

August, 2011

Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome to Cokato Elementary! It is always exciting to start a "New Year" together anticipating all the learning and growth that will take place!

Each year the Cokato Elementary staff adopts a school-wide theme on which to focus its attention. Our theme for the 2011-2012 school year is "**Celebrating Success!**" We will take time to acknowledge all the positive academic milestones that our students achieve in the upcoming year as well as accomplishments in music, phy. ed. and good character. We will keep you updated on those accomplishments through classroom newsletters, our Website (www.dc.k12.mn.us), and in the monthly school newsletter.

Our handbook is designed to be a useful guide in understanding numerous building and district wide procedures. Another purpose is to assist you in communicating with our staff. Please refer to the phone extensions and e-mail addresses of our staff included in the handbook. It is our hope that you will use these to communicate with us. We encourage you to contact us when concerns or questions arise.

You are invited to become active participants in your child's education. We are pleased to welcome you to our building, and we encourage you to extend an invitation to attend our events to family members, senior citizens, and other community members. We are proud of our school and its history of educational excellence.

We have a very active parent volunteer program. We welcome parents and community people to become involved in this program. Consider giving our volunteer coordinator a call to learn more about these opportunities. Many tasks can be done from home as well as in the classroom. The teachers and students are very appreciative of your willingness to assist.

This year I will also be holding occasional "**Coffee Talks**" where you will be invited to come into my office to have a casual conversation and ask questions about our school. Many of you are "regulars" as you wait for your children at the end of the day. I thought it would be a good time to connect with you and get to know you better! Watch for a notice in the newsletter or a sign in the lobby announcing that the coffee pot is on that day!

We are also pleased to offer a parent involvement opportunity through the Dassel-Cokato PTA. The group meets the first Thursday of alternating months in the high school media center. These gatherings are a wonderful opportunity to ask questions and learn more about our district. Watch for notices regarding topics, dates, and times in the monthly newsletter.

Children are our most precious resource. Each is a unique and wonderful person! Let's all work together to make your child's years in school a positive experience. The staff and I look forward to this cooperative, educational experience.

Sincerely,

Lorene Force
Cokato Elementary Principal
lorene.force@dc.k12.mn.us
320-286-4100 extension 1304

Cokato Elementary School 2011-2012

- Address:** Cokato Elementary School
200 5th St. SW
Cokato, MN 55321
- FAX number:** 320-286-4131
- Cokato Elementary Office Staff:** Lorene Force, Principal
320-286-4100 ext. 1304
- Margaret Pokornowski, Administrative Assistant
320-286-4100 ext. 1300
- Kelly Krueger, Licensed School Nurse
320-286-4100 ext. 1306
- Jo Bender, Health Assistant
320-286-4100 ext. 1305
Mary Kay Morris, Parent Volunteer Coordinator
320-286-4100 ext. 1327
- School Hours:** 8:00 a.m.-3:15 p.m.
Playground supervision begins at 7:45 a.m.
Children enter the building at 8:00.
- Student/Parent Entrance:** Door "B" on the north side (5th Street).
- Student Drop-off and Pick-up Areas:** North **and** west sides of the building
(5th Street and Jackson Street).
- Bus Loading and Unloading:** **South side of the building (6th Street)**
- District Website:** <http://www.dc.k12.mn.us>
- School-Age Child Care:** Charger Kids Club
Located in the small gym at Cokato Elementary
Hours: 6:00 -8:00 AM and 3:15-6:00 PM
- Coordinator: Colleen Compton
Community Education Offices
320-286-4100 ext. 1022
Cokato Site Manager: Jennifer Todnem
320-286-4100 ext. 1334
- Cokato Transportation:** Cokato Transportation
320-286-5315

Cokato Elementary Staff Directory

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>320-286-4100 and the person's extension</i>	<i>E-mail Address, if available</i>
Lorene Force	Principal and District Curriculum Director	1304 and 1609	lorene.force@dc.k12.mn.us
Cindy Kaczmarek	Kindergarten	1321	cindy.kaczmarek@dc.k12.mn.us
Lori Hanson	Kindergarten	1314	lori.hanson@dc.k12.mn.us
Jodi Munson	Kindergarten	1356	jodi.munson@dc.k12.mn.us
Sam Weber	Grade 1	1333	sam.weber@dc.k12.mn.us
Michelle Melquist	Grade 1	1312	michelle.melquist@dc.k12.mn.us
Kathy Johnson	Grade 1	1323	kathy.johnson@dc.k12.mn.us
Jean Searles	Grade 1	1335	jean.searles@dc.k12.mn.us
Gail Berggren	Grade 2	1311	gail.berggren@dc.k12.mn.us
Julie Ardoff	Grade 2	1318	julie.ardoff@dc.k12.mn.us
Rachel Franklin	Grade 2	1344	rachel.franklin@dc.k12.mn.us
Ryan Weinandt	Grade 2	1315	ryan.weinandt@dc.k12.mn.us
Lee Nelson	Grade 2	1329	lee.nelson@dc.k12.mn.us
Laura Bussler	Grade 3	1326	laura.bussler@dc.k12.mn.us
Carissa Chap	Grade 3	1339	carissa.chap@dc.k12.mn.us
Lori Stangland	Grade 3	1342	lori.stangland@dc.k12.mn.us
Mike Barton	Grade 3	1341	mike.barton@dc.k12.mn.us
Kristin Glur	Grade 3	1339	kristin.glur@dc.k12.mn.us
Pat Kusler	Grade 4	1325	pat.kusler@dc.k12.mn.us
Jenny Bertram	Grade 4	1337	jenny.bertram@dc.k12.mn.us
Todd Heinonen	Grade 4	1340	todd.heinonen@dc.k12.mn.us
Stacey Doering	Grade 4	1328	stacey.doering@dc.k12.mn.us
Lynda Johnson	Reading Recovery	1347	lynda.johnson@dc.k12.mn.us
Katy Snider	Special Education	1338	katy.snider@dc.k12.mn.us
Jennifer Meyer	Special Education	1313	jennifer.meyer@dc.k12.mn.us
Christine Karlgaard	Special Education	1310	christine.karlgaard@dc.k12.mn.us
Jean Abrahamson	Speech/Lang. Pathologist	1348	jean.abrahamson@dc.k12.mn.us
Megan Van Zuilen	ELL (English Lang. Learner)	1300	megan.vanzuilen@dc.k12.mn.us
Heidi Sickmann	Social Worker (M, W, F)	1336	heidi.sickmann@dc.k12.mn.us
Sarah Terpstra	Social Worker (T,Th)	1349	sarah.terpstra@dc.k12.mn.us
Vinne Pokornowski	DAPE	1655	vincent.pokornowski@dc.k12.mn.us
Sherry Graham	School Psychologist	320-543-4606	sgraham@mawseco.k12.mn.us
Beth Hoeg	Child Study Coordinator	320-543-4606	bhoeg@mawseco.k12.mn.us
Brice Berggren	Physical Education	1332	brice.berggren@dc.k12.mn.us
Stacy Sorgatz	Physical Education	1355	stacy.sorgatz@dc.k12.mn.us
Amanda Spires	Music	1322	amanda.spires@dc.k12.mn.us
Sarah Luhrs	Music	1533	sarah.luhrs@dc.k12.mn.us
Pam Osterberg	Media Center/Gifted	1331	pam.osterberg@dc.k12.mn.us
Pam Bayerl	Reading Corps Tutor	1324	pam.bayerl@dc.k12.mn.us
Kelly Krueger	School Nurse	1306 or 1804	kelly.krueger@dc.k12.mn.us
Jo Bender	Health Assistant	1305	jo.bender@dc.k12.mn.us
Mary Kay Morris	Volunteer Coordinator	1327	marykay.morris@dc.k12.mn.us
Margaret Pokornowski	Administrative Assistant	1300 or 1301	margaret.pokornowski@dc.k12.mn.us
Irene Pierce	Curriculum/SpEd Secretary	1352	irene.pierce@dc.k12.mn.us
Mary Larson	Media/Computer Assistant	1330	mary.larson@dc.k12.mn.us
Colleen Compton	Charger Kids Club	1022	colleen.compton@dc.k12.mn.us
Jennifer Todnem	Charger Kids Club at Cokato	1334	jennifer.todnem@dc.k12.mn.us
Dave Hoyhtya	Head Custodian	1346	dave.hoyhtya@dc.k12.mn.us

