Dear Parents/Guardians and Students: The following handbook is to inform you of the policies as related to the instruction of your child at the New York Mills Elementary School. We hope it will answer many of your questions and help provide for a close working relationship between home and school. Should any questions or concerns arise during the year, you are encouraged to call or stop at school to discuss them.

Blaine Novak, Superintendent - School Phone: 385-4201 Judith Brockway, Elementary Principal – School Phone 385-4207

ATTENDANCE REGULATIONS: Attendance is a very important part of a student's education. Compulsory attendance as cited in M.S. 120.101 is enforced at the New York Mills Public Schools. We follow a countywide attendance policy that states: 1. Students who are not in school or at a school-related activity are considered absent. 2. Attendance will be taken every half-day in the elementary school. 3. For the purpose of this policy, absences are cumulative throughout the school year. 4. Every time a student is absent for any period of time there will be a communication between the school and the parents during the day the absence occurs. (Parents are required to call in the day their child is absent between 7:30 and 9:00 a.m.) If the parent has not communicated with the school regarding the absence, the school will contact the parent. 5. After five days of a student being absent/tardy, a letter will be sent to the parents. The purpose of the letter is to document the student's absence/tardies and let parents know the importance of attendance and the consequences of non-attendance. 6. Following the seventh day of absences/tardies, a face-to-face meeting with the parents and student may be required. This meeting may be facilitated by the school principal, school counselor, the child's teacher, or Family Outreach Facilitator, as appropriate to the school. This meeting represents both an expression of concern, a desire to open communication with the parents and an opportunity to determine and address the reasons for the absences/tardies. If the parents do not attend this meeting, a second meeting will be scheduled. If the parents do not attend the second meeting, the matter will be referred to Otter Tail County Human Services for immediate response. 7. Under Minnesota Law, students with seven or more unexcused absences qualify as truant, and schools may make a formal referral to Human Services. Parents are required to attend a face-to-face meeting with school administrators to develop a Truancy Plan of Action, as a final

If the Truancy Plan developed is not followed and the child continues to have unexcused absences, the matter will be referred to Human Services for review by the County Attorney's Office for determination of what action should occur.

Please refer to School District Policy #503.1L for further details. Our school is a part of the Otter Tail Family Services Collaborative Truancy Prevention Project which promotes good attendance for our students.

ACCIDENTS: In an emergency, children who are injured on the way to school, on the playground, or in the school will be taken to their family physician. Parents are always notified immediately. Please update the school office anytime that you switch address, phone number, and the person we should contact in case of emergency.

ALCOHOL, DRUGS, AND TOBACCO: A student shall not knowingly possess, use, transmit or be under the influence of any form of drug, alcohol, or tobacco of any kind: 1. On the school grounds at any time. 2. At any school activity, function, or event on or off the school grounds.

ARTICLES BROUGHT TO SCHOOL: Students should not bring items from home that could get them in trouble. Students may bring items for "show and tell" and primary students may bring small toys for recess time.

ATTENDANCE AT EXTRA-CURRICULAR EVENTS: Students are encouraged to attend events with their parents/guardians. When a student is misbehaving at the event, the supervisor will ask the student to sit with their parent/guardian or the event supervisor. If the student continues to misbehave, the student will be asked to make arrangements and leave the event. A student may not be allowed to attend such events due to discipline concerns

BACKPACKS / BOOK BAGS: All backpacks or carry bags must have identification on the outside of the bag. We need to be able to identify ownership of any unattended bags without opening the bag. Identification may be in a discrete area not easily read while the bag is carried, or on an attached luggage tag. This applies to all students and staff.

BICYCLES: Your child may ride a bike to school. Bike riders are to enter and leave the school grounds so as not to interfere with bus transportation. Bike racks are provided for storage during the day. Bikes are not to be ridden during the day on the playground or tampered with by other students. We are not responsible for loss or damage.

BUS PASSES: No student shall get off the bus at any other place than the approved destination or ride on another bus route without prior approval from the school. The request must be given to or phoned to the classroom teacher, receive written approval from the office no later than 2:50 p.m., and then be brought to the bus driver. No bus requests received after 2:50 p.m. will be honored unless deemed an absolute emergency by the elementary office. A student may choose to bring one guest to ride on the bus for a sleepover, birthday party, etc. No more than one guest may ride on the bus on a specific occasion without written approval.

