

Birch Grove Community School

“Where Roots Grow Deep and Branches Reach High!”



Student and Family Handbook

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Birch Grove Community School Handbook

1. School Philosophy

A. Mission: *Birch Grove Community School will promote academic excellence utilizing our unique natural setting allowing students to reach their potential, preparing them to become socially and environmentally responsible, self-directed, life-long learners.*

Vision: Birch Grove Community School envisions *quality* curriculum, *excellent* staff, and *committed* families and community members. Our vision also includes:

- A K-5 educational program in multi-grade classrooms
- Low student-teacher ratios
- A focus on the Core Knowledge sequence
- Preparing students to be active and responsible citizens in their community
- Intergenerational learning
- Encouraging student/parent/community ownership in *their* community school

Birch Grove Community School will provide a nurturing and safe environment where:

- Parents and community members are actively engaged in student learning
- High expectations for students and staff are modeled and clearly defined
- Quality programs are developed, evaluated and continuously improved
- All student's needs are met
- Student-teacher ratios in the classroom are low
- Students' lives are further enriched through active partnerships with local citizens and businesses.

This vision and mission will drive decision-making at the school. In evaluating merits of any key decision, we will ask ourselves: Will this support the vision and mission of Birch Grove Community School? This will apply to the hiring, textbook selections, documenting policy, selecting community partnerships, and all aspects of the Birch Grove Community School. Our vision and mission will be read at the beginning of each meeting and communicated clearly and often to staff, parents and community members situated in each classroom.



AWARDS & ACHIEVEMENTS

2005-2006 (Opening Year)

Minnesota Department of Education Finance Award
Opening of the "Saplings" Program
AYP Proficient School Scores in Math and Reading

2006-2007

Minnesota Department of Education Finance Award
NWEA Student Growth Achievement Award
AYP Proficient School Scores in Math and Reading

2007-2008

Minnesota Department of Education Finance Award
Introduction into the Quality Compensation Program
Completion of the Outdoor Classroom
AYP Proficient School Scores in Math and Reading

2008-2009

Minnesota Department of Education Finance Award
Completion of the Nature Trail System
AYP Proficient School Scores in Math and Reading

2009-2010

Minnesota Department of Education School Finance Award
AYP Proficient School Scores in Math and Reading
"Excellence in Finance Management and Oversight Award"
("Charter School Network Excellence Awards" VOA)

2010-2011

Minnesota Department of Education School Finance Award
AYP Proficient School Scores in Math and Reading

2011-2012

AYP Proficient School Scores in Math and Reading

2012-2013

Minnesota Department of Education Finance Award
Opening of "Summer Saplings" Program
Opening of "Campsite Kids" K-5 Summer Programming
AYP Proficient School Scores in Math and Reading

2013-2014

Minnesota Department of Education Finance Award
Opening of Birch Buddies ~ Before/After School Program
AYP Proficient Scores in Math and Reading

2014-2015

Minnesota Department of Education Finance Award
"Award of Excellence in School Board Governance" ~VOA of Minnesota
"High Quality Charter School" ~ Minnesota Department of Education
AYP Proficient Scores in Math and Reading

B. Program

Highest MCA Scores:

Reading 92.9% Proficient in 2012

Math: 100% Proficient in 2014



School Culture

Birch Grove Community School works hard to ensure a academic environment where students feel safe, comfortable, respected, and challenged. The start of each year requires much attention directed to new students who aren't accustomed to Birch Grove. Birch Grove integrates respect and responsibility into everyday life of the school. We

start every morning the same – all staff and students are gathered to listen to daily announcements, recite the Pledge of Allegiance and set a positive, “let’s get to learning” tone.

At Birch Grove, we come to know our students very well. Our low student to teacher ratio, multi-grade classrooms (students have the same teacher for at least two consecutive years) and the staff concern and care for our students contributes to a family atmosphere that we are proud of. Because we know our students well, we are better able to gauge what their specific abilities and needs are, allowing us to serve our students better.

