



FAMILY HANDBOOK

Important Information for 2026-27

Cherokee Heights Elementary
694 Charlton Street, St. Paul, MN 55107
651-293-8610
Attendance line 651-744-6803
Fax 651-293-8617
www.spps.org/cherokee

****We want to partner with you to ensure your child(ren) has a fun and safe school year filled with engaging learning opportunities. This handbook is designed to provide important information to our Cherokee Heights community. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact us at 651-293-8610.**

Our Mission: *Together we grow and guide learners to develop academic achievement and social responsibility*

Core Values:

1. We believe in whole child development through a student-centered education.
2. We believe in relationships through community, connection, and belonging.
3. We believe in honoring children's voices through high expectations and restorative practices



Academic Achievement

At Cherokee Heights we focus on student achievement while building trusting, positive relationships through collaboration with staff, students, families and community members. Our school offers rich, standards-based instruction that meets the needs of individual students focused on academic achievement.



After-School Programming

Boys & Girls Club

291 Belvidere St E, <https://boysandgirls.org/>, 651-222-2212

- West Side youth organization providing after-school programs and activities for Kinder-Gr 5. Bus transportation provided from Cherokee.

Discovery Club

560 Concordia Ave., <https://www.spps.org/discoveryclub>, 651-325-2680

- Cherokee families have access to the Discovery Club hub at the Rondo hub, located at Benjamin E. Mays World School. Bus transportation is provided to and from Cherokee. Financial assistance is available for families who qualify. Discovery Club serves students PreK-Gr 5.

Extended Day Learning (EDL)

Mondays/Wednesdays, 2:00-3:45 at Cherokee Heights

- EDL offers free instructional programming after school for students in grades K-Gr 5 based on academic need. Snacks are provided. EDL classes begin in October and end in mid-May. Transportation is NOT provided.
- If you have questions, please contact our EDL lead, Rachel White. You can reach Ms. White at rachel.white@spps.org.

Arrival/Dismissal Time

Our school day starts at 7:30 a.m. and ends at 2:00 p.m.

Students can enter the building starting at 7:15 a.m.

Drop-Off: Parents driving students to school in the morning should enter the parking lot on the Baker Center side and exit onto Charlton Street. **Parents should wait to let students out of the car until they have passed the crosswalk (along the curb).** The door on the parking lot side will open for drop-off students at 7:15 and close at 7:30. ***If your child arrives after 7:30 parents are expected to come into the building to check their child in.***

Pick-Up: Parents picking children up at the end of the day must either drive up to the door near the parking lot by entering by the Baker Center or park on Page Street and walk up to the door.

- All parent pickups will be assigned a number and MUST have that number card with them to pick up children.
- If the number is not present, the parent/guardian will pick up the child in the office and will need to show identification.

If there are any changes to a child's regular dismissal routine, families should provide a written note to their child's teacher or call the office at 651-293-8610 **by 1:30 pm**.

Attendance

- **Regular attendance is essential for school success.** We monitor attendance each day and follow the Minnesota Law for compulsory school attendance.
- **Please call the school attendance number at 651-744-6803 to report your child's absence between 7:30-9:00 a.m.** A computerized district system will call you if the child's absence is unknown.
 - If a child has **3 unexcused absences** and/or **5 unexcused tardies**, the school will send home an Attendance Warning letter. The next step is a meeting with the Principal and Social Worker.
 - If a child is absent frequently, the school will take the necessary steps to comply with the state and district guidelines for attendance, including reporting to the Ramsey County Truancy Intervention Program if necessary.

Excused Absences:

- Sickness– too sick to be in school (3 consecutive absences require a doctor's note)
- Medical Appointments– (excused half day only and clinic note required)
- Religious Holidays
- Extreme Family Emergencies– house fire, death, etc.

