

HOPE Community Academy

Parent Handbook

School Year 2026 / 2027

Elementary: Grades PK–5 | Secondary: Grades 6–12

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About HOPE Community Academy

Vision

It is the vision of HOPE Community Academy to be a public school of excellence, with high-quality staff, diverse programs, and successful students.

Mission

The mission of HOPE Community Academy is to inspire students to achieve high academic success while embracing Hmong language and culture.

Core Values

We are committed to a culture of learning at HOPE. We build that culture through high-impact instruction, scholar-focused decisions, a strong sense of belonging, leadership, and joyful excellence.

Student Needs

Every student deserves an equitable, high-quality education that develops the specific skills needed for academic achievement and for success in high school and beyond.

Diversity

It is our commitment to welcome, embrace, and celebrate the diversity of our students and their families. We welcome all students and families regardless of race, gender, socio-economic status, ability, and religious background.

Title I School-Wide

HOPE is committed to ensuring all students are supported in their growth as learners and become confident, competent readers and mathematicians. To make that happen, we offer a school-wide Title I program that serves all of HOPE's scholars. Title I funding from the State of Minnesota supports monthly parent meetings, where staff and families connect about school events, discuss how to support students at school and at home, and gather parent feedback on their child's academic needs.

Academic Information

Open House / Goal Setting

HOPE holds an Open House on September 3rd from 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. for all families in PK–12th grade to meet the teacher and see the classroom. All families are encouraged to attend to meet teachers and school administrators, visit classrooms, and make sure all start-of-year paperwork is turned in.



Proof of Preschool Screening

Preschool screening is offered through HOPE and must be completed before a student begins Kindergarten.

Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled in the fall (November 13th) and spring (March 26th). Conferences at HOPE are student-led, so students should attend along with their parents. Teachers will reach out before each conference window to set specific times.

Homework Guidelines

- Homework reflects the standards students are working on in class and is recorded in the daily planner.
- Directions are given to students along with the assignment.
- Parents are asked to provide a quiet study space and time for homework, with the TV and other distractions turned off.
- Parents and students should check the daily planner each night to make sure students are keeping up with assigned work.
- Parents should not do a child's homework for them, but should check in to make sure the child understands the work. Explanations and discussion can happen in Hmong and/or English, whichever works best for the family.

Homework Requests: If a family knows in advance that a student will miss school, please call the school to arrange for missed work. Teachers need at least three full school days to gather materials.

Report Cards

HOPE Community Academy runs on a semester schedule, with report cards issued at the end of each semester.

Grading Scale

- **4** = Students exceed or go above and beyond grade-level standards (Above).
- **3** = Students meet grade-level standards (At Level).
- **2** = Students show partial understanding of grade-level standards (Working Towards).
- **1** = Students show little to no understanding of grade-level standards (Not Meeting).
- **NE** = Not evaluated during this grading period.
- **ND** = Not demonstrated by the student.

A grade of "3" in the fall does not mean a student has already met year-end outcomes — it means the student is proficiently meeting expectations for this point in the year. If a student continues to progress at this pace, they are on track to meet year-end grade-level expectations by June.



Attendance

All students have the right to learn. Regular attendance and on-time arrival are essential to student success, and students cannot make adequate progress if they are not in school. HOPE Community Academy runs a 10-month school year from early September through early June, and it's important for students to attend consistently throughout.

Minnesota Law (Minn. Stat. 120A.22): Students who miss three or more days without a valid excuse are considered truant and will be referred to the Ramsey County Attorney's Office School Attendance Matters (SAM) program. Note: three tardies equal one day of unexcused absence.

Absences

If a student must be absent, a note is required from the family when the student returns to school. Teachers will work with the student to complete any missed assignments.

If a Student Is Absent or Late for Any Part of the Day

Parents must:

- Call the school or teacher with the reason the student is not in school (please specify diagnosis and/or symptoms if the absence is due to illness).
- Send a note or email to the teacher when the student returns to school.
- Send a doctor's note if the student is absent more than three consecutive days.

Students must:

- Ask the teacher for make-up work at least three days before any extended absence (3 or more days).

Excused Absences

- Sick
- Doctor's visit
- Religious holiday
- Family emergency (death, fire, etc.)
- Pre-approved family vacation

Unexcused Absences

- Staying home to babysit
- Oversleeping
- Missing the bus
- "Too cold"



Unexcused Absence Procedure

1–5 Days: HOPE's Attendance Team reaches out to the family.

5–10 Days: SAM Step 1 – Parent informational meeting video with Ramsey County.

10–15 Days:

- An in-school contract and meeting with the student, parent, and a HOPE representative.
- The parent must attend a Zoom meeting with Ramsey County.
- The family is notified by letter or email of the additional referral, along with the date, time, and location of the required SART meeting.
- For students under 12, a referral is made to Child Protection for possible involvement. For students 12 and older, a Youth Engagement Worker may be assigned to assess needs and connect the family with services.

16+ Days: An attorney reviews the referral for charging and files a petition when appropriate.

