



# **Nelson Mandela Elementary Family Handbook**

**2022-2023 School Year**

**6316 North 30<sup>th</sup> Street  
Omaha, Nebraska**

**Effective: August 2022**



Dear Mandela Families,

I am excited to embark on another journey of learning with our marvelous meerkat family. The world our scholars are growing up in is a tough one – violence in our country is higher than it has ever been, especially in schools. We are also striving to recover from a long pandemic and all its repercussions. Now, more than ever, we need HOPE.

HOPE is powerful. It inspires us to do what feels impossible and helps us carry on during tough times. HOPE comes in many different shapes and sizes. It may be having a positive attitude, believing in yourself, or even giving hope to others with words of encouragement.

This year, our team will be focused on instilling HOPE in our scholars. Through daily lessons in math, reading, science, social studies, art, and violin, our scholars will HOPE for their best and trust in others when they cannot find it within themselves.

Nelson Mandela said, “As we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.” This year, we will shine HOPE for each other and live out our mission to maximize the educational success of our scholars academically, physically, socially, and emotionally.

Our team is committed to working for our scholars to be on grade level. Supported by HOPE, research, high-quality curriculum, and regular evaluations, our team will continue to deliver the best possible education to our scholars.

They cannot do it without you. Join us in engaging with your scholar in academics, in our community, and in their interests. I am filled with HOPE that this will be a great school year if we do it together. Thank you, parents/guardians, for entrusting us with your scholars. We look forward to a year of learning and growing as a meerkat family!

Please do not hesitate to contact myself or any member of the team at any time.

Be well,

*Mrs. Genevive Core*

Mrs. Genevive Core  
Principal

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**Nelson Mandela Elementary School Inc.  
Board of Education Members  
2020-2021**

Dianne Lozier - President  
John Scott - Vice President  
Jan Mueller – Treasurer  
Susan Toohey - Secretary  
Bob Braun  
Tre Brashear  
Janice Garnett

If families would like to contact the board, they can email Tre Brashear at [tre.brashear@lozier.biz](mailto:tre.brashear@lozier.biz)

**Nelson Mandela Elementary Advisory Board Members:**

<b>Committee</b>	<b>First</b>	<b>Last</b>	<b>Organization</b>
<b>Academic Excellence</b>	Jerry	Bexten	Sherwood Foundation
<b>Academic Excellence</b>	Clarice	Jackson	Voice Advocacy
<b>Academic Excellence</b>	Nancy	Liebermann	Phoenix Academy
<b>Academic Excellence</b>	Renee	Fry	Open Sky Institute
<b>Academic Excellence</b>	Dianne	Seeman-Lozier	Lozier Foundation
<b>Academic Excellence</b>	Lisa	St. Clair	OPES
<b>Buildings, Grounds, Technology</b>	Bob	Braun	Lozier Foundation
<b>Buildings, Grounds, Technology</b>	George	Lozier	Lozier Foundation
<b>Buildings, Grounds, Technology</b>	Bill	McKay	New Street Property
<b>Buildings, Grounds Technology</b>	Pat	Weddle	Community Volunteer
<b>Buildings, Grounds, Technology</b>	Larry	Ziska	Former Blessed Sacrament Parishioner
<b>Finance</b>	John	Ash	Nelson Mandela
<b>Finance</b>	Sue	Klima	Nelson Mandela
<b>Finance</b>	John	Scott	Scott Foundation
<b>Finance</b>	Dianne	Seeman Lozier	Lozier Foundation
<b>Scholar, Community, Family Relations</b>	James	Cloyd	MCC
<b>Scholar, Community, Family Relations</b>	Pat	Weddle	Community Volunteer
<b>Scholar, Community, Family Relations</b>	Aaron	Evans	Union Pacific
<b>Scholar, Community, Family Relations</b>	Ivan	Gilreath	Boys and Girls Club
<b>Scholar, Community, Family Relations</b>	Jamalia	Parker	Learning Community Center of North Omaha
<b>Scholar, Community, Family Relations</b>	Robertta	Wilhelm	Girls Inc
<b>Scholar, Community, Family Relations</b>	Alisa	Parmer	Community Volunteer

*This handbook is provided for informational purposes only and does not constitute a contractual agreement between NME and any scholar or any parent/guardian of any scholar.*

*The information contained in the Handbook provides a general description of rules and regulations. The school reserves the right to add to, to modify, or abolish any of the Handbook provisions as needed to meet the current needs of our scholars, community members, and team.*

*Non-enforcement of any of the rules or regulations does not serve as a waiver of their future enforcement.*

*This handbook does not create any restriction upon NME's right to institute any course of disciplinary action which, in NME's sole discretion, it believes is necessary and consistent with its educational mission.*

### **Mission Statement**

The mission of Nelson Mandela Elementary is to provide quality instruction that demonstrates ALL scholars can learn and develop academically, emotionally, socially, and physically. Nelson Mandela Elementary is committed to maximizing the educational success of all scholars and bridging learning and achievement gaps.

Nelson Mandela Elementary fulfills its mission by:

- Using multi-sensory, evidence-based educational curricula and frameworks
- Addressing each child's individual learning needs
- Setting high academic and behavior expectations
- Providing a safe, positive environment
- Employing committed, caring, and well-trained educators and providing on-going professional development
- Partnering with parents/guardians and the community to strengthen the educational experience for all learners

### **School Goals**

The goals of NME are:

- To provide a quality education that addresses the needs of the whole child
- To provide an academic program with comprehensive guidelines and benchmarks for determining achievement
- To provide a learning environment that is thoroughly integrated and reflective of the people we serve.
- To foster respect for self and others
- To present an alternative educational opportunity for the members of our community

### **Achievement Goals**

NME scholars will:

- Possess and exhibit knowledge of academic disciplines
- Demonstrate effective oral and written communication skills
- Model skills that promote life-long learning, self-discipline, problem solving strategies and independent thinking

- Demonstrate respect for self, others, and the environment
- Read and do math on grade level or above

### **Accreditation Status**

NME is accredited under the guideline of Rule 10 by the State of Nebraska and, therefore, meets the highest educational standards set by the state.

For more information, please visit:

<https://www.education.ne.gov/apac/accreditation-rule-10/>

### **NME Team**

#### **Office**

Dr. Susan Toohey – Superintendent, [stoohy@omandela.org](mailto:stoohy@omandela.org)  
Genevive Core – Principal, [gcore@omandela.org](mailto:gcore@omandela.org)  
Stacy Hudson – Administrative Assistant, [shudson@omandela.org](mailto:shudson@omandela.org)  
Elisha Suttles – Family/Scholar Support Liason, [elewis@omandela.org](mailto:elewis@omandela.org)  
Erika Mardock – Counselor, [emardock@omandela.org](mailto:emardock@omandela.org)  
Amanda Myroniuk – Volunteer Coordinator, [amyroniuk@omandela.org](mailto:amyroniuk@omandela.org)  
Shilene Meeks – Kids Can Director, [smeeks@omandela.org](mailto:smeeks@omandela.org) or [smeeks@kidscan.org](mailto:smeeks@kidscan.org)

#### **Kitchen**

Riannon Bell – Kitchen Manager, [rbell@omandela.org](mailto:rbell@omandela.org)

#### **Kindergarten**

Amanda Krier – Teacher, [akrier@omandela.org](mailto:akrier@omandela.org)  
Amber Curry – Para, [acurry@omandela.org](mailto:acurry@omandela.org)  
Diann Moore – Teacher, [dmoore@omandela.org](mailto:dmoore@omandela.org)  
Shiree Bonner – Para, [sbonner@omandela.org](mailto:sbonner@omandela.org)

#### **First Grade**

Jessica Hawthorne – Teacher, [jhawthorne@omandela.org](mailto:jhawthorne@omandela.org)  
Amanda Partee – Para, [apartee@omandela.org](mailto:apartee@omandela.org)  
Sadé Henley – Teacher, [shenley@omandela.org](mailto:shenley@omandela.org)  
Cherie Smith – Para, [csmith@omandela.org](mailto:csmith@omandela.org)

#### **Second Grade**

Ryan Margheim – Teacher, [rmargheim@omandela.org](mailto:rmargheim@omandela.org)  
Daphne Krzemien – Para, [dkrzemien@omandela.org](mailto:dkrzemien@omandela.org)  
Clarissa Redick – Teacher, [credick@omandela.org](mailto:credick@omandela.org)  
Ashari Johnson – Para, [ajohnson@omandela.org](mailto:ajohnson@omandela.org)