Examples of UNEXCUSED Absences

- Overslept
- Missed school bus
- Suspended from school bus
- Staying home to babysit
- Weather too hot/cold
- Family vacation
- Parents/Guardians MUST communicate with the school office every time a child is absent.
- Please note that not all absences will be excused. Call in or send a note to the main office, state the reason for absence and be specific. All unknown absences are automatically marked as UNEXCUSED.

Behavior Interventions/Matrix

We strive to use common language when speaking with students about school wide expectations. The expectations below will be taught, practiced and reinforced with students. We greatly appreciate your support with reinforcing these expectations.

	Be Kind	Be Responsible	Be Safe
Classroom	• Care for self • Care for others • Care for materials	• Do work • Follow directions • Get permission	• Stay with class • Body to self
Hallway	• Voice level 0/1 • Silent wave • Give space	• Have a pass • Go • Return	• Walk • Stay with class • Body to self
Bathroom	• Eyes to self • Stay in stall • Voice level 1	• Flush • Wash • Be all done	• Feet on ground • Water in sink • Body to self
Cafeteria	• Please and thank you • Voice level 2 • Ask	• Get it • Sit it • Clean it	• Walk • Sit • Body and food to self
Recess	• Care for self • Care for others • Care for materials	• Follow directions • Get permission • Talk it out	• Stay with class • Body to self
iPad Use	• Care for self • Care for others • Use headphones	• Do work • Follow directions • Care for iPad	• Ask permission • Privacy
Bus	• Voice level 2 • Care for self • Care for others	• Follow directions • Report	• Sit • Aisle clear • Body to self

Breakfast to Go

Our students pick up breakfast in the cafeteria hallway and then eat breakfast to go from 7:15-7:40 a.m. in their classrooms. Breakfast and lunch is FREE for all Cherokee Heights students.

Bus Transportation

- Cherokee students outside of the walking area are assigned a bus by the District Transportation Department.
- Bus transportation is a privilege and all students must display appropriate, safe bus behavior to continue riding the school bus.
- Children can only ride on their assigned bus.

- Children who live less than a half mile from school are considered "walkers" and no bus transportation is provided.

All children are instructed about safe bus riding behavior and bus rules at the beginning of the school year. If your child does not follow bus rules and receives a report from the bus driver, staff will conference with your child, notify parents and take progressive discipline consequences outlined by our Transportation Department. Students will lose their bus riding privileges if serious or ongoing bus problems occur.

Here are the District Guidelines for Bus Safety

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1YfW58mt5t9tWQ_VzSN8mfxWUTQg--7Fn7mv3PzakyTg/edit?usp=sharing

Contact the school office for bus changes at 651-293-8610.

- **General Bus Concerns:** Rob Hoveland, robert.hoveland@spps.org or 651-744-5170 or Josie Baker, josie.baker@spps.org or 651-.
- **Bus Route Information/Changes:** Chrisie Zepeda, Clerk at christine.zepeda@spps.org or 651-293-8610.
- **For Transportation Emergencies** after Cherokee Heights school office hours: District Transportation Office at 651-696-9600.

Calendar

Calendar highlights and updates are provided in the principal's newsletter. We also have a [family google calendar](#) that has important dates and times for our school.

District calendars can be found at [this link](#) on the SPPS website.

Cell Phones

Students are prohibited from carrying cell phones or other electronics at school during the day. If a parent needs to contact their child during the day, they should contact the school office. Student cell phones will be turned into the office or teacher to safely store in the morning. Students pick them up each day before dismissal. ***The school is NOT responsible for phones that have been brought to school and are lost, stolen or damaged.***

Classroom Celebrations

Based on Saint Paul Public Schools' health and wellness policy, we ask families not to bring in food treats for special celebrations. Instead of sending sweets or snacks with your child to share with classmates, you can, for example:

- Have your child wear a special sash or crown
- Have your child pick a game to play with their class
- Send a favorite book to school with your child

Please contact your child's classroom teacher or visit www.spps.org/studentwellness for more details.