Goal Setting Contracts

Every student at Birch Grove has a Goal Setting Contract. At the beginning of each school year, students partake in the NWEA Measurement of Academic Progress System (MAPS) testing for both math and reading and receive an initial RIT score. Utilizing data provided from NWEA, a year end RIT score (the goal) is determined based on the students beginning RIT. The initial RIT score and the year end RIT goal are recorded in a contract for each student. Contracts are presented at the first conference of the year. The classroom teacher discusses the contract with both the student and the parents, discusses the initial score, and what the end goal is. Contracts are signed by all three parties. The overall goal is student academic growth.

Curriculum

Birch Grove Community School believes that what is taught and how it is taught are equally important. Birch Grove Community School selected the nationally recognized *Core Knowledge Sequence* to be the foundation of our academic program.

The *Core Knowledge Sequence* is a detailed outline of specific content to be taught in language arts, history, and geography, math, science, and the fine arts. As the basis of at least 50% of our school’s curriculum, it provides a solid, coherent foundation for learning, while allowing flexibility to meet our local needs.

The curriculum at Birch Grove Community School weaves together the *Core Knowledge Sequence* and the benchmarks of the Minnesota State Standards into a comprehensive curriculum map for all classrooms.

The Benefits of Core Knowledge are:

For the students:

- Provides a broad base of knowledge and rich vocabulary

- Motivates students to learn and creates a strong desire to learn more
- Provides an academic focus and encourages consistency in instruction
- Promotes a community of learners – adults and children
- Becomes an effective tool for lesson planning and communication among teachers with parents

For the Parents and Community:

- Provides a clear outline of what children are expected to learn in school
- Encourages parents to participate in their children’s education both at home and in school
- Provides opportunities for community members to help obtain and provide instructional resources

Everyday Mathematics is the chosen math curriculum for Birch Grove Community School. *Everyday Mathematics* was developed through the University of Chicago School Mathematics Project (UCSMP) in order to enable children in elementary grades to learn more mathematical content and become life-long mathematical thinkers.

Everyday Mathematics begins with the premise that students can, and must, learn more mathematics than has been expected from them in the past. This premise is based on the research the UCSMP author team undertook prior to writing the curriculum. Here are some of the major findings of this research:

- The typical U.S. mathematics curriculum is arithmetic-driven, slow-paced with isolated instruction, and broad without depth of content.
- International studies show how that U.S. students learn much less mathematics than students in other countries.
- Children are capable of learning more mathematics in a richer curriculum.
- All children can be successful mathematical thinkers.
- Mathematics is meaningful to children when it is varied, rich, and rooted in real world problems and applications.

Everyday Mathematics instructional design was carefully crafted to capitalize on student interest and maximize student learning.

- High expectations for all students
- Concepts and skills developed over time and in a wide variety of contexts
- Balance among mathematical strands
- Dynamic applications

- Multiple methods and strategies for problem solving
- Concrete modeling as a pathway to abstract understanding
- Collaborative learning in partner and small group activities
- Cross-curricular applications

Within the content of *Everyday Mathematics*, emphasis is placed on:

- Establishing links from past experiences
- Discussing and sharing ideas
- Using and comparing equivalent expressions
- Expressing numbers in context by including units
- Learning about the reversibility of most things

Houghton-Mifflin is the chosen reading curriculum for Birch Grove Community School. *Houghton Mifflin* is based on scientific research to deliver effective instruction in five key areas of reading.

Phonemic Awareness

- Skills sequence by difficulty
- Short, engaging activities
- Linked to phonics

Phonics

- Systematic, explicit instruction
- Immediate application of new skills
- Phonics/Decoding strand continues through grade 6

Fluency

- Fluent reading modeled in teacher read-alouds, audio CDs and more
- Lots of books for the students to read and reread at their own level
- Support for checking oral reading rates

Vocabulary

- Direct instruction of key vocabulary
- Development of vocabulary skills and strategies
- Wide reading in text with rich vocabulary

Comprehension

- Comprehension strategies taught explicitly and consistently to develop monitoring, questioning, previewing, summarizing and evaluating
- Graphic Organizers that support comprehension with every selection

Multi-grade Classrooms

Some of the benefits of multi-grade classes are:

- a. Instructional Flexibility – In a multi-grade classroom the teacher has the possibility of allowing a child to read with students in higher grades while, for example, the same child does math with the lower grades. One can more easily gear the work to individual needs.
- b. Social Skills – A classroom with children of several ages enables students to gain a perspective on what is happening in the lives and education of children both younger and older. It helps them gain a more accurate sense of the past and future in terms of experiences and interest and stimulates the entire learning environment.
- c. Peer Tutoring – In multi-age classrooms, the children generally have more opportunity to help one another than in a single grade classroom. Such peer teaching aids the slower and younger children in ways often beyond the communicative ability of adults, since adults have generally forgotten the problems they had in learning a particular concept or skills in the remote past.

Enhancement Program

Each school year we change the enhancement program to best fit the needs of our students. Typically, the program consists of pulling out small groups or single students for focused instruction and support in reading. Some groups are formed to target areas where the student achievement is low, while other groups may be formed to challenge high performing students. This programming is taught by a licensed teacher and can vary greatly from year to year depending on student needs.

Community Lunch

Community Lunch is held at Birch Grove the second Tuesday of the month. This is a chance for parents, grandparents and community members to interact with our students and staff and to enjoy a great meal and conversation! Everyone seems to enjoy these monthly events!

The Great Outdoors

Our school is located in one of the most beautiful natural environments in the state, and we are taking advantage of it! Included in our program is the opportunity to go cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, hiking, and ice skating. Not only do these activities create bonds between student, staff and volunteers, but it promotes physical activity!

The nature trail was completed in September 2009 and runs throughout the land behind the building. The trail has 10 interpretive signs focusing on: owls, wetlands, deer rubs, tree identification, fungus, tree rings, ants

and anthills, woodpeckers, a deer enclosure, and one sign that introduce the trail system. All of the signs can be changed and moved to create different focal points from year to year, or season to season.

Special Education

Special education services will be offered on site at Birch Grove Community School. If your child qualifies for these services, he/she will receive services from qualified special education staff.

Morning Meeting

The entire student and staff body meets every morning. During this time, announcements will be made, and the Pledge of Allegiance will be recited.

School Awards

Students have the opportunity to earn the following awards:

- Attendance Award – Perfect Attendance Award will be given to those students that attend school every day that it is in session and a Good Attendance Award will be given to those students that miss five or less days of school.
- Academic Achievement Awards will be given to those students that accomplish their goals determined at the goal-setting conference. There are also awards given for those students that are at least one or more grade above the mean, a single award given for the student with the highest academic growth in math, and a single award given for the student with the highest academic growth in reading. Please see the NWEA (MAP) Reading and Math Status Norms (RIT Values) chart at the end of the Handbook for more information.

These awards will be presented at the graduation ceremony held at the end of each school year.

Additional offerings

The Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center trip is geared toward the older students and is scheduled every other year.

The John Beargrease Marathon is a yearly all-school event that takes place in February. The finish line is anticipated to be at Birch Grove this year!

Tanzen – a cross between yoga and exercise/dance was created last year. This will be a part of this school year.

During fire prevention week our local firefighters and emergency medical personnel visit our school in the fall yearly. We appreciate their volunteer time to do this!

An all-school Winter Program is held yearly in December. Both a day and an evening performance are held.

WTIP Radio Spot: Hear our 2-5th grader on WTIP weekly presenting "School News".

2. What is a Charter School?

- A public school funded with public money - **No tuition**
- Non-sectarian, non-religious, and may not discriminate in student admissions
- Operated by parents, educators, and/or community leaders
- Free to be a unique school designed to meet the needs of the students it intends to serve
- Provides special education services to students who meet the state's eligibility requirements
- Operates under a contract with a sponsor
- Accountable for academic and non-academic outcomes
- The same transportation as local district schools can be provided
- The same graduation standards as other schools
- Commits to improving achievement as a condition of its charter

For more information on charter schools, please go to www.mncharterschools.org or www.birchgroveschool.com

3. School Life

Know that all of the following policies and procedures will be periodically reviewed to ensure that they are meeting the needs of our students!