#### **Third Grade**

Mattkia Montgomery – Teacher, [mmontgomery@omandela.org](mailto:mmontgomery@omandela.org)  
Tishara Collins – Para, [tcollins@omandela.org](mailto:tcollins@omandela.org)  
Sho Shann Smith – Teacher, [ssmith@omandela.org](mailto:ssmith@omandela.org)  
Donta' Cain – Para, [dcain@omandela.org](mailto:dcain@omandela.org)

#### **Fourth Grade**

Bianca Sherman – Teacher, [bsherman@omandela.org](mailto:bsherman@omandela.org)  
Noah Bailey – Para, [nbailey@omandela.org](mailto:nbailey@omandela.org)  
Jordyn Jackson – Teacher, [jjackson@omandela.org](mailto:jjackson@omandela.org)  
Michael Wilhelm – Para, [mwilhelm@omandela.org](mailto:mwilhelm@omandela.org)

#### **Fifth Grade**

Annette Foster – Teacher, [afoster@omandela.org](mailto:afoster@omandela.org)  
Diamyn Franklin – Para, [dfranklin@omandela.org](mailto:dfranklin@omandela.org)  
Cynthia Warming –Teacher, [cwarming@omandela.org](mailto:cwarming@omandela.org)  
Angela Bultez – Para, [abultez@omandela.org](mailto:abultez@omandela.org)

### Specials

TJ Stosich – PE and Health, [tstosich@omandela.org](mailto:tstosich@omandela.org)  
Jessica Davis – Violin and Art, [jdavis@omandela.org](mailto:jdavis@omandela.org)  
KaSheena Maxwell – Library and Technology,  
[nmaxwell@omandela.org](mailto:nmaxwell@omandela.org)

### Scholar Support

Liz Anderson – Speech Therapist, [landerson@omandela.org](mailto:landerson@omandela.org)  
Kerrie Ivey – Occupational Therapist, [kivey@omandela.org](mailto:kivey@omandela.org)  
Maurice Cotton – Teacher Support/Athletic Director,  
[mcotton@omandela.org](mailto:mcotton@omandela.org)  
Daniel Hernandez – Custodian, [dhernandez@omandela.org](mailto:dhernandez@omandela.org)  
Kwin Kunkle – Curriculum Support, [kkunkle@omandela.org](mailto:kkunkle@omandela.org)  
Bill McKay – Building /Maintenance Engineer,  
[bill.mckay@newstreetprop.biz](mailto:bill.mckay@newstreetprop.biz)  
Tamara Wharton – Spalding Certified Instructor/Teacher,  
[twharton@omandela.org](mailto:twharton@omandela.org)

All NME teachers, team members and volunteers who have direct and consistent contact with children have completed a background check.

### About NME

Nelson Mandela Elementary is a private, tuition-free K-5 elementary school located in North Omaha. The school is fully funded by the Lozier Foundation and The Ruth and William Scott Family Foundation. Mandela first opened its doors in 2015 after Dianne Lozier decided she wanted to create a unique school that would serve the community of North Omaha.

At Mandela, scholars experience a rigorous and advanced curriculum, year-round school, frequent recesses, restorative practices in the classroom, and data-driven interventions.

Team members at Mandela believe in a holistic education, in which scholars not only learn math, reading, and writing, but also skills that teach them to be the best versions of themselves, and Mandela families are deeply committed to engaging in the education of their scholars.

Learn more at:

<https://nelsonmandelaelementary.org/>

### Admission

NME admits scholars in kindergarten and in first grade, if space is available, at the discretion of the Head of School. Due to the rigor of the curriculum, including violin class, NME does not accept any scholars entering second, third, fourth, or fifth grade. Acceptance at NME is based on need and eligibility. NME will begin accepting pre-applications in early December. All interested families, including those with scholars enrolled at the Nelson Mandela Early Childhood Development Center, must fill out a pre-application to be considered for enrollment. The following qualifications are prioritized:

- Scholars who live within 1.5 miles of school

- Scholars who qualify for free/reduced lunch or Title XX
- Scholars who live in a single-parent household or with a non-parent as the primary care provider/custodial parent
- If one or both parents did not complete high school with a traditional four-year experience
- If the scholar has a sibling from the same household enrolled in NME
- Scholars whose families commit to partnering in their child's education

The state of Nebraska requires that an official certificate of birth be presented to the school and a copy be put in the child's file within 30 days from the time of admission. Nebraska State Education guidelines dictate that a Kindergartner must be 5 years old, and first graders must be 6 years old before July 31. NME adheres to these guidelines and require the scholars to be of age before June 1.

New scholars and parents/guardians requesting admission will participate in an interview before final registration can be completed. Registration forms are sent home in early spring to plan class membership for the coming school year. Forms are to be completed and returned by stated deadlines.

Scholars enrolling in NME for the first time, must present:

- An official, raised-seal birth certificate
- a health record which includes a history of vaccinations
- all forms and permissions presented at registration

Each school year begins in August. Nelson Mandela Elementary does not accept mid-year transfers.

### Application Process Timeline

- December: Pre-application available on NME website
- January: Interviewees selected based on pre-application scoring criteria
- February: Interviews with the NME Administration
- March: Acceptance and denial letters mailed home
- June: Accepted scholars begin Jump Start Program

Full details of the enrollment process are available at:

<https://nelsonmandelaelementary.org/enrollment/>

### Relationship to Early Childhood Development Center

Nelson Mandela Elementary (NME) and the Nelson Mandela Early Childhood Development Center (ECDC) belong to one Mandela Campus but are two separate programs. Acceptance into each program is based on need and eligibility and independent from the other. Scholars that attend the ECDC are not automatically granted admission to NME. All ECDC families are asked to fill out a pre-application and will be granted an interview. The NME admin team will consult the ECDC admin team about attendance and engagement hours, alongside the qualifications for enrollment (See 'Admission') to determine if the family is a good fit for NME.

## **Curriculum**

NME maintains a high-quality curriculum of study which includes Zearn Math, Spalding Reading, Literature, Spelling and Handwriting, Science, Social Studies, Physical Education, Music, Art, Library and Technology, and Health and Life Skills. NME also provides enrichment activities and regular field trips during the final term. Curriculum guides for review of specific subject areas are available in the office.

NME regularly offers Curriculum Nights to provide tools to families for how to support their scholars at home.

## **Special Services**

Certain services including Speech/Language Therapy and Occupational Therapy will be available at NME. Title I Am reading and/or Math; Audiology testing; and Psychological Academic testing are available to scholars at NME through the Omaha Public Schools. The OPS policy is that a parent or guardian who requests such a service should get the necessary forms from our school office and submit them through us so that eligibility can be determined.

## **Special Education**

Recognizing that individual differences exist among scholars, reasonable adjustments and accommodations will be made to help scholars develop skills affecting academic growth. When developmental delays (and behavioral impairments) exist to the degree that school adaptation is difficult, the school administrator, after consultation with parents/guardians, will initiate a referral to the appropriate agency or resource.

After diagnosis by qualified persons, suggestions for helping the scholar will be implemented by support personnel in the school. If this assistance does not result in significant progress within a specified time, the school administrator will assist parents/guardians in locating a more helpful educational situation for the scholar.

## **Parent/Guardian Disagreement with School Programs and Activities**

NME parents/guardians are always kept informed regarding the educational programs and activities offered at school for their children. If parents/guardians have questions or concerns regarding specific programs or activities, they should discuss their questions and concerns with the administration. If parents/guardians are seriously dissatisfied with an aspect of the school's programs or activities that have been approved by NME as integral to or in the best interest of the school's goals, they may wish to exercise their option of choosing another school for their child or children.

If serious dissatisfaction results in continued agitation on the part of parents/guardians, the administrator and the Board will assess the impact of such agitation, and after discussion of the matter with the parents/guardians, may exercise the school's prerogative to withdraw permission for enrollment of the child or children.

## **Resolution of Parent/Guardian Concerns**

Parents/guardians are asked to contact the appropriate teacher about any concerns they have regarding their children or their children's education. If their concerns are not resolved through

discussion with the teacher, the principal will meet with parents/guardians and teacher to assist in resolution of the concern.

Concerns are most effectively addressed and resolved when both speak from first-hand knowledge of events, remain open to and respectful of others' viewpoints, and focus the discussion on establishing the factual basis of the concern. Teachers are always encouraged to be sensitive to and responsive to the concern parents/guardians have for their children. Parents/guardians are encouraged to be trusting of the teacher's role as an authority essential to effective instruction of groups of scholars.

The principal is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the school, and in accordance with that responsibility, has authority to make final decisions relative to resolution of concerns. If a parent/guardian feels that their concern has not been given due attention or that the resolution of the concern is not in accord with the mission, goals, and objectives of the school, they may request further discussion with the Board.