Communication

Communication between school and families is crucial. We have several modes of communication that should help you keep on top of everything related to Cherokee Heights, including: Our website (<https://www.spps.org/cherokee>), email, school newsletters, classroom newsletters, automated phone announcements, and personal phone calls. Be sure to update your contact information with the teacher and the school clerk with any changes during the year.

SPPS is committed to regular communications with families and the community. The district's website, [spps.org](https://www.spps.org), is the central location for information. The district also sends updates via email, text and phone as needed.

The district has guidelines for providing communications in English, Spanish, Hmong, Karen, and Somali. Families needing interpreters for school-related communications should call their child's school at 651-744-5500 or the Office of Family Engagement and Community Partnerships at 651-767-8347.

Conferences

Cherokee families are encouraged to participate in parent-teacher conferences throughout the year. Traditional 20-minute conferences are held in November and March.

Custodial Team

Our custodial team works diligently to ensure the school is beautiful and clean. Please encourage your child to be proactive in these efforts by cleaning up behind him/herself.

Dress Code

- Children should wear appropriate clothing to school (tank tops or stomach exposing tops are not allowed).
- Students need to wear tennis shoes to participate in physical education classes, and grades 1-5 need a swimsuit and towel.
- Students need to wear appropriate shoes and outerwear for daily outdoor recess, especially in cold winter months.

Rights/Opportunities

- Students have the right to choose their manner of dress and personal grooming unless it presents a clear danger to the student's health or safety, causes an interference with school work or creates classroom or school disorder.

Responsibilities

- Students are responsible for wearing clothes that are appropriate for school. To maintain a safe learning environment, student dress cannot be a health and/or safety hazard, obscene, sexually explicit or discriminatory. Clothing that displays words or images that communicate a message that

is racist, sexist, or otherwise derogatory is not permitted. Clothing that displays references to alcohol, chemicals, tobacco or other products that are illegal for use by minors is not permitted.

Drug-Free Schools

Tobacco, e-cigarettes, alcohol, and drugs are strictly prohibited on school grounds. This policy applies to students, staff, parents, and guests.

E-Learning Days

E-Learning days are not pre-planned, but can occur due to circumstances such as inclement weather. On e-learning days, students do not attend school in-person. Instead, they complete their work at home using their district-issued iPad. Students will participate in sessions with their teacher on Google Meet and complete lessons/activities via SeeSaw (grades PreK-3) or Schoology (grades 4-5).

Emergency Information

Parents should provide emergency contact information for their child online in August. Login information will be sent to households in mid to late August. **Please keep telephone numbers current by reporting these changes to iUpdate or to the school clerk.**

English Language Learners (ELL)

Cherokee uses a collaborative model of ELL programming for qualifying students. ELL services provide students with opportunities to reach excellence in their second language (English), while maintaining their first language and culture. Our ELL teacher provides service to students in the classroom, collaborating with classroom teachers daily.

Family Engagement

[Family Engagement Plan](#)

[Family Compact](#)

[School Improvement Plan \(SCIP\)](#)

Field Trips

- Field trips are planned throughout the year to support classroom learning. Families will receive advance notice about all field trips.
- All children must have a signed permission slip to participate in field trips. Verbal approval is not accepted. Families will be asked to turn in a written permission slip prior to their child being able to participate in any field trips.
- Per district policy, all parent chaperones must have a cleared background check on file in the office.

Food

Any food brought by students to share with classmates must be store bought and packaged according to Saint Paul Public School requirements. Please contact your child's teacher before sending items to check for allergies and food sensitivities that may exist in the classroom.

Harassment

We work to create and maintain a harassment-free environment. Saint Paul Public Schools has well-established guidelines for dealing with any behaviors which are considered to be harassment, including racial, sexual, gender or violence. Encourage your child to report these problems promptly to their teacher, support teachers or the principal. All complaints will be taken seriously.