A. Calendar

Birch Grove Community School will review its calendar yearly. You will receive a copy of this calendar the first week of school. Please post this calendar at home for your reference or see it on our school website at www.birchgroveschool.com

B. Transportation

Birch Grove Community School will provide transportation for students that live in Cook and Lake Counties. Bus routes are sent each August to the student's home. Any questions about the bus schedules should be directed to the school at 663-0170. The drivers will make an effort to abide by the schedule, but events beyond their control occasionally cause

deviations. If you have any problems or questions regarding transportation please feel free to contact the office at 663-0170.

Behavior/Safety

The care and discipline of the children riding the bus is the responsibility of the driver, parents, school personnel and the students themselves. Repeated misbehavior may result in being suspended from riding the bus or dropped from the bus route entirely. In order to maintain an excellent safety record, students must follow these guidelines:

- Be on time – Bus stops have only a two minute window and do not wait according to contracts.
- Obey the driver’s instructions
- Keep all body parts inside the bus
- Remain seated until the bus stops
- Be polite; profane language is not allowed
- Work together to keep the bus clean and safe
- Hazardous objects are not allowed on the bus
- Keep the noise level low
- To cross the street, walk in front of the bus and wait for directions from your driver

Consequences for Poor Behavior on the Bus

Consequences for poor bus behavior may include at least the following:

First Offense: Warning, verbal communication/ note home.

Second Offense: Written communication with parents

Third Offense: Student conference, note home, potential 1 day suspension from the bus.

Fourth Offense: Potential 2 day suspension from the bus and parent conference. Any further offenses may lead to suspension for bus riding privileges for a longer length of time. Should a student’s behavior warrant consequences either greater or lesser than those listed above, Birch Grove Community School has the authority to make such decisions based upon the facts of the individual case.

Bus Passes

A signed note to the classroom teacher, or a phone call from parents/guardians to the school Director or classroom teacher, is required for a student to get a bus pass. Unless a student has a bus pass, they must exit the bus at their regular stop in the afternoon. A member of the Birch Grove staff will give all bus passes to the driver before leaving the school grounds.

C. Dress

Students are expected to dress in a clean and appropriate manner, which will not create a distraction within the learning environment. Hats, caps, coats, sunglasses or clothing advertising alcohol or tobacco products shall not be worn in school. Earrings or other jewelry that may pose a hazard to the student or others will not be allowed. It would be a good idea to place the student's name or initials on all clothing items, especially outer ware. Containers of lipstick, hair spray, perfumes, etc. are not allowed at Birch Grove Community School. These items, if used, must be applied at home. Please help your child to be dressed according to the weather conditions! Outdoor time is part of the daily routine and will take place unless it is dangerously stormy or the temperature is well below zero. All outdoor wear should be labeled on the inside of the item. Your child will also need to have *both* indoor and outdoor shoes at school.

D. Lost and Found

If your child has lost clothing, please make sure to check the lost and found box. The items in this container may periodically be sent to the recycling center, so make sure to check this box if your child is missing something.

E. School cancellations

Snow days or other emergency school closings will be posted on Boreal and you will be notified by our automatic voice dialing system (home phone, work phone, cell phones as you desire). In case of an *early* closing, all of the above will be used to inform parents. If a parent cannot be reached, the child will be bussed to your designated "storm home". Birch Grove Community School will also use our automatic voice dialer that will call your home and inform you of any school closings.

F. Emergency Cards

The school needs to have emergency cards on file, with at least two emergency contacts, and a designated "storm home" for students if parents cannot be reached in the case of an early closing.

G. Storm/Fire Drills

Birch Grove will follow the state guidelines regarding both storm and fire drills.

H. Field Trips

Field trips are recognized as having educational value. Trips are encouraged when they fit into the budget and curriculum. Walking trips may happen spontaneously, and will always have staff supervision. Parents will sign a blanket permission form for walking trips. For all other

trips, parent/guardian permission slips must be signed and on file prior to a student departing on any trip away from the grounds.