BUS RIDING: The school district reserves the right to assign bus seats for students. Bus safety procedures are to be followed at all times. When an infraction of safety procedures and/or discipline occurs, the district reserves the right to take away the bus privilege for a period of time.

CELL PHONE/ELECTRONIC DEVICES: All elementary students who bring electronic devices such as I-Pods, MP3 players, video games, cell phones, cameras, etc. to school are expected to leave these items in their lockers during the entire school day (including lunch/recess). If a student is caught with any of these items during the school day, the teacher is to take it away and bring it to the elementary office. The student will be able to pick it up at the end of the day before they go home. If a student is caught a second time, a phone call home will be made and the parent will need to come pick up the item.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS: You are also asked to inform the school immediately of changes in your family status, parent's/guardian's work place, custodial rights, or parent's/guardian's marital status. Please contact the elementary office if you move during the school year. We must know if you change your telephone numbers or address. If you move out of the district and would like to continue enrollment in the New York Mills School District, please contact the district office for the appropriate forms. The elementary principal and the child's teacher should be informed as early as possible if you intend to move from your present address. This information will assist us in making changes in bus routes, if necessary.

If you are moving from the school district, please notify the principal and the teacher giving the information as to where you are moving so that the school records may be transferred at the earliest possible time. Records will be transferred by the school district upon receipt of required PARENT/GUARDIAN PERMISSION FORM that your new district will have you sign and send to us.

COMPUTER/INTERNET USE: Elementary students will have the privilege of using computers and gaining supervised access to the Internet. Inappropriate use will lead to students losing these privileges.

CONFERENCES: Elementary conferences are held in the fall and the spring of each year. All parents are encouraged to attend. Any parent wishing to discuss a problem can contact the elementary principal or teacher at any time to arrange a special conference.

CONFIDENTIALITY: The school will maintain confidentiality of information provided to the school. School staff members are mandated reporters of abuse situations and privacy requirements will be obeyed. This information includes school records and other information shared with the school. Student's names, addresses, and phone numbers, are considered directory information and do not fall under the same confidentiality requirements as records. Parents/guardians choosing not to have directory information released must notify the building principal in writing by October 1 of each year (or within two weeks, 14 calendar days, of their enrollment in the district).

CONFLICT MEDIATORS: Trained fifth and sixth grade students, under the guidance of Family Outreach, help other students solve minor problems.

DAMAGE OR THEFT OF PROPERTY: Pupils who destroy or damage school and/or personal property will be responsible to pay the full cost of repair or replacement. Students shall not steal or attempt to steal school and/or personal property. Students shall also be liable for punishment according to the nature of the offense. Continued destruction or damage by a student shall be the basis for long term suspension or expulsion.

DISCIPLINE/EAGLE PRIDE/5 POINT SCALES: Our school discipline policy reinforces our theme of EAGLE PRIDE. We ask that all students and staff treat themselves, each other, and school property with RESPECT. Should the need arise for disciplinary action, students, parents, teachers, counselors, and administrators work together to improve the behaviors of the student(s) involved; the school staff decide the consequence(s) for the student. Consequence possibilities include, but are not limited to, verbal warnings, noontime detention, after school detention, loss of bus riding privileges, in-school suspension, and out of school suspension. If a student receives after school detention, a parent or guardian is responsible for picking him/her up. For additional information, see the school district's policy manual which is found on the school district's website.

HF 826 – THE BULLYING BILL. This bill applies to student vs. student bullying. This is a student statute. It does not cover claims of teachers or coaches behavior toward students. Traditional notions of school authority are maintained. The definition of bullying has four parts: (a) bullying is intimidating, threatening, abusive or hurtful conduct, (b) it is objectively offensive and, (c) the conduct involves an imbalance of power and is repeated or, (d) the conduct materially and substantially interferes with a student's education or ability to participate in school activities. Bullying falls into two categories: (1) bad behavior that involves an imbalance of power and pattern, or, (2) bad behavior that significantly affects a student's ability to participate in school, classes or events. The fact that someone is simply offended is not enough. There must be some substantial interference with the student's educational opportunities or rights. District 553 was required to amend their existing policy to comply with the new law. Training for employees is required. Other requirements include: (a) designating a primary contact person for bullying (principal), (b) requiring employees to make a reasonable effort to address the bullying when they see it or know about it, (c) commence investigation within 3 days of receipt of a report, (d) contact parents as appropriate, (e) prohibit retaliation, identify school responses, and do not rely solely on anonymous reports, (f) inform students and parents of their data practices rights. Finally, a School Safety Council will be created to improve school climates and school safety. For more information, please see Policy 514.