Homework

At the elementary level, we primarily want children to read each day, play, and experience the world around them, therefore, students will not receive daily homework. The frequency and amount of homework will reflect the learning level and individual needs of our students. Reach out to your child's teacher if you have any questions.

Homelessness Support Programs (Project Reach 651-632-3790)

The number of families experiencing homelessness continues to rise in Ramsey County. SPPS can provide some support to families through our Title 1 programs. We can help you if your family lives:

- In a transitional, domestic, or emergency shelter or a youth shelter
- In a motel or hotel
- Temporarily staying with friends or family members because you have lost your housing
- Staying in emergency foster care
- In the community, a car, on the street, or in an abandoned building

Families can contact Anne Paron, Social Worker or Principal Gina Hass at 651-293-8610 to request support, including bus transportation to school.

Internet Use Contract

After students review appropriate use of the internet lessons at the beginning of the school year, parents/guardians will be asked to sign an Internet Use Contract in iUpdate. The district uses technical measures to prevent access to sites that may be controversial, inappropriate, or may contain advertising. However, even with these measures, it is impossible to totally control what students encounter.

iPads

Each student is assigned a district iPad, which is utilized as a learning tool. iPads will be handed out in the fall. Students will use the iPad in school. You can email our iPad lead, Shannon Johnson shannon.johnson@spps.org with questions. Consult our district website for important details and the Family iPad Handbook at <https://www.spps.org/Page/23994>.

One Stop Tool for Parents

[One Stop](#) (formerly iUpdate) Tool for Parents allows parents and guardians to access online tools and provide important student information. Parents log into One Stop and update information August 1 – September 15. This site includes many important forms including household information, bus transportation, field trip permission etc. If you have

any questions, please call 651-293-8610. Additionally, only persons listed in Campus will be able to access your student's information or students. Only people listed in Campus will be allowed to pick up students with a valid ID.

Library Books

Students will have opportunities to check out books from our school library. We also encourage families to take advantage of the large collection in the Saint Paul Public Library system. All students have a LibraryGO account that they can use to check out books from any Saint Paul Public Libraries (and to access any online resources). You can sign up for LibraryGO in iUpdate. Please talk with the main office if you have any questions about iUpdate. You can also find information about LibraryGo and other online tools at the site linked here:

<https://www.spps.org/site/Default.aspx?PageID=30108>

Lost and Found

Parents should label student clothing and belongings to make lost item identification easier. Parents can check the Lost and Found closet at school to look for missing items. Unclaimed items will be donated at the end of each school year.

Lunch Program

- Interactive lunch menus, which include nutritional information, are posted on our school website.
- All students will receive free breakfast and lunch.
- All families should complete an Educational Benefits application, regardless of income. The application is available online in August at <https://www.spps.org/Domain/14318>. Translated versions are available online.
- Parents can direct questions about the school lunch program to SPPS Nutrition Services at 651-603-4950.

Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) Report Card

You can learn more about your school's academic performance: [MDE Report Card](#)

Newsletters

Classroom newsletters from teachers serve as an important communication tool for sharing information with families. Weekly newsletters from the principal are distributed via email each Thursday that school is in session. Archived newsletters can be found on our school website at [spps.org/cherokee](https://www.spps.org/cherokee). Hard copies of the weekly newsletter are available upon request.

Non Exclusionary Discipline

- Dismissals for PK-3 are prohibited unless non-exclusionary discipline has been used, and there is an ongoing serious safety threat to the child or others.
- Students may be dismissed from school for less than one day.

As a school, Cherokee Heights uses Restorative Practices, including non exclusionary discipline We work to repair harm and solve problems with students when necessary.

When students need to be out of class due to behavior our consistent response system includes: regulation, a peace process/fix it plan, repair of harm, and return to class or alternative education setting within our school.

Physical aggression towards other students or staff will not be tolerated. Disrespect towards adults will also not be tolerated. Please refer to the [Rights and Responsibilities](#) handbook for disciplinary actions.

