

**2008-2009**

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**THE NEXT STEP STUDENT HANDBOOK**

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NORTH ST. PAUL-MAPLEWOOD-OAKDALE SCHOOL DISTRICT 622  
The Next Step Transition Program  
2586 East 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
North St. Paul, MN 55109  
<http://www.isd622.org/>

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## **Accident/Illness at School**

If a student feels ill or is injured while in school, the student should request to see the nurse. The health education assistant will call the student's parent/guardian for permission to go home, if necessary. Students should not go directly home, or remain in a bathroom during the school day without prior staff permission, if the student does this, they will be considered truant.

## **Age of Majority**

Students who reach the age of 18 during the school year are subject to the same school rules as the rest of the student body. If a student is 18 and parents/guardians have not established legal guardianship, the student must sign a Consent to Release form allowing school personnel to communicate with their parents or guardians.

## **Attendance Procedures**

Quality schools and teachers have little impact on students who are not regularly in school. Students attending The Next Step Transition Program are expected to follow their established schedule.

Students must attend all portions of their schedule including their work schedule, if employed. Failure to do so will result in being dropped from the program after fifteen (15) consecutive days.

The Next Step Transition Program is a closed campus. Students are expected to remain inside the building during the scheduled school day. Students may be considered truant if they are outside of the school building without staff permission.

## **Reporting an Absence if under 18 years old**

- Parent/guardian should call the attendance hotline by 7:30 a.m. at (651) 621-1900 **each day** a student is absent, including:
  - the student's full name
  - reason for absence
  - expected length of absence.
- 2. Any absence not verified by phone requires a written note from the parent/guardian on the day the student returns to school.
- 3. The attendance hotline is available 24 hours a day. The program secretary will handle all unverified school absences the following day.
- 4. ***Oversleeping and transportation*** problems are not excused absences.
- 5. A medical note may be required to verify absences.

## **Reporting an Absence by Over 18 year olds**

1. The student must call the attendance hotline by 7:30 a.m. each day of absence. Please include the following information:
  - his/her full name
  - reason for absence
  - expected length of absence.
2. *Oversleeping and transportation* problems are not excused absences.
3. A medical note may be required to verify absences.

## **Behavior Intervention Specialist**

The Behavior Intervention Specialist is available to:

- Provide support and direction to students in completing independent work
- Process problems and difficult situations with students
- To resolve conflict
- To prevent disruptive behaviors

A student may request, or be sent by a staff member to see the Behavior Intervention Specialist

## **Cafeteria-Lunch Payment**

Breakfast and lunch are provided on scheduled school days. Meals are prepared at the District Education Center kitchen and shuttled over to the program. Students are expected to sign up for breakfast/lunch each day by 8:30 a.m. at the reception desk. If a student fails to do so, he/she will not be guaranteed a breakfast/lunch.

## **Case Management/Advisement**

Every student is assigned a case manager. The case manager is their primary contact for the student as it relates to the IEP and Graduation Plan. The case manager develops a class schedule and meets regularly with the student to ensure progress is being made. Full-day and afternoon students have a scheduled advisement period with their designated case manager.

## **Cell Phones, Pagers, and Headphones**

Cell phones and pagers brought to school must be silenced and must not be used during class time. Headphones are only allowed during break times and should not be visible during class time, unless they are included in the student's behavior intervention program.

If an electronic device is used in class, then the item will be confiscated by staff for the remainder of day.

## **Data Privacy**

As required by law, student directory information must be given to all persons requesting it unless the parent does not want the information released. Directory data includes pupil records,

(which include the pupil's name, address, telephone listing, date and place of birth), major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, photographs, degrees and awards received, and the name of the school most recently attended.

If a parent, legal guardian, or guardian ad litem of a pupil attending The Next Step does not wish all or any part of the "directory data" released without prior consent, please inform the building supervisor in writing.

## **Discipline**

Students are expected to follow all district and school policies as stated in the Student Responsibility Policy Book and as posted on the District 622 website ([www.isd622.org](http://www.isd622.org)).

The Next Step Transition Program's philosophy regarding discipline is based on restorative practices. A restorative practice defines accountability for offenders in terms of taking responsibility for actions and repairing the harm caused to the victim and community.