DRESS: It is our belief that people feel better about themselves when dressed neatly. We also believe that when students feel good about themselves they will learn better. Therefore, we encourage parents to see that their children come to school neat and clean. Children should also come to school wearing sufficient clothing to play outdoors during noon recess. In winter, children should be dressed appropriately to play outside during the recess period. Students in grades kindergarten through third must wear snow pants and snow boots (not hiking) during winter weather. Students in grades four through six must wear snow boots during winter weather. No child will be allowed to remain in the building during lunch period for more than three days without a written excuse from a doctor. Students wearing clothing with inappropriate messages, or advertising alcohol, tobacco, or drug use will be asked to wear other clothing. Students should not wear clothing that would expose any undergarments or midriff area. We ask that students dress comfortably with clothing that will not cause potential embarrassing situations.

DROP OFF AND PICK UP SPOT: When you drop off or pick up your child, please use the circle drive on the south end of the school campus. This will help with the congestion that we have due to the busses unloading by the district office entrance.

PARENTS PICKING UP STUDENTS AFTER SCHOOL: When picking up a student after school, parents are required to stop in at the elementary office and the elementary secretary will call the student to the office where they can then be signed out by the parent. Under no circumstances are parents to go directly to their child's classroom without stopping in the elementary office and following the above procedure for signing out their child.

EARLY ARRIVAL: No student shall arrive at school or the school grounds before 8:00 a.m., unless they are assigned by staff to come before this time. When students arrive they will be allowed to go to the commons, or wait in the hallway by the elementary office until 8:15 a.m. when they may go to their classrooms.

PARENTS PICKING UP STUDENTS DURING THE SCHOOL DAY: When picking up a student at any time during the school day, parents are required to stop in at the elementary office and the elementary secretary will call the student to the office where they can then be signed out by the parent. Under no circumstances are parents to go directly to their child's classroom without stopping in the elementary office and following the above procedure for signing out their child.

EMERGENCY CARE CARDS: An emergency care card is filled out on each student. If there are changes for the card, please notify the office immediately.

HEALTH INFORMATION/RECORDS: The health and safety of the child is the concern of the entire community. The school carries on various programs with the aim of helping the parent fulfill the responsibilities of promoting and maintaining the child's health. Vision, hearing, and speech screening tests are administered to children during the school year. A health record is kept for each child by the school and is required by law. Any disease or immunization that the child has had during the summer or during the school year should be reported to the teacher so that the information can be recorded on the child's health card. The Minnesota School Immunization Law states "... Children entering the school must be completely immunized against Diptheria, Tetanus, Pertussis, Polio, Measles, Mumps, Rubella, Hepatitis B, and Varicella (or date of disease signed by physician), or meet one of the alternatives provided by law." Exemption forms are available from the Health Office to be signed by the parent and Notary Public. The school principal is responsible for excluding children without properly documented immunization or exemption. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to have the immunizations up to date, and report the dates to the school nurse.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES: The State Dept. of Health has set down the following recommendations for schools to follow in case of a communicable disease being contracted by a pupil:

- 1. Parents should notify the principal or teacher if the child contracts a communicable disease.
- 2. Parents should have the disease diagnosed by their family doctor.
- 3. Parents are urged to keep the child home if they suspect he/she is coming down with a communicable disease. (Appearance of a rash, sore throat, fever, etc.)

