps need to be worn correctly, bill facing forward. Baseball caps cannot be worn in the building, unless participating in a school-sponsored event.

No student shall wear, possess, use, distribute or sell any clothing, jewelry, emblem, badge, symbol, sign or other things that are evidence of membership or affiliation in any criminal gang. Students whose dress and appearance do not meet these standards will have the option to change clothes, cover themselves, be given alternative clothing from the office, or sent home to change clothes.

Student hair must not be distracting, disruptive, or unsafe to the educational process. This includes, but is not limited to, painted or temporarily colored hair and styles.

## **TELEPHONES**

Telephones are located in each classroom. Students who wish to use the telephone must ask permission from the classroom teacher and/or adult in charge. Telephones are also available in the office with permission. Students are to use the telephone only when necessary and are not to use the telephone to make social arrangements after school. Cell phones are permitted, however, they must be turned off during the school day.

## **TESTING**

The *Viking Express*, the weekly newsletter, will announce testing periods. These are usually one to two week periods of time when the students will be engaged in benchmark testing. To get an accurate snapshot of student achievement it is recommended to avoid having students out of school during these times. Students achieve higher scores when they take the test with their own classmates. The seasons generally fall in September, December, March, and April. This testing period also includes the State mandated "PAWS" test: *Performance Assessment for Wyoming Standards* and "SAWS" test: *Student Assessment of Writing Skills*. These tests only occur once a year for students in Grades 3-5.

## **TITLE IX - EQUAL OPPORTUNITY**

The Natrona County School District is committed to the concept of equal opportunity for all people regardless of race, color, creed, national origin, political affiliation, sex, or religious belief.

The policy of the District is to provide equal opportunities to all students for participation in all of the educational programs under the direction of the school system, including extracurricular activities. A person who feels that they have an alleged Title IX grievance may contact the principal.

### **TOBACCO, ALCOHOL, AND OTHER DRUGS**

See NCSD Student Discipline and Code of Conduct Handbook.

### **TRACK DAY**

Each year the Physical Education Department of our school organizes a Track Day for all students. We encourage every student to participate unless there is a medical reason for not participating. We have one day for all students that is held at Kelly Walsh's stadium.

### **VERDA JAMES SPIRIT DAY**

Every Friday we celebrate Verda James Spirit Day! Join us by wearing the school colors (cobalt blue and sunflower yellow) every Friday!

### **VISITS TO SCHOOL AND CLASSROOM**

Parents are always encouraged and welcome to visit our school. Please check with the teacher ahead of time as the class may be involved in a special project. The teacher and you should arrange scheduled work times to respect the time of one another and **not disrupt the classroom learning time**. It is recommended that visits be for no more than one hour or one class period and that you visit several times rather than in one large block of time. Many of the teachers appreciate and request parent assistance in the classrooms. To volunteer in the classroom you must, per NCSD requirements, have a background check and be fingerprinted. Due to the amount of confidential information in a classroom, please do not enter a room without the teacher's permission. When picking up students at the end of the day, parents are asked to wait in foyer at the main entrance until the bell rings.

***TO PROTECT YOUR CHILDREN***, parents and visitors, ***MUST*** report to the school office to sign in and receive a visitor's badge before entering the classroom and hallways, or picking up students for appointments during the school day.

ALL visitors not wearing a visitor's badge will be asked to report back to the office to check in and obtain a badge. This is done for the protection of all the children.

We appreciate your cooperation and support!

### **WEAPONS IN SCHOOL**

See NCSD Student Discipline and Code of Conduct Handbook.

The possession or use of any such weapon shall require that the principal shall initiate proceedings for the suspension with the possibility of expulsion of the student involved immediately.

# Making Kindness Cool

## Behavior Matrix

### BE NICE

#### Be Safe

#### Be Responsible

#### Be Respectful

##### Common Areas

Keep hands, feet and objects to self  
Report any danger to adults  
Use all equipment appropriately

Take care of all materials  
Take ownership of behavior  
Work hard to learn

Walk face forward, hands down  
Hallways are for walking not playing  
Ask permission to leave the area  
Use kind words & actions  
Use appropriate voice  
Include others

##### Restrooms

Wash hands with soap  
Keep hands, feet, objects to self  
Keep feet on the floor  
Use equipment properly

Use bathroom pass  
Use toilet correctly  
Use toilet paper correctly  
Flush toilet after use  
Return to class promptly

Knock on stall door  
One person to a stall  
Use quiet voices  
Give privacy

##### Assemblies

Keep all body parts to self  
Sit on bottom

Use restroom before assembly

Stay seated until dismissed  
Use audience manners  
Sit quietly during presentation  
Applaud appropriately  
Use kind words and actions

##### Playground

Stay in boundaries  
What's on the ground, stays on the ground  
No play fighting

Follow rules  
Line up quickly when bell rings

Include others  
Play fairly  
Ask permission to go in bldg

##### Lunchroom

Eat only your food  
Walk at all times  
Keep hands, feet, objects to self  
Wash your hands

Sit in assigned seat  
Clean up after yourself  
Wait quietly to be dismissed

Stay in your seat  
Face your table w/ feet on floor  
Raise hand to get attention  
Use good manners  
Use inside voices  
Be polite to servers  
Lights off, voices off

**Bus**

Wait behind designated line.  
Keep hands, feet and objects to self  
Stay seated while bus is moving

Be on time.  
Stay in designated areas  
Keep pathways clear

Wait single file patiently  
No food or drink on bus  
Use your words  
Treat the bus driver with respect

**Lining up**

Line up single file behind designated areas.  
Line up immediately  
Line up on your designated spot

Face forward

Wait for enter signal from adult  
Voices off

**Hallways**

Walk face forward  
Use 3<sup>rd</sup> tile rule  
Traffic flow to right, stop at corners

Hands at sides

Voices off

**Field Trips**

Stay with adult supervisor  
Get permission and buddy to leave area

Sit or stand attentively  
Focus on present  
Wait for dismissal instruction

Leave site as we found it  
Hats allowed outdoors only  
Food and drink w/ permission