## **Evaluation**

Omaha Program Evaluation Services evaluate our program for continuous improvement. This means we use external evaluators to assess children's learning and development, complete teacher ratings of children's progress, observe teachers and provide feedback on teaching practices, use surveys with team members and families, and look for ways to make services to children and families better. If you would like more information about the evaluation process, please contact your Site Director, the Executive Director, or our external evaluator, Dr. Lisa St. Clair of Omaha Program Evaluation Services at [Lstclair@omahaeval.org](mailto:Lstclair@omahaeval.org) or (402) 677-2684.

Nelson Mandela Elementary School values rigorous program evaluation of its delivery of high-quality elementary education.

Therefore, all scholars attending NME will be assessed regularly throughout the year and parents/guardians will be invited to rate NME and offer suggestions of its strengths and opportunities for improvement. Scholar assessment includes, but not limited to academic achievement, social emotional strengths, executive functioning (paying attention, using self-control, making friends), musical skills and engagement in school. Results about scholar progress are shared with parents/guardians informally throughout the year and formally during conferences.

## **Balanced Assessment Plan**

A balanced assessment plan serves to measure scholar achievement, to provide information for the improvement of teaching and learning, and to monitor the effectiveness of NME curriculum and instructional programs. Our balanced assessment plan includes the following assessments:

### **Norm-Referenced**

Assessments are required for all scholars at grades 3 and 5. Annual whole grade norm-referenced assessment is completed in the fall of the school year and fulfills the requirements set forth by the Nebraska Department of Education Rule 10 and Rule 14. NME administers the Woodcock Johnson to all scholars in the Fall.

### **Growth-focused**

NME utilizes the MAP (Measurement of Academic Progress) three times a year to plan specific instruction for each scholar.

### **On-Going Classroom Formative Process**

Formative assessment is a planned process in which teachers or scholars use assessment-based evidence to adjust teaching and learning. Such adjustments are an indispensable element of a balanced assessment plan to improve scholar learning. Teachers will integrate this on-going process including all types of classroom observations and assessments.

### **Reporting Results**

As required by Rule 10 and Rule 14, NME will report results of the norm-referenced assessment results to their local governing board.

### **Grade Reports**

The school's curriculum guides identify the knowledge and skills that scholars are expected to master, and teachers provide instructional experiences to assist the scholars in such mastery. Teachers assess

each scholar's level of performance on annual, nationally accepted tests that measure our children's performance to other students nation-wide and encourage each scholar to achieve to their maximum potential. Report cards are sent home at the end of each term.

Teachers also know that diligence and self-discipline are essential to academic success and the full realization of each scholar's potential. Parents/guardians who expect diligence and self-discipline of their scholars, who require development of good study habits, well-done assignments, and supplementary reading, greatly enable the academic achievement of their child.

### **Conferences**

Conferences are held at the end of the first grading period, in the middle of third grading period and the end of the fourth grading period. These are **required** and must be held at different time if the regularly scheduled conference date is a conflict. Additional conferences may be held at any time during the school year at the request of the parents/guardians and/or teachers. Parents/guardians can call the school office (402-991-1444) if they would like to schedule such a conference.

Non-custodial parents may attend regularly scheduled conferences and/or obtain a copy of any records of conferences unless the non-custodial parent is restricted by a legally binding instrument or court order. At the discretion of the Head of School, if either parent requests separate teacher conferences, arrangements will be made to accommodate such requests for the purpose of discussing scholar performance.

Scholars' cumulative records, containing grades, absence and tardy reports and standardized test results are kept in the school office. The school grants right of access to custodial parents/guardians and non-custodial parents in the same way unless a legally binding document has been received regarding the non-custodial parent that dictates otherwise. Transcripts needed at the time a scholar transfers from school or graduates are sent by the school office when an official release of records is received from the new school.

### **Confidentiality of Scholar Records**

Parents/guardians and non-custodial parents have the right to see the educational records of their children. Upon request, parents may view the records in the presence of the principal or their designate. Parents/guardians have the right to request removal of material, and if such request is denied, to add their own written statements in the record.

All requests to review records should be made in writing at least 48 hours in advance of the review.

### **Homework**

The educators at NME assign homework appropriate to the grade level of the scholar. Homework provides practice and drill that reinforces classroom learning, as well as opportunities for independent study, research, and creative thinking.

Parents/guardians can help their children by arranging a quiet, comfortable place for the scholars to work and by seeing that assignments are completed. Parents/guardians should review their scholar's homework folder, agenda, or Class Dojo account daily for information about assignments.

### **Study Skills**

A parent/guardian can help their child be aware of skills and techniques which make learning easier and more enjoyable. The following are scholar guidelines for achieving good study habits:

- Come to school prepared with pencil (pen), paper, and other necessary materials.
- Be an active participant in class. Listen well and take part in class.
- Ask questions to clarify problems.
- Plan your day and schedule time for homework.
- Use what is learned and apply it to new situations.
- Strive to do the best work possible.

Parents/guardians looking to supplement their scholar's learning may reach out to the scholar's teacher or visit our Academic Resources Page on the school website.  
<https://nelsonmandelaelementary.org/academic-resources/>

### **Internet Acceptable Use Policy**

Recognizing the need for scholars to develop search and discernment skills regarding digital information and communication technologies, NME is providing access to digital equipment and filtered internet for all scholars. To ensure all scholars receive the full educational value from this opportunity, the following guidelines have been set:

Improper use of technology will result in conversations with the administration. Judgment of improper use is made by the supervising adult. If improper use is accidental, scholars can inform the supervising adult of the problem. Consequences will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Listed below are some examples of improper use:

- Visiting an internet site with objectionable or inappropriate material.
- Choosing to use the digital equipment and/or Internet to transmit or view unauthorized

information, including hacking, accessing another person's documents and other unlawful activities,

- Plagiarism
- Not following copyright laws
- Use of social networking sites for noneducational purposes

Scholars may transfer documents, photos, and digital media to and from school and home. Scholars, however, should not expect that files stored on school-based computers will be private. Team members may review digital media to maintain system integrity and ensure that users are acting responsibly.

Personal electronic devices brought from home (cell phones, tablets, etc.) should remain in backpacks during the day unless they are for a specific school project. The school accepts no responsibility for lost or damaged items.

All digital products are the property of the school. The content may be used in web pages and for publicity purposes. Web pages designed and posted by the school team members and scholars will never have a scholar's full name. The school Facebook site may include pictures of classes and activities. Pictures will not be labeled or tagged with a scholar's name.

### **Awards**

Scholars receive special recognition from the school through a variety of awards. Teachers and parents/guardians are expected to promote these awards as an encouragement and an incentive for special effort and achievement by the scholars.

**Mantra Awards:** Awarded by teachers to scholars that demonstrate the values of the school mantra: hope, strength, service, unity, peace, and wisdom. One scholar per class is chosen every other week in relation to that week's Social/Emotional Learning (SEL) lesson. Scholars receive a certificate and pin.

**Scholar of the Month:** Awarded by teachers to scholars that excel in their demonstration of the school mantra values, academic effort, and school expectations. One scholar per class is chosen at the end of each month. Scholars receive a certificate and a Meerkat stuffed animal. Scholars that receive the award more than once may choose to receive a hoodie.

**Meerkat Tickets:** Awarded by team members to scholars who are "caught" demonstrating the school mantra values, academic effort, or school expectations. Scholars receive awards based on the number of tickets they have.

### **Library Materials Selection Policy**

Each scholar, through multiple activities designed to develop library skills, proper library etiquette and knowledge of how to utilize various media, will develop an appreciation of literature, reading, and writing through multiple activities. If a concern arises about a book in our collection, a form may be submitted for review by the library book section. The form is available from the librarian.

### **Books and Library**

All textbooks and workbooks are provided that include folktales, biographies, poetry, fiction, and other genres. The  
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school asks that every effort be made to protect scholar books. Scholars are individually responsible for lost or damaged books, including library books and must pay the replacement cost of these items if the books are damaged or lost. During 5<sup>th</sup> term, scholars will visit the Omaha Public Library and be responsible for checking out and returning books.

### **Field Trips**

Field trips are taken to enhance scholars' educational experience in a setting outside the classroom. Parents/guardians are asked to sign and return the required field trip permission form before their child is permitted to participate in a class or group field trip. These are sent home with the child several days before the trip is scheduled to occur. It is school policy that no scholar may leave school property without such written permission. Verbal permissions and written notes on paper other than the school's official form, cannot be accepted. Regular trips to Metro Community College have a blanket permission form that was signed during the registration process. A blanket permission form is also signed for all fifth term field trips.

