



# NEW HEIGHTS SCHOOL

Academics • Balance • Citizenship

*The Power of Choice*

November 2023

## Based on Principal

I am writing this on the morning of Halloween, which this year is serving as a strong reminder that winter is fast approaching. I was in my final year of college at River Falls in 1991, which many of you may recall the huge Halloween blizzard that dropped over 20 inches of snow on October 31st. It is rare, but on a handful of occasions in my life, including this year, there can be snow on the ground during trick or treating festivities. So, now seems like a good time to remind parents of a few things that need to be said regarding the approaching winter months.



## Weather Delays

When inclement weather hits and causes potential or real problems for the commute to and from school, parents are reminded that you are empowered to decide for yourselves whether or not to send your children to school. School officials have a lot of things to consider when deciding whether or not to close schools or even just to delay the start of school for two hours. The information we need in order to do that may not be as obvious as it should be at the time we have to make the decision, but, you as a parent may be better suited to make the call for your child or children on those days when the weather is questionable but school officials did not decide to close school. So, if you feel the roads are not safe enough for travel to and from school on a particular day, you can call or email your decision to the school. You will need to identify yourself, name the children you're calling in for, and also state the specific reason you are calling them in even if it seems obvious and we will record that information in our JMC system. When you choose to keep your child(ren) home but school is still open, teachers may or may not be able to send home lessons on Google Classroom because they will have teaching responsibilities here at school and teachers here do not have a lot of spare time outside their teaching responsibilities. It will basically be hit or miss on those days.

## Severe Weather

If the weather is bad enough, or the predictions seem to be reliable in advance of an actual weather event, school will be canceled typically between 5 and 5:30 am on the day of the cancellation or may even get canceled the night before. New Heights will begin to post the cancellation in several locations, but here are the primary ways you can expect to be informed of this important information: T.V. Channels 4, 5, 9 and 11 on local T.V. as well as on their school cancellations tabs found on their websites; The New Heights Website's main page; the New Heights Facebook page; and, all families will also get a JMC email and a JMC text alert.



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## IMPORTANT DATES

- Nov. 3—End of Quarter 1
- Nov. 6 — No School  
Teacher Grading day
- Nov. 9 — Secondary Science  
Museum Field trip
- Nov. 15— School Board  
Meeting 4 pm
- Nov. 22-26—No School  
Thanksgiving Break



## Text Alerts

New Heights occasionally sends out text alerts to families for various reasons. The alerts are sent through our student management system JMC which shows up on your phone as an 800 number. We recommend adding this number to your phone contacts so that the texts aren't mistaken as spam.

844-575-7269



(cont'd from page 1) So, as you can see, there are many, many ways to find out that school is going to be closed due to weather or other type of event. The bottom line is always safety. When it appears that a commute to or from school will put people in danger, school is likely to be closed for that day.

## E-Learning Days

Sometimes school will be closed, but other times we will close in-person activities and post lessons on Google Classroom. We will call those days "E-Learning" days. On those days, teachers will send/post lessons for students on Google Classroom. The lessons will be light and should be something the students can accomplish without the need for adult support in most cases. E-Learning days become necessary when school has been closed multiple times in one winter. Schools risk losing funding when they close for too many days; which is why schools sometimes declare E-Learning days. It is our intent to avoid losing essential revenue provided by the government. It is important that parents pay attention to the school closure notices because you should not send your children to a bus stop, send them to school as a walker or driver, or try to drop them off at school when school is closed because there will not be a bus to pick them up and there will likely not be any employees at school because the roads are not safe for staff just as much as they are unsafe for students. When we close school for students, staff are not expected to report to the building.



## Elementary Outdoor Clothing

Here is your reminder to send cold weather gear for your Kindergarten through 5th grade child to have at school so they can participate in recess during the mid-day break. Winter gear includes snow pants, coat/jacket, hat, mittens/gloves, boots, and anything else you might feel is necessary to help your child remain warm and dry during recess. I also recommend putting your child's name on each item to prevent loss and unnecessary replacement and cost. It might even be a good idea to take pictures to identify if something goes missing.

## 6-12 Conferences

New Heights typically hosts a conference day/night after the conclusion of the 1st and 3rd quarters. To be honest, the participation/attendance at conferences over the past 4 years has been disappointing, which is why we are trying something new and different this year. Rather than schedule a single day/evening for all conferences, we have decided to open conferences up for a two-week window and leave it up to our parents to contact each teacher the parent wishes to conference with. The conferences for students in grades 6-12 can either be in person, held virtually through Google Meet, or they can occur over the telephone. If you as a parent would like to conference with one or more of your child's teachers, simply find the teachers on the school's website and send them an email telling them you would like to schedule a conference.



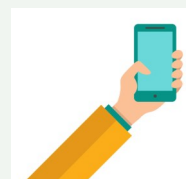
(cont'd from page 2) If your child is running late or has to attend a morning appointment, you or they should call the school and place their order prior to 9:15 to ensure that there is a lunch ordered for them even though they weren't at school for homeroom and lunch count. Failure to place that order will severely limit their chances to get lunch as we typically only order and receive enough food to fill the orders placed in the morning by the students who attended home room.