I. Attendance

Parents need to call the school office when children are to be absent or tardy. Please call the school office at 218-663-0170 as soon as you are able.

The Birch Grove Community School staff and Board of Directors believe that regular and punctual attendance is very important for many reasons:

- Regular attendance is necessary to allow the educator to best meet the needs of each student. It also allows each student and family to maximize the daily opportunities that Birch Grove Community offers.
- Consistent school attendance is important for the community life of the classroom, since each member's contribution is significantly valued.
- Frequent absences may put the child at a learning disadvantage because it is often difficult to extract a classroom conversation or experience and fulfill that opportunity on a separate or individual basis.
- Some expectations of routine and structure are important in a child's life. If there is a problem or concern regarding school, the child's presence is crucial to pursuing a satisfactory resolution. Families can rely on their partnership with the educator and the school to handle any difficult situation that may arise.

Excused Absences:

1. Student illness- when this exceeds three days the Birch Grove Community School requires a Doctor note to accompany the student when returning back to school.
2. Sickness/Death in the immediate family of student - Family medical emergency.
3. Medical or dental treatment
4. Temporary absence from the city upon personal request from the parent or guardian provided that the request is made in advance and class assignments are completed upon request of the teacher.
5. Other reasons verified by the parent/guardian and mutually acceptable to both the parent/guardian and the Birch Grove Community School Co-Directors.

Unexcused Absences:

All absences which are not school authorized or which are not excused absences are considered, UNEXCUSED. All absences for which timely and proper notification is not proved are considered trancies.

Birch Grove Community School believes highly in regular and punctual attendance. Birch Grove Community School will follow the following procedures:

1. When a student has missed school 8 (eight) days of school, whether it is excused or unexcused school administration will send home a letter to the parents/guardians relaying the importance of attendance at school.
2. When a student has missed school 12 (twelve) days of school, whether it is excused or unexcused, school administration will set up a meeting with the parents/guardians, the educator and the school administration to discuss attendance.
3. When a student has missed 16 (sixteen) days of school, whether it is excused or unexcused, school administration will set up a team meeting with the parents/guardian, the educator, and the school administration to design a plan of action to increase attendance at school.
4. When a student has missed 18 (eighteen) days of school, whether excused or unexcused, school administration, at its discretion, will make a report to the appropriate agencies.
5. Parents are welcome to appeal this process before the Birch Grove Community School Board of Directors. Please arrange this with the Birch Grove Community School administration.

J. Illness/Medication

Students who take medication in school *must*:

- Bring the medication in an original, properly labeled container
- Bring a signed and dated permission slip explaining the purpose of the medication, times to be given, length of time to be given and any other pertinent information
- Bring a doctor's written order for administration (the local clinic has these forms).

Medication will be kept in a locked cabinet. A designated staff person will be responsible for administering the medication. Children requiring the use of inhalers in school may carry them if they have a signed doctor and parent/guardian form. These forms will be available in the school office, or you may ask an educator for one.

Illness

Keep your child at home for the following conditions/reasons:

- Contagious diseases, such as chickenpox, measles or mumps.
- Skin eruptions or suspicious rashes.
- Vomiting/diarrhea, two or more episodes within 24 hours.
- Fever - 100 degrees or higher, especially if accompanied by other symptoms such as vomiting, sore throat, diarrhea, headache, stiff neck or undiagnosed rash.
- Sore throat - especially when fever or swollen glands are present. A throat culture is recommended to check for strep throat. Students with strep throat must wait 24 hours after medication has been administered before returning to school. If you choose not to medicate, the child must have a negative strep test prior to returning to school.
- Itching - persistent itching/scratching of body or scalp.
- Pink eye (conjunctivitis) - keep home if thick, crusty discharge is present and the child is uncomfortable with itchy, watery eyes.
- Appearance/behavior - child looks and acts differently; unusually pale, lacking appetite, confused or extra irritable.