Breakfast / Lunch

It is the mission of the HOPE Community Academy Food Service program to provide healthy, satisfying breakfast and lunch to every student. We believe starting the day with a nutritious meal supports learning and positive behavior, so HOPE offers free breakfast and lunch to all students. Students may not bring their own lunch from home.

Food Allergies and/or Special Diets

Please contact the Food Service office before your child begins school if you have concerns about food allergies or special diets. A physician's written note is required for HOPE to eliminate items from the program and provide substitutions, as in the case of food allergies. Questions? Call 651-796-4500.

Communication

Grade Level and School Newsletters

Weekly teacher updates and school messages are sent home with important information — calendar updates, student work, the monthly lunch menu, special events, standards information, and other HOPE news. Please read these carefully, and call the main office if you need translation support.

Changes in Student/Parent Contact Information

Families are responsible for letting the school know right away about any change in family information, including address, phone number, family status, guardianship, or emergency contact. This information is essential so HOPE can always reach a parent about their child.

During the School Day

Coming to Attention

When a teacher needs to quiet the class, they raise a hand and say, "Give me Five." When this happens, students are expected to:

- Look at the teacher.
- Stop talking.
- Be still (stop walking, working, moving).
- Put down all materials.
- Listen to the speaker.

Leaving the Classroom

Students may not leave the classroom without their teacher's permission.

Using the Bathroom / Drinking Fountains

Bathroom and water breaks are expected to happen during each class's assigned time. The bathroom should only be used during class time in a true emergency. If a student has an emergency, they should let a friend know what's happening, take a pass, and go.

Behavior & Discipline

Consistent with HOPE's policy section 306, all students are expected to meet the school's expectations for conduct. Our school community treats each other equally, and every student is expected to take ownership and responsibility for their own actions.

In the classroom, on school property, or at a school-sponsored activity or event, students are expected to:

- Respect self, other people, and property
- Cooperate with other students and adults
- Complete all class requirements to meet standards
- Make up work when absent from school
- Help keep the school safe
- Keep yourself clean
- Use appropriate language
- Use all educational resources - including computers, laptops, iPads, printers, and video production equipment - as designed and as directed by teachers

Written referrals for behavioral problems are always followed up with a contact to the parent or guardian.



Teachers and administrators follow the HOPE Community Academy Disciplinary Behavior Matrix when making decisions about detentions or suspensions. Please refer to that document with any questions about discipline.

Our PBIS Framework

HOPE's approach to behavior is grounded in Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), a proactive, evidence-based framework that teaches and reinforces positive behavior instead of relying only on punishment after something goes wrong. PBIS is organized into three tiers, so every student gets the right level of support:

- **Tier 1 – Universal Support:** All students are explicitly taught HOPE's schoolwide expectations, and staff use consistent language and positive reinforcement - recognitions, shout-outs, class celebrations - to acknowledge students who are meeting them.
- **Tier 2 – Targeted Support:** Students who need a bit more support receive small-group interventions such as check-in/check-out, social skills groups, or mentoring, coordinated by our Impact Coaches and Social Workers.
- **Tier 3 – Intensive, Individualized Support:** Students with more significant or persistent needs receive an individualized behavior support plan, developed together with the family, a Social Worker, and, when appropriate, Special Education staff.

These same "Be Respectful, Be Responsible, Be Kind, Be A Leader" expectations are taught and reviewed in every classroom, hallway, and common space, so students know exactly what's expected of them wherever they are in the building.

Minor and Major Behaviors

Not every behavior concern is handled the same way. HOPE staff distinguish between minor behaviors, addressed by the classroom teacher, and major behaviors, referred to the office.

Minor Behaviors (Classroom-Managed)

Minor behaviors are low-level and don't seriously disrupt others' learning or safety - for example, not following directions, minor disruptions, work refusal, or disrespectful language between peers. Classroom teachers respond using PBIS strategies such as:

- A verbal reminder of the expectation, followed by reteaching if needed
- A brief, structured cool-down, or offering the student a choice
- A restorative conversation between the teacher and student
- Contacting home if a pattern of minor behavior continues
- Documenting the behavior so staff can look for patterns over time

Major Behaviors (Impact Team-Managed)

Major behaviors are unsafe, seriously disrupt the learning environment, or violate school policy or Minnesota law - for example, physical aggression, weapons, bullying or harassment, theft, vandalism, or



repeated defiance after Tier 1 and Tier 2 supports have been tried. These are referred directly to an Impact Coach, Impact Manager, or the Chief of Impact Officer using a written office discipline referral. HOPE's response to a major behavior includes:

- An immediate safety check for every student involved
- An investigation, including statements from students involved and any witnesses
- Parent/guardian contact the same day whenever possible
- A decision on consequences using the HOPE Community Academy Disciplinary Behavior Matrix
- A restorative follow-up when appropriate, such as a repair-of-harm conversation or a re-entry meeting so the student returns to class ready to learn
- Written documentation in the student's file

Restorative Practices

Alongside PBIS, HOPE uses restorative practices to repair harm and rebuild relationships rather than relying on punishment alone. This may include a restorative conversation, a circle with those affected, or a structured re-entry meeting after a suspension.