### **Withdrawal from School – Parent/Guardian Request**

A letter of withdrawal should be written by the parent/guardian, informing the teacher and the administration, of any scholar who is withdrawing from NME. Teachers and team members will summarize the scholar's progress and prepare the scholar's file to forward to their next school.

### **Withdrawal from School – Administration**

NME strives to provide the best learning environment for all scholars. We understand that as a private school, we may not have all the resources necessary to best address the learning needs of all children. The administration may determine, after open communication and systemic dialogue with the family, that NME is not in the best interest of the scholar and work with the family to determine the best placement. NME will be sensitive to the timeframe for all involved parties and work with the family to ensure a smooth transition.

### **Attendance Policy**

Regular attendance by the scholars at school is essential for scholars to obtain the maximum opportunities from the education program. Parents/guardians and scholars alike are encouraged to ensure an absence from school is a necessary absence.

Parents/guardians should **always** inform the front office of any absences from school before notifying other team members. It is also a courtesy to inform teachers and Kids Can about anticipated absences.

NME will track a scholar's number of absences, verified or unverified (defined below). Regardless of verification status, the following procedures will be in place for excessive absenteeism:

5 absences: a letter or phone call from NME

10 absences: a family meeting or home visit with the Scholar and Family Support Team to provide needed support and set progress goals.

15-20 absences: a report will be made to the County Attorney and possible dismissal from NME.

Verified absence: An absence confirmed verbally by phone or from a parent/guardian with an explanation for the absence.

Unverified: No notification regarding an absence from a parent/guardian.

### **Tardy Policy**

Punctuality by scholars is essential for scholars to obtain the maximum opportunities from the education program. Parents/guardians are expected to bring scholars to school on time.

NME will track a scholar's number of tardies. The following procedures will be in place for excessive tardies:

5 tardies: a letter or phone call from NME

10 tardies: a family meeting or home visit with the Scholar and Family Support Team to provide needed support and set progress goals.

15-20 tardies: a report will be made to the County Attorney and possible dismissal from NME.

### **Authorized Dismissal from School**

A written request or advance phone call from the parent/guardian is required for a scholar to leave school before time of dismissal. The request must clearly state reason(s) for leaving early. Because of the grave danger involved, NME shall never release scholars to strangers or callers without using necessary precautions.

Children will not be released during the school day to anyone except the custodial parent/guardian unless permission is granted by the custodial parent/guardian. Any contacts by non-custodial parents with the child during the school day will be governed by the legally binding instrument or court order in effect unless the school has received permission from the custodial parent/guardian.

### **Arrival and Dismissal**

The school day at NME begins at 8:00 and ends at 3:30 for grades K-2 and 3:45 for grades 3-5. There is supervision on the school grounds before school in the morning starting at 7:00 a.m. The west door of the school opens at 7:00 a.m. and scholars may enter the building at that time. Scholars are tardy if they arrive after 8:00a.m. Children arriving late to school should be accompanied by an adult and stop at the office for a pass before being admitted to the classroom.

Regular school dismissal is at 3:30 for K-2, and 3:45 for 3-5. Parents are encouraged to avoid removing scholars from school early. Medical, dental, and other appointments should be scheduled on vacation days or after school.

Parents/guardians that arrive early are asked to park in the South Lot to avoid traffic congestion. Parents/guardians are welcome to remain in their vehicles for scholars escorted to

them. Parents/guardians may also walk up to the school and wait on the sidewalk; parents that do this are asked to park in the south lot to avoid congestion.

On time pick up is essential. Parents who are running late must, contact the school with their estimated arrival time. Habitual tardiness may result in dismissal from NME.

Due to staffing shortages, the after school program Kids Can has limited space. Applications for the program can be found at the front office. Once the program is full, scholars can be placed on a waiting list. Contact the Kids Can director for assistance.

Please use caution and drive slowly for the safety of everyone. It is the responsibility of school parents to inform others who may be picking up children of these regulations.

### **Traffic Flow on Campus**

With the assistance of parents/guardians and keeping the safety of our scholars as a primary objective, the administration has adopted several parking and driving policies for the NME campus:

- Parents/guardians are asked to follow all cones and the directions of NME team members at drop off and pick up times. For the safety of everyone, all parents/guardians, and visitors are asked to drive slowly throughout both the west and south parking lots.
- Parents/guardians are also asked to never park in along the curb of the school as it is a fire lane. This is true during the school day as well as for evening and weekend events at the school.
- Before school and at dismissal when picking up a child from school, parents/guardians or designated drivers will need to park in the south or west parking lots if they arrive early. This will prevent backups into traffic on the street.
- It is recommended that parents/guardians turn right onto Curtis Ave when exiting the west parking lot to avoid traffic backups.
- It is also recommended that parents/guardians turn right onto 30<sup>th</sup> street from Curtis Ave whenever possible to avoid traffic backups.

### **Visitors and Guests**

All visitors, including parents/guardians must report to the school office upon entering the building. The doors are kept locked during the day for the protection of the scholars and team members. Visitors and parents/guardians must ring the doorbell and identify themselves before the door will be automatically released to enter the building. Any visitor or parent/guardians that wishes to stay in the building will need to sign in, take their temperature, and receive a badge. The badge should be left at the office upon departure. Scholars must have prior, written approval from their parent/guardian, and the permission of their teacher and Head of School before bringing a guest to school for any part of the school day.

## Dress Code

NME has established a uniform and a dress code policy. It is the responsibility of the school professionals to enforce the policy. Parents/guardians are asked to reinforce the guidelines of the established dress code and encourage proper grooming habits for their children.

The dress code at NME serves several purposes:

- to promote a sense of community and pride within our school and individual scholars
- to provide a means for a child to associate dress with behavior
- to create an environment of uniformity and safety for all scholars
- to reduce clothing expenditures

The dress shall be:

- NME polo
  - Tie-dye t-shirt (5<sup>th</sup> term only)
- Khaki pants, shorts, or skorts
- NME sweaters or hoodies
  - White or black, non-patterned, long sleeve shirts, jackets, sweaters, or cardigans are also acceptable
- Close toed and heeled shoes
- Black or white socks or tights (may be worn year-round under shorts/skorts)
- Black or white undershirts

Polos, tie-dye t-shirts, khaki bottoms, NME sweaters, and NME hoodies must be purchased from NME. Socks, tights, and undershirts are not available for purchase at the school.

Scholars are asked to wear close-toed and heeled shoes for their safety and to avoid any shoe changes during the day that are not appropriate for indoor/outdoor activity.

If there is a uniform violation parents/guardians will receive a warning to fix the violation. After three warnings, the family will be asked to meet with the Scholar and Family Support Team to discuss barriers to proper dress and solutions for improvement.

The Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) will host a uniform drive at the beginning of each school year. Parents/guardians that do not wish to keep uniforms after a scholar has outgrown them are encouraged to donate gently used items with no stains, rips, or tears to the school. These items will be offered at the PAC-sponsored uniform drive free of charge.

Donating gently used uniforms does not count as a donation for engagement hours. Instead, families can choose to anonymously "adopt a scholar" and donate the necessary funds to provide a scholar in need with a new set of uniforms (two tops, two bottoms, and a hoodie or sweater). Interested families should contact the front office to add their name to a list. They will be contacted when the need arises.

## Lost and Found

A "lost and found" is in the cafeteria. Scholars are asked to check there when items are missing. Parents/guardians are also

encouraged to come in and check for any lost clothing or personal items. All remaining items left in "Lost and Found" are donated at the end of December and May. Please label all uniform items and jackets to ensure quick return when lost.

## Engagement Hours

NME is unique in many ways, and one of the most unique factors is its emphasis on family engagement. The Mandela team firmly supports this and the research that links scholar success with family engagement.

All scholars are admitted with the requirement the family will complete and log 25 hours of engagement by the end of the fifth term each school year, and the end of fourth term for 5<sup>th</sup> grade.

Engagement is broken down into three categories: Academic, Community, and Extracurricular (ACE). Families are required to complete a minimum of 5 hours in each category for a total of 15 ACE hours. The remaining 10 hours are flex hours and can be completed in any of the three ACE categories.

Families with a scholar at both NME and the Early Childhood Development Center (ECDC) are required to complete 40 total hours of engagement. They must complete 15 ACE hours in each building, and 10 additional flex hours from any ACE category.