ILLNESS: A child showing any indications of being ill before leaving for school should be kept at home. Parents/guardians will take their child home whenever their child displays any of the following symptoms: temp over 100 degrees, vomiting, pink eye, suspicious skin lesions, lice, any other signs of illness. The staff usually observes any behavior that might indicate that the child is not feeling well. When a child becomes ill at school, the parents will be called to inform them of the child's illness and to have them come and take their child home. No child will be sent home without their parents first being contacted. If your child has been sick and was not at school on the day of a scheduled school concert, your child will not be allowed to attend the concert

HEALTH CONCERNS: Parents should inform the school immediately when their child is on medication, has allergies, or conditions that may interfere with the administration of first aid in case of an accident. Also, if the student has a condition that impedes their educational progress the school should be notified when the child enters school. If your child needs to take prescription medication during school hours, YOU MUST SEND A NOTE FROM YOUR DOCTOR giving us permission to administer the prescription medication and it must be in its original container. Also write a note when your child is taking over the counter medications, such as topical (ie. Chapstick, cough drops, etc.). In the interest of student safety, all unauthorized medicines will be taken from children and parents contacted. Prescription medicine will be administered under the control of a school nurse or the office.

HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION: If a student misses ten days of school or if we know a student will miss at least ten days of school (due to injury, illness, surgery, etc.), a homebound teacher can provide instruction to help the student keep up with their class work. Contact the elementary principal for homebound help.

HOMEWORK: A child may have special work that is necessary due to neglect, absence, extra drill, or high interest on the part of student in a unit, etc. When daily work is not completed your child will have work to complete at home. This work needs to be returned to school the next day or when designated by the teacher. Establishing a time and place for doing homework and giving assistance is very helpful. This is an opportunity for parents and students to share in the child's education.

HOT LUNCH/BREAKFAST PROGRAMS: We are fortunate to have an excellent food service program at our school. A well-balanced meal is served each day. If children prefer, they may be bring a cold lunch instead. Milk tickets are purchased separately for morning and afternoon milk breaks. The school also offers a breakfast program on a voluntary basis. Reminders are sent home when a student's meal account needs more money. Breakfast is available daily in the cafeteria between 8:00 and 8:30 a.m. Students who eat breakfast are expected in their classrooms by 8:30 a.m. Breakfast is not served on days when school begins late. If your child has a food allergy or intolerance, please contact the school food service to arrange for meal modifications.

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

- 1. The school furnishes all texts, workbooks, and curriculum materials. These are the property of the school and loaned to the child. Proper care should be given to school property. Fines for excessive damages will be assessed on an individual basis.
- 2. Pencils, color crayons, paper, and other expendable items are furnished by the student. It is also requested that the parents keep check on the supply of these items so that their child will be adequately provided for at all times.
- 3. Classroom teachers will inform pupils of materials they need.

KEEPING CHILDREN AFTER SCHOOL: Children may occasionally be kept after school to make up work missed or neglected. Rarely, will anyone be kept more than one hour after dismissal time. Detention students will have to be picked up by their parents/guardians at 4:00 p.m. each day in the elementary office. Students having detention must call their parents in the presence of a teacher or the principal. This is to assure that the parents receive the message.

LEAVING SCHOOL DURING THE DAY: There are times when it is necessary for a child to leave school early for an appointment, etc. We would appreciate if you would attempt to schedule those appointments either before or after school, or on the 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 with your request be given to the elementary office. When you come to get your child, please check in at the elementary office and the office will notify the classroom teacher of the child's departure. A note must be sent to the elementary office if someone other than the parent/guardian will be picking up the child. It is important that we have a record of which children are leaving and who picks them up to ensure the safety of all children.

LIBRARY/MEDIA CENTER: The school maintains a library to provide students with a wide variety of materials for leisure reading and/or research. The library staff works closely with classroom teachers to meet the print and electronic resource needs of our students. Children will visit the school library weekly with their class. They are welcome to check out a book(s), learning that part of borrowing something is to be responsible for it also. Proper care and timely return will be expected. A charge will be made for damaged or lost materials, with the assessed price to be determined by the Media Specialist and/or school administration in accordance with district policy. If parents or guardians notify the library staff or classroom teacher of any accidental book damage, repairs can often be made to minimize damage.

LOCKERS: Lockers are the property of the school district and are provided for use by students. At no time are locks allowed on elementary lockers. At no time does the school district relinquish its exclusive control of the lockers. Inspection of the lockers may be done at any time, without notice, without consent, without a search warrant, by school authorities. Articles and clothing within the locker may be searched when there is a reasonable suspicion by school authorities.