### **Ala Carte**

New Heights has a few ala carte items for sale during lunch for students in grades 6-12. In order to get ala carte items, the student must either have money in a pre-paid account or they must have enough cash on hand to make the purchase; we do not operate on a credit or IOU basis. Parents can deposit money into a student's meal account by either sending a check or sending cash with your child to deposit into their account. Students whose accounts reach zero will not be allowed to make a purchase until the account has sufficient funds to purchase the desired items. Parents wishing to limit the amount or type of food purchased, or limit the amount of money your child can spend in a day or a week should contact Lindsay at the main office of the school.

### **Cell Phones and Tech**

Cell phones and technology continue to be a problem at New Heights, as well as at schools around the world. You may have heard that England recently banned cell phones from schools altogether; something I would assume will occur in the U.S. sooner or later. Smart Phones are, for some people, the equivalent of pocket slot machines, simply meaning some people can't stop interacting with their phones even when at work or school because they have become addicted to what the phones offer. People seem to like to use the term "multitasking," when they get caught using their phones during a time when they are supposed to be doing something else, but the term doesn't really mean that people can effectively do several things well at one time. The term really means that people divide their attention across many things, meaning they aren't giving anything their full attention. This is a problem for kids in school because they are wasting the one chance they will ever have to maximize their education by paying as much if not more attention to their phones than they pay to their school-related tasks. Parents sometimes ask why we at school put up with it. The reality is we don't put up with phones anymore than we do with drugs, vaping, or misconduct of a various types. We have expectations in place for phones, but many students can't help but get sucked in to their addiction with the phones, which means they are breaking the rules. The simple fact is that most kids have cell phones today and it has become virtually impossible to break kids from these addictive devices. We encourage parents to consider learning how to set some limits on their kids' phones so that they can focus on their school work and lessons during the school day. It is simply too much to ask the school to be cell phone police to more than 100 students. The potential risk of loss of education is too high of a price to pay. Please consider looking into ways to set some limits on your child's phones, or consider keeping the phones at home during the school day.

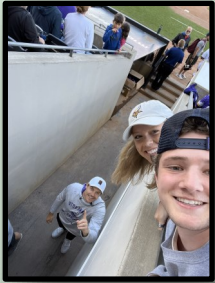


### **Food and Drink at School**

Please be aware that New Heights does not permit students to bring things like Starbucks or other Coffee House products, McDonalds or other fast food, energy drinks, pop or other similar items into school. We do not necessarily care what kids are eating or drinking in the morning before school, but we can't have these items coming into the building due to the mess they tend to make and the distraction they cause. The only places and times food or drinks are allowed at school is in the cafeteria during meal times. Students bringing these items to school will be asked to dispose of them properly, but may also receive a consequence for continued violations to this expectation. There are many types of organizations that do not allow these things in their environments, school happens to be one of them. Please help us to maintain the cleanliness of the school by respecting this important rule. It has been the expectation for more than 25 years and will continue to be enforced for many good reasons.

# New Teacher Feature

## MR. MURPHY – SOCIAL STUDIES & MATH



### 1. What inspired you to become a teacher?

What inspired me to become a teacher is having the opportunity to make a positive impact in the lives of my students.



### 2. What do you enjoy most about teaching?

The thing I enjoy most about teaching is being a role model to my students and creating relationships with them.

### 3. What is the most exciting thing you've ever done?

The most exciting thing I have ever done was visit Yellowstone and Jackson Hole, Wyoming!



### 4. What is something people would be surprised to know about you?

Something people would be surprised to know about me is that I am what some people call a "Swiftie." I enjoy Taylor Swift's music.

### 5. What do you enjoy doing in your free time?

In my free time I like to stay active with golfing, running, hunting, and fishing! I am also a big Minnesota sports fan so much of my free time is spent watching Minnesota teams. Along with these things, spending time with family and friends is important to me!

*Based on Principal Continued from Page 2*

## End of the Quarter for 6-12 Graders

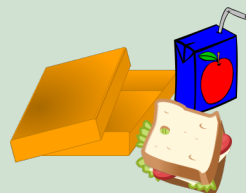
The end of the 1st quarter is November 3rd and teachers will be finalizing quarter grades on Monday November 6th, so anytime after the 6th is fair game to conference. We will honor parents' requests through November 21st, but after that, the teachers will focus their efforts on 2nd quarter activities. We know this is a different way of conducting conferences, but the last few years have shown us that only a small percentage of parents actually attend the scheduled conference day. We feel we can meet with more parents by giving them more dates and options. Hopefully some of you will decide to contact the teachers and meet with them about the progress your child has made at school for the first quarter.

## K-5 Conferences

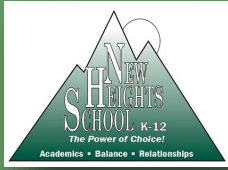
The K-5 teachers have always scheduled individual conferences with the parents of each student. They have decided to keep on with this tradition, so you should be hearing from your child's K-5 teacher about scheduling your own private conference very soon.

## School Meals

This is a reminder that **all school meals are free** to all students in Minnesota public schools this year...and hopefully beyond. Students inform their teachers each morning which of the lunch options he or she wants and then the main office orders all of the lunches from the school's vendor for that day only.







# November Monthly Planner

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
29	30	31	1	2	3 <i>End of Quarter 1</i>	4
5	6 <i>No School- Grading Day</i>	7	8	9 <i>Secondary Science Museum Field trip</i>	10	11  <small>VETERANS DAY</small>
12	13	14	15 <i>Board of Directors Meeting 4pm</i>	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23  <small>THANKSGIVING</small>	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	 	

## Upcoming Events:

\*Holiday Break– December 25 - January 1; students return on Jan 2.