Families that do not complete and log their 25 hours will be put on a probation list and asked to complete a minimum of 7 hours before October of the following school year. They will also be asked to have a meeting with the NME admin team to devise a strategy for improvement. Failure to demonstrate significant improvement may result in removal from Nelson Mandela Elementary. It may also impact future enrollment of siblings, recommendations for schools post-Mandela, or scholarships offered by the Lozier Foundation after graduation from Mandela.

Engagement hours will be tracked on an electronic platform that can be accessed at <https://omandela.galaxydigital.com/> or by visiting <https://nelsonmandelaelementary.org/volunteer/>

Once an account is created, each family will be added to a group under their scholar's name and be able to track their own hours. All volunteer opportunities will be posted to this site. Any questions about engagement hours can be directed to the Volunteer Coordinator, Ms. Myroniuk, at 402-991-1444, on Class Dojo, or at [amyroniuk@omandela.org](mailto:amyroniuk@omandela.org).

## Volunteers

All volunteers play an important role in our school programs, whether they're parents/guardians, other family members, or members from the community. All volunteers who work directly with scholars should remember to respect the privacy of scholars. Events witnessed while volunteering in a classroom or with individual scholars should never be the topic of general discussions with friends or acquaintances. If a concern is raised due to something a volunteer witnesses, the volunteer should go directly to the teacher responsible for the activity or the

Head of School to discuss the matter. It is essential for the smooth operation of the school that volunteers cooperate fully with the administration and faculty when carrying out any duties related to the volunteer's school activities.

Volunteers are considered extensions of the professional team members at NME. Professional and appropriate behavior and dress is expected of all who assist us in our education of children. All volunteers who have direct and regular contact with scholars are required to complete a background check.

### **Communication**

Class DOJO and the school website will be the primary mode of communication between the school and families. A weekly newsletter containing school announcements and scholar/parent/guardian information will also be posted on Class DOJO and the school's website every Monday and sent home with scholars. Short letters or notices of events will also be advertised on Class DOJO.

Attendance calls, and important updates and reminders will be sent via School Messenger. It is mandatory for all parents to opt-in at the beginning of the school year for timely communication from NME.

The NME Facebook and Instagram pages regularly posts photos of happenings at Mandela.

Website: [nelsonmandelaelementary.org](http://nelsonmandelaelementary.org)

Facebook: [facebook.com/NelsonMandelaElementary](https://www.facebook.com/NelsonMandelaElementary)

### **Emergency Information**

In case of emergency each scholar is required to have on file at the school office the following information:

- Parent or guardian name.
- Complete and current address.
- Home phone and parent/guardian work phone.
- Emergency phone number of friend or relative.
- Physician's name and phone number.
- Medical alert information.

Parents/guardians must keep the school office informed regarding any changes in this information throughout the school year. Failure to do this prevents an immediate response to emergency needs of your children.

### **School Calendar**

A school administrator will develop an annual calendar that:

- Provides an optimum number of instructional days in recognition of the direct correlation between instructional time and scholar learning
- Fulfills, as minimum, state, and applicable accrediting agency requirements
- Gives priority to number of instructional days regardless of length of the school day

Families will be given a copy of the school calendar at Back to School Night. They can also access the calendar by visiting:

<https://nelsonmandelaelementary.org/calendar/>

### **Weather Cancellation of School**

If the case of severe weather, an automated message will be sent to inform parents of any school cancellations. NME will not utilize remote learning on cold weather or snow days. NME will make every effort to inform families in a timely manner so they can plan for childcare if necessary.

Parents/guardians always have the option of not sending children to school on a day when inclement weather is developing or has been forecast. Such absences are treated as any other absence, under the guidelines and policies stated in the handbook. If a tornado warning (not a watch and the tornado or civil defense sirens are blowing or have already done so and the all-clear has not sounded) is in effect, during a regular dismissal time, scholars will be retained in the basement of the school until it is deemed safe for them to leave.

### **Health Services**

*NME partners with College of St. Mary's and CHI for health care services. Health services provided by NME beyond those mandated by State Law are subject to time and budget constraints.*

Admission of children; kindergarten or beginner grade; evidence of physical examination; visual evaluation, and grade appropriate immunizations.

No child is admitted before reaching the age of five, unless certain requirements are met. A physical examination is required for school entry and at seventh-grade. Qualified providers are physicians, physician assistants, and advanced practice registered nurses. Also required for school entry is a visual evaluation, consisting of testing for amblyopia, strabismus, internal and external eye health, and testing sufficient to determine visual acuity. The cost is borne by the parent/guardian.

The school board of each school including each private, denominational, or parochial school shall cause scholars to be immunized prior to enrollment. Any scholar who does not comply shall not be permitted to continue in school until he or she complies. A record of immunization must be on the permanent health records of the scholar's cumulative school record. Current health records must be maintained by the school office; the school nurse or school health chairperson may periodically request updated information to revise your scholar's health record.

Mandatory screening for vision, hearing, height, and weight is completed each year in cooperation with CHI and the CSM School of Nursing. Recommendation for further examination or follow up is made to parents/guardians of scholars who show a need. Parents will be notified in advance when these procedures are to be held.

The following communicable diseases require exclusion from school, but do not require a written note from a physician:

- Chicken pox (scholar should not return to school until at least 6 days after eruption).

- German measles (scholar should not return to school until at least 5 days after the rash disappears).
- Mumps (scholar should not return to school until at least 9 days after the swelling disappears)
- All other communicable diseases and contagious skin diseases require that a child have a written release from a physician before returning to school.

Temporary exclusion is recommended when:

- The illness prevents the scholar from participating comfortably in activities as observed by the team members
- The illness results in a greater need for care than the team members can provide without compromising their ability to care for other scholars
- The scholar has the following conditions:
  - Lethargy
  - Lack of responsiveness
  - Irritability
  - Persistent crying
  - Difficulty breathing
  - Vomiting
  - Diarrhea
  - A quickly spreading rash
  - Skin eruptions
  - Sore throat
  - Earache
  - Discharge from the nose,
  - Eye infection
  - Fever above 100.4 degrees

Any time a scholar is sent home for vomiting or diarrhea it is the expectation that the scholar remains home for a minimum of 24 hours since the last episode of vomiting or diarrhea. If a scholar has a fever of 100.4 or greater, the scholar cannot return for 24 hours fever free without the use of fever reducing medication.

If a child becomes ill or complains of consistent discomfort during the school day, the school will call the parent/guardian at home or workplace. Please keep your emergency contacts up to date.

In the event that you have questions regarding sending your scholar to school, please call the office and you will be directed to the nurse.

For more information about the control of communicable diseases, visit:  
[http://www.sos.ne.gov/rules-and-regs/regsearch/Rules/Health\\_and\\_Human\\_Services\\_System/Title-173/Chapter-03.pdf](http://www.sos.ne.gov/rules-and-regs/regsearch/Rules/Health_and_Human_Services_System/Title-173/Chapter-03.pdf)

To be excused from Physical Education class, a written request from the parent or guardian is required. In cases of frequent or prolonged absences from physical education, the school requires a current, written recommendation from a physician.

### COVID-19 Health Policy For 22-23 School Year

*Subject to change based upon most current Directed Health Measures (DHM) from Douglas County Health Department and the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services*

### COVID-19 Requirements for Screening, Exclusion, and Re-Admittance of Ill Scholars and Staff in Schools

The following is REQUIRED under Nebraska's current Directed Health Measures:

Scholars and staff with any (1) of the following symptoms shall immediately isolate in the designated area and will be sent home as soon as possible:

- New cough
- New onset of shortness of breath
- New loss of taste or smell

Scholars and staff with two (2) or more of the following symptoms will be sent home as soon as possible, be required to wear a cloth or surgical mask over nose and mouth while waiting, if tolerated, and isolate in the designated area:

- Fever 100.4 F. or above
- Chills
- Muscle aches
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Fatigue

Symptomatic Staff /scholars who **tests positive**:

Exclude until: - At least 5\* days have passed since first symptoms AND - At least 24 hours have passed since last fever without the use of fever reducing medications AND - Symptoms have improved

Symptomatic staff /scholars who **tests negative**:

Exclude until: - At least 24 hours have passed since last fever without the use of fever reducing medications (or meets the school's requirements for readmission) AND - Symptoms have improved AND - Student has completed quarantine, if required due to an exposure to a positive COVID-19 case

Symptomatic staff /scholars **not tested**:

Exclude until: -At least 5\* days have passed since first symptoms AND - At least 24 hours have passed since last fever without the use of fever reducing medications AND - Symptoms have improved.

*May return to school if a doctor establishes an alternative diagnosis, provides a return to school note, and the student meets the school's requirements for readmission.*

\*This length of time may need to be extended for people who have severe illness or are immunocompromised. Please consult your health care provider for further guidance on those situations.