**For the safety of your child and others,
Do not send your child to school when they are ill.**

K. Lunch/Snack

Birch Grove Community School offers hot lunch on Monday and Tuesday of each week (at a regular cost of \$3.00 per meal including milk - some families may qualify for \$2 or \$1 per lunch), and the students will pack a brown bag lunch on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. Please send a nutritional lunch with your child to school. Proper nutrition is an important component of the learning process. When packing a bag lunch, please do not include candy, gum, soda pop, or any other high sugar or caffeine content drinks. Only milk or water are allowed at lunch time. Microwaves will be available for your child's use to heat food. **Please do not send food that needs to be cooked!** Milk will also be available every day for .50 per milk.

Please send a cold emergency lunch to keep in your child's locker in the event that a cold lunch is forgotten at home or on the bus. The emergency lunch should be made of foods that are non-perishable. Canned soup is a good suggestion for the main part of the meal!

Snack

Students will have an a.m./p.m. daily snack time incorporated in the classroom schedule. Please be sure to pack healthy snacks and send a box

of crackers to share. The classroom teacher will give more details the first week of school.

Community Lunch

“Community Lunch” will be held monthly at Birch Grove. Parents, Grandparents and community members will have the opportunity to eat with our students. The cost is \$3.00 for children and \$5.00 for adults. A menu will be sent out prior to the lunch. If your child does not prefer the menu, please make sure to send a lunch with him or her.

L. Enrollment/Transfer/Withdrawal

Registration materials for the school year are available in the school office. You may also print an enrollment form from our website at birchgroveschool.com or call the school administration at 663-0170 and you will be sent a form.

An enrollment cap will be set for each year for each class. In the event that there are more applicants than spaces available, a lottery will take place to select the students.

An exit interview with school administration is requested in the event of a transfer/withdrawal. We believe that it is in the best interest of the child and school community that the child be given the opportunity to say goodbye to fellow students and staff.

M. Arrival/Dismissal

Supervision (for a fee is) available from 7:00 a.m. to 8:15. Morning Meeting officially begins at 8:15 and school is out at 3:15. Supervision is available (for a fee) from 3:15 to 5:00 p.m.

N. Library and Computers

Birch Grove students will have regular access to the library and computers.

Library

Please assist your child with caring for library books and materials. Provide your student with a backpack to transport books and materials and a safe place at home to store these items. Fines for lost and damaged materials must be paid before any more library materials can be issued.

Computers

Students will have access to computers. Each student who uses computers must have a usage agreement signed by parents/guardians and on file. Students will have access ONLY to approved sites on the internet for

curriculum-based projects with educator supervision. NO CD's or programs may be brought into the school from the outside.

O. Items from Home

Please do not let your child bring valuables from home. Any money that is brought to school for a school purpose should be in a sealed envelope with your child's name on it. Please do not let your child bring radios, compact disc players, walkmans, pagers, cell phones, etc. **Birch Grove Community School is not responsible for any lost personal items.**

P. Parties

Unless ALL children in the class are invited to the party, please send invitations through the mail. It would be best not to bring gifts to school for parties after school, but if it can't be avoided, please use discretion. Children notice these things, and can have hurt feelings as a result. Also, please advise your children to do their best to avoid talking in school about a party that *everyone* is not invited to. Educators will advise parents of in-school birthday celebration protocol.

Q. Pledge of Allegiance

All Birch Grove students and staff will recite the Pledge of Allegiance daily during Morning Meeting.

R. Homework

Homework Policy: Homework is a part of our educational program. Homework reinforces what is learned in class, keeps parents apprised of what is going on at school and teaches the student responsibility. Homework is additional work to be completed at home. Work unfinished during the school day is not considered to be homework. All teachers are required to give homework to all students. Kindergarten/First grade: 15-30 minutes per week. Second/Third grade: 45-90 minutes per week. Fourth/Fifth grade: 120-180 minutes per week.

4. Community Life

A. Communications

Goal - Setting Conferences

Formal conferences will be held in the fall and the spring - academic goals will be set in the fall. Conferences may be scheduled at anytime during the school year, by contacting the appropriate teacher. If at any time you as a parent/guardian have a classroom concern or question, please contact the educator directly involved. If the educator does not satisfactorily address your question or concern, please contact the school administration at 663-0170.