LOST AND FOUND: Each year we have a large collection of lost and found articles. Feel free to stop and check for items that might belong to you. Please label all items so we can locate the owners. Items not picked up by the end of the school year are donated to the Community Action Center.

MUSIC: We have special instructors for both vocal and instrumental instruction. Vocal music classes are held for all students while band lessons are for fifth and sixth grade students. An elementary choir is also formed in grades five and six.

OUTSIDE GROUPS USING FACILITY: Anyone wishing to use the New York Mills School facility during or after school hours must contact the Community Education Office and sign out a facility use form. Groups must have an adult in supervision and leave the area in the same condition as found. All students and adults are expected to follow school rules.

PARTY INVITATIONS: If you are having a party for your child, please mail the invitations or phone parent/guardians, unless you are inviting the whole class. This request is intended to help save hurt feelings on the part of anyone in the class who may not be invited to the party.

PERSONAL PROPERTY: Children should not bring expensive jewelry, valuable toys, money, etc. to school. Garments should be plainly marked with the child's name. With the large number of children in the building, it is nearly impossible to find articles in school when they are unmarked or lost. Any money sent to school for hot lunch, etc., should be PLACED IN AN ENVELOPE WITH THE CHILD'S NAME AND THE TEACHER'S NAME WRITTEN ON THE OUTSIDE. If one check is sent for lunch for money covering several students in the family, PLEASE LIST EACH CHILD'S NAME

TOGETHER WITH EACH CHILD'S TEACHER'S NAME on the envelope to insure the proper credit. This is very important since we are often successful in recovering lost money when this procedure is followed.

PEST CONTROL: District #553 utilizes a licensed, professional pest control service firm for the prevention and control of rodents, insects and other pests in and around the district's buildings. Their program consists of 1) inspection and monitoring to determine whether pests are present and whether any treatment is needed, 2) recommendations for maintenance and sanitation to help eliminate pests without the need for pest control materials, 3) utilization of non-chemical measures such as traps, caulking and screening, 4) application of EPA-registered pest-control measures when needed. Pests can sting, bite, cause contamination, damage property and spread disease; therefore we must prevent and control them. The long-term health effects on children from the application of such pest-control materials to which they belong, may not be fully understood. All pest-control materials are chosen and applied according to label directions per federal law. An estimated schedule of interior pest-control inspections and possible treatments is available for application for review or copying in the district office. A similar estimated schedule is available for application of herbicides and other materials to school grounds. Parents of students may request to receive, at their expense, prior notification of any application of a pest-control material, should such an application be deemed necessary on a day different from the days specified in the schedule.

PETS IN SCHOOL: At times students want to bring in a pet to show to their classmates or as a part of a special class project. The school needs to be informed prior to any pets being brought to school and the pets need to be current with their shots. Because some students have allergies to various animals, pets will only be allowed at school outside of the school building under the direct supervision of a parent/guardian for a short period of time and they may not be brought to or from school on a bus.

PHYSICAL ABUSE AND/OR ASSAULT: A pupil shall not intentionally threaten to do injury to any person: 1. on the school grounds at any time. 2. off the school grounds at a school activity, function, or event. Either self-defense or action undertaken on the belief that it was necessary to protect some other person is to be considered an intentional act under this rule.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION: Physical Education is provided to every student in grades K-6. Everyone must participate in this activity unless excused by a medical doctor. If a child has been ill and is convalescing, the child cannot be excused for more than five days without a doctor's written excuse. Children need gym shoes for Physical Education class. Shoes will be worn in gym at all times. Elementary students will at times use the facilities at Lund Park for recess or Physical Education classes. This land is adjacent to the school facility.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: In following school district policy, students in this school district shall recite the pledge of allegiance to the flag of the United States of America one or more times each week. Any student or teacher may decline to participate in recitation of the pledge of allegiance to the flag. Students must respect the choice to not recite the pledge.

REPORT CARDS: Report cards are issued in grades Kindergarten through sixth grade. Report cards will be issued at the end of each trimester. Please feel free to contact your child's teacher to discuss achievement and progress at any time during the school year.