Restorative practices:

- Deal with a violation against another person
- Focus on problem solving by those directly involved
- Foster discussion and working things out
- Make use of restitution as means of restoring both parties
- Define justice by the outcome
- Seek to understand the impact of actions and how to make things right

*It is important to keep in mind the administration's commitment to taking appropriate action, which may not always be identical for all students as individual circumstances may vary. Therefore, the Dean of Students may impose or recommend longer suspensions, expulsion, or any other discipline deemed appropriate on a case-by-case basis.*

*School administrators reserve the right to inspect student's designated space, automobiles, and personal items located on school property.*

## **Dress Policy**

Students are expected to dress as though they are on a job site. Student's clothing should not offend others, cause embarrassment to them or others, present a health hazard, or create disruption in classes. The following expectations will be enforced:

- All students must wear shoes
- No headgear
- Wearing of gang colors, bandanas or other gang identification is not allowed
- Students may not wear shorts, skirts or tops that will show underwear. For example, tops must be able to cover bra straps.
- Students may not wear clothing which displays inappropriate language or graphics (directly or implied), or which is immodest.

- Students are expected to maintain healthy, clean attire.

Students who are not in compliance with the dress policy will be asked to modify their apparel or be sent home. A pattern of noncompliance by a student may lead to other disciplinary action.

### **DRS/ Vocational Division of Rehabilitation Services**

Washington and Ramsey County provides career assistance to qualifying student after graduation. The Next Step Transition Program works closely with DRS as student's transition to adult life.

### **Emergency Closing, Delays or Early Dismissal**

If poor weather conditions or other unforeseen circumstances necessitate emergency closing of school buildings, a delay in opening, or an early dismissal, you will be notified by radio. The Superintendent of Schools or his designee will forward an announcement to WCCO 830 AM by 6:00 a.m. Students and parents should listen to this radio station for emergency messages.

### **Equal Opportunity Policy**

It is the policy of the North St. Paul-Maplewood-Oakdale School District not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, sex, national origin, disability, marital status, parental status, economic status, or status with regard to public assistance, in its educational program, curriculum, or activities as required by State and Federal statutes and regulations. Inquiries regarding compliance with this policy may be directed to your building supervisor or to the Human Resources Director.

### **Fire Drills/Lockdowns/ Severe Weather Drills**

Fire drills/Lockdowns/Severe Weather drills are for the purpose of practicing evacuation in the case of an actual emergency. Cooperation is extremely important. Tampering in any way with the alarm system or the fire equipment is a serious offense. *Violators will be prosecuted.*

### **Graduation**

The Next Step Transition Program does not offer a credit system. Instead, all students enrolled graduate based on IEP goal and Graduation Plan attainment. For new students, an IEP team meeting will be held to develop the graduation plan one trimester from the student's first day of attendance. When the IEP team determines the student has met the expectations regarding goal and Graduation Plan progress, the student will provide presentation data that supports exiting the program to receive a diploma. Diplomas will be issued by the student's home attendance area high school and dated the year the student completes The Next Step Transition Program.

Students who plan to attend or are currently enrolled at The Next Step Transition Program may walk through their home attendance area graduation ceremony with their chronological graduating class. Students will not receive a diploma until they have made the IEP goal and graduation plan progress outlined by their team (even if the student has accumulated all of the

credits required at the referring home high school). The Next Step Transition Program offers a graduation ceremony every spring for students who have earned their diploma.

### **Health Services**

All health records, immunization records and authorization for prescribed medications are located in the Health Office. Each student must have on file the Annual Health Service Emergency Sheet. Students may have medication(s) administered in the Health Office as needed, with proper doctor authorization.

### **Laser Pointers**

Laser pointers are not allowed on school property or at school activities. If they are found, then they will be confiscated. If the laser pointer is deemed to be used as a weapon, then weapon's policy and procedures will be followed.

### **Lost and Found/Theft**

If an item has been lost or found, then the items should be turned in at the reception desk.

Any incidents of theft should be reported to program administration. Depending on the situation, the local authorities may be involved.

### **Messages for Students**

During the school day, only emergency messages can be accepted from the student's parent/guardian. The parent/guardian must describe the nature of the emergency, and the student will be located as quickly as possible.