Take Home Folder

Daily folders are in place to provide effective regular communication between the home and the classroom. A folder containing classroom /school information and homework will be sent home with student's everyday. The folder must be returned every day as well. The same folder will be used the entire school year and it can be used to send messages to or from school. Take Home Folders should also be used to send Bus Passes.

Teacher Phone Contact

All teachers have a phone in the classroom. It is the school policy to have the ringers turned off during student contact time. Teachers will check their phones for messages before and after school, during lunch and prep times. If it is a priority to get in touch with a classroom teacher while they are engaged with students, the school administrator will ensure that the staff member is contacted immediately.

Weekly Newsletter

Every week a newsletter will be sent home in folders. The newsletter will contain important dates to remember, upcoming events, special notices, and an update from classroom teachers as to what is happening in your child's class! You may also sign up to get your newsletter by email. Please let us know that you would like to sign up for the email newsletter by contacting us at birchgrove@boreal.org

Website

Please access our school website often. You will find the school calendar, lunch calendar, newsletter, current photos, events and the latest news. We keep our website up to date, so visit often! www.birchgroveschool.com

Face Book

Please find and "like" us on Facebook. Share with family friends and neighbors!

Annual Report

Birch Grove Community School compiles an Annual Report that is sent to the Minnesota Department of Education, our school authorizer Volunteers of America, is sent home to all of our students and is posted on our website.

B. Visiting Birch Grove Community School

Parents and volunteers are always welcome at the school. Since students and educators will be busy during school time, please make an

appointment if you need to have a private conversation with an educator. All visitors (other than parents) need to check in at the office at arrival, sign in the volunteer or visitor log, and put on a name tag.

C. Volunteer Opportunities

Birch Grove Community School asks all families to consider how they might offer their gifts to our community. Parent involvement is a personally rewarding experience, and allows the opportunity to participate in the education of our children, and solidifies our connections as a community. It has been shown that parental involvement enhances student success. Whether you prefer working with children or adults, in large or small groups, or independently, there is a place for you!

D. Adult Roles and Responsibilities

Parental Involvement

- Make sure your child has a wholesome breakfast
- Pack a nutritious lunch
- Assure your child's prompt and regular attendance
- Call the school if your child will be absent or tardy
- Communicate with the educators and students about homework
- Set a schedule at home to allow your child to complete homework
- Read aloud to your child for at least 20 minutes a day, and/or provide an opportunity for your child to read on his/her own
- Attend conferences with the teacher
- Become as active as possible in the life of the school by volunteering

Educator Responsibilities

- Partner with parents in discussions on the academic progress and conduct of children on a regular basis
- Teach and enforce the rules in a courteous, consistent, and fair manner, and deal with misconduct quickly, fairly and impartially.
- Plan and conduct a program of instruction that captures the interest and meets the needs of each student
- Demonstrate by attitude and actions genuine concern and respect for each student, family and other staff

5. Policies

All policies are on file in the school office. To refer to these, please see the school administration. You can have a copy of these upon request. You will find the following policies concerning students on file in the office:

- 501 School Weapons Policy
- 502 Search of Lockers, Desks, Personal Possessions, and Student's Person
- 503 Student Attendance
- 504 Student Dress and Appearance
- 505 Distribution of Non-school Sponsored Materials on School Premises by Students and Employee
- 506 Students Discipline
- 507 Corporal Punishment
- 508 Extended School Year for Certain Students with Individualized Education Programs
- 509 Enrollment of Nonresident Students
- 510 School Activities
- 511 Student Activities
- 512 School-Sponsored Student Publication and Activities
- 513 Student Promotion, Retention, and Program Design
- 514 Bullying Prohibition Policy
- 515 Protection and Privacy of Pupil Records
- 516 Student Medication
- 517 Student Recruiting
- 518 DNR-DNI Orders
- 519 Interviews of Students by Outside Agencies
- 520 Student Surveys
- 521 Student Disability Nondiscrimination
- 522 Student Sex Nondiscrimination
- 523 Policy Incorporated by Reference
- 524 Internet Acceptable Use and Safety Policy
- 525 Violence Prevention (Applicable to Students and Staff)
- 526 Hazing Prohibition
- 527 Student Use and Parking of Motor Vehicles; Patrols, Inspections, and Searches
- 528 Student Parental, Family, and Marital Status Nondiscrimination
- 529 Staff Notification of Violent Behavior by Students
- 530 Immunization Requirements
- 531 The Pledge of Allegiance
- 532 Use of Peace Officers and Crisis Teams to Remove Students with IEP's from School Grounds