We are asking parents to partner with the school to help create a peaceful learning environment for all students. If students physically harm or are consistently disrespectful towards adults, we will ask for your support at school. This may include picking up your child or coming to sit with them in class to help them be more successful.

Nurse & Health Care Services

- Ways to help your child stay healthy:
 - Teach your child to wash their hands often with soap and water.
 - Teach your children not to share personal items like drinks, food or forks/spoons
 - Teach them to cover their coughs and sneezes with tissue or to use their elbow, arm or sleeve instead of the hand when tissue is unavailable.
- Know the signs and symptoms of the flu. Symptoms of the flu include fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit or greater), cough, sore throat, a runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache or feeling very tired. Some children may also vomit or have diarrhea.
- Keep sick children home for at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever, vomiting, diarrhea or do not have signs of a fever using fever-reducing drugs. Keeping children with a fever at home will reduce the number of children who may get infected at school.
- Please do not send your child to school if they are sick. Children who are determined to be sick at school will be sent home.
- All medications must be kept in the School Health Office unless special arrangements are made with the School Nurse. No medications, including Tylenol and/or cough drops, will be given to students at school without parent and doctor written permission.

Parents Right to Know

Under the Every Student Succeeds Act, parents in Title I schools have the right to request information regarding the professional qualifications of their student's classroom teachers and paraprofessionals. Parents who would like to receive this information should write to the Human Resource Department, Attn: ESSA Teacher Qualifications, Saint Paul Public Schools, 360 Colborne Street, Saint Paul, MN 55102-3299.

Patrols

Student patrols are upper-grade students who assist students walking to and from school from nearby corner locations. Currently, we do not have patrols.

Questions

If you have any questions or concerns about your child, please call or email your child's classroom teacher first. He or she may direct you to a specialist teacher if your question pertains to Physical Education, Aquatics, or Science.

Restorative Practices

Restorative Practices is a way of being in community with each other that fosters connection and a sense of belonging. It is based on principles and processes that emphasize the importance of positive, healthy relationships.

At Cherokee Heights, our goal is for children, families, and educators to be happy to come to school every day and feel that they are connected to each other through healthy relationships. We build these relationships through the use of the Circle process, and when relationships have been harmed, Restorative Practices offers a pathway to repair the relationship.

Mistakes are an opportunity for growth and learning, and Restorative Practices promote problem-solving, inclusiveness, and relationship building rather than exclusionary punishment which does not offer a pathway for learning from mistakes. Children and adults in communities implementing Restorative Practices show improved empathy, kindness, collaboration, communication, and problem solving skills.

Recess

All students go outside daily for recess unless it is raining or the temperature/wind chill is below -10 degrees. Students should dress accordingly for the weather by bringing snow pants, boots, gloves and hats to school regularly.

Rights and Responsibilities

[Saint Paul Public Schools Rights and Responsibilities Handbook](#)

SPPS strives to create welcoming schools where each and every student is seen, known and valued. There are rights students are guaranteed when they are at school as well as responsibilities that accompany those rights. Both are summarized in the Rights and Responsibilities Handbook. In addition, the Rights and Responsibilities Handbook outlines the work SPPS is doing to build a positive school culture and hold students accountable for behavior that is not appropriate.

Safety Drills

Students participate in a variety of emergency drills during the school year: Fire and tornado drills, as well as lockdown and secure. Drills are repeated throughout the school year under varied conditions and are monitored by building administrators for effectiveness. When an emergency happens, students and staff know ahead of time what to do and have experience doing it.

School Hours

Our school hours are from 7:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. for all students in grades PreK-5. Students can enter the building starting at 7:15 a.m. Students pick up breakfast and then go to their classrooms. Supervision is not provided before 7:15 a.m. or after 3:00 p.m., unless a child is enrolled in after-school programming.