Name	Position	Phone Extension	E-mail Address
Ross Anderson	Evening Custodian	1346	ross.anderson@dc.k12.mn.us
Wylene Danielson	Food Service	1307	wylene.danielson@dc.k12.mn.us
Carol Janckila	Food Service	1307	
Connie Berg	Food Service	1307	
Jane Hawes	Food Service	1307	
Kelsey Anderson	Educational Assistant	1300	kelsey.anderson@dc.k12.mn.us
Brenda Anderson	Educational Assistant	1300	brenda.anderson@dc.k12.mn.us
Julie Chap	Educational Assistant	1300	julie.chap@dc.k12.mn.us
Donette Danberg	Educational Assistant	1300	donette.danberg@dc.k12.mn.us
Carol Davis	Educational Assistant	1300	carol.davis@dc.k12.mn.us
Lisa Grack	Educational Assistant	1300	lisa.grack@dc.k12.mn.us
Lynda Huseby	Educational Assistant	1300	lynda.huseby@dc.k12.mn.us
Kim Lehto	Educational Assistant	1300	kim.lehto@dc.k12.mn.us
Kristie Martinson	Educational Assistant	1300	kristie.martinson@dc.k12.mn.us
Sarah Mayfield	Educational Assistant	1300	sarah.mayfield@dc.k12.mn.us
Karen Ortquist	Educational Assistant	1300	karen.ortquist@dc.k12.mn.us
Candace Paulson	Educational Assistant	1300	candace.paulson@dc.k12.mn.us
Starla Powers	Educational Assistant--Patrol	1300	starla.powers@dc.k12.mn.us
Syneva Richardson	Educational Assistant	1300	syneva.richardson@dc.k12.mn.us
Janel Ryyananen	Educational Assistant	1300	janel.ryynanen@dc.k12.mn.us
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Bev Moye	Educational Assistant	1300	bev.moye@dc.k12.mn.us
Veda Davis	Educational Assistant	1300	veda.davis@dc.k12.mn.us
Wendy Halonen	Educational Assistant	1300	wendy.halonen@dc.k12.mn.us
Pat Isaacson	Educational Assistant	1300	patsy.isaacson@dc.k12.mn.us
Chris Josephson	Educational Assistant	1300	chris.josephson@dc.k12.mn.us
Janet Morgan	Educational Assistant	1300	janet.morgan@dc.k12.mn.us
Kim Morris	Educational Assistant	1300	kim.morris@dc.k12.mn.us
Joyce Thinesen	Educational Assistant	1300	joyce.thinesen@dc.k12.mn.us
Jenny Niska	Educational Assistant	1300	jenny.niska@dc.k12.mn.us
Glenda Peterson	Educational Assistant	1300	glenda.peterson@dc.k12.mn.us
Arlyce Terning	Educational Assistant	1300	arlyce.terning@dc.k12.mn.us

Cokato Elementary School Mission Statement

Cokato Elementary provides an enriching educational experience for all children. We create an environment that helps children reach their maximum potential. Our school community works together to prepare each student for continued personal growth and responsible citizenship.

Cokato Elementary School Calendar 2011-2012

Sept.	1	4:00-7:00 Open House—Cokato Elementary
Sept.	6	First day of school for grades 1-4
	6 & 7	Scheduled appointments for kindergarten students, parents, teachers
	8	First day of kindergarten for all kindergarten students—1/2 Day
	9	Second day of kindergarten for all kindergarten students—1/2 Day
	12	All day/every other day kindergarten schedule begins—red group
	13	All day/every other day kindergarten schedule begins—blue group
	13	First Day of Kindergarten Boost
	15	Parent Volunteer Orientation—2:00 Conference Room
	TBD	4 th Grade Environmental Day at Collinwood Park
	30	Picture Day for K-4 students. PM kdgn right after arrival
Oct.	6	Exotic Animals Lyceum from 1:00-1:45
	7	Dassel-Cokato Homecoming
	9	Fire Prevention Week—K-2 visits fire station on Oct. 13
	14	Vision Screening—Grades 1 and 3 Hearing Screening—Grades K and 2
	20 & 21	No School—Education MN Convention (Thurs. and Fri.)
Nov.	4	Picture retakes for K-4
	4	Vision and Hearing re-screening
	11	Veteran’s Day Program at 10:00 AM
	11	Kindergarten Conferences— No School Kindergarten Only
	15 & 17	Elementary Parent/Teacher Conferences 4:00-7:00 PM
	18	No School—Elementary Only AM Teacher Planning / 12:30-3:30 Elementary Conferences
	24 & 25	No School—Thanksgiving Vacation
Dec.	1	End of Grading Period
	2	No School—Staff Development/Teacher Planning
	13	Grades K-2 Christmas Program—1:15 Matinee at High School 7:00 PM Evening Concert—High School Performing Arts Center
	23-Jan. 2	No School—Winter Break
Jan.	3	Classes Resume
	16	No School—Staff Development
Feb.	14	Valentine’s Day Celebrations and Jump Rope for Heart
	20	No School—President’s Day
Mar.	2	Read Across America Day
	2	End of Grading Period
	5	No School—Staff Development/Teacher Planning
	6	Kindergarten Conferences— No School Kindergarten Only
	12 & 15	Elementary Conferences 4:00-7:00 PM
	16	No School—Elementary Only AM Teacher Planning/12:30-3:30 Elementary Conferences

	20	Kindergarten Roundup at Cokato Elementary
	24-Apr. 1	No School—Spring Break
	TBD	Odyssey Testing—3 rd Grade
Apr.	2	Classes resume
	6	No School—Good Friday
	11	Kindergarten “Doughnuts for Dads” (Red Group)
	11	CLIMB Theatre Environmental Plays K-2—9:00-9:40 3 and 4—10:20-11:00
	12	Kindergarten “Doughnuts for Dads” (Blue Group)
	17 & 18	MCA testing for Third and Fourth Grade—(Reading) (Tentative)
	24 & 25	MCA testing for Third and Fourth Grade—(Math) (Tentative)
May	3	Spring Program for Grades 3 & 4—1:15 Matinee at High School 7:00 PM Evening Concert—High School Performing Arts Center
	4	Grandparent’s Day—12:45 program—cookies/lemonade following
	9	Kindergarten “Muffins for Moms” (Red Group)
	10	Kindergarten “Muffins for Moms” (Blue Group)
	16	Activity Day on playground and Peterson Park
	24	Cokato Olympics at High School Track
	28	No School—Memorial Day
	31	Fourth Grade Send-Off at lunch
June	1	Last Day of school, unless there are snow days. Variety Show and Awards Program in AM; Picnic at noon



D-C educators receive Leadership in Educational Excellence Awards. Congratulations, Mr. Weinandt, from Cokato Elementary!

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Section 504 Rights

Internet Policy Summary

Weapons and Assault Policy

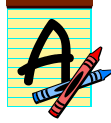
Bullying Prohibition Policy

Pesticide Notification

Medication Authorization

Volunteer Information

Lunch Payment Form



Absences

The habit of regular attendance is desirable for successful school achievement. All students are expected to be in school and on time unless 1) prevented by illness, 2) family emergency, 3) a death or serious illness in the family, or 3) medical, dental, orthodontic, or counseling appointments. Absences of any type are subject to the 8 days per trimester limitation, which is part of the school board policy. **Parents will receive written notification when their child has been absent 8 days in a trimester or has excessive tardies.**

For safety and accountability reasons we request that you call Cokato Elementary at (320) 286-4100 extension 1300 before 8:00 a.m. to report if your child will be late or absent. Should we not hear from you, it is our practice to call your home or work number to determine the whereabouts of your child.

An excuse note, written by the parent or guardian, **must** accompany the child upon arrival at school for either an absence or tardy if no phone call was received from the parent. Please include the child's first and last name, date(s) of absence, the specific reason, and your signature.

State law defines a Continuing Truant as a child who is absent without lawful excuse for 3 days. A Habitual Truant is absent without lawful excuse for 7 days. Child Protection Petitions will be filed in these cases.

Accidents and Illness

If a child becomes injured or ill at school, the parent/guardian will be notified. If you cannot be contacted, we will call the emergency contact names listed on your child's Emergency Information Card.

Address and Phone Number Changes

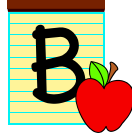
Please notify the school if family names, places of work, e-mail addresses, and phone numbers change while your child is a student at Cokato Elementary. In alternate years, we will send home a form at the beginning of the year that enables you to update this information for our records.

Age Requirement

Minnesota State Statutes require that kindergartners be five years old on or before September 1st of their kindergarten year. Please contact the building principal if you have questions or concerns regarding your child's readiness for kindergarten.

Arrival Time

Students who wish to eat breakfast may arrive as early as 7:30 a.m. The door on the east side of the lunchroom will be unlocked only for participants in the breakfast program. All other students are expected to play on the playground until the bell rings at 8:00 a.m. Playground supervisors are not on duty until 7:45 a.m. If your child does not ride the bus, please time his/her arrival for **after** 7:45 a.m. In the event of extremely cold weather or heavy rain, the students are seated in the gym until the 8:00 bell rings.



Behavior Expectations

The Dassel-Cokato communities have adopted six “Character Building Pillars” as part of our character education focus. The pillars each represent positive life skills that frame behavior and learning expectations in our schools. The pillars are as follows:

Respect: Showing genuine concern for yourself, others and the world around you.

Responsibility: Being accountable for your actions and accepting the consequences of those actions.

Resiliency: Rebounding from significant stresses with a positive attitude and a sense of balance.

Integrity: Reflecting trustworthiness, honesty and self-discipline.

Compassion: Willing to share and give aid or support to all people; caring.

Understanding Diversity: Realizing that everyone is unique, and that all have their strengths and limitations.

Students will be acknowledged for positive behavior choices at Cokato Elementary! As part of setting improvement goals in the areas of the six character pillars, students will be encouraged and recognized for their positive behavior choices.

Our school will now be using “Above the Line” for our school behavior plan. Corwin Kronenberg, who is the author of the program, has taught this system to many schools around the state and nation.

The goal of “Above the Line” is to promote a safe and caring environment where all students are taught the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behavior. In the program, behavior is divided into three groups. The groups are Above the Line, Below the Line and Bottom Line. Here are some examples of those behaviors:

ABOVE THE LINE		
Be Respectful Be Responsible Be Polite	Be Your Best	Be a Hard Worker Be Safe Be Cooperative
BELOW THE LINE		
Swearing Teasing Budging in Line		Unsafe Behavior Uncooperative Wasting Time
BOTTOM LINE		
Bodily Harm Weapons Vandalism		Bullying Harassment Smoking/Drugs

Students who demonstrate Below the Line Behavior will be given a choice by the adult in charge. They will be asked if they want to “fix it” or if they want a consequence. If the child selects the “fix it” option, he/she will be expected to develop a plan for fixing the problem. When a child chooses a consequence, this will be worked out with the adult in charge. We do not have set consequences for every Below the Line behavior, but the consequence will be 1. related to the behavior, 2. delivered respectfully, and 3. reasonable to carry out.

Bottom Line behaviors are behaviors that are considered totally inappropriate at school. These would include violations of state law, district policy, or any totally unacceptable behavior. This type of behavior will require involvement by the principal, parents/guardians and possibly legal authority.

Bicycles, Blades, Skateboards, and Scooters

Children are allowed to ride bicycles to school. The school does not assume the responsibility for them except for providing a parking area with bicycle racks on city-owned property. It is recommended that the bike be locked. Bicycles are not to be used on the playground during morning or noon recess times. Bikes should be walked across school patrol crossings only. This is for safety reasons, and students who do not respect these rules will be asked to leave their bicycles at home. Children are not allowed to **bring or travel** to school on roller blades, skateboards, or scooters. Heelys are also not permitted at school for safety reasons.

Birthdays

Birthdays are special occasions when parents may send treats to school for the entire class. If you would like to send a treat, please comply with Minnesota health guidelines which state that such treats must be purchased from a bakery or store and all candy must be individually wrapped. **Do not buy candy that contains gum since gum chewing is prohibited at our school.** Homemade treats are not allowed. Please have an accurate count of your child's classmates before bringing/sending treats.

Birthday invitations are very special to receive. We ask your cooperation in not sending birthday invitations to school to be handed out. We have many disappointed children when invitations are handed out and they are not included. Please make arrangements to mail them or deliver the invitations in an alternative way. Please note: Our school office and teaching staff will not disclose the addresses of our students due to data privacy laws.

Boxtops for Education and Other Collections

Each year Cokato Elementary students collect Boxtops for Education from General Mills products. We also collect Campbell's soup labels, pop tabs, empty ink-jet and laser printer cartridges, old cell phones, and Kemps "Give 'em Five" Milk Lids and Labels showing a cow in a graduation cap. Also, we benefit from charge purchases you put on your Target Guest Card. The funds raised by your contributions go in part to support the field trips our classes take each year. Thank you for contacting friends and relatives for their support also!

Breakfast Program

It is important for students to have a nutritious breakfast to maximize their learning potential. Our district offers breakfast for students at the start of each day. The menu for the breakfast is listed on the back of the lunch menu that is sent home at the end of each month in our newsletter. The cost of the breakfast is \$1.00 per meal. Families who may qualify for free or reduced prices are encouraged to contact Noni Smith at the District Office (320-286-4100 extension 1013) for an application.

Building Use

Cokato Elementary is available for community use. All people using the building must obtain permission through the Activities Office located at the high school (320-286-4100 extension 1813).

Bus Behavior Expectations and Policy

The privilege of riding a school bus requires appropriate behavior. Each bus driver is responsible for the safe transportation of all students on his/her bus. Students who ride the district buses have the following safety rules enforced:

1. Immediately follow the directions of the driver.
2. Sit in your seat, facing forward. *Elementary students should sit at the front of the bus.*
3. Talk quietly and use appropriate language.
4. Keep all parts of your body inside the bus.
5. Keep your arms, legs, and belongings to yourself.
6. No fighting, harassment, intimidation, or horseplay.
7. Do not throw any object.
8. No tobacco, drugs, or alcohol are allowed on the bus.
9. Do not bring any weapon or dangerous objects on the bus.
10. Do not damage the school bus.
11. Pets or animals of any type or size will not be transported on the school bus.
12. Sleds, skis, ski poles, fishing rods, and related equipment should not be brought on the bus.

When students want to bring a pet to/from school, or need sleds, skis, etc. for a school activity, parents must make arrangements to get them to/from school.

The bus driver will report incidents of misconduct to the school principal on an incident report form. The principal will call parents regarding the bus report. The following are the consequences for students who receive one of these forms:

- 1st offense—Warning. The principal and the bus driver reserve the right to suspend the student based on the nature of the offense.
- 2nd offense—3 school day suspension from riding the bus.
- 3rd offense—5 school day suspension from riding the bus.
- 4th offense—10 school day suspension from riding the bus.

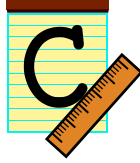
Note: When an elementary student goes 60 calendar days without a report, the student's consequences may start over at the first offense.

Please call 320-286-5315, Cokato Transportation, if your child will not ride the bus or there is a change in pick-up or drop-off location. When there is a one-time change, i.e., a birthday party, please send notes with your child to school to notify his/her teacher **and** the bus driver. Parents who wish to pick up their children at the end of the day should arrive at school early enough to notify the child, the office, and the teacher of the change. Children must be signed out in the office. **Failure to give adequate and timely notice will result in the child being sent to their customary drop-off place.**

Parents are discouraged from going to the gym or to the bus lines to take their child. They will be asked to sign out their child with the principal or her designee before the child will be released. Children cannot be picked up by their parents on the south side of the school where the buses load students at the end of the day. You will be redirected to go to the north or west sides.

Please be aware that times of pick-up can vary slightly. Drivers can be early if one or more students are not riding the route. Please have your child at his/her stop 5 minutes before the appointed time.

If your child should miss the bus, bring the child to school. Please help your child know the danger of running after the bus.



Calendars

The District 466 school calendar is mailed to all postal patrons in August. Please inquire at the Cokato Elementary office if you did not receive a copy.

This handbook also contains dates that are specific to Cokato Elementary. The monthly newsletter that is sent home with students also contains upcoming events for our building.

Charger Kids Club

Dassel-Cokato Community Education is pleased to offer school-age childcare for students who attend Cokato and Dassel Elementary **before school (6:00 AM) and after school at Cokato Elementary only**. Teachers and assistants plan educational and fun activities for students beginning at 3:15 p.m. and ending at 6:00 p.m. Childcare is also available on vacation and inservice days as well. Please contact the Program Coordinator, Colleen Compton, at the Community Education Office (320-286-4100 extension 1022) or at Cokato Elementary (extension 1334) for more information, fee rates, and enrollment forms.

Class and School Assignment

Each spring, classroom teachers, special education teachers, and the building principal work together closely to form classes for the upcoming school year. A great deal of thought goes into this lengthy process. The class lists are constructed to include:

- A balance of boys and girls
- A blend of all ability levels
- Careful consideration of student personalities and behaviors
- A mixture of students from all classrooms
- Placing students together who work well academically, but aren't necessarily friends.

We also realize that parents/guardians know their child's personality better than anyone, and we respect the fact that some parents may want to contribute their thoughts to the process. In the past, several parent requests for a specific teacher could not be granted due to a variety of reasons. Most parents do not submit a teacher request. We are asking that you follow the steps listed below if you want to give input into your child's placement for the following year.

1. Stop by the Cokato Elementary Office to pick up a form to complete. This form is short and will ask you to describe your child and the type of learning style your child has. We carefully consider children's learning styles as we place them in classes for the following year. **No teacher name should be put on the request.**
2. Another factor to consider is that the teaching assignments are not known for next year at the time your request is made.
3. Return the form to the Cokato Elementary Office. Please watch for the deadline date in our monthly newsletter.
4. Please complete a separate form for each child. Only these forms will be accepted. Do not replace these forms with written notes or letters. These forms are good for one year.
5. The class lists will be posted on the windows of the auditorium (Door A) in August each year. Once posted, the lists are not subject to change.

6. In an effort to balance class size, the administration has the responsibility and authority to designate which elementary building your child will attend. It is our intent that this notification will occur as early as possible in ensure that families can tour the new building prior to the start of the school year. The district is proud of its two elementary buildings and the consistent instruction students receive in both buildings. We thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

As you can tell, a great deal of time, thought, and effort goes into the formation of class lists each year. We want you to know that all Cokato Elementary teachers are highly qualified and exceptional teachers with whom you can put your trust.

Classroom Visitation

Parents are welcome to visit their children's classroom throughout the school year. If a parent's visit might disrupt the student's learning, an alternative visit date will be set. Parents are requested to prearrange their visit with the classroom teacher to avoid any scheduling conflicts.

Student classroom visits are not permitted without special invitation by the classroom teacher and principal approval. A student who is considering or will be enrolling in the school may tour the school on a prearranged basis with approval of the principal. Extended day visits by children who are a relative or friend of a particular student are not permitted.

Clothing

We believe that neat and proper dress contributes to desirable attitudes and behavior. Student dress should adhere to the following guidelines:

- Clothing should be neat, clean, and in good taste. Clothes that display violent messages and/or drug, alcohol, or cigarette advertising will not be permitted. Short shorts, short skirts, bare midriff or see-through clothing is also not appropriate. If children wear items of clothing to school that are not respectful or may be offensive to other school attendees they may be asked to change clothes, cover up the offensive item, or parents/guardians may be called to bring another item of clothing to school.
- Students are prohibited from wearing Heelys at school for obvious safety reasons.
- Adults entering Cokato Elementary are also asked to respect the dress code rules.
- During cold weather, students are expected to play outdoors unless the temperatures exceed -10° or the wind chill exceeds -15° . No child is ever forced to stay outside if they are cold. When weather prohibits students from outdoor play, they are supervised by assistants in their classrooms.
- We **require** students to wear coats, snowpants, hats, boots, mittens or gloves. Students will not be allowed to play outdoors if they do not dress appropriately.
- Caps are not to be worn in school except under special circumstances or observances.
- **Labeling clothing** helps us to return items. Several lost and found containers can be found throughout the building. Lost and found items are displayed on tables in the entrance hallway during parent/teacher conferences. Unclaimed items are donated to charity at the end of the school year.

Conferences

Conferences are held twice a year in November and March. Sign-up sheets will be available in the lobby of our school during the August Open House. The time you choose for the November conference will also apply to the March conference.

We are proud of the fact that parent/teacher conferences have always been well attended in the past—nearly 100%! This shows a very strong commitment by the parents to working together closely with the teachers.

When concerns arise, please deal with them as soon as possible. You do not need to wait until conference time. It is best to direct your concern to the specific school personnel most directly related to your question or concern. Your child's teacher can be reached by either e-mail or phone. Please see the staff directory for his/her listing. In most instances, the teacher will be available for calls before and after school. Calls made during the school day will go to voice mail and will be returned as soon as possible.

The following are suggestions for a meaningful parent/teacher conference:

- Make a list of areas you wish to discuss.
- If possible, bring both parents.
- **Please do not have younger brothers and sisters attend conferences.** Childcare is available at our school during this time in order for you to be less distracted during conferences.

Continental Math League

This mathematics competition is designed to give students an opportunity to use and improve their problem-solving capabilities. Participants compete with other schools around the country on a team basis. Continental Math League is open to students in grades 2, 3, and 4.

Curriculum

All students receive instruction in these core subjects: Language Arts (reading, writing, spelling, handwriting), Mathematics, Social Studies, Science, Health, and Art.

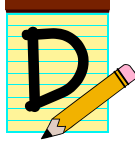
In addition, specialists in the following areas provide instruction: Physical Education, Music, and Library/Media/Technology Skills. Students have computer experience both in lab settings and on the classroom computers. The emphasis is on integrating computer use with subject area curriculum, which enables the computer to be used as a tool to help students learn.

Custody

If custody changes after enrollment, documents should be provided to the school as soon as possible after the change. The school will follow court orders that specifically authorize or direct custody or related custodial issues.

The school system will give non-custodial parents, upon request, duplicate school information about their child unless prohibited by court order. A certified copy of that order must be on file at the school.

The school should also be made aware of any unusual situations that might require a heightened need for greater security for your child.



Data Privacy

Data Privacy Laws prohibit us from releasing the name, telephone number, or address of any student or staff member for any reason. This includes providing names and addresses for birthday party invitations.

Discipline (See Behavior Expectations)

Drills

As per Minnesota state law there will be:

-Fire: Five fire drills during a year. Students practice evacuation of the school and are led to areas designated as safe on or off the school grounds.

-Tornado: One tornado drill during tornado season. The school conducts a tornado drill in conjunction with the state of Minnesota. Students are led to areas inside the school that have been designated as most safe.

-Lockdown: Five lockdown drills during a year. In the event an intruder should enter the building, teachers have been instructed on how to keep students safe in their area.

-Evacuation: One evacuation drill during a year. Students in grade K and one are led to the Centennial Room of the public library. Older students in grades two through four are led to the lower level of the Elim Mission Church.

-Playground: One playground safety drill during a year. Playground assistants conduct one drill towards the beginning of the year to have children practice listening for the sound of an “air horn” which indicates that they should immediately run to the nearest door of the school.

Drug-Free Environment

The Dassel-Cokato School buildings and grounds are drug-free environments. Tobacco, alcohol, and chemical use are strictly prohibited on school grounds. This includes all activities before, during, and after school and includes all students, siblings, parents, and staff. **Parent chaperones who accompany classes on field trips must adhere to these policies as well.**



Early Childhood Screening

Early Childhood Screening is provided **free of charge** to all children 3 1/2 years of age or older. Screening takes place at the Early Childhood Education Center located on the west end of Dassel-Cokato High School. Early Childhood Screening is **required** before entrance into kindergarten. Please call 320-286-4100 extension 1020 to arrange an appointment.

Early Dismissals and Late Starts

It is the policy of the Board of Education to keep school open as much as possible and to close school only when it is absolutely necessary. The closing of school will be determined by

the inability of our school buses to travel safely or if an emergency exists. On days when we have inclement weather, we request that you listen for school closing or late start announcements on the radio or TV. School closings are announced on WCCO (830 AM), KRWC (1360 AM), KDUZ (1260 AM), KARP (106.9 FM), and KLFD (1410 AM). TV stations include channels 4, 5, 9, and 11. You may also dial 320-286-4100 and choose menu option #1.

It is sometimes necessary to send students home before the end of the day. Each teacher will send home a "School Closing Information Sheet" to fill out for each child. Please complete this form and return it to the classroom teacher as soon as possible. It will help us know where students should go in the event of an unforeseen school closing. Please review with your child where to go in these instances.

Electronic Devices, Toys, and Trading Cards

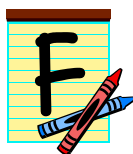
Radios, CD players, MP3 players, iPods, cameras, tape recorders, pagers, two-way radios, cell phones, remote control vehicles, trading cards, and handheld games are not allowed at school. It is our belief that students need exercise and movement during their morning and noon recess periods. Students will be instructed to return the item to their backpack and not bring them back to school. Failure to follow these guidelines will result in the item being stored in the office until the parent/guardian is able to pick it up. The school is not responsible for these items if they are damaged, lost, or stolen.

E-Mail

Only general school information will be communicated via e-mail. Specific information related to student grades, an incident, and/or personal information will only be communicated via phone or letter. Please remember that e-mail communication must not contain personal accusations and inappropriate language.

ELL (English Language Learners)

Students at Cokato Elementary who are learning the English language are provided with individual and small group instruction facilitated by a licensed teacher. The teacher meets with the students multiple times a week to assist them in developing their English language skills.



Field Trips

Field trips are an important part of our educational program. Through these excursions, students see what they are learning in the classroom applied to real life. It is also a time to develop skills in courtesy, safety, and good citizenship. The students will either walk to the local sites or be transported in our buses. If your child's class is planning a field trip, you will be asked to sign a permission slip to allow your child to go with the group. **Sometimes a contribution is requested to help offset transportation costs. No student will be denied the opportunity to go on a field trip if funds are not affordable. Contact your building principal for details.** We encourage all students to attend field trips. All students not receiving parental permission to participate with their class should plan on attending school that day where alternative grade level activities will be provided.

Parents are encouraged to join the group if space allows. Parents must pay their own way into an area that charges a fee. For liability reasons we must limit chaperones to parents or guardians. Preschool children, including those of chaperones and faculty members, are not allowed to attend the trip. Other relatives (such as a grandparent) would only be used when there are not a sufficient number of parents/guardians. Chaperones are expected to ride the bus when chaperoning field trips. Our insurance only covers students who are riding on the bus, so all students must use the bus for transportation on a field trip. If you are not chosen to chaperone, we ask that you do not drive to the location of the field trip on your own to be with your child. The teachers have divided their students into small groups of students with an adult chaperone. It is highly beneficial to the students to remain with their peers and benefit from the teacher-directed activities.

Parents/guardians will be consulted if special circumstances, such as inappropriate behavior prior to the field trip, prohibit the student from attending.

All students attending the field trip must be enrolled in the class participating in the field trip.

Parent chaperones and staff members that accompany classes on field trips must adhere to the district drug/tobacco/alcohol policies as well.



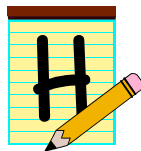
Gifted Program (See Odyssey)

Going Home with a Friend

To avoid communication problems between home and school, we require a written, dated note (signed by a parent) if a child is to go home with someone else. **Failure to give adequate and timely notice will result in the child being sent to their customary drop-off place.**

Gum Chewing

Cokato Elementary students **are not allowed** to have gum or any candy containing gum (example Blow-Pops) at school.



Harassment and Bullying Policy

1. Everyone at Cokato Elementary, students and adults, has the right to feel respected and safe.
2. Cokato Elementary will not allow put downs that include language or actions against a child or adult's race, gender, or religion. This is called harassment.
3. Harassers can be a student or adult. Some examples of harassment can include:
 - Name calling, jokes;
 - Notes or drawings;
 - Unwelcome touching of a child's body or clothing;
 - Other actions or words that make a child or adult feel so bad it is hard to concentrate on their work;

- Threats to do bodily harm to another person or property.
- 4. Respectful behavior is expected in all areas of the school, on the playground, and on the school bus.
- 5. If someone makes a child or adult feel uncomfortable, afraid, or confused, the child or adult needs to tell a teacher, principal, or social worker. (See D-C bullying prohibition policy in appendix)

Hazing

Hazing means committing an act against a student, or coercing a student into committing an act, that creates a substantial risk of harm to a person, in order for the student to be initiated into or affiliated with a student organization, or for any other purpose.

Any person who believes he or she has been the victim of hazing, or any person with knowledge or belief of conduct which may constitute hazing shall report the alleged acts immediately to an appropriate school district official designated by this policy.

To view the complete Board of Education policy regarding hazing, please visit the Dassel-Cokato Website at <http://www.dc.k12.mn.us>. Refer to section 5145.5.

Health Services

A licensed school nurse and one health assistant provide first aid care for students and staff, ongoing vision and hearing screenings and referrals, and medication administration.

Medications—State law sets standards for dispensing medication within the school. Before a medication can be dispensed at school, we must have a written order from a physician including:

1. Student's name
2. Name of medication
3. Diagnosis (the reason the medication is needed, and why it is needed during the school hours)
4. Time of administration
5. Route and dosage of medication to be administered
6. Possible side effects
7. Termination date for administration

Health office personnel are not allowed to dispense any medication without the physician's order. This includes over-the-counter medications (i.e., Tylenol, cold medications, etc.). The parent must also sign this authorization. Please see the Appendix or stop in the health office for a copy of this form.

If your child must have medication of any type given during school hours, you may complete the physician's order as outlined above, or you may come to school to give the medication to your child at the appropriate time(s).

If your child has a health condition or is on medication at home, please let us know in order for us to best serve his/her health needs. The school nurse will complete an emergency care plan (if needed) or individualized health plan to assure the health and safety of your child while in school or on a field trip. (This would include students who have diabetes, seizure disorders, asthma, bee sting allergies, etc.)

Illness—Many students and parents are frequently concerned about when students should stay home or attend school. General Practice:

- If the student has had a fever of 100° or more, the student should stay home for **24 hours after the temperature returns to normal.**
- If the student has vomited or had diarrhea, the student should stay home until **24 hours after the last episode.**
- If the student has any rash that may be disease-related, or you do not know the cause, check with your family physician before sending the student to school.
- If the student is ill, please call the school daily to report the illness.

When your child develops a temperature above normal or shows other symptoms of illness, parents will be contacted so he/she can be picked up. If the parent cannot be reached, information provided upon registration will be used. Please contact the school to update this information if there are changes in home or work phone numbers.

Immunizations—State law provides for compulsory immunizations for all new students entering Minnesota schools. All children must be adequately immunized against polio, diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, measles, and mumps. Five DPT, four Polio, one MMR, one Varicella (chicken pox), and three Hepatitis B immunizations are required. A second MMR and Vairicella immunization are required before entering grade 7. Verification of these immunizations is required previous to enrollment. Your child **will not** be able to attend school this fall unless his/her immunization record is complete. If you have any questions, please contact the school nurse.

Home/School Connection

Conferences, open house, report cards, and newsletters are some of the ways you learn about your child’s school experience. Equally important are the informal ways. Set aside time each day to hear about what your child has learned in school. Talk about the day’s happenings, friendships, and feelings. Talk about school projects and become active in the Dassel-Cokato Parent Teacher Association (PTA). If you have concerns, please let us know. By the same token, if you are happy with the progress your child makes, let us know that also!

Homework

Homework assignments vary from teacher to teacher. Some homework consists of completing assignments that were not finished during the school day. Other homework may include studying spelling words, practicing math facts, and special projects that relate to a unit of study or reinforces a skill worked on at school. All homework is meant to reinforce and enrich a student’s learning experience. At Cokato Elementary we recommend 10 minutes per grade level for homework each evening. For a 3rd grader, the students would have about 30 minutes of homework at night. Reading independently or with a parent can often exceed the 10-minute/grade level recommendation!

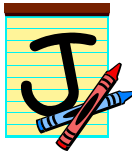
Homework during an absence: When your child has an extended illness and you want to pick up homework, please notify the teacher before classes begin in the morning. This allows time for the teacher to prepare the assignments. The homework can be picked up in the office at the end of the day or sent home with another student.



Internet Access

The media specialist and classroom teachers will provide instruction and guidance on acceptable use of the Internet to all students. A copy of the Internet policy is included in the Appendix.

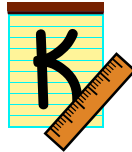
The Internet is a teaching tool, and students will be using it to access online reference materials, such as encyclopedias, atlases, magazines, and educational sites to complete assignments. Inappropriate use of the Internet may result in suspension of computer privileges and/or other disciplinary action. Parents may request that their child not use the Internet by notifying the school.



Job (Student Preparation)

School is your child's job at this stage of their life. Please help to prepare them each day for success with:

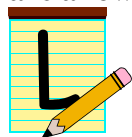
- A good breakfast
- A good night's sleep
- All of their homework completed
- Backpacks packed and ready to go



Kindergarten

Cokato Elementary provides full day, every other day kindergarten. The classes are designated as "red group or blue group". Children attend school for half-day sessions on Fridays. A calendar is sent to families at the beginning of the year that indicates which days their child attends school throughout the year.

All students must have participated in Early Childhood Screening and have their immunization records on file before they are allowed to begin school in the fall.



Library (See Media Center)

Leaving School during the Day

There are times when it is necessary for a child to leave school early for an appointment. Please attempt to schedule these appointments after school or on days when school is not in session. However, when it is necessary for your child to be excused during school hours, we ask that a note be sent with your child about the request to leave. Include the name of the person who will pick up your child. Please come to the office to sign out your child. Our school secretary

will notify your child's classroom that you have come for him or her. **Please inform the school in writing if there is a restriction as to who may pick up your child.**

If you plan to pick up your child after school, please come into the building and check in at the office. School dismisses at 3:15. You are welcome to wait in the "Parent Waiting Area" located in the lobby at the main entrance on the north side of the building. Please do not go to the classroom to pick up your child. This can lead to a disruption at the end of the day in the child's classroom and lessens the feeling of security we maintain in our building.

Parents who are picking up children each day should park on the north or west sides of the building. Please make sure your child knows you will be parked in that area in order for him/her to know where you will be found. **Parents are discouraged from going to the gym or to the bus lines to take their child. They will be asked to sign out their child with the principal or her designee before the child will be released. Children cannot be picked up by their parents on the south side of the school where buses load students at the end of the day. We are prohibited from releasing students to cross the street to find their parents' vehicle. You will be redirected to go to the north or west sides of the building.**

Leaving School Grounds

Students will not be allowed to leave the school grounds during school hours unless accompanied by a staff member, parent or guardian, or a written note from a parent or guardian.

Lockers

School lockers are the property of the District and are provided for the convenience of students. School authorities may conduct an inspection of the interior of lockers at any time, without notice, without student consent, and without a search warrant. The personal possessions within a school locker may be searched only when school authorities have a reasonable suspicion that the search will uncover evidence of a violation of law or school rules.

Lost or Damaged School Property

Students will be charged an appropriate fee for any lost or damaged school property. Examples include textbooks, workbooks, media center books and general school property.

Lunch Program

A nutritious lunch will be served each day that school is in session. The Dassel-Cokato school lunch program operates as a computerized system. Each family has a district account that all students in a family access when they eat school lunch or purchase milk for cold lunch. One family payment is sent to the district office to establish an account. When a student eats a meal, he/she types in the account code and the meal is deducted from the family account. When the family account balance falls below \$3.00 per student, an automated phone call will be made to your home. **Payments can now be made on-line with a credit card. Go to the homepage of the district website to make lunch payments, pay for field trips, or purchase the yearbook.**

Free and reduced hot lunch application forms will be mailed to each home before school begins. All applications must be processed and approved before the student can receive the free or reduced lunch. Parents need to complete one application per family when applying for free and reduced lunches. Checks for the district lunch program should be sent to: Dassel-Cokato Public Schools, Suite 1700, Cokato, MN 55321. Please use caution when sending checks or cash with your elementary students. Enclose this in an envelope with your child's full name and grade

included on the front of the envelope. Please use the form at the back of the handbook to attach with your payment.

Students may also participate in a mid-morning milk or juice break. This can be paid by year or by semester. The cost of lunches/milk/juice is as follows:

K-4 Lunch	\$1.60 per meal and \$1.00 extra for 2 nd entrée.	
Adult Lunch	\$3.15	Adult Breakfast \$1.55
Breakfast	\$1.00	
Milk with cold lunch	\$.35	
Milk/Juice for AM snack	No charge for the 2011-2012 school year	
Kdgn.—	No charge for the 2010-2011 school year	

When packing a cold lunch for your child, please pack nutritious food. Students at Cokato Elementary are not allowed to bring soda pop for their cold lunch beverage. We encourage them to purchase milk at school or bring fruit juice from home.

Students with Lactose Intolerance will be provided with one of the following alternatives if the parent requests an alternative in writing—Lactose-reduced milk; milk fortified with lactase in liquid, tablet, granular, or other form; or milk to which lactobacillus acidophilus has been added.

Please notify the health office if your child has food allergies. Kitchen personnel can make accommodations to the child's meal in order for them to eat a similar meal as their peers.

Parents are welcome to join their child for breakfast or lunch any day. We ask that you call the office prior to 9:00 a.m. or send a note with your child in the morning to let us know you will be coming for lunch. The cost of an adult hot lunch is \$3.15. Breakfast is \$1.55.

The lunchroom **behavior expectations** are as follows:

1. Hands must be washed prior to eating
2. Follow directions given by adults
3. Use quiet voices and appropriate language
4. Walk at all times
5. Use appropriate table manners—keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself
6. Raise hand for assistance; permission must be given before leaving seat
7. Clean up your area on and around the table
8. Deposit waste, trays, and silverware as directed
9. Hats and outerwear are not worn inside the lunchroom
10. Equipment for outdoor play or toys are not permitted at the lunchroom tables

Consequences:

1st offense—Students will receive a verbal warning and /or eat at a separate area for the day

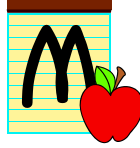
2nd offense—Students will receive a behavior report from the principal and eat at a separate area for a time determined by the supervisor and the principal

3rd offense—Student will receive a behavior report, eat at a separate area (which could include the office) for a substantial time period, and will call parents.

4th offense—Parents will conference with school staff to develop an intervention behavior plan.

Severe:

Students will go directly to the office. Parent/guardian will be contacted. A plan for appropriate behavior will be developed.



Media Center/Computer Lab

This central area of our school serves as the resource for our print and non-print materials. Books may be checked out from the media center and returned on any school day in addition to the scheduled weekly class time period. We encourage you to help your child remember to return media center books as soon as they have been completed. We want to circulate the books as much as possible and encourage our young readers to read, read, read!

Computers are housed in the Computer Lab, which is located adjacent to the Media Center. Each class has a scheduled time of 40 minutes per week to work on computers, as well as additional time blocks for computer related class projects. In addition to this time, teachers may send students to the Media Center to work on computers during unscheduled time periods.

Medication (See Health Services)

Money at School

It is not advisable for children to have large sums of money at school. Generally, their only purchase may be to buy pencils from the pencil machine or to bring money for field trips. Money for fees or their lunch account should be sent in a sealed envelope clearly marked with the child's name, grade, and teacher's name.

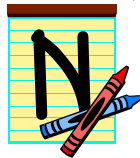
Music

The music curriculum at Cokato Elementary has as its main goal to increase the sensitivity of all children to the power of music as an art. Music can also enhance the child's self-esteem and productivity; and stimulate their creativity.

Since classroom teachers and the music teacher often correlate subject matter, music can aid the students in understanding other subjects and can give them an artistic view of the subject. Most of all, we hope the children will develop a lasting appreciation for music and that many will be active participants in our music culture.

Kindergarten students are taught music by their classroom teachers. First, second, third, and fourth graders meet with the music teacher three times a week for 30-minute periods.

Grades K-2 perform at the annual winter program, which will be held in early December. The annual spring program, involving grades 3 and 4, is held in May. Please consult the yearly schedule in the front of this handbook for exact dates, times, and locations.



Newsletter

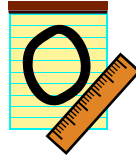
The Cokato Elementary Newsletter is published at the end of each month and sent home with each family. We offer families the chance to "opt out" of a printed version if they wish to read the newsletter on-line. Information of interest about school activities is printed and includes:

- Calendar of Events

- News from the principal
- News from the PTA
- Articles highlighting student and staff accomplishments
- Breakfast and lunch menu

Non-Custodial Parents

It is the parent/legal guardian's responsibility to inform and provide the school with current documentation if anyone is **legally** restricted from contact with a student.

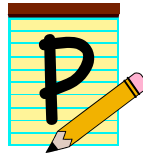


Odyssey

A program for academically gifted students (Odyssey) is available for qualifying students. We recognize that these students have special needs that must be met. If you would like to have your child tested for this program, please contact the principal. Usually the testing takes place in 3rd grade.

Open Enrollment

Students are eligible to attend other Minnesota Public Schools as a result of the state's open enrollment policy. Applications are available at the superintendent's office or on line at www.education.state.mn.us. Parents are encouraged to complete applications shortly after the first of the year prior to enrollment the following fall. The school district reserves the right to close open enrollment at any time to maintain small class sizes.



Parent Organization

Parents are encouraged to join the Dassel-Cokato Parent Teacher Association (PTA) which meets on the first Thursday of alternating months in the high school media center. Topics are varied and may include curriculum, instruction, testing and many other topics of interest to parents. This is your organization, and you should feel free to use it. You may bring any concerns that you might have to this group for discussion. No concern is too big or too small. Watch the *Cokato Elementary Newsletter* for date, time, and location.

Patrol

Our School Safety Patrol is made up of responsible 3rd and 4th grade students who have been trained in these duties. The Safety Patrol will assist all walkers who need to cross streets near school in arriving (7:35-7:55) and departing (3:10-3:25).

Please note: In the event of extremely cold weather, the patrol officers will be at their corners for a limited time. When the wind chill has dropped to -20, we will not be sending our patrol members to their corners until 7:50 AM. They will cross children only for 10 minutes until 8:00 AM. The corners will not be supervised if children arrive before or after the stated times. Please help your children plan their arrival at the corners accordingly. At the end of the day on extremely cold days, classroom teachers will escort our "walkers" to the small gym. The patrol

members will gather children who cross at the five corners and escort them as a group to the correct corner. This will enable patrol members to spend a minimum amount of time outdoors in the cold.

Pesticide Notification

State law requires that parents who would like to be notified of the dates of pesticide applications at Cokato Elementary may contact the District Office to obtain the estimated application schedule. A copy of the “Request for Pesticide Notification” form is available in the Appendix of this handbook.

Pets

No pet of any kind is to be brought to school without prior permission from the classroom teacher. **Due to the increasing numbers of students and staff with allergies to fur/dander, we are requiring that prior arrangement be made with the classroom teacher. Please do not just “drop in” with a pet for a visit to your child’s classroom.** The teacher may schedule a time your child may bring their healthy appropriate pet to school as part of a sharing activity where the students enjoy the pet outdoors. Pets cannot be transported on the bus per Minnesota state law.

Phone Use

Each classroom contains a telephone for the purpose of safety and better communication between parents and teachers. Students may only use phones when given permission by a staff member. We will not allow students to call home to make arrangements to visit a friend. These types of arrangements should be done prior to the visit, and a note should be sent by the parent to verify it for the bus driver and us. **Student use of cell phones is prohibited.**

Photographs

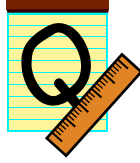
Photographs are taken in our buildings throughout the school year. Some of these photographs will be used in district publications or submitted to outside publications. Videotaping, for district use, may also occur. Pictures taken with cell phones are prohibited. Requests not to photograph or film specific students will be honored. Please contact the principal for additional information.

Physical Education

Cokato Elementary School’s Physical Education program focuses on improving fitness levels, learning skills that enable students to be successful at lifelong activities, promoting appropriate social and emotional behaviors, and developing a positive self-concept. Students in grades 1-4 will meet 5 days per week with the physical education teachers. The year will culminate with an “Activity Day” when we welcome parents and friends to cheer on the kids! We are also privileged to use the D-C High School track for the “Cokato Olympics” in May.

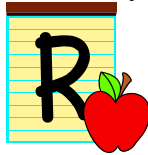
Occasionally parents ask to have a child excused from physical education classes. We request that a written excuse signed by the parent be sent with the child. This will be honored for one day. If a longer time is needed, we must have a statement from the doctor.

We also require the students to have tennis shoes for physical education classes. Please put the child’s name in a place that can be clearly seen.



Quality Experiences

The staff at Cokato Elementary School work as a team to provide the highest quality educational experiences possible for your children. With support and encouragement from home, we believe we can provide success for each and every child.



Recess

Students will go outside for recess times before school and during the noon hour recess period unless any of the following weather related conditions exist:

1. The temperature is at or below -10 degrees and the wind chill is at or below -15 degrees.
2. Precipitation (rain or snow) and/or weather conditions (thunderstorms, lightning) are of a degree that it is deemed the conditions are not conducive to the students' well being.
3. The playground or playing field are in such condition, i.e. wet, icy, muddy, that it is deemed unsafe and not conducive to the students' well being.

The principal or her designee will make decisions related to this policy.

If a parent desires to have their child stay indoors related to a recent illness, the child must have a **doctor's note** stating that indoor recess is required. The number of days must also be established by the doctor.

For safety and peace-of-mind, visitors, including parents, are prohibited from going on or near the playground to talk to their child or pick up him/her for an appointment. Playground supervisors will politely tell the visitors to leave the playground and check into the main office.

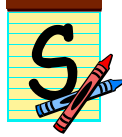
Registration

Parents may register their child in the school office at any time during the school year. We encourage parents to register in person and to bring their children with them. This site visit, accompanied by a parent, generally increases the comfort level of a new student.