Asymptomatic staff /scholars who test positive: Exclude until: - At least 5\* days have passed since the positive test AND - only allow to return if no symptoms develop. (If symptoms develop, refer to symptomatic positive instructions.)

Note: A COVID-19 positive individual does not need a repeat COVID-19 test or a doctor's note in order to return.

For the full list of procedures followed during COVID-19, please visit <https://nelsonmandelaelementary.org/coronavirus-covid-19-information/>.

### **Medication Administration**

The following guidelines are the recommended policy and procedures for distribution of medication to scholars during the school day taken from the State Department of Education and the State Health Department.

Any scholar requiring medication during school hours shall comply with the school's medication policy and procedures outlined below. A written physician's order and parental permission must be provided by the parent/guardian when a scholar must receive medication at school. This medication order must be renewed each school year.

Physicians should be consulted regarding the timing of medication. Some prescriptions can be written to eliminate the need for giving medication during school hours.

When a scholar must take medication during school hours the following guidelines will be applied:

- Medication orders are good for the school year they are written (including 5th term following the regular school year). Medication orders must be renewed every school year unless they are written on/after March 1st of any school year. In these instances – the medication order will be good for the school year in which it was written AND for the following school year. Expired medication will not be accepted and/or dispensed by the school nurse or designated trained staff.
- The parent/guardian shall provide a written, signed, and dated permission statement requesting medication be administered during school hours. This form is available in the school office
- A current, signed physician's order must be provided by the parent/guardian. In the case of a short-term prescription medication (i.e., an antibiotic) a currently dated prescription bottle detailing instructions may serve as the physician's order.
- Medication must be brought to school in its original container. Prescribed medication must be labeled with the scholar's name, date prescribed, name of medication, dosage and time medication is to be taken, and physician's name. Pharmacies can divide prescription into two bottles – one for school and one for home
- It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to see that the medication arrives at school safely. All

medication that a child needs to take during the day should be brought to the school office and dispensed by office personnel

- Medications are given by a member of the school personnel selected by the Head of School and instructed in the appropriate methods of administering medications
- Over the counter medication (i.e. aspirin, non-aspirin pain relievers, cold tablets, cough drops, anti-acid tablets, etc.) cannot be administered without written permission from a doctor. It must arrive at school in an original container accompanied by written instructions regarding dosage, date, and time the medication should be taken.
- Controlled medication is stored in a locked cabinet. Inhalers and epi-pens are not locked away. NME reserves the right to limit the amount of medication stored at school
- CSM assists in teaching proper medication administration techniques, benefits, and side effects of medication
- A written record is kept of all medication administered during the school day
- All medications not picked up will be properly disposed of at the end of the school year or when the scholar is no longer enrolled in the school

### **Life-Threatening Asthma or Systemic Allergic Reactions (Anaphylaxis)**

NME has adopted the Emergency Response to Life-Threatening Asthma or Systemic Allergic Reactions (Anaphylaxis) protocol mandated by the Nebraska Board of Education in Rule 59. Trained responders will be available to provide an EpiPen injection and Albuterol nebulizer treatment to ANY scholar or school team member should an emergency arise in the school building while school is in session. A copy of the mandated protocol is available in the school office for review.

IMPORTANT: The emergency EpiPen and Albuterol are not intended to replace a scholar's own prescribed medications for asthma/allergy control and management. Parents are expected to ensure their scholars have inhalers, EpiPen, etc. available at school and have an Asthma/Allergy Action Plan or emergency medical plan on file with the school and the medication orders must be renewed every school year, unless they are written on/after March 1st of any school year. In these instances – the medication order will be good for the school year in which it was written AND for the following school year.

### **Self-Administration of Medication**

Occasionally, a scholar's parent or guardian will request that the scholar be allowed to self-manage their medical condition while at school and during school-related activities. In such instances, the school will adhere to the following steps:

- Require and receive a written request from the scholar's parent or guardian that the scholar be allowed to self-manage their medical condition. See Appendix for agreement

- Develop, with the scholar's parent or guardian, along with the scholar's physician, a medical management plan for the scholar for the current school year.

This plan must:

- Identify the health care services the scholar may receive at school relating to such condition
- Evaluate the scholar's understanding of and ability to self-manage their medical condition
- Permit regular monitoring of the scholar's self-management of their medical condition by an appropriately credentialed health care professional
- Be signed by the scholar's parent or guardian and the physician response for treatment of the scholar's medical condition
- The medical management plan must be kept on file at the school
- The scholar's parent or guardian must sign the attached Release and Indemnification form before the scholar can self-administer his or her medical condition
- Once the medical management plan is in place, the scholar shall be allowed to self-manage their medical condition on school grounds, during any school-related activity, or in any private location specified in the plan

If the school determines that the scholar has endangered themselves or others through the misuse of such medical supplies for self-management, it may prohibit the scholar from possessing the necessary medical supplies to manage their medical condition, or place other necessary and appropriate restrictions or conditions on the scholar's self-management. In addition, the scholar may be subject to discipline. The school shall promptly notify the parent or guardian of any prohibition, restriction, or condition imposed, as well as any disciplinary action taken against the scholar.

### **State of Nebraska Health Regulations**

NME will utilize the current edition of the state of Nebraska health regulations for schools and implement those applicable to private schools (See Title 92 – Nebraska Department of Education, Chapter 59 – Regulations for School Health and Safety).

### **Scholar Health Records**

Health records as mandated by the state, will be kept for every child. These records will be sent to the next school upon the scholars' transfer.

### **Healthy School Environment/Wellness Policy**

NME recognizes schools play a critical role in creating a healthy environment for the prevention of childhood obesity and combating problems associated with poor nutrition and lack of physical activity. This policy requires all members of the school and community to maintain an environment that enhances maximum scholar potential. The full Wellness Policy is available at <https://nelsonmandelaelementary.org/parent-information-2/>.

## **Nutrition Education**

The primary goal of nutrition education is to influence scholars' eating behaviors. NME will promote nutrition education throughout a scholars' educational program. Nutrition education is incorporated into a variety of curriculum areas. These curriculum experiences provide the knowledge and skills necessary to make healthy food choices for a lifetime.

### **Nutrition Standards**

Scholars' lifelong health and nutritious eating habits are greatly influenced by the types and choices of foods and beverages available to them. School reimbursable meals meet the federal program requirements and nutrition standards.

### **Breakfast and Lunch**

NME participates in the United States Department of Agriculture's school breakfast and lunch program. Scholars will have the opportunity to eat a grab and go breakfast in their classrooms. Scholars will go through the lunch line at designated, staggered times and eat in the café. Scholars are welcome to bring their own lunch to school.

The lunch and breakfast menu will regularly be posted on the school website, Class Dojo, and on the back of the school newsletter.

Scholars are not allowed to bring candy, pop, or snacks to school. If scholars opt to bring their own lunches, snacks are allowed, but they are not permitted to bring candy, pop, or extra snacks to consume outside of their lunch period. Teachers/team members will provide allergy-safe snacks to scholars during the school day.

Scholars may not eat lunches prepared by commercial vendors during the school lunch period unless accompanied by a parent/guardian.

If a parent/guardian would like to eat the school lunch with their scholar, the cost is \$4.50, and the front office must be notified before 9:00 a.m.

The lunchroom supervisors discourage any wastefulness of food and encourage scholars to try a wide variety of foods.

### **Medical Nutritional Standards**

When a meal accommodation is medically necessary because the requested accommodation cannot be achieved within the federal meal pattern requirements for school meals (SP59-2016) a designated form called a Medical Statement must be completed by a State Licensed Health Care Professional. ONLY this form is acceptable. If your scholar needs a medical meal accommodation due to severe allergies/anaphylaxis the Medical Statement form must be requested from the school office, completed by the State Licensed Health Care Professional and submitted back to the school. This form is then sent to Westside Schools for approval and accommodation. Please allow 10 business days before the meal accommodation is received at NME. Parent/guardian will be notified of meal accommodation implementation date. Prior to notification, it is necessary that breakfast and lunch is provided from home.

## **Physical Activity**

The primary goals are to offer opportunities for scholars to experience a variety of physical activities and to teach the value of a consistent fitness program for better health, academic success, and general personal well-being. NME will promote opportunities for physical activity throughout the school day and during existing after-school programs. Physical activity, health and fitness education are incorporated throughout a scholars' educational program.

### **Other School-Based Activities**

Schools are encouraged to promote school environments which provide consistent wellness messages that are conducive to healthy eating and being physically active.