### **Phones**

A phone is available at the reception desk for students after school, and on an emergency only basis. Students are not to use classroom phones without staff permission.

### **Policies**

All district policies are available at [www. ISD622.org](http://www.ISD622.org). In addition to this handbook, each student will receive an ISD 622 "Student Responsibility Handbook," which outlines expectations related to student conduct.

## **Program Schedule**

Period 0	8:15-8:25 (breakfast)
Period 1	8:26-9:20
Period 2	9:21-10:15
Period 3	10:16-11:10
Period 4	11:11-12:05
<i>Lunch</i>	<i>12:06-12:35</i>
Period 5	12:36-1:30
Advisement	1:31-2:25
Bus Pick up	2:30

\*Tuesday and Thursday afternoon classes are in session from 1:30 to 4:00 p.m.

## **Progress Reports and Report Cards**

IEP progress reports and report cards are completed through the collaboration of the student's case manager, classroom teachers, and Work-Based Learning Coordinator. Progress reports and report cards are mailed at the end of every trimester. The Next Step Transition Program operates on a "Pass/Fail" system. Specific grades are not issued. IEP and Grad Plan Progress Check –in nights are offered during the school year to provide parents/guardians with an update regarding the student's performance in classes, IEP goals, and Grad Plan requirements.

## **PSEO and 916**

Students, who are interested in attending PSEO college-level classes, must meet the same entrance criteria as the non-disabled peers (criteria vary depending on the college/institution). Students interested in attending 916 programming must complete the established application and selection process for enrollment consideration. Students are not eligible to apply to either program until they have been enrolled at The Next Step Transition Program a minimum of one trimester. During this time, the student must demonstrate good attendance, good behavior and a positive work ethic. In addition, the student must have received a recommendation from the IEP team, after consideration of the student's needs/abilities.

## **Schedule Options**

Each student's schedule is dependent upon the needs identified in their IEP and Graduation Plan. The primary program operates Monday through Friday from 8:15 a.m. to 2:30p.m., including six 55 minute classes. Afternoon classes are available depending on the student's needs and work/post secondary schedule.

Students who hold a paid/non-paid job, or who participate in Post Secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO), or 916 classes may count the hours served toward their school schedule. All paid/non-paid job sites must meet the Work Based Learning guidelines and be supervised by a Next Step Work Based Learning Coordinator.

Scheduled changes will be made on a case-by-case basis, with the case manager's approval. Changes to student schedules may not be immediate.

### **School Outings**

Students participating in class outings or activities must ride to and from the specified location in program approved vehicles.

### **Storage Spaces**

Coat racks and limited storage space is available for student use. These designated spaces are not the private property of students, and may be searched by school personnel. School officials retain control of storage spaces and may inspect them periodically. The program/ISD622 is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

### **Student Guest Policy**

Because the presence of student visitors may disrupt the daily classroom procedures and reduce learning time, it is our policy *not* to allow visitors during the regular school day.

### **Substitute Teachers**

If the regular teacher is absent from the classroom, then students will have a substitute teacher to guide learning for the day. The substitute teacher assumes all the responsibility, as well as the authority, of the regular teacher. It is expected that all students will treat the substitute teacher with respect and provide assistance in making the day worthwhile and productive.

### **Tardy Procedures**

1. Students arriving between 8:25 and 8:45 are considered tardy.
2. Students arriving after 8:45 are considered truant.

### **Teen Depression**

#### **What everyone should know to help themselves and their friends.**

Not all people with depression will have these symptoms or have them to the same degree. If a person has four or more of these symptoms, if nothing can make them go away, and if they last more than two weeks, a doctor or psychiatrist should be consulted.

- Persistent sad or "empty mood"
- Feeling hopeless, helpless, worthless, pessimistic and/or guilty
- Substance abuse
- Fatigue or loss of interest in ordinary activities
- Disturbances in eating and sleeping patterns
- Irritability, increased crying, anxiety and panic attacks
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering or making decisions
- Thoughts of suicide, suicide plans or attempts

- Persistent physical symptoms or pains that do not respond to treatment

### **Know What to Do**

- Listen carefully. Don't judge. Focus on the behaviors that concern you.
- Reassure your friend that there is help and that suicidal thoughts are only temporary.
- Offer to go with your friend to his/her parents, counselor, or doctor.
- You can say things like, "I can tell you're really hurting," or "I care about you and will do my best to help." Tell him/her, "It's okay. It isn't your fault." A supportive friend can mean so much to someone who is in pain.