Suspension and Expulsion – Family Rights

For more serious or repeated major behaviors, a student may be suspended or, in rare and serious circumstances, recommended for expulsion. HOPE follows the due process protections guaranteed to every Minnesota student under the Pupil Fair Dismissal Act (Minn. Stat. 121A.40–121A.56), including:

- Written notice of the reason for the dismissal and the rule(s) allegedly violated
- An opportunity for the student and parent/guardian to share the student's side of the story before an out-of-school suspension of more than one school day, except in emergencies
- Consideration of non-exclusionary discipline and alternative educational services before a longer dismissal, when required
- The right to appeal a suspension or expulsion decision
- A readmission plan developed together with the family for any suspension

Families with questions about a suspension or expulsion decision may request a copy of the full Pupil Fair Dismissal Act notice from the School Director's office at any time.

Suspension and Expulsion - Student

HOPE Community Academy operates its student discipline and dismissal practices in accordance with the Minnesota Pupil Fair Dismissal Act (Minn. Stat. §§ 121A.40–121A.56, “PFDA”) and applicable federal laws and regulations.

HOPE's primary goal is to keep scholars engaged in the classroom, minimize exclusion from instruction, and provide the support and interventions necessary for scholars to be successful academically, behaviorally, and socially.



This policy provides a framework for scholars, families, teachers, and school leaders to understand HOPE's expectations, progressive intervention practices, and the rights and responsibilities of all parties when disciplinary action may result in removal from school. All disciplinary and dismissal decisions will be implemented consistent with applicable Minnesota and federal law, including required procedural protections and due process rights.

HOPE is committed to using nonexclusionary disciplinary practices and appropriate interventions whenever appropriate, while maintaining a safe, supportive, and productive learning environment for all scholars and staff.

Level	Definition	Type of Behavior	Examples	Response
Level 1A – Minor	A brief, low-level behavior that interrupts learning but is corrected easily through the teacher's normal classroom management.	Classroom-manage d behavior	Off-task, talking out, minor disruption, minor disrespect, not following expectations	No ISS/OSS. Nonexclusionary intervention required first: teacher redirect, reteach expectations, restorative conversation, logical consequence.
Level 1B – Repeated Minor	A Level 1A-type behavior that continues or repeats after the teacher has already used classroom-level interventions.	Minor behaviors continuing after interventions	Repeated disruption, repeated disrespect, repeated refusal, inappropriate language, misuse of materials	Up to 1 Day ISS or OSS. Teacher documentation, family contact, restorative response, Impact Coach support. Maybe a day in OSS to reflect on behavior and supporting HOPE's community.
Level 2A – Moderate	A behavior serious or persistent enough that it requires support beyond what the classroom teacher can manage alone.	Behavior requiring intervention beyond classroom management	Defiance, leaving class without permission, verbal conflict, minor physical conflict, repeated refusal to follow directions	Up to 1–2 Days ISS or OSS. Informal conference and written notice required. Impact Coach referral, family contact, reflection/restorative intervention.



Level 2B – Significant	A Level 2A-type behavior that repeats, escalates, or does not improve after an Impact Coach or other intervention.	Repeated or escalated moderate behavior	Repeated defiance, repeated classroom removals, aggressive behavior, escalating peer conflict, repeated Level 2A behaviors	Up to 2–3 Days ISS or OSS Informal conference, written notice, family conference. Administrative involvement, behavior plan/intervention.
Level 3A – Serious	Misconduct that creates a significant disruption to the school or raises a safety concern for students or staff.	Serious misconduct creating significant disruption or safety concerns	Fighting, physical aggression, bullying/harassment, theft, vandalism, serious threats, leaving school grounds	Up to 3–4 Days OSS. Administrative investigation, family notification, restorative/safety intervention, re-entry support.
Level 3B – Major	Serious misconduct involving greater harm, higher risk, or repeated Level 3A incidents.	Serious misconduct involving greater harm, risk, or repeated incidents	Serious fighting, repeated aggression, significant property damage, credible threats, severe bullying/harassment, repeated Level 3A behaviors	Up to 3-5 Days OSS. Administrative investigation, family conference, safety/behavior plan, required re-entry meeting.
Level 4A – Severe	Behavior that creates a serious and immediate threat to the health or safety of students or staff.	Behavior creating a serious threat to health or safety	Violence causing injury, serious assault, credible serious threats, drugs/controlled substances, dangerous objects, major property destruction	Up to 5 Days OSS. Immediate administrative/safety response, family notification, re-entry plan; additional proceedings when appropriate.
Level 4B – Critical / Extreme	The most serious misconduct a student can	Most serious conduct presenting	Weapon-related conduct, serious assault causing	Up to 5 Days OSS. Immediate suspension, with



	engage in, presenting an immediate or substantial danger to the school community.	an immediate or substantial danger	significant injury, credible weapon threats, extreme violence, severe drug-related incidents, repeated Level 4 behavior	safety plan in place, family notification, re-entry plan.
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Progressive Behavior Support and Re-Entry Process

- **After Each Suspension:** The Impact