Classroom treats should not include snacks that may contain peanut or tree nuts or packaged in a facility in which the snack may have come in contact with a tree nut or peanut. An allergy safe snack list will be sent home for acceptable safe snacks for all scholars but in particular this list will be sent home in specific classrooms in which a severe allergy causing anaphylaxis is known.

### **Parties**

Classroom parties are held at the discretion and direction of the classroom teacher. Parents/guardians must contact the classroom teacher to coordinate the appropriate drop off time. Treats will not be accepted unless a parent/guardian has coordinated with the classroom teacher. It is requested that birthday treats be limited to simple snacks that are individually wrapped and healthy. We suggest popcorn, fruits, vegetables, fruit snacks, granola bars or other healthy options.

Parents have the option to order a special treat of popcorn and cookies from Ms. Bell at the cost of \$5.00.

### **Nondiscrimination Statement**

NME expressly prohibits any form of unlawful discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, or disability.

### **Bullying/Harassment**

Nelson Mandela Elementary believes that all scholars have a right to a safe and healthy school environment. The school, home, and community have an obligation to promote mutual respect, tolerance, and acceptance. Nelson Mandela Elementary will not tolerate behavior that infringes on the safety of any scholar. A scholar shall not intimidate, harass, or bully another scholar through words or actions. Such behavior includes direct physical contact, such as hitting or shoving; verbal assaults, such as teasing or name-calling; and social isolation or manipulation.

Nelson Mandela Elementary expects scholars and/or team members to immediately report incidents of bullying. Team members who witness such acts take immediate steps to intervene when safe to do so. Each complaint of bullying should be promptly investigated. This policy applies to scholars on school grounds, while traveling to and from school or a school-sponsored activity, during the lunch period, whether on or off campus, and during a school-sponsored activity.

To ensure bullying does not occur at school, NME will provide team members development training in bullying prevention

and cultivate acceptance and understanding in all scholars and team members to build each school's capacity to maintain a safe and healthy learning environment.

Teachers should discuss this policy with their scholars in age-appropriate ways and should assure them that they need not endure any form of bullying. Any scholar who engages in bullying may be subject to disciplinary action.

If the complainant scholar or the parent/guardian of the scholar feels that appropriate resolution of the investigation or complaint has not been reached, the scholar or the parent/guardian of the scholar should contact the principal. Nelson Mandela Elementary prohibits retaliatory behavior against any complainant or any participant in the complaint process.

The procedures for intervening in bullying behavior include, but are not limited, to the following:

- All team members, scholars and their parents/guardians will receive a summary of this policy prohibiting intimidation and bullying: at the beginning of the school year, as part of the family handbook
- The school will make reasonable efforts to keep a report of bullying and the results of investigation confidential
- Team members who witness acts of bullying shall take immediate steps to intervene when safe to do so. People witnessing or experiencing bullying are strongly encouraged to report the incident; such reporting will not reflect on the target or witnesses in any way

### **Drills**

Class Dojo and the Monday Meerkat newsletter will be utilized to notify parents/guardians of drills. NME will make every effort to give advance notice of drills.

### **Fire Drill**

Fire drills are scheduled to occur once a month, but also contingent on weather. We will notify parents/guardians of upcoming fire drills whenever possible.

Detailed escape plans are posted in each classroom and the children practice with their teacher before an actual drill is planned. Two rules are followed:

- walk to the planned exit
- remain silent during the drill

These drills are important for the safety and well-being of all children. To prepare scholars as best we can, we suggest parents/guardians discuss the importance of safety and drills at home with scholars.

### **Evacuation Drill**

In the event that an evacuation is deemed necessary, NME will evacuate to Trinity Lutheran Church located at 6340 N 30th St, Omaha, NE 68111. The evacuation drill will be practiced once per school year.

### **Disaster Drill**

The disaster drill will take place once during the second half of the school year. The warning signal is five intermittent buzzer sounds. Silence and order must be maintained during a disaster drill. Detailed escape routes for disaster situations are posted in each classroom.

### **Lockdown Drill**

We will practice lockdown drill so that we are prepared to respond to a crisis in the neighborhood or the school. Our goal is to practice the lockdown drill at least once per term. These are at the recommendation of the Omaha Police Department. We will prepare the scholars and notify you in advance of the drills.

See Appendix for Standard Response Protocol diagram.

### **Drugs, Alcohol, and Tobacco**

NME is bound by the laws of Nebraska regarding the use of alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drugs. State laws and school policy strictly prohibit the use, evidence of use, or possession and/or transfer of narcotics, depressants, stimulants, hallucinogens, look-a-like pills of any type, alcohol, tobacco, or possession of drug related paraphernalia anywhere on school property or at any school-sponsored activity. The school may suspend or expel a scholar for engaging in such activity. Legal authorities (police) will be notified. If a chemical dependency evaluation is recommended, a scholar and parent or guardian must comply with the request for an evaluation and school access to the results, or expulsion will automatically be sought. If the evaluation recommends specific steps to be taken, the scholar and parent or guardian must comply with those recommendations for the scholar to remain at NME.

### **Asbestos Statement**

In compliance with AHERA regulations we hereby notify you that: Asbestos containing materials do exist in the buildings designated as NME. These materials are kept in good repair. These areas undergo an inspection every three years. The operations and maintenance plan are followed, and the areas receive surveillance every 6 months. The official management plan is available for your inspection in the school office.

### **Valuables**

The school authorities and team members cannot be responsible for valuables which scholars bring to school. It is recommended that scholars leave all valuables at home. If special circumstances make it necessary for a scholar to bring substantial cash or other important possessions to school, these items can be safeguarded by registering them and leaving them in the school office.

### **Vandalism**

Our school building and school equipment is school property. Willfully damaging or destroying this property is cause for an immediate meeting. The school requires that vandal damage be paid for before a scholar can return to class, or arrangements have been made for payment with school authorities. Any scholar writing on desks or walls, who has lost or damaged books, or has damaged any part of the building or items belonging to the school shall be responsible to pay for damages or replacement.

### **Weapons Policy**

State laws and school policy strictly prohibit the possession of any weapon judged to be harmful or dangerous to the person or others on school property. The following are examples of instruments ordinarily or generally considered weapons: knives of all types, guns, lead pipes, chains, chuck-sticks, throwing stars, darts, metal knuckles, blackjacks, unauthorized tools, fireworks, explosives, or other chemicals. An ordinary object utilized in a harmful manner is also prohibited. Any scholar who violates this rule will be immediately dismissed from school and referred to the appropriate authorities. Further disciplinary action will be taken after consultation with parents/guardians and school authorities. Parents, guardians, and guests are also prohibited from having these weapons on campus.

### **Cooperation and Other Governmental Agents Requesting Access to Scholars**

In all cases where Law Enforcement Personnel enter a school building to interview or apprehend a scholar, the school shall follow the procedures set forth below. Law Enforcement Personnel shall include police officers, fire officials, and employees of the Nebraska Health and Human Services Department.

### **Arrival of Law Enforcement Personnel**

Law Enforcement Personnel desiring to interview or apprehend a scholar shall inform the Head of School and state the nature of the inquiry or investigation.

### **Scholar Interviews**

In cases where Law Enforcement Personnel wish to interview a scholar, the Head of School shall make the scholar available and provide the Interviewing Officer a room where the scholar may be interviewed. The scholar's parent or legal guardian shall be contacted and present during the interview unless otherwise directed by the Interviewing Officer. In instances where the parent or legal guardian is not notified, or is unavailable, the Head of School (or designee) shall remain present during the interview unless otherwise directed by the Interviewing Officer.

### **Notification**

In all cases where a scholar is interviewed by Law Enforcement Personnel without the knowledge of the scholar's parent or legal guardian, the Head of School shall immediately contact the scholar's parent or legal guardian and advise them of the interview unless otherwise directed by the Interviewing Officer. In all cases where a scholar is taken into custody and removed from school premises, the Head of School shall promptly notify the scholar's parent or legal guardian. In all cases where a scholar is interviewed or apprehended, the Head of School shall notify the President of Board of the incident and the procedures followed by the school.

### **Documentation**

In all cases where Law Enforcement Personnel have interviewed a scholar or taken a scholar into custody, the Head of School shall document the date and time of the incident, the identity of the Law Enforcement Personnel (including badge number, if applicable), and the procedures followed by the school.

### **Custody Procedures**

NME will honor all legal rights for custodial parents, legal guardians, and non-custodial parents. The school must have a copy of all relevant court documents if there are changes in custody status or restrictions to the rights of a parent/guardian in the scholar's life.