### **Find Someone Who Can Help**

- Parent(s), guardian, or other family member
- School psychologist, social worker, or case manager
- Personal physician
- Personal clergy
- Your local hospital

Many people can help you help a friend who is depressed or suicidal. But sometimes adults don't understand depression and suicide. You can teach them. Ask for help until you find it.

### **Local Resources**

Crisis Connection	(612) 379-6363	<a href="http://www.crisis.org">www.crisis.org</a>
Youth Service Bureau	(651) 439-8800	<a href="http://www.yusb.net">www.yusb.net</a>
Community Counseling Center	(651) 429-8544	
Suicide Prevention	(612) 347-2222	
Face to Face (Counseling Services)	(651) 772-5555	
What's Up? Youth Info Line	(612) 399-9999	

**For Emergency Call 1-800-SUICIDE**

### **Transportation**

The Next Step Transition Program provides busing to and from the student's home high school via shuttle. Other modes of transportation commonly accessed include MTC, NEST, and Metro Mobility.

Students with a valid driver's license must complete a parking application and receive administrator approval prior to driving to school. Students may park their car in the back lot or on the city street. Parking applications are available at the reception desk.

Students are not permitted to access their vehicle or transport other students during the school day.

### **Bus/Van Rules**

All school policies, procedures and behavior expectations are in force on school transportation. In addition, the following rules and regulations must be followed by the students. Failure to do

so may result in a driver's Bus Conduct report to an Administrator. Loss of transportation privileges and/or other disciplinary action may occur.

1. Be at the assigned bus stop five minutes before the scheduled arrival time
2. Quiet talking is acceptable on the bus. Excessive noise or shouting will not be tolerated.
3. Students must remain in their seats at all times with seatbelts fastened. Moving around in the bus is not permitted.
4. Paper and trash must not be left of the bus.
5. The safety of all riders requires that the driver's directions must be promptly followed. Students must accept any seat assigned by the driver.
6. Students are responsible for any damage to the bus and must reimburse the district for costs of repair and replacement.
7. When requested, students must identify themselves and give correct information to the bus driver.
8. At the beginning of the school year, each student will receive a copy of the District's BUS SAFETY CODE. This contains a complete set of rules and regulations governing student conduct while being transported on school buses.
9. Bus evacuation drills are practiced during the year and safety instructions are provided. Student cooperation in following these procedures is expected and appreciated.
10. Report items left on the bus to the Reception Area.

### **Truancy**

Truancy is an absence from class/school, which has **not** been excused by the parent/guardian, or program staff. Students who are habitually truant may be referred to the county attorney's office and face other disciplinary action.

### **Vandalism**

Vandalism is any willful act that defaces or damages school property or private property. Any student committing acts of vandalism is subject to disciplinary action, including, but not limited to, financial restitution.

### **Withdrawal from School**

To initiate the process, the student must contact their case manager.

### **Work-Based Learning**

Every student is assigned a work-based learning coordinator. The Work Based Learning Coordinator is the primary contact for the student related to employment and career planning. Regular meetings are held with the student at the school, on the job site, or in the community to discuss employment issues. The Work-Based Coordinator is required to maintain verification of the student's employment schedule, work evaluations, and training agreement and plan.

## DISCLAIMER

*This booklet does not cover all policies and procedures of The Next Step Transition Program. Additional policies and procedures will be presented and discussed with students as they occur. Should a question arise on a topic not covered in this booklet, students are encouraged to meet with school personnel for clarification and interpretation. The program supervisor reserves the right to make final decisions regarding any issues.*

**The Student Handbook will be reviewed with all students by school personnel.**

**Please sign and date that you understand you are responsible to read and follow the contents of this document.**

**I have received and will read the Student Handbook. I understand and agree to follow the expectations of The Next Transition Program.**

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**Student Signature**

**Date**

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**Parent Signature (if student is under 18)**

**Date**