6. Behavior

A. Birch Grove Behavior Expectations

A. We have high expectations for student behavior. We intend to encourage a culture of respect among students, staff, families and volunteers, to be carried out into the community.

Safety

Students, staff, parents and volunteers will promote, create and maintain an environment free from physical and emotional harm. Birch Grove Community School will not tolerate physical violence against another person, or the use of threatening or abusive language.

Respect

Students, staff, parents, and volunteers will respect the unique attributes and qualities of every individual. Varied beliefs and backgrounds strengthen a public education system. Students, staff, parents and volunteers will be thoughtful caretakers of the school building and property, as well as the property of others.

Dress

Students, staff, parents, and volunteers will dress appropriately for the school environment.

School Climate

Students, staff, parents and volunteers will behave in a manner that fosters a positive school environment. Our actions are distinguished by the highest standards of personal behavior, including trust, honesty, fairness, integrity and mutual respect.

B. Discipline Procedure

Birch Grove Community School is committed to promoting learning within an environment of care and concern for one another. We celebrate and appreciate our individual differences and expect the following behaviors:

- Treat yourself, others, and property with respect
- Work to the best of your ability

In an effort to sustain an environment that promotes courtesy and respect for individuals, Birch Grove Community School students will be recognized for exemplary behavior. All staff is always looking to “catch” students being good and make examples of them.

At Birch Grove Community School student expectations are clearly outlined. We expect much from our students – we do not however, expect them to be perfect and know misbehavior may/will occur. Teachers and

staff have open communication with parents using phone calls/take home folders/personal meetings regarding any and all misbehavior.

Continual and/or severe acts of physical violence will be referred to the office. Administration/staff will discuss the incident with the student(s) involved. *Most* acts of physical violence will be dealt with in the following way:

- First physical violence offence will result in the student(s)/administration calling the parents from school to discuss the incident
- The second physical violence offence will result in the student(s) being sent home for the day
- The third physical violence offence will result in the student(s) being sent home for the day
- The fourth physical violence offence will result in a student/staff/administration conference to determine a behavior plan for the student

All serious incidents will be dealt with on a case by case basis. School staff/administration will work with students/ parents to resolve any and all issues. It is our intention that students have the best learning environment available.

7. Governance

Birch Grove Community School, #4145, is a non-profit organization run by a Board of Directors. Board members are educators, parents of currently enrolled students, and community members who subscribe to the mission and vision of Birch Grove Community School. Board members meet at least monthly. To find out the dates, times, and place of the meeting (usually the third Tuesday of the month), please call the school administration at 218-663-0170 or see a calendar on our website at www.birchgroveschool.com.

All are welcome! Parents and community members are invited to attend meetings and express any questions, concerns or comments that they may have during the Community comment section of every meeting.

Board members agree to set aside personal agendas and act in good faith according to the mission of the school in making decisions.

8. NWEA Status Norms (RIT values) charts

[NWEA READING Status Norms \(RIT values\)](#)

Grade	Beginning of year mean	Middle of year mean	End of year mean
Kindergarten	142.5	150.6	155.1
1st	160.0	170.1	176.1
2nd	175.9	183.4	189.2
3rd	190.2	194.8	199.2
4th	199.6	203.0	206.3
5th	207.1	209.9	212.4

NWEA MATH Status Norms (RIT values)

Grade	Beginning of year Median	Middle of year Mean	End of year Median
Kindergarten	143.7	150.5	156.1
1st	162.5	172.2	179.0
2nd	178.7	185.9	191.3
3rd	192.3	198.7	203.5
4th	203.5	208.6	212.4
5th	212.7	217.5	220.7