



Harding Middle School

DES MOINES PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Warren G. Harding Middle School

Parent & Student Handbook

2024-25

203 East Euclid Ave

Des Moines, IA 50313

515-242-8445

harding.dmschools.org

Twitter: @HardingWolfPack

Instagram: [hardingwolfpack](https://www.instagram.com/hardingwolfpack)

Des Moines Public Schools Mission

The mission of Des Moines Public Schools is to become the model for urban education in the United States. The Des Moines Public Schools exists so that graduates possess the knowledge, skills, and abilities to be successful at the next stage of their lives.

Des Moines Public Schools Vision

Becoming the model for urban education in the United States.

Harding Middle School Mission

Harding Middle School provides a safe place to develop empathy, gain confidence, and become disciplined learners.

Harding Middle School Vision

Harding Middle School staff will partner with students, families, and the community to build a consistent and trusting learning environment.

Harding Middle School Collective Commitments

1. Clearly and consistently communicate with all stakeholders.
2. Ensure excellence through teaching, modeling, and upholding high expectations for students, staff, and self.
3. Maintain a positive, empathetic, and inclusive growth mindset.
4. Acknowledge positive behaviors and achievements through regular and meaningful celebrations.
5. Strive to know one another and our community through collaboration and intentional, active listening.
6. Hold one another accountable for the roles WE each play in our building.

District Equity/Nondiscrimination Statement

It is the policy of the Des Moines Community School District not to illegally discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, creed, age (for employment), marital status (for programs), sexual orientation, gender identity and socioeconomic status (for programs) in its educational programs and its employment practices. There is a grievance procedure for processing complaints of discrimination. If you believe you have (or your child) has been discriminated against or treated unjustly at school, please contact the Equity Coordinator at 2100 Fleur Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50312, 515-242-7972 or carol.wynngreen@dmschools.org.

Welcome To Harding!

Welcome to Harding Middle School!

We are thrilled to welcome each of you to Harding Middle School. This year, we are eager to embark on a journey of learning, growth, and problem-solving together. Our goal is to prepare you for success beyond middle school.

To stay informed about all the exciting events and important updates at Harding, be sure to follow us on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter.

Parents, we encourage you to sign up for the Infinite Campus Parent Portal and Snap! Connect (formerly known as School CNXT). These tools will help you stay updated on your child's grades, attendance, and behavior, as well as provide a convenient way to communicate with teachers.

We look forward to a fantastic year ahead!

-Dr. Christopher Schmit, Principal

Harding's Website:

Please check our website at <https://harding.dmschools.org> for dates, times, and details about all events and activities at Harding. The webpage includes our calendar of events, information about athletics and activities, parent and student information, and contact information for Harding staff. Save us to your favorites for quick access!

Snap! Connect:

Des Moines Public Schools and Harding Middle School staff are consistently sending messages and updates via the Snap! Connect platform. Download the app on any mobile device or visit <https://cloud.schoolcnxt.com/> to stay up to date on the need-to-know information. If you haven't registered your Snap! Connect account yet, call the school at 515-242-8445 to get your personalized code.

Administration & Main Office Contact Information

Phone – 515-242-8445

Fax – 515-323-8656

Email: harding@dmschools.org

Hours: 8:00 AM – 3:45 PM

Dr. Christopher Schmit - Principal christopher.schmit@dmschools.org	Jeanette Carrington - Student Engagement Coordinator jeanette.carrington@dmschools.org
Ben Heinen - Associate Principal benjamin.heinen@dmschools.org	Megan Van Sickle - Community School Coordinator meganvansickle@dmschools.org
Courtney Wahlstrom - Associate Principal courtney.wahlstrom@dmschools.org	Ashwaag Ahmed – Bilingual Family Liaison (Swahili) ashwaag.ahmed@dmschools.org
Jenny Rink - Office Manager jenny.rink@dmschools.org	Francisco Hernandez – Bilingual Family Liaison (Spanish) francisco.hernandez@dmschools.org
Rennis Monzon - Office Clerk rennis.monzon@dmschools.org	Mary Scuito - School Nurse mary.scuito@dmschools.org

Building Commitments

Collaborative

We will take responsibility when we make mistakes.

We will be kind when we interact with people.

Professional

We do our best every day.

We are scholars, and class comes first.

We demonstrate grit when faced with adversity.

Respectful

Kindness must prevail.

We will respect others' boundaries and property.

Harding Timberwolves are **collaborative**, **professional**, and **respectful**. We are **collaborative** because we work together and look for ways to support each other to achieve common goals and create a positive school community. We are **professional** because we understand that school is our job. We act, dress, and carry ourselves in a mature manner. We are **respectful** to others, our school, and ourselves. We respect each person in our building despite our differences in opinions, backgrounds, and abilities.

General Information:

School Hours:	
Doors Open	8:15 AM
Breakfast	8:15 – 8:30AM <i>(in classrooms)</i>
School Start Time	8:30 AM
School End Time	3:25 PM
Doors Close	3:45 PM

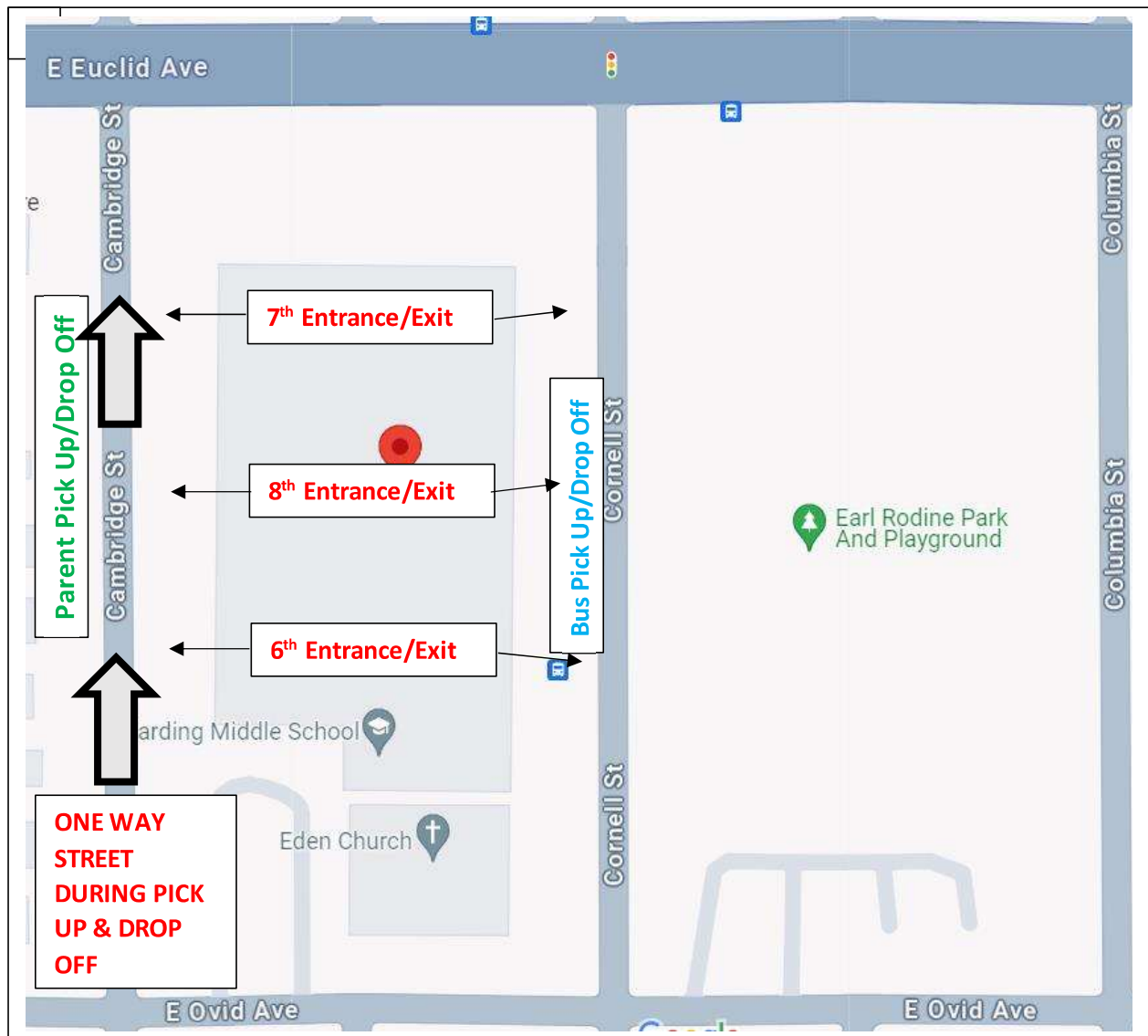
Bell Schedule:

6th grade			7th grade			8th grade		
Doors open at 8:15			Doors open at 8:15			Doors open at 8:15		
ADVISORY	8:30	9:15	ADVISORY	8:30	9:15	ADVISORY	8:30	9:15
1	9:18	10:19	1	9:18	10:19	1	9:18	10:03
2	10:22	11:41	2	10:22	11:07	2	10:06	11:07
3	11:44	12:29	3	11:10	12:11	3	11:10	12:29
4	12:32	1:33	4	12:14	1:33	4	12:32	1:17
5	1:36	2:21	5	1:36	2:37	5	1:20	2:21
6	2:24	3:25	6	2:40	3:25	6	2:24	3:25
LUNCH A	11:00	11:18	LUNCH A	12:35	12:53	LUNCH A	11:48	12:06
LUNCH B	11:23	11:41	LUNCH B	12:58	1:16	LUNCH B	12:11	12:29

Arrival to School:

Doors will remain locked until 8:15 when students may begin entering the building. Staff duty also begins at 8:15. Please plan accordingly.

- All walkers and parent drop-offs will enter from the West side of the building through the following doors.
 - 6th: Southwest Doors
 - 7th: Northwest Doors
 - 8th: Middle West Doors
- All bus riders will enter from the East side of the building through the following doors:
 - 6th: Southeast Doors
 - 7th: Northeast Doors
 - 8th: Middle West Doors
- From 8:15-8:30, no students should enter the building through the main doors near the parking lot and office.**
- Students arriving after 8:30 must check in at the main office to get a pass to give to their teacher.



WEATHER DELAYS:

- When the weather is extreme, there may be a need to delay the start of school.
- Please watch for messages on Snap Connect, email, or via phone call.
- Local news stations will also share any delays or cancellations.
- In the case of a 2-hour delay, all arrival times listed above will be adjusted 2 hours for staff and students.

Attendance:

School Attendance Procedures:

Attendance is the foundation for learning and achievement. When students attend class regularly, they are exposed to fundamental reading and math skills and the chance to build a

habit of good attendance that will carry them into the next stage of their life. Excused and unexcused absences count toward a student's total absence minutes.

Parents should try to notify the school promptly when their child will be gone from school.

Teachers will take attendance within the first 20 minutes of class and update at the end of each class.

Parents/Guardians will receive an automated call from the school when their student is absent from class.

Excused Absences:

Excused absences are defined as:

- Medical appointment (notes are encouraged)
- Medical injury
- Illness excused by parent/guardian
- Illness excused by health care provider
- Other than medical/illness. Examples: a religious holiday; court; death or illness in immediate family; other as approved by school administrator, such as college visits, weather related incidents
- In-school suspension
- Out-of-school suspension

Unexcused Absences:

Unexcused absences are defined as all other absences. Examples include skipping school, babysitting, family vacations, gone without contact.

When a student reaches 10 days absent (excused and unexcused) during a school year, for any reason, a school may request that a parent provide medical excuse documentation for further absences. Medical excuses may be provided by the school nurse or doctor's office. If the student continues to be absent without medical excuse, the absences will be considered unexcused. Schools must provide this request in writing using the 10-day letter.

Tardy and Absences:

Students will be counted tardy in the following situations:

- Students who arrive late to school after the first bell.
- Students who do not arrive to their class after the bell will be considered absent, the number of minutes will accumulate to an overall total minute absent.
- Students who leave school before the last bell of the day will be considered absent for the time missed, the number of minutes will accumulate to an overall total minute absent.

Excessive and Consecutive Absences

Excessive absences are defined as five or more days of absences (excused and/or unexcused) in a semester. Building-based teams will review student attendance data on all students who have excessive absences and provide appropriate intervention as needed.

Consecutive absences are defined as full days in a row and are unexcused. Schools will determine their response to absences. Examples include loss of privileges, attendance contracts, detention, etc.

Parents/Guardians will be formally notified of absences by phone call, email, and/or Snap! Connect message. Parents may also receive attendance letters or be requested to attend meetings to discuss improving their student's attendance.

Breakfast:

Breakfast is served from 8:15 AM to 8:30. Students will eat breakfast in their Advisory class. Students will pick up breakfast in their grade level hallways as they enter the building. Students arriving at school late can pick up breakfast from the cafeteria until 9:00.

Bullying, Harassment, and Hazing Policy:

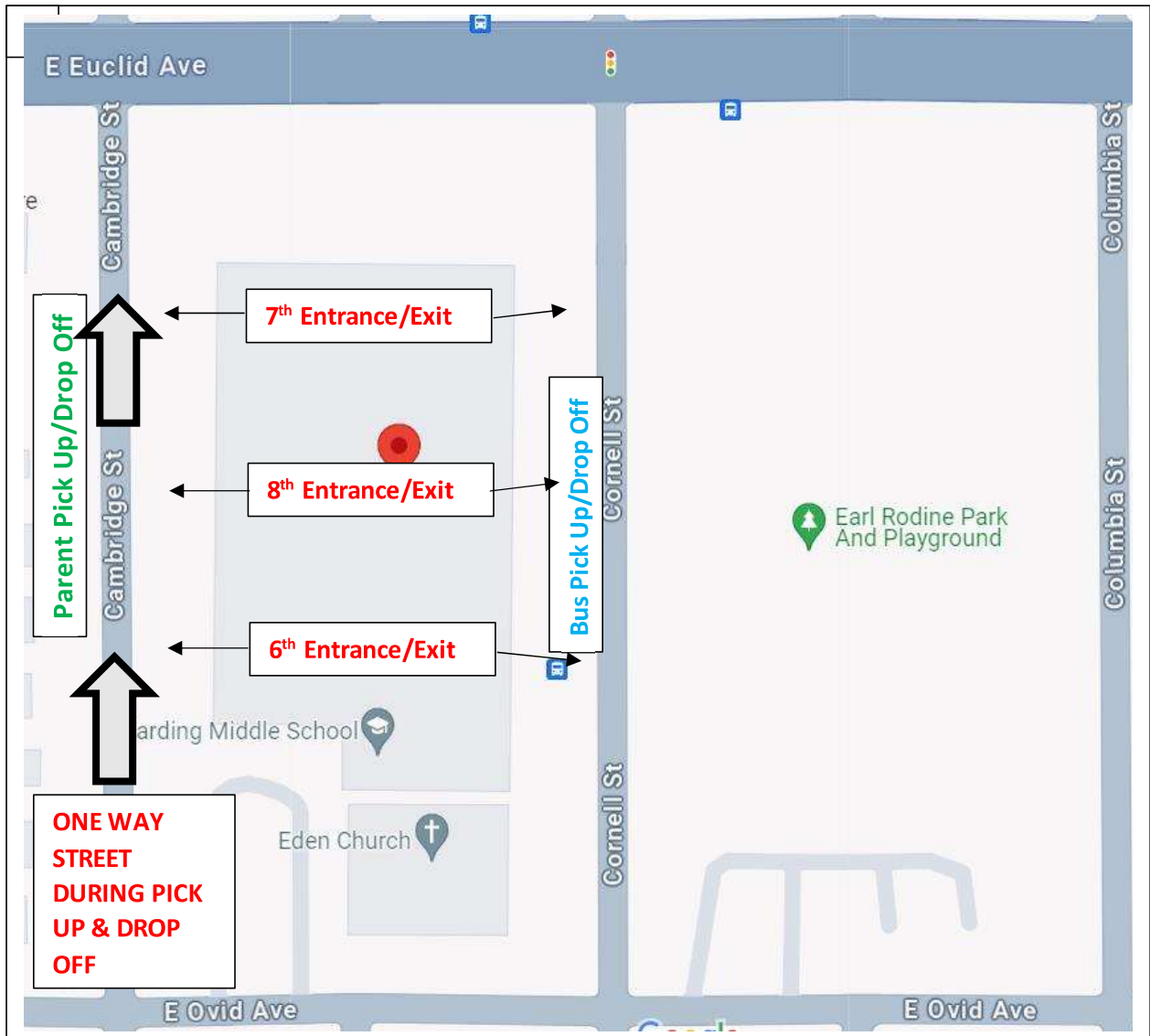
See Appendix at the end of the handbook.

Dismissal:

Students will exit the building through the same door that they entered. Parent pick up is on the west side of the building. Buses will be on the east side of the building. Students walking may exit either side of the building. Students should use the following doors to enter and exit the building - 6th grade - southeast and southwest doors, 7th - grade northeast and northwest doors, and 8th grade - middle doors on the east and west sides of the building. **At dismissal, no students should exit the building through the main doors near the parking lot and office.**

Unless students are under the direct supervision of an adult (homework help, clubs, or activities), all students need to exit the building by 3:35 PM.

If students are being picked up before 3:25, guardians must check them out from the main office prior to them leaving.



Dress Code and Accessories:

At Harding Middle School, students may dress in a way that expresses their gender identity, cultural, and/or religious beliefs. Students are expected to dress in a professional manner, which helps us maintain a collaborative and respectful atmosphere.

To ensure the effective and equitable enforcement of this dress code, school staff shall enforce the dress code using the protocol below:

- Students will be asked to put on their own clothing that meets the dress code, if it is available at school
- The school will offer clothing that meets dress code expectations.
- Parents/Guardians may be called to bring clothing to school that meets dress code expectations.

The following guidelines are meant to assist students and parents in determining appropriate attire for school.

1. Clothing must cover undergarments, stomachs, chests, and private areas.
2. Shoes must be worn at all times. Shoes without soles and slippers may not be worn at school to maintain student safety.
3. Students are permitted to wear headwraps, headbands, hats, sweatshirts with hoods, and bandanas. Sunglasses and blankets are not permitted to be used in the building.
4. Clothing which contains offensive language, hate speech, or clothing that promotes alcohol, drugs, or tobacco are banned at Harding Middle School. Additionally, clothing or accessories that are unsafe are not allowed at Harding.

School administration reserves the right to add or change the dress code as necessary. School administration also reserves the right to send students home if they are in violation of the dress code.

General School Information:

Advisory Time Purpose: Advisory is a safe and sacred space to build community and develop trusting relationships through goal setting and social/emotional learning. The main purpose of Advisory is to offer time for students and staff to build positive relationships. Each Advisory will focus on building students' social skills through group processing, individual goal setting, and self-evaluation. Topics covered include grade level goals, bullying and harassment, conflict resolution, goal setting, leadership development, peer-to-peer interventions, positive peer relationships, and student empowerment.

Attendance at school events is voluntary and a privilege. All students attending must be in good standing behaviorally and academically. In addition, students must not owe any detentions or suspensions. Any student absent from school for more than ½ the day will not be allowed to attend any event that same day. Students who attend events away from Harding Middle School must be accompanied by an adult.

Food: Food should only be consumed in the cafeteria during lunch or during breakfast in the classroom. Food should not be consumed in classrooms or the hallway. If food is visible, it will be confiscated and returned to the student at the end of the school day upon the student's request. Appropriate use of gum is expected and may be allowed per teacher discretion. Exceptions may be made for special events and occasions determined by Harding staff. Students are able to carry a **water bottle** with them to class. The container must be clear and only water is allowed to be consumed during instructional time. Only student lunches should be stored in academic lockers. No other food should be stored in school lockers.

Hall Passes & Common Area Out of Bounds:

Ensuring students are in class or in an appropriate location is necessary to maintaining a safe and secure learning environment for all students. Any student not in class during their designated class time and who does not have a pass is considered out of bounds. It is all

students' responsibility to be in class. Being out of bounds may result in detention or other consequences being assigned. If these issues continue, additional consequences may be determined by the administration, including loss of passing time or escorted passing.

All students in the hallway during class time must have permission from their teacher and a pass. If a student is in the hall without a pass, they may be considered out of bounds. In an effort to engage all learners in instruction, students will not be allowed to leave the classroom for the first 10 minutes or last 10 minutes of class time, unless it is deemed an emergency.

Any student wanting to meet with any support staff (office manager, nurse, Success case manager, social worker, counselor, etc.) or administration (principal or associate principal) must first check in with their classroom teacher and get a pass. If a student does not have a pass to see the staff member, the teacher will email or call the appropriate staff to check their availability, and then write the student a pass once available.

Cell Phones and Electronics:

Technology is a part of our world, both at home and school. At Des Moines Public Schools, we are fortunate to have a computer for each student which allows us to address the educational needs of our students.

While we recognize that cell phones are a part of our everyday lives, they are not a necessary requirement to meet curricular outcomes. In fact, cell phones are often a distraction to our students' ability to engage in their learning. Studies have shown a connection between the decline of adolescent's mental health and use of cell phones and social media (Haidt, 2024). To maintain an optimal learning environment for all students and to ensure safety and limit distractions, we request your support as we curtail the student use of cell phones and other personal devices at Harding Middle School.

Cell phones may be used before school and after school. During the school day, cell phones should be kept in the student's pocket, locker, or backpack.

In the case of a family emergency, the office staff will give your child a message or have them return your call. Health concerns can be addressed using the telephone in the nurse's office. We expect all students to comply with this policy to support learning and we will do our best to help our children understand the need for this policy. Thank you in advance for your partnership with our middle schools and your continued support to provide a safe and productive learning environment that limits distractions for all students.

Cell Phone and Other Personal Devices General Understanding:

1. Cell phones, ear buds and other personal devices must remain off and in the student's pocket, locker, or book bag while at school.
2. **Students contacting parents:** Students will ask teachers before they contact parents when they are ill, upset or require something. Teachers will assist students in contacting home through the classroom or office phone. Upon request, private space will be provided for students in the office.
3. Any device will be used responsibly. When usage is inappropriate, there will be consequences such as temporary confiscation of a personal device, communication with parents, and/or inaccessibility to technology for learning. Digital citizenship is important. "Doing the right thing online" is expected.

4. All cell phones must be charged at home and ready to go. Care of the devices remains in the hands of the student, and the school takes no responsibility for repair or replacement of personal devices if they are damaged/lost or stolen by the students or while in possession by the school.

If	Then
Phone/electronics is out or heard for 1st time in classroom without permission	The teacher will give a warning to the student and remind the student to silence and put the phone/electronic device in backpack or pocket.
2nd time phone/electronics is out or heard in the classroom without permission	Teacher will call student services to remove the phone/electronic device for the remainder of the school day. The phone/electronic device will be taken to the office safe and will be locked up. The student can get the phone at the end of the school day.

**Further and on-going violations of the cell phone and electronics policy may result in a parent/guardian having to pick up the students' phone or electronics, meetings with behavior strategist and/or administration, and a student cell phone or electronics contract.*

Haidt, J. (2024). *The Anxious Generation*. Penguin.

School Computers:

School computers will be used by students in classes for some assignments and some assessments. School computers and chargers will remain in the classroom and not be handed out to students. Computers are the property of the school district. Students are expected to take care of devices and report any damage or issues so they may be fixed. Damage to computers may result in the student/family responsible for the damage paying the cost to fix it. Additionally, school computers are intended for educational purposes such as completing assignments, academic games, or researching a topic. School computers are **not intended** to be used for social media, streaming videos or shows, messaging other students, or playing non-academic games. A school computer can be confiscated and checked as needed to ensure students are using devices appropriately. Any misuse will be communicated to parents so a plan can be developed to improve student usage.

School Transportation:

School transportation includes transportation on a yellow school bus and DART buses provided by the school. All students must have their school ID to ride the DART bus. Students are expected to display appropriate behavior on the school or DART bus. This includes, but is not limited to, using appropriate language, keeping hands and feet to yourself, and making safe decisions. Failure to meet expectations may result in consequences including the loss of transportation privileges.

For the 2024-25 school year, all Harding Middle School and North High School students will be able to ride DART for free, thanks to continued funding from the Principal Foundation. This means that all students, including those who open enroll or live within three miles of the school, will have free access to DART any time and any day, including weekends and over breaks. This is the third year we have partnered with DART to offer free transportation, with the goal of improving student attendance, academic achievement, and access to jobs and extracurricular activities. North and Harding are the only two schools that will have free access for all students; like last year, DMPS will partner with DART to offer different levels of access for students at other schools. For more information, visit our school website at [DART Bus Information - Harding Middle School \(dmschools.org\)](https://www.dmschools.org).

Standards Referenced Grading:

Harding Middle School uses Standards Referenced Grading to help students, teachers, and families know whether work in the classroom is heading in the right direction and pointing towards the goals and dreams of our students. The term *standards-referenced* refers to instructional approaches that are aligned to learning standards- i.e., written descriptions of what students are expected to know and be able to do at a specific stage of their education. In other words, *standards-referenced* refers to the use of learning standards to guide what gets taught and assessed in schools.

In Standards Referenced Grading, a consistent 4-point interval grading scale will be used. Letter grades, derived from this 4-point scale, will be based solely on achievement of course/grade level standards. Students will have multiple and varied opportunities to demonstrate evidence of their learning, and accommodations and modifications will be provided for exceptional learners.

What the letters mean:

NM: Not Meeting Target - there is no evidence of the target, but work is attempted possibly with many errors *If a student is refusing work, it should be marked as MISSING

PT: Progressing Toward Target - there are aspects of the target that are being demonstrated, but not fully or with some errors

AT: Achieving Target - the evidence provided fully meets the target described in the scale

ET: Exceeding Target - use the level 3 skills within the scale and apply/adapt at a higher level

For more information about Standards Referenced Grading, or for particular content and/or curriculum materials, please visit the Des Moines Public Schools website at

www.gradingdmschools.org

Student Behavior:

Students are expected to display appropriate behavior at school including showing respect to classmates and adults, using appropriate language, engaging in lessons, and working with classmates and teachers; however, it is also anticipated that middle school students may

display challenging behaviors at times. Harding Middle School staff members believe student behavior provides a teachable moment. Staff will work with students on behaviors that are inappropriate for class, so all students are able to continue learning. If a student continues to show behavior, the teacher will call for support and the student will leave the classroom and go to the In School Solutions room to reflect on their behavior. When the student is ready, a staff member will talk with them about their plan to be successful in class, take them to process with the teacher, and return to class. If the conversation is unsuccessful, the student will return to the In School Solutions room until they are ready to try again. Teachers or administrators will communicate with parents about student behaviors that remove them from class.

Level III student behaviors (such as fighting, gambling, theft, etc.) place the school and persons in harm's way and create an unsafe school environment. The Des Moines Schools District has chosen to specifically address the most prevalent and disruptive of these behaviors with specific policy and procedures.

1. Fighting: students mutually engaging in offensive physical contact intended to cause injury
2. Common area loitering or refusal to be in an assigned area: students creating an unsafe school environment by refusing to attend class or be in an assigned area, which creates an unsafe school environment
3. Technology use leading to or supporting violence while on school grounds: the uses of technology to increase the level of violence in schools: Recording violent acts while on school grounds for the purpose to exacerbate, recording violent acts while on school grounds without alerting school officials

Students committing any of the behaviors listed above (Items 1-3) are subject to the following procedures:

1st offense = Parent Meeting and formal Behavioral Contract with supports provided.

2nd offense = 10 school days virtual placement

3rd offense = additional 60 school day virtual placement

4th offense = additional 90 school days virtual placement

*A manifestation determination meeting must be held for students with a disability.

Student IDs:

All students will be issued a student ID at the beginning of the school year. Lost IDs can be replaced by requesting a new one from the main office. New IDs cost \$1.

Students are encouraged to have their ID with them every day. A student ID is **required** to ride the DART bus and attend after school activities (including high school events). Other possible uses for a student ID include signing into the office if you are late, checking out at lunch, and checking out library books.

Student Lockers:

- A locker may be requested by students by talking to their Advisory teacher. The teacher will contact the office staff to assign a locker.
- Only for non-academic items during the day (ie: Coat, music instrument, clothing not needed during the day, etc.).
- Students will only be allowed to use lockers before school and after school – not during the day.
- No open food/drink containers.
- Must be kept clean.
- Lockers are a privilege. Students failing to meet locker expectations may lose the privilege.

Turnaround Arts Model:

Turnaround Arts brings arts education resources to priority and focus schools as a strategic tool for targeting larger school challenges and opportunities.

At Harding Middle School, we use the arts to create unique opportunities for students to learn and grow. Students engage in arts integrated instruction to deepen their understanding of core content skills through connecting, responding to, creating and presenting music, theater, dance, visual and media arts. The Harding Middle School learning community employs community art experiences, beautification projects and classroom residencies with local teaching artists to prepare students for the next stage of life.

Athletics and Activities

Activity Code of Conduct and Program Information

Harding Athletics Philosophy: At Harding Middle School, we believe that interscholastic and intramural athletics supplement the curricular program to become a vital part of a student's total educational experiences. These experiences contribute to the development of learning skills and emotional patterns that enable the student to maximize their education. **Student participation in any part of our activities program is a privilege which carries responsibilities to the school, the activity, the student body, the community, and to each student.** Commitment, loyalty, comradery, discipline, citizenship and sportsmanship will be fostered through participation and experience. This participation will enable the student to develop physically, mentally, socially and emotionally.

Program Goals: The ultimate goals of the athletic program are to realize the value of a team and individual skill development without overemphasizing the concept of winning; and to develop and improve positive citizenship traits among the program's participants.

Requirements to Participate:

1. Iowa requires students to be in 7th or 8th grade for interscholastic sports.
2. Students must have a current sports physical performed by a doctor on file with the school nurse. Students cannot participate in practice until the nurse has a physical on file.
3. DMPS Athletic Registration Form (Complete during school registration or using separate form) Link [here](#)
4. Student Expectations/Player Contract (bottom of this form)
5. District activity fee paid

Season Timeline:

1. Athletic practices will be held Monday-Friday after school; Activities will be scheduled by each individual sponsor.
2. Coaches and sponsors will determine the start and end times for practices/meetings.
3. A complete game/practice schedule, coaches' contact information, and general guidelines will be handed out at pre-season meeting and/or the first practice.

Student Expectations/Player Contract:

1. Attendance
 - a. Unexcused absences may affect participation time (includes tardies and/or truancy)
 - b. Examples of excused absences are doctor appointments, absent from school, working with a teacher per their request. (Must provide a note from doctor or teacher upon return.)

- c. Students must be present at school for at least half the day in order to participate in that day's contest, event, practice, or meeting.
2. Academics
- d. Students who are not meeting academic expectations, which includes missing assignments and failing grades, are expected to make up time/work after school which may result in missed practice/meeting time and/or missed participation time. School staff will work with coaches/sponsors to create a plan that is in the best interest of the student.
3. Behavior
- e. Level 2 or higher referral may result in missed participation time.
 - a. Suspension from school will result in students being suspended from at least 1 event/game.
 - b. Students serving game suspension will not travel to the away games with the team.
4. Transportation
- h. It is the expectation that every student has made arrangements for transportation immediately following practices, meetings, events, or games in advance. Students should wait in designated areas. Please make every effort to pick up your student within 15 minutes after the event is scheduled to be over.
 - a. After away games, players may only ride home with their parent/guardian. Players riding home with their parent/guardian must sign out with the coach prior to leaving. All other players will ride the bus back to school.
5. Sportsmanship
- j. All students will represent their school with pride and appropriate sportsmanship. Failure to do so may result in lost participation time.

Athletic Uniform Policy: All uniform equipment must be returned to the coach at the end of the season, or a monetary fine will be added to the student's account to cover replacement cost of those lost or not returned items.

Physical exams and insurance requirements: Regulations of the Department of Education, IHSAA and the IGHSAA states: The school shall require of each student participating in athletics a physician's certificate stating that he or she is physically able to participate in athletic contests of his or her school. The medical certificate is valid for the purpose of this rule for one calendar year. This certificate must be on file before the student will be allowed to practice with any of the high school/middle school's athletic teams. Another regulation states: A student shall not be permitted to practice or compete for a school until it has verification that he or she has basic athletic insurance coverage. School district rule requires filing of an "Assumption of Risk" form by the student and parent/guardian before participation will be permitted.

Appendix

Bullying, Harassment, and Hazing Policy

The Board directs the Superintendent to implement appropriate procedures and regulations to maintain an academic environment that is free from harassment, including sexual harassment, and bullying. Des Moines Public Schools will take action to halt any bullying and harassment and will take appropriate corrective actions, including disciplinary measures, to remedy all violations of this policy. It is a violation of this policy for any student, staff member, volunteer, parent or business associate of the District to harass or bully any student on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, gender, gender identity, age, marital status, sexual orientation, physical attributes, physical or mental ability or disability, ancestry, political party preference, political belief, military affiliation, socioeconomic status, familial status, or any other trait or characteristic, on or in school property or vehicles, and at any school function or school-sponsored activity, regardless of the activity's location. Harassment and bullying are prohibited by the State of Iowa and this school policy. Violations of this policy or procedure will be cause for disciplinary action up to and including expulsion. The level of discipline for each incident will be determined after considering the severity of the incident and any prior incidents. The Board is committed to providing all students with a safe and civil school environment in which all members of the school community are treated with dignity and respect.

This policy is in effect while students or employees are on property within the jurisdiction of Des Moines Public Schools, including District-owned or chartered vehicles, and while away from school grounds if bullying, harassment, hazing, or any other victimization of students directly affects the good order, efficient management, and welfare of the Des Moines Public Schools.

If, after an investigation, any student, staff member, volunteer, parent or business associate of Des Moines Public Schools found to be in violation of this policy may be disciplined by appropriate measures, which may include expulsion and termination.

Definitions Harassment and bullying shall be construed to mean any electronic, written, verbal, or physical act or conduct toward a student which is based on any actual or perceived trait or characteristic of the student and which creates an objectively hostile school environment that meets one or more of the following conditions:

1. Places the student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or property.
2. Has a substantially detrimental effect on the student's physical or mental health.
3. Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's academic performance.
4. Has the effect of substantially interfering with the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

Electronic means any communication involving the transmission of information by wire, radio, optical cable, electromagnetic, or other similar means. Electronic includes but is not limited to

communication via electronic mail, internet-based communications, pager service, cell phones, and electronic text messaging.

A person commits an act of hazing when the person intentionally or recklessly engages in any act or acts involving forced activity which endanger the physical health or safety of a student for the purpose of initiation or admission into, or affiliation with, any organization operating in connection with a school.

Reporting All Des Moines Public Schools stakeholders have the ability and responsibility to report any act in violation of Policy 507 to school staff and/or district staff. This report can be written, made verbally or electronically and should be given to a school administrator or designee. An electronic complaint form is available via the Des Moines Public School website. The report will be logged in the reporting student's communication log. Upon receiving the report, communication must be immediately made to the building-level bullying and harassment investigator.

Investigation. Once a report is received by Des Moines Public Schools (building-level bullying and harassment investigator), an investigation will begin immediately. Investigators will consider the totality of circumstances presented in determining whether conduct objectively constitutes harassment or bullying. If the reporting student's perception of the acts matches Iowa Code 280.28, an investigation is required and must be completed as promptly as possible by the building-level investigator. All investigations must begin and finish at the building level. Building-level investigators may consult with District Administration for guidance and compliance. Investigators will ensure safety and confidentiality during the investigation. In addition, investigators will collect formal statements from the complainant, accused and can collect formal statements from witnesses, students, staff and adults. Complainants and accused students and guardians will receive a written summary notifying them of the findings of the investigation and next steps outlined by the school.

No Retaliation or False Accusation No person shall retaliate against a student or other person because the student or other person has filed a discrimination or harassment complaint, assisted or participated in an investigation, or has opposed language or conduct that violates this policy, if the participation or action was done in good faith. Persons who engage in retaliation or who knowingly file false complaints or give false statements in an investigation shall be subject to discipline up to and including suspension and/or expulsion.

Notification Notice of this policy shall be communicated to staff, students, and parents of the Des Moines Public Schools and to the Des Moines Public Schools community. It shall be included in handbooks including those for students, staff, and volunteers; posted on the district's website; and published in any such manner as deemed appropriate.

Training Des Moines Public Schools shall educate staff, parents, and students about harassment and bullying, effective methods of prevention, and what to do in the event of such actions. Each building will appoint, at a minimum, one staff member to be the building-

level bullying and harassment investigator. Des Moines Public Schools shall participate in assessments of the effectiveness of this policy and education programs and shall make reports as required.

Other Agencies Students, parents, and employees may also contact the Iowa Civil Rights Commission; the Des Moines Human Rights Commission; the Region VII Office for Civil Rights within the United States Department of Education in Chicago, Illinois; or the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in Chicago, Illinois for assistance.

Legal Reference: Code of Iowa, section 280.28

Code of Iowa, sections 216.9; 280.3 (2013)

281 Iowa Administrative Code 12.3(6)

Adopted: 2007; Revised 2014; Revised 2017

District Equity/Non-Discrimination Statement:

It is the policy of the Des Moines Community School District not to illegally discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, creed, age (for employment), marital status (for programs), sexual orientation, gender identity and socioeconomic status (for programs) in its educational programs and its employment practices. There is a grievance procedure for processing complaints of discrimination. If you believe you have (or your child) has been discriminated against or treated unjustly at school, please contact the Equity Coordinator at carol.wynngreen@dmschools.org or 515.242.7709.

Statement of Non-Discrimination for Gender Identity:

The Des Moines Independent Community School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, disability, religion, creed, age (for employment), marital status (for programs), sexual orientation, gender identity and socioeconomic status (for programs) in its educational programs and its employment practices.

Des Moines Public Schools strives to create a supportive environment for its students. Discrimination, harassment, and bullying of students for any reason, including on the basis of gender identity and/or sexual orientation are prohibited by state law and District policy. Students who believe they have experienced or witnessed discrimination, bullying, or harassment should refer to school administration to file or make an internal complaint.

Complaints of discrimination or harassment based on a student's actual or perceived gender identity or sexual orientation must be handled in accordance with District Policy.

Definitions

1. Gender identity: A person's gender-related identity, which may be the same as or different from the person's sex assigned at birth.
2. Transgender: an umbrella term used to describe a person whose gender identity or gender expression is different from that traditionally associated with the assigned sex at birth.

3. Sexual orientation: an individual's enduring pattern of physical, romantic, or other attraction to another person. Sexual orientation is not the same as gender identity.

Privacy

In accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), only those District employees with a legitimate educational interest are permitted to access a student's records. Absent consent from the parent or adult student (18 years or older), information contained in a student's records, including information regarding a student's sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or transgender status may only be disclosed under the limited circumstances set forth in FERPA.

Students can discuss and express their gender identity openly and decide when, with whom, and how much of their private information to share with others. Schools should work closely with the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) to devise an appropriate plan regarding the confidentiality of the student's gender identity.

Requesting Support

Des Moines Public Schools recognizes that it is a highly personal decision for a student to determine whether they identify with a different gender than their sex assigned at birth. Students are encouraged to speak with a building administrator or guidance counselor if they need support or accommodation at school.

In some cases, transgender students may not want their parents to know about their transgender status. These situations must be addressed on a case-by-case basis and will require schools to balance the goal of supporting the student with the requirement that parents be kept informed about their children. The paramount consideration for school officials in such situations will be the health and safety of the student.

Student Names and Pronouns

If a student asks to have a conversation with school staff about their own gender identity

One of the most important factors in ensuring a safe and supportive environment for transgender/genderqueer students, is communication between the school/district and the student and their family.

A school employee may not knowingly provide false or misleading information about a student's gender identity to the parents/guardians of that student upon request. As soon as the school employee determines that a student may want to share information about their gender identity or intent to transition, the school employee should advise a student of their obligation to follow the law and allow the student to determine whether to share information with that school employee.

School administration should work with a building counselor to notify the student that the

request for accommodation requires communication with the student's parents and/or guardians. The administrator and counselor should seek support for the student from the parent/guardian and work towards creating an accepting environment.

If the family is in support of the transgender/genderqueer student accommodation, staff should provide information about the ability to display name and gender in Infinite Campus and discuss any supports the student may need at school (transition, use of facilities, supportive adults etc.). Be very clear that the name and sex assigned at birth change requires parent permission (if younger than 18), and all parents will have access to that information and have all communications sent home (absences, grades, etc.) in the updated name.

If the parent/guardian does not support the student's request for accommodation, then the school, student and family should determine how the school can best support the student. All school staff should work with parents to ensure all support is exhausted to ensure each student feels affirmed at school.

District-Maintained Records

Des Moines Public Schools may be required to maintain certain records including the student's name and sex assigned at birth (including, but not limited to, the student's permanent record). These records will only be maintained and used as required by law, policy, or rule, and will only be disclosed in accordance with such law, policy, or rule.

Any student, regardless of gender identity, must file appropriate court documents to get their legal name changed in their permanent record. Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), a parent or eligible student may ask to have the student's education records amended if they are inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of a student's privacy rights. Des Moines Public Schools will respond to requests to amend information in student records for transgender students consistent with how other students' records are amended.

Other than documents where the student's name and sex assigned at birth are required to be listed, any reference to the student's name and gender should match the gender identity of the student.

Student "directory information," as defined by FERPA, is information that may generally be disclosed without prior consent from the parent or eligible student. Directory information is defined by District policy and families must receive notice each year of their rights under FERPA. Directory information shall not be used by Des Moines Public Schools in any way that intrudes on the privacy interests of students with respect to gender identity.

Access to Gender-Segregated Facilities

Pursuant to Iowa Code section 280.33, all multiple occupancy restrooms, locker rooms, or changing facilities in DMPS shall be designated only for and used by persons of the same sex assigned at birth. With respect to all DMPS restrooms, locker rooms, or changing facilities, students will be expected to use facilities that correspond to their sex assigned at birth.

Any student who desires greater privacy when using the restroom, locker room, or changing facility, regardless of the reason, shall be provided with a safe and non-stigmatizing alternative upon receipt of a written request signed by the parent/guardian of the student. Examples of accommodations may include an addition of a privacy partition or curtain within a facility that accords with the student's sex assigned at birth; permission to use a private restroom or office; or a separate changing schedule in a facility that accords with the student's sex assigned at birth.

Schools shall designate any existing facilities that are designed to be used by only one person at a time as accessible to all students regardless of gender. Single-user facilities may be used by anyone for any reason. However, under no circumstances shall a student be required to use a single-user facility because they are transgender or gender nonconforming. Schools are encouraged to incorporate single user facilities and greater privacy into new construction or renovation, and to assess ways to increase privacy for all students in existing facilities.

Extra-Curricular Activities and Interscholastic Sports

The Des Moines Public Schools encourages participation in District-sponsored activities for all students regardless of their gender identity. However, participation in interscholastic sports may be subject to the rules and requirements of the Iowa High School Athletic Association and/or the Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union. Participation in activities and sports will be determined on a case-by-case basis by a team consisting of the appropriate Executive Director, Principal, and Activities Director of the school. If there is no Activities Director assigned to the school, the Executive Director shall choose one from another school within Des Moines Public Schools.

Physical Education/Gym Class

Transgender students shall not be denied the opportunity to participate in physical education, nor shall they be forced to have physical education outside of the regularly scheduled class time.

Student Dress

Students can dress in clothing consistent with their gender identity, including at school-sponsored special events (e.g., school dances, 8th Grade Formal, etc.).

Notification

Each building Principal or designee is responsible for ensuring that school staff and students are familiar with these guidelines

Questions/Inquiries

Questions about these guidelines should be directed to Harding Administration at 515-242-8445.

Restraint, Confinement, and Corporal Punishment

State law forbids school employees from using corporal punishment against any student.

Certain actions by school employees are not considered corporal punishment. Additionally, school employees may use “reasonable and necessary force, not designed or intended to cause pain” to do certain things, such as prevent harm to persons or property.

State law also places limits on school employees’ abilities to restrain or confine and detain any student. The law limits why, how, where, and for how long a school employee may restrain or confine and detain a child. If a child is restrained or confined and detained, the school must maintain documentation and must provide certain types of notice to the child’s parents or guardian.

If you have any questions about this state law, please contact your school. The complete text of the law and additional information is available on the Iowa Department of Education’s web site: www.iowa.gov/educate.