SACC/EXTENDED DAY: School-aged Child Care (SACC) is provided on the elementary school site for parents who may need to drop their child(ren) off early before school starts, or pick them up late after school. Please contact the Community Education Office at 385-4203 for further details.

SCHOOL HOURS: School classes start at 8:30 a.m. each day and dismiss at 3:15 p.m. Students who arrive after 8:30 a.m. will be considered tardy.

SCHOOL PICTURES: School pictures are taken each fall at the elementary school. Information will be sent home with students prior to picture taking.

SPORTS: Elementary sports programs will be offered for students during the school year at a fee of \$10.00 per sport to participate. Parent letters will be sent out in advance of the first practice date. School insurance is available for all students. Insurance information is sent home early in the school year.

STORM ANNOUNCEMENTS: In the event inclement weather causes school to be closed for the day, announcements will be made over KWAD Wadena (920 AM) and KPRW Perham (99.5 FM) radio stations. You may call 385-2553, then press five followed by one for the Superintendent's/Weather related announcements. We will also be using an Instant Alert messaging system called School Reach.

STUDENT COUNCIL: The elementary students in grades 4-6 elect class representatives to be on our school's student council. The student council helps the school with special projects and programs.

TARDINESS: If a child is not able to be at school on time, a written excuse or phone call to the elementary office must be made. Students who are late should stop by the elementary office before reporting to class. Students who are habitually tardy will be reported to the authorities and parents will be notified.

TEACHER REQUESTS: Parents/Guardians who wish to request their child's teacher for next school year must put the request in writing by completing our "Teacher Request" form, a copy of which can be picked up in the elementary office or from your child(ren)'s teacher. This request must be turned in to the elementary principal no later than April 1. In writing the request, it is necessary to give an educational reason for the request. Parents will not be guaranteed their request. The teachers and administration reserves the right to make the final decision.

TELEPHONE: The elementary office number is 385-4208. The telephone number at the school district is 385-2553. Always feel free to call the elementary office when you have a question or problem in which we can be of help. Students are allowed to use the telephone in their classrooms for school related reasons when they have permission from their teachers. Permission will not be given to make last-minute arrangements to go to a friend's house or other reasons not related to school business.

TOBACCO FREE: The properties of School District #553 are tobacco-free environments. Use of tobacco products are not permitted in school buildings, school grounds, or in school vehicles. Visitors are required to follow school policy.

TREATS: The Dept. of Health requires that food which is served in a food establishment as defined in Minn. Statutes Chapter 157 shall be obtained from sources which are approved and inspected by either the federal, state, or local regulatory authority. All treats must be in a pre-wrapped package for distribution. The Department's advice is not subject to modification by individual school administration. Families are encouraged to send healthy snacks that enhance their student's learning and health. The school district encourages that classroom snacks brought for entire class are healthy snacks including fruits and vegetables and food that is under 150 calories. When planning school day classroom celebrations, including birthdays, the focus needs to be on physical activities when possible.

TRUANCY: Students who are found to be truant will be reported to the authorities. Parents who enable students to be truant will also be reported. Our school is a part of the Otter Tail Family Services Collaborative Truancy Prevention Project which promotes good attendance for our students.

VEHICLE USE ON SCHOOL PROPERTY: For safety and maintenance reasons the New York Mills School District requests that both motorized and non-motorized vehicles not be driven or ridden on any school property except designated roadways.

VISITORS: In order to keep the classroom environment consistent, students may have a school-aged visitor in our school for only a short period of time. We suggest during the noon lunch and recess period. Prior approval of both the principal and the classroom teacher is required. Full day visits and pre-school aged visitors will not be allowed. Students considering enrolling in our school will be allowed to, with the approval of the principal, spend up to one day visiting our school. Parents are encouraged to visit school.

VOLUNTEERS: Volunteerism is one measure of a community's dedication to its youth. Join us as we work together. For additional information, contact the Elementary Office at 385-4208.

WEAPONS: A student shall not knowingly possess, handle, or transmit any object that can reasonably be considered a weapon: 1. on the school grounds at any time. 2. off the school grounds at a school activity. Please refer to the School District Policy.

Additional information in regards to other school policies may be found in the High School Handbook or the District #553 Policy Manual. The policy manual may be found by accessing the district's website at: www.nymills.k12.mn.us