Specialist Prep Class

Students participate in Physical Education, Swimming, Science and Social Studies classes by grade level following a three-week rotation schedule (Social Studies will be provided by a specialist 3 times/year for a whole week for one prep period/day).

Social Responsibility

Social Responsibility is the way we interact with each other as humans, and the earth, both inside and outside of the school building. We understand that children learn so much more than reading, writing, and math at school; they are also learning how to become kind humans and good citizens.

How do we focus on Social Responsibility? As a community, we focus on Social Responsibility through the use of Restorative Practices, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), the Zones of Regulation, and Culturally Responsive Teaching.

Technology Support

If your iPad is damaged or needs to be replaced please report the issue to your child's teacher or Shannon Johnson our iPad Manager.

Here are some regularly needed resources:

- For Tech Support, visit spps.org/iPadHelp
- [Seesaw Support](#): Students in grades PreK-3 will use an iPad app called Seesaw to share lessons and work with their teachers and families.
- [Schoology Support](#): Schoology is an online learning management system that helps Gr 4-5 families stay informed about their student's classes, assignments and grades.

Title I Program & Compact

Cherokee Heights is a schoolwide Title I school. All families will receive a copy of the Cherokee Heights Family-School Compact at the beginning of the school year. Our Title I Compact clearly states expectations for students, parents, and staff. Copies of the 2025-26 Family Engagement Plan and Compact can be found on the school website.

Unnecessary Items from Home

Children should not bring unnecessary articles to school that could disrupt student learning. These items include toys, cell phones, fidgets, hand-held computer games, and trading cards. The school will not be responsible for these items if they are damaged, lost, or stolen.

Vacations

We strongly encourage families to schedule vacations during non-school days as allowed in our district calendar. If your child is doing well in school and has a good attendance record, the principal can allow up to five days of excused absence for family vacation in a school year. Teachers are not required to prepare homework in advance for students missing school for vacations. As per district policy, if students are pulled for a vacation for more than 14 days, families may need to reapply for enrollment through Student Placement. Please contact the school in advance if your child will miss school for a family vacation.

Volunteers & Visitors

Visitors and volunteers are always welcome at Cherokee Heights. All visitors and volunteers must sign in at the office when they arrive and wear a visitor's badge while on school property. If you are interested in volunteering, please call the school at 651-293-8610 to sign up and arrange for a volunteer orientation.

Walkers

Children who live less than .5 miles from school are not eligible for bus transportation and may walk to school if parent transportation is not provided.

Website

www.spps.org/cherokeeheights

Our monthly newsletter, classroom information, and monthly calendars are posted on our school website. [Cherokee Heights Family Calendar](#)

Weapons

A weapon brought to school can result in immediate suspension and possible referral to the district office for expulsion. Toys that look like weapons will also result in administrative disciplinary action and should not be brought to school. Children should not bring any non-instructional items to school. Refer to the SPPS Student Behavior Handbook: Rights and Responsibilities <http://www.spps.org/Page/3249>.

Winter Weather Plan

The decision to close the school system due to extreme weather conditions is no simple matter. The safety and well being of students and staff is our top priority. The expectation is that schools will remain open, if at all possible, for uninterrupted student learning on school days.

Important winter weather information to note:

- School closures will be made public as soon as possible.

- Check the district's website at <http://www.spps.org/home> for the most up-to-the minute updates.
- A pre-recorded voice message will be on the district's main number alerting callers of the closure.
- Families will also receive voicemail messages on their phones. Please make sure the school has current phone numbers for your family.
- Tune in to local media – broadcast, print and online for information on school closures.
- It is critical to check the district website daily during winter weather incidents that may span beyond one day.

You

YOU are the key to your child's success in school! We look forward to partnering with you. Reach out any time. We always value your questions and feedback.

Cherokee Heights
694 Charlton St St. Paul, MN 55107 (651)293-8610
School Hours 7:30 am—2:00 pm
www.spps.org/cherokee