### **Release of Scholar Information**

The principal is the only school official who can authorize release of directory information to outside parties. Scholar and parent/guardian name, addresses and phone numbers are printed in the scholar directory which is distributed to all school families. Parents/guardians who do not wish their directory information published must notify the principal in writing prior to the beginning of the school year.

### **Scholar Files**

NME complies with the provisions of the Buckley Amendment.

Official scholar files will contain only:

- academic transcript
- attendance record
- records of educational or related testing
- emergency information
- required health information

All information contained in the official scholar file should be factual and not observational.

### **School Pictures**

NME contracts annually to have scholar pictures taken. All scholars, faculty, and parents/guardians have their pictures taken. Parents/guardians are welcome to bring younger siblings of scholars at a specified time to be determined by the school.

### **Media Access to Scholars**

Whenever NME is involved with outside media agents, those representatives will only be allowed to interview scholars at school with the written permission of the parents/guardians. All other digital media including pictures, videos, social media, and the website can be only used with written parent/guardian permission which is obtained upon acceptance to NME.

### **Use of School Building**

Due to liability concerns, Nelson Mandela Elementary will not loan, rent or lease space in the school to outside entities.

### **Behavior Management Plan**

NME uses the Multi-Tiered System of Support for Behavior (MTSS-B) in all disciplinary procedures. This system is believed to foster positive relationships, emotional health, and behavior,

while also increasing academic success. Under this model, there are targeted interventions for behavioral infractions instead of suspensions. Team members are asked to communicate universal expectations to all scholars, and if these expectations are not followed, the administration will lead any necessary action.

We have adopted a "Take 5" Model that we encourage parents and guardians to use at home to keep school and home consistent. This model encourages scholars to reflect and come up with a solution for improved behavior, a "closure". The emphasis of this system is to encourage children to own their behavior and then control it independently. The process ALWAYS begins with a statement of support.

If a child creates a closure, and then has a difficult time following through on fixing the problem, they will go to the office to have time to create a better solution, or to get help from the administration. If these behaviors continue parents/guardians may be called to meet at the school and create a plan together. See Appendix for full model.

To reinforce expected behaviors, NME uses Meerkat Tickets, which are given to scholars who demonstrate behaviors that are safe, respectful, and responsible. Scholars are rewarded with various prizes based on the number of tickets they have.

### **Unauthorized Articles**

Common sense and consideration are the best guide in determining whether to bring personal possessions to school. In general, scholars should not bring toys, candy, games, money, or electronic devices to school. Such items may be removed from the scholar's possession if deemed a distraction to the classroom learning environment.

### **Support Services**

NME offers family and scholar support through our school counselor, Mrs. Wells, Monday-Friday, from 8:00-4:00 and by appointment. NME also offers counseling services on a part time basis through a partnership with Project Harmony and Charles Drew. The counselors are licensed, professional mental health practitioners who works with children and families on behavioral and systemic issues. Parent/guardian requests for counseling should be directed through the school counselor.

### **Child Abuse Reporting Requirements**

We care for the safety and well-being of all scholars. All NME team members are mandatory reporters and will notify Child Protective Service and Law Enforcement officials if they suspect a child has been subject to abuse or neglect.

## Appendix

[Release and Indemnification Agreement](#)

[Standard Response Protocol](#)

[Take 5 Diagram](#)

**Release and Indemnification Agreement**

(Self-Administration of Diabetic Condition)

\_\_\_\_\_ Name of Parent or Guardian

hereby acknowledge that \_\_\_\_\_ Name of School

(including school's employees and agents) is not liable for any injury or death arising out of the self-management by \_\_\_\_\_ of their Name of Scholar

diabetic condition and I \_\_\_\_\_ hereby Name of Parent or Guardian

indemnify and hold \_\_\_\_\_ (including Name of School

its employees and agents) from any claim arising from the scholar's self-management. If \_\_\_\_\_ injures personnel or another scholar Name of Scholar

because of misuse of the prescription asthma or anaphylaxis medication or related medical supplies, the undersigned shall be responsible for all costs associated with the injury.

\_\_\_\_\_ Date/ Parent or Guardian

# Standard Response Protocol



## STUDENT SAFETY

A critical ingredient in the safe school recipe is the classroom response to an incident at school. Weather events, fire, accidents, intruders and other threats to student safety are scenarios that are planned and trained for by students, teachers, staff and administration.

## SRP

Our school is expanding the safety program to include the Standard Response Protocol (SRP). The SRP is based on these four actions. Lockout, Lockdown, Evacuate and Shelter. In the event of an emergency, the action and appropriate direction will be called on the PA.

**LOCKOUT** - "Secure the Perimeter"

**LOCKDOWN** - "Locks, Lights, Out of Sight"

**EVACUATE** - "To the Announced Location"

**SHELTER** - "For a Hazard Using a Safety Strategy"

## TRAINING

Please take a moment to review these actions. Students and staff will be trained and the school will drill these actions over the course of the school year. More information can be found at <http://iloveguys.org>

**LOCKOUT  
SECURE THE PERIMETER**  
Lockout is called when there is a threat or hazard outside of the school building.



### STUDENTS:

- Return to inside of building
- Do business as usual

### TEACHERS

- Recover students and staff from outside building
- Increased situational awareness
- Do business as usual
- Take roll, account for students

## LOCKDOWN LOCKS, LIGHTS, OUT OF SIGHT

Lockdown is called when there is a threat or hazard inside the school building.



### STUDENTS:

- Move away from sight
- Maintain silence

### TEACHERS:

- Lock classroom door
- Lights out
- Move away from sight
- Maintain silence
- Wait for First Responders to open door
- Take roll, account for students

## EVACUATE TO A LOCATION

Evacuate is called to move students and staff from one location to another.



### STUDENTS:

- Bring your phone
- Leave your stuff behind
- Form a single file line
- Show your hands
- Be prepared for alternatives during response.

### TEACHERS:

- Grab roll sheet if possible
- Lead students to Evacuation Location
- Take roll, account for students

## SHELTER FOR A HAZARD USING SAFETY STRATEGY

Shelter is called when the need for personal protection is necessary.



### SAMPLE HAZARDS:

- Tornado
- Hazmat

### SAMPLE SAFETY STRATEGIES:

- Evacuate to shelter area
- Seal the room

### STUDENTS:

- Appropriate hazards and safety strategies

### TEACHERS:

- Appropriate hazards and safety strategies
- Take roll, account for students



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## Take 5 Diagram



### **Step 1: Support**

Make a statement of support recognizing something positive about the scholar.

### **Step 2: Expectation**

State the expectation for behavior. Be specific.

### **Step 3: Breakdown**

Break down the expectation into smaller pieces that the child can understand.

### **Step 4: Benefit**

Discuss how/ why following this expectation will benefit the child personally.

### **Step 5: Closure**

Ask the child how he or she can fix it and what help is needed to make that happen.



**Signed copy on file in the school office.**

Parent/Guardian Agreement

The **mission** of the Nelson Mandela Elementary is to provide quality instruction that demonstrates all scholars can learn and develop academically, emotionally, socially, and physically. Nelson Mandela Elementary is committed to maximizing the educational success of all scholars and bridging learning and achievement gaps.

**Nelson Mandela Elementary agrees to fulfill its mission by:**

- Using multi-sensory, evidence based educational curricula and frameworks
- Addressing each child’s individual learning needs
- Setting high academic and behavior expectations
- Providing a safe, positive environment
- Employing committed, caring and well-trained educators and providing ongoing professional development
- Partnering with parents and the community to strengthen the educational experience for all learners

**Important Agreements**

1. I/we are partners in education and will be expected to be a part of my child’s experience.
2. I/we will participate in Parent/Teacher conferences.
3. I/we will make sure my scholar is at school on time and attends school regularly.
4. I/we will support the school with my gifts and talents by committing to a minimum of 25 hours of engagement per school year
5. I/we will support the education of our child by holding them accountable.
6. I/we will support creativity and thinking outside the box based on data and challenging the status quo.
7. I/we will support a year-round school.
8. I/we will support Spalding language arts and Zearn mathematics by attending parent learning sessions.
9. I/we will reinforce the use of Mindfulness and Positive Behavior Interventions to assist my child in developing self-regulation and coping skills.
10. I/we will support the playing of violin by attending parent information sessions and scholar performances.
11. I/we will bring my concerns and suggestions to the school administration so that we can work together to address any issues or concerns.
12. I/we will reinforce the importance of good health through healthy eating and exercise, good sleep through appropriate bedtimes, and reinforcement of learning at home.

\_\_\_\_\_ I agree to the above statements and have read and understood the 2022-2023 Family Handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature