

**Student/Parent Handbook  
Transitional Kindergarten – Grade 5  
2015-2016**



**Alta Elementary School  
1009 Main Street  
Principal: Kurt Hanna  
Telephone: 712-200-1400**

**The mission of the Alta Schools is: "Together in Lifelong Learning."**

## **Welcome to the 2015-2016 School Year**

It is with great pleasure that we welcome you as a member of the Alta Elementary School community. We look forward to working in partnership with you in the upcoming school year. We understand that it is vital that educators, students, and parents work together to create a learning environment that is rigorous, productive, and safe for all learners. It is my hope that we will embrace all that Alta Elementary can offer and create a successful and meaningful school year.

The information found within this Student/Parent Handbook shall serve as a guide in maintaining an environment of learning and respect. Please read and discuss the information found in the handbook as a general overview of the regulations of our school. We would also ask that you refer back to this information if needed as the school year unfolds.

Alta Elementary is dedicated to accommodating to the needs of all students and we would appreciate your participation and input. I welcome your interests in all aspects of our educational program so do not hesitate to communicate with me throughout the school year. You are always welcome to stop in during office hours, call at (712) 200-1400, or email: [khanna@alta-aurelia.k12.ia.us](mailto:khanna@alta-aurelia.k12.ia.us)

Sincerely,

Mr. Kurt Hanna  
Elementary Principal

**MISSION STATEMENT**  
*Together in Lifelong Learning*

We believe that:

1. All students have the right to learn in a safe environment.
2. All students can learn.
3. Respect for all individuals is very important in our schools and society.
4. Community service is a valuable learning tool.
5. That proper balance is necessary between the academic and co-curricular programs in our schools.
6. Problem solving, creative thinking and decision-making are all important skills for life-long learning.
7. Leadership opportunities are important experiences for our students.
8. Students need positive experiences.
9. All students should be challenged to reach their optimal abilities

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## Staff

Kurt Hanna .....	Principal
Tonja Meier .....	Four year old Pre-school
Keisha Aberson.....	Four year old Pre-school
Kacee Jensen .....	Three year old Pre-school
Lesa Tokheim .....	Transitional Kindergarten
Penny Payne.....	Kindergarten
Allison Robbins .....	Kindergarten
Abbey Piercy.....	Kindergarten
Lisa Brown.....	Grade 1
Molly Elston.....	Grade 1
Brian Christiansen .....	Grade 2
Cary Friedrich .....	Grade 2
Jeanne Strock.....	Grade 3
Deboney Langner.....	Grade 3
Ana Lopez.....	Grade 3
Sherry DeRoos .....	Grade 4
Sherry Harms.....	Grade 4
Tammy Peterson.....	Grade 5
Rory Payne .....	Grade 5
Elizabeth Feilmeier.....	Art
Becky Elemond .....	Vocal Music
Corbet Butler .....	Band
Mary Pedersen.....	Resource Room
Terri Zimmerman.....	Physical Education
Beth Lietz .....	Talented and Gifted
Linda Huseman.....	Technology Coordinator
Megan Husman.....	English Language Learners
Julie Langner .....	Media Center
Caren Hinkeldey .....	Secretary
Sonia Galvin.....	School Nurse
Deb Hanson .....	Food Service
Betsy Lenz.....	Food Service
Beth Kessler.....	Food Service
David Suhr.....	Custodian
Rich Peterson.....	Custodian

### **Personal Conduct**

Your actions determine what others think of you and your school. Conduct yourself as a lady or gentleman. While your school is serving as a host to visitors, be a gracious host. Good manners are to be practiced at all times until they become a regular part of your daily lives.

### **Statement Requesting Parent Support**

It is the feeling of the Board of Education and Administration that the school needs the support of all parents in upholding the rules and guidelines, which have been established for our school.

## **Supplemental Instruction**

The Alta Elementary School has a Title I instructor to provide students with additional reading instruction. Students who have a learning disability, emotional disability, or another handicap are scheduled for Resource Room. Prairie Lakes Area Education Agency staff assists our students with speech and language instruction, psychological and social needs. We also provide supplemental instruction in our Media Center, Computer Room, English Language Learners, and Talented and Gifted.

## **Health Services**

At the beginning of each year a form requesting health and emergency information is filled out for each student. All pupils are required to have their immunization cards or the appropriate waiver certificate turned in. The nurse would prefer communication with any health concerns as they arise. The Medication Policy is outlined in the district's monthly newsletter at the onset of each school year.

## **Books and Equipment**

Each student is responsible for caring for and returning all books and equipment received. Payment must be made for lost or damaged items. Students may not possess the following items on school property without the explicit permission of a teacher or administrator:

- Valuable items such as MP3, Game Boys, roller blades, skateboards, etc..
- Weapons, look-a-like weapons, guns, knives, screwdrivers and/or other items designed or easily used to cause physical harm.
- Animals, pets, etc.

## **Telephone/Cell phones/E-mail**

Students are not to use cell phones in the classrooms unless the teacher gives explicit permission for students to use them for an educational purpose. Cell phones are expected to remain in student backpacks during the school day.

Teachers are available to talk on the phone before or after school. **Please do not call them directly during the day as time on the phone is time away from students.** You may leave a message with the secretary at anytime. Cell phones are to be used on a limited basis during the school day. If you send messages to teachers via e-mail or text, they may not respond immediately. Please do not send a message for an appointment or plans for going home the same day – it may be missed until it is too late. Please allow at least 24 hours for a response for e-mail concerns.

## School Day

7:50 a.m.	Breakfast is served
8:10 a.m.	All students may enter rooms
8:25 a.m.	Tardy bell rings
8:25 a.m.	Pledge/Announcements
8:30 a.m.	Classes begin
10:00 a.m.	Recess TK-2
10:45 -11:30 a.m.	Lunch dismissals
11:50 a.m.	Class resumes for Grades TK-2
12:20 p.m.	Class resumes for Grades 3-5
2:00 & 2:15 p.m.	Recess – Grades 2-3, TK-1
3:15 p.m.	Walkers/Riders TK-2 and siblings dismissed
3:25 p.m.	Walkers/Riders 3-5 dismissed
3:30 p.m.	Bus riders dismissed

If students are leaving before bus departure, or arrive at school after 8:25, a parent must come inside the building and sign them out/in. **Parents must check in at the office. Please do not go directly to the classroom when school is in session.**

### School Hours

Unless your child is enrolled in the Before School Program, **they should not be dropped off prior to 7:50 a.m. before school starts each day. They are to leave by 3:40 p.m.** or they will be sent to the Warrior’s After School Program (AWA). This is for your child’s safety, as these are the times supervision is available. At 7:50 a.m. students should go directly to the lunchroom after stopping at their lockers.

### Student Tardy Procedure

Students should not arrive at school before 8:10 a.m. unless they need to see a teacher before school begins or are eating breakfast. **Students are to use the East entry to come into school.** Students are expected to arrive promptly every day. When students arrive after 8:25 a.m., they must go to the office and receive a tardy slip before being admitted to class.

### Attendance Policies

Part of our attendance procedure is to send letters to parents stating our concern about a student’s attendance if the student reaches at least ten absences or tardies. Even though some of those may be excused, a letter may still be sent to communicate our concern. After ten absences, a doctor’s note is required to excuse any more absences. Excessive tardies and/or absences may lead to a child protection referral for educational neglect being filed with appropriate county officials. It is our goal to work with families to improve attendance. Studies have shown that regular school attendance is one of the major factors in predicting student success.

## **Absences**

It is important that we know if your child is going to be absent from school. If a student is absent from class, he or she should do one of the following when returning to school: 1. Bring a note to the office from a parent or guardian stating the date(s) of the absence and the reason(s) or 2. Have his or her parent or guardian call the office and give the date(s) of the absence and the reason(s). If a student arrives at school after the tardy bell but before 10:00 a.m., the student is counted as tardy. If a student arrives in the morning after 10:00 a.m. or leaves in the afternoon before 2:00 p.m., the student will be counted absent for that half day. You will be called if we do not hear from you regarding your child's absence. If there are ten or more unexcused absences in a semester, a conference needs to be held as retention is a possibility. Truancy matters will be turned over to the District Attorney's office.

## **Bus Transportation**

Transportation to school is provided for many of our students. It takes the cooperation of all bus riders to make it as safe and pleasant as possible. The bus driver has complete charge of a student's conduct while riding the bus. Please notify the school or the bus driver by phone or note of any changes in your child's plans to ride the bus. A copy of the bus rules will be sent home with the students.

## **Loading and Unloading Students**

Walkers and children being picked up will dismiss out of the East doors of the Elementary at 3:25. Please use the swimming pool parking lot when picking up your child. Bus students dismiss out the West side (front entrance) at 3:30.

The City of Alta has posted NO U TURN signs on Main Street in front of the Elementary School. The safety of your children is our primary concern. Parents are asked to observe the yellow NO PARKING ZONE to allow space for loading and unloading buses.

## **Inclement Weather**

Please listen to KAYL & KICD radio, or KCAU and KTIV television for late start and early dismissal announcements. Also, please check the monthly calendar sent home in the newsletter for early dismissals for staff development. Please make arrangements in advance so your child knows where to go in case of early dismissal due to weather.

School Alerts - If weather is inclement, students will stay at school with staff until conditions improve. Parents are encouraged to sign up for weather alerts at [www.ktiv.com](http://www.ktiv.com) or snowcap at <http://www.snowcaponline.net/siouxland.php> for weather related announcements.

## **Bicycles**



If parents approve, students may ride their bicycles to school. The school cannot provide supervision of the bicycles and will not assume responsibility for them. Please remind your child to follow good safety practices when riding to and from school. Skateboards are not allowed on school grounds for safety reasons. Please park bikes in the bike rack.

### **Change in End of Day Destination**

If a change needs to be made in a student's usual destination at the end of the school day, written permission is required from the parent. Please send this note to school with the student or call the school. **Because teachers may not be able to check phone messages or e-mails on a regular basis during instructional time, phone calls or e-mails to classroom teachers to change a student's destination may not be received before the end of the day. Phone calls or e-mails to the Office to change a student's destination should be made before the last fifteen minutes of the school day.**

### **Access Rights – Custodial/Non-custodial Parent Policies**

Unless we have a copy of a court order that specifies restraints against the parental rights of the non-custodial parent, the school will assume that both parents may continue to exercise parental rights.

### **Discipline**

The PBIS (Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports) framework will be used at the Alta Elementary School to support appropriate student behaviors.

PBIS is a school-wide system of support that includes proactive strategies for defining, teaching, and supporting appropriate student behaviors to create positive school environments. Instead of using a piecemeal approach of individual behavioral management plans, a continuum of positive behavior support for all students within a school is implemented in areas including the classroom and non-classroom settings (such as hallways, lunchrooms, and restrooms). More information is available upon request.

### **Dismissal From Class**

When a student is dismissed from class for disciplinary reasons, a report will be made of the incident and parents notified. After a second time a student will not be allowed to return to class until a conference has been held with the parents and teacher.

### **Grade Reporting**

A combination of letter grades and non-letter grades are used on our report cards. The cards go home once each quarter with evaluations, attendance and teacher comments. Please sign and return the report card envelope for the first three quarters.

## **Class Work**

The grades earned in school become a part of a permanent record that follows students the rest of their lives. Their primary purpose in school is to learn the skills needed later in life. It is the student's responsibility to complete all class work on time. Otherwise credits are lost. Students must do satisfactory work to be allowed to move on to the next grade level.

## **Homework**

Homework may be assigned to students. Good homework is one part of improved learning and allows parents to become involved in their child's education. Most of a pupil's work can be completed at school if time is used wisely.

## **Parent-Teacher Conferences**

Conferences are held after the first and third quarters each year. The times are designed to meet the needs of working parents. A parent may also request a conference at any other time by calling the school or the teacher to arrange a convenient time.

## **Emergency Drills – Fire, Lockdown and Tornado**

Fire, lockdown and tornado drills will be held at intervals throughout the school year. These drills are important to each student's welfare and should be taken seriously by the student. Safety procedures for all drills will be explained to students.

## **Security for students – Locked Doors**

All entrances, with the exception of the main entrance, will remain locked during the student day. Some doors will be open periodically during the day for morning arrival and recess.

## **Requests For Teachers**

Parent requests will be considered, but not guaranteed. Much thought and consideration is put into developing balanced classrooms that are best for ALL students. A parent request for a teacher will not be honored if it compromises a fair balance between classrooms.

## **Testing**

Iowa Tests of Basic Skills are administered in the fall in Grades 3 and on up. Cognitive Ability Tests are administered in October in Grades 3 and 6. Benchmark tests are given to all students 2-3 times a year.

## **Birthday Parties**

**Students may hand out invitations for parties at school IF everyone in the class is included.** Boys may invite just boys or girls just girls. No addresses or telephone numbers will be given out from the office pertaining to this or any other request.

## **Birthday Books**

If you would like to honor your child on his/her birthday, you may place a book in our library in his/her honor. Our librarian will suggest an appropriate book to buy. We will place a bookplate in the book indicating that it was presented to the Alta School Library in honor of your child's birthday and invite your child to a Book Birthday party in the library at the end of the year. This is a great way to do something special for your child and our school library at the same time.

## **Classroom Observations/Visits to School**

We encourage all parents to actively participate in their child's education and welcome you to visit for observation and/or lunch. However, to limit disruptions to the classroom setting, we have established the following guidelines:

1. Classroom observations must be scheduled with your child's classroom teacher at least one day in advance.
- 2. Classroom observations should be limited to one hour in length.**
- 3. The parent should not disrupt the educational setting, i.e., talk to or distract the child or classroom teacher during instruction.**
4. Cousins, friends and other children are invited to eat lunch and spend the noon recess with us but are not allowed to attend classes as this proves to be highly disruptive for the students in the class.
5. After a classroom observation, any conversation with the teacher should be held when students are not present.
6. Please do not plan a visit the first or last two weeks of school.
7. Please limit your lunch visits to once a quarter, and to special events such as your child's birthday.
8. All visitors must check in at the school office to sign in and obtain a visitor's badge. Attempts are made not to interrupt the instructional day unless necessary.

## **Snacks During School**

Students are asked not to bring gum, candy, pop or other snacks to school. The snacks provided for a birthday party or holiday parties are an exception to this rule. Snacks are to be eaten only during the party. Transitional Kindergarten and Kindergarten have their own snack program.

## **Breakfast and Lunch**

The cafeteria is maintained for those who purchase school lunches or bring their lunch from home. Parents and special guests who eat lunch are required to pay for lunch at the time of purchase. Breakfast is served at 7:50 a.m.

The Alta Elementary School requests that students limit bringing food and beverages into the school building and that it is not stored in lockers. With the exception of a sack lunch, food should not be brought into the building. Food from outside vendors, such as Casey's, Subway, or Pizza Hut, cannot be brought into the lunch room for lunch unless it is packaged in containers from home.

If students bring an item containing peanuts or peanut products, there will be an area in the cafeteria where they will eat lunch. We need to be aware of the allergies that are present in our building and take precautionary measurements to ensure the safety of our students.

## **Lost and Found**

Lost and Found items are located outside the Office. Feel free to check periodically. Unclaimed items will be sent to charity. Labeling all items reduces the chance of loss.

## **Dress and Appearance**

The Alta CSD reserves the right to insist that the dress and grooming of students are within the limits of generally accepted community standards and that students shall be required to show proper attention to personal cleanliness.

The ACSD guidelines have been established as:

1. No clothing advertising alcohol, drugs, tobacco products, offensive designs, gang symbols or obscene language.
2. Shoes or sandals appropriate for safety and comfort must be worn at all times.
3. Children should be dressed appropriately for recess periods outside, i.e. boots, coat, hat, gloves for Iowa weather. **Please make sure all items are marked.**
4. Unnecessarily tattered or frayed clothing is not acceptable. The Principal shall retain the authority to grant exceptions for special occasions and/or special conditions.

Failure to comply will result in the following action:

1. Parent(s) notified
2. Clothing changed

## **P.E. Dress Requirements**

All students, K-8, will be required to have tennis shoes for Physical Education class. These shoes must be kept at school. Students will change into these shoes specifically for Physical Education classes. Shoes should NOT have a black or navy bottom. Shoes must be non-marking. Physical Education shoes will NOT be worn outside. Shoes must have a back on them and should not have a platform bottom. Tie shoes are preferred, as slip-ons tend to stretch out and children cannot keep them on.

## **Media Center – Library**

The Alta Elementary School has an excellent collection of books and audio-visual materials for students to use. We have a librarian and associate who provide pupils with instruction in library skills and assist them in viewing the materials. All students can check out books and they will be returned weekly for more books. Videos will not be checked out during school hours.

## **Confidentiality**

All Alta School District employees are required to comply with the Family Education Right to Privacy Act. This insures all students and families confidentiality of information regarding the student and his or her educational records. Information will only be shared on a “need to know” basis to employees and other school officials as well as authorized federal and state agencies and authorities as defined by the law. The law prohibits disclosing of specific information to non-employees or employees without a “need to know” unless appropriate consent is acquired from the parent or legal guardian.

## **Home/School Communication and Involvement**

At Alta, we are committed to open and honest communication. If there is information regarding school activities or changes in schedules, etc., every effort is made to keep the parents informed by sending letters home with students. All parents are given the opportunity to participate in their child’s education in the following ways:

- Meet and Greet Conferences
- Parent-Teacher Conferences
- Blue Notes sent out on Fridays
- Teacher/Office e-mail
- Monthly School newsletter
- Parent visits and conferences (upon request)

We pride ourselves on a warm and inviting campus where everyone feels at home. Stop by and visit sometime. Just give us a call so we can be ready for you!

## **Character Education**

Our character education program provides students the opportunity to gain experiences through classroom activities, lessons and literature relating to trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, caring, fairness and citizenship. We emphasize behaving the Warrior Way.

## **Music Classes for Elementary Students:**

Music education is part of your child's learning experience here at Alta Elementary School. Periodically throughout the school year the students are involved in music concerts. As this is the equivalent to semester tests for the class, your child is expected to participate in the concerts. Concert dates can be found on the master calendar. Blue notes will be sent home prior to each concert with information regarding dress code and arrival times. There will also be a notice in the newsletter prior to each concert.

## **Equal Educational Opportunity**

The board will not discriminate in its educational activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, religion, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or marital status.

The board requires all persons, agencies, vendors, contractors and other persons and organizations doing business with or performing services for the school district to subscribe to all applicable federal and state laws, executive orders, rules and regulations pertaining to contract compliance and equal opportunity.

The board is committed to the policy that no otherwise qualified person will be excluded from educational activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, religion, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability. Further, the board affirms the right of all students and staff to be treated with respect and to be protected from intimidation, discrimination, physical harm and harassment.

## **School Pictures**

Individual school pictures are taken each year. You will be informed of the exact date so that your child will be ready for the picture. There is no obligation to buy these pictures. Pictures taken in the fall are used for the class composite. Therefore all students have a photo taken even if they are not purchasing the pictures.

## **Online Policy**

The use of electronic resources is supported provided that abuses do not occur. Access is a privilege that will be denied if used inappropriately. In addition, disciplinary and/or legal action may be taken. The Alta-Aurelia CSD website can be accessed at: [www.alta.k12.ia.us](http://www.alta.k12.ia.us)

## **Recess**

A note is needed to stay in for recess. If the child needs to stay in longer than 2 days the nurse will be contacted unless there is a physician's excuse to stay indoors. Being outside in cold weather will not cause a cold or flu. Fresh air and exercise help the student perform better in the classroom.

We live in Northwest Iowa where we can expect a normal amount of very cold weather. Parents should always make sure that children are properly dressed for this type of climate.

The following procedures will be used in determining if children should go outside for recesses:

Regular or wind chill temperatures 0 degrees or below - No outdoor recess; students will engage in an activity within their own classrooms.

As school personnel, we are all mandatory reporters. If there is any concern expressed by students we are required to call the Iowa Department of Human Services who then determine whether or not a case is founded.

## **Sexual Harassment Policy**

Sexual harassment is defined as verbal and/or physical behavior that is sexual in nature and perceived as unwelcome by someone.

The K-12 school staff members have received training to make them aware of sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment in any form will not be tolerated. If violations occur, disciplinary action will be taken. Any discrimination on the basis of race, creed, nation origin, sex, age, or handicap will not be tolerated.

If sexual harassment is reported by a student to a staff member, the following procedure will be followed:

1. A written report of the incident will be filed with the school principal.
2. The principal and school nurse will investigate the incident.
3. Parents of both parties will be informed.
4. A decision on the action to be taken will be made by the principal.

## **Harassment and Bullying**

Harassment and bullying of students are against federal, state and local policy, and will not be tolerated – this includes harassment, bullying, hazing or any other victimization of students, based on any of the following actual or perceived traits or characteristics: age, color, creed, national origin, race, religion, marital status, sex, sexual preference, political belief, socioeconomic status, or familial status. This is in effect while students are on property within the jurisdiction of the Alta Community School District; while on school-owned or school-operated vehicles; while attending or engaged in school sponsored activities; and while away from school grounds if the misconduct directly affects the good order, efficient management and welfare of the school or school district.

If, after an investigation, a student is found to be in violation of this policy, the student will be disciplined by appropriate measures up to, and including, suspension and expulsion.

Harassment and bullying may include, but are not limited to, the following behaviors and circumstances:

- Verbal, nonverbal, physical or written harassment, bullying, hazing, or other victimization that have the purpose or effect of causing injury, discomfort, fear, or suffering to the victim;
- Repeated remarks of a demeaning nature that have the purpose or effect of causing injury, discomfort, fear, or suffering to the victim;
- Implied or explicit threats concerning one's grades, achievements, property, etc. that have the purpose or effect of causing injury, discomfort, fear, or suffering to the victim.
- Demeaning jokes, stories, or activities directed at the student that have the purpose or effect of causing injury, discomfort, fear, or suffering to the victim; and/or
- Unreasonable interference with a student's performance or creation of an intimidating, offensive, or hostile learning environment.

Also if harassment and bullying

- Places the student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or property;
- Has a substantially detrimental effect on the student's physical or mental health;
- Has the effect of substantially interfering with the student's academic performance; or
- 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.

An incident of bullying or harassment must be reported to a school official.

Any student found to have retaliated in violation of this policy shall be subject to measures up to, and including, suspension and expulsion.

The complete policy and procedure for reporting can be obtained from the Principal's or Superintendent's office.