We urge families who move into our community over the summer to register prior to the first day of school. For families who come to us during the school year, we request a day's notice prior to the student's attendance. This allows the classroom teacher to have a desk and materials ready and to properly welcome a new student.

Report Cards

Students in grades K-4 are given report cards each trimester. Teachers or the principal will contact the home at other times when necessary to report progress or discuss a concern. Parents/guardians are encouraged to contact the school if they have a concern.



Safety and Security

The Dassel-Cokato Board of Education approved a safety/security plan in 2001 for school buildings in the district. In order to assure that students, staff, parents, and visitors are safe at Cokato Elementary, the following plan has been established:

- The main entrance to the building will be door “B”, the front doors facing north by the office. All parents and visitors must enter through this door, sign in at the office, and receive a visitor’s name tag when entering the building. All visitors will be required to check out before leaving the building.
- The east doors by the lunchroom/kindergarten rooms, the safety patrol doors, the west doors facing the tennis courts, the south doors facing the swimming pool, and the auditorium doors on the north side will be locked during the day. The custodial door on the south side of the building and the handicapped entrance on the west side of the building are equipped with buzzers for use by delivery people and handicapped students or visitors.
- Students and staff are not permitted to open the locked doors to anyone requesting entry.
- Parents waiting to pick up their children at the 3:15 dismissal time will be required to check in at the office but will not be required to wear a visitor’s button. Parents and all other adults authorized to pick up students will be asked to wait for their children in the “Parent Waiting Area” located in the hallway outside the office. The children will be instructed to meet their parents in this area when their class is dismissed at 3:15 instead of joining each other at their classroom or lockers. An exception to this would be if you have specified in a note to the teacher that your child should meet you in your vehicle at the parent pick-up area on the **west or north** sides of the building.
- Twenty-five cameras have been installed inside and outside of the building for the purpose of monitoring who is in or near the school. The safety of our staff and students, as well as the protection of school property, is of prime importance to us.
- **Your children will not be released to cross the street between the buses on the south side of the building during dismissal time.** Please use the pick-up area on the west or north sides only.

Section 504—Policy Prohibiting Discrimination on Basis of Disability

It is the policy of School District 466 to protect students with disabilities from discrimination and to identify and evaluate learners who, within the definition of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, need accommodations, special services or programs in order that such learners may receive the required free, appropriate public education. Please refer to the Appendix of this handbook for a full description of the Section 504 parent/student rights.

Signs, Posters, Literature

Any sign/poster to be displayed or literature to be distributed in the school building or on school grounds requires the prior approval of the principal. Public school buildings may not be used to promote the interests of any commercial or non-school agency.

Social Workers

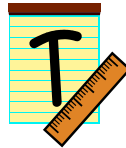
Elementary social workers are available every day at Cokato Elementary to work with students, parents, and staff in the areas of self-esteem, social development, behavior, and feelings. They provide entire classroom activities, small group, individual and family counseling, and consultation. The social workers work closely with teachers. We encourage you to contact them if they can help in any way to make this a better year for your child.

Special Education

The special education programs at Cokato Elementary include but are not limited to:

- Speech or Language Impairments
- Specific Learning Disability
- Developmental Cognitive Disability
- Emotional or Behavior Disorders
- Autism Spectrum Disorders
- Developmental Adapted Physical Education
- Occupational Therapy
- Physical Therapy
- Other Health Disabilities
- Physically Impaired
- Visual and Hearing Impairments

All students referred for special education assessment must have parent permission prior to assessment. After the assessment, parents will be called for a conference to discuss assessment results.



Tardiness and Leaving Early

Any student arriving late or leaving early must report to the office and sign in or out. Students who arrive after the 8:00 bell rings are considered tardy and must check in at the office to receive a tardy slip before going to their classroom. Oversleeping or missing the bus are considered **unexcused** tardies. The school excuses late arrivals or early dismissals for medical appointments and other emergencies. If absences and tardies become a concern, they will be handled according to MN Statute 260.015 as it applies to truancy.

It has been documented that tardiness has become habitual with several students at Cokato Elementary. Beginning with the first week of school, school officials will be proactive in contacting parents in an effort to reduce the number of tardies at our school.

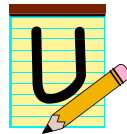
Team Time

For 30 minutes each morning, teachers meet as a grade level to work on instructional planning. Students are supervised during Team Time by paraprofessionals. During this time, the students are welcome to bring a snack to eat. **For the 2011-2012 school year, there will be no cost for milk or juice that is served during Team Time for all students in grades K-4.** The students are not required to bring a snack from home. If they chose to do so, the school strongly recommends nutritious snacks, as opposed to cookies and pastries. Students are not allowed to share home prepared snacks/food items with other students due to state health regulations. Beverages brought from home should be limited to juices that are low in sugar. It is not permissible to bring soda pop for the Team Time snack.

Healthy snack ideas include string cheese, graham crackers, animal crackers, popcorn, party mix, fruit, raw vegetables, yogurt cup, pretzels, whole grain crackers, and mini bagels with cream cheese topping.

Title I

Some students need additional help in the basic skills necessary in reading and math. Title I is a federal program available at Cokato Elementary for students who need those services. You may contact the principal for more information.



Understanding Self and Others

We hope that your child's experiences at Cokato Elementary will increase his/her understanding of the world in which we live. The Dassel-Cokato communities have adopted six "Character Pillars" on which to focus our character education curriculum. Focusing on the pillars helps students better **understand** themselves and their interactions with other people.



Vacations

The school calendar is published several months in advance for your convenience in planning family vacations. We ask that you plan family vacations around the school calendar, if at all possible. If you wish to take a child out of school for a family vacation, the teacher, as well as the office, must be contacted. Many school activities cannot be made up. Students will be responsible for completing assignments as soon as possible **after** their return. **Please do not request that a teacher prepare lessons in advance for the child to take on their trip.**

Visitors

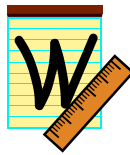
This is your school—we welcome you! Please phone ahead to make arrangements when you plan to visit. We ask that you not bring pets for show and tell unless the teacher is aware of this in advance. (See Pet Policy)

There will be times during the year when you will be invited for special activities and programs. It is not necessary to stop in the office to sign in under these circumstances.

We ask that you do not send a visiting relative or friend to spend the day with your child. This can result in a disrupted day for your child and other students in the classroom.

Volunteers

Volunteers are an integral part of our program. Many opportunities arise throughout the year. We encourage **parents, senior citizens, and community members** to volunteer their time and talents to the school. Volunteers may work in the classroom, small groups, media center, computer lab, at home, or by sharing their own personal interests and hobbies. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator listed in the staff directory. A volunteer information form is also included in this handbook that will provide additional information.



Walking To and From

For maximum safety, please teach your child to follow the safest route to school. Teach and review the use of crosswalks, stopping at the curb and looking both ways before crossing a street.

Winter conditions create possible safety hazards for walkers. Extra caution must be used if snow has blocked sidewalks. Students should NOT walk on the high banks next to the street as they may fall into the street. If it is necessary to walk on the side of the street, please teach your child to walk facing the traffic.

Please instruct your child to come directly home from school, not stop and play. Caution him/her to never talk to strangers, accept candy from strangers, or get into a stranger's car.

Weapons

Students and visitors are not allowed to possess, use, or distribute a real or look-alike weapon when in a school location. According to School Board policy, immediate out-of-school suspension and notification of parent or guardian will occur. For a detailed summary of the policy, please refer to the Appendix at the back of this handbook.

Withdrawals

If you know that your child will be withdrawing from Cokato Elementary, please inform us at the earliest possible date. This will help our planning and will allow the forwarding of records so that the transition to the new school can be as smooth as possible.



eXtra—Many extra programs and events are offered to Cokato Elementary students throughout the year.

Yes—You are always welcome here!

Zest—Let's work together in inspiring your child's **ZEST** for learning!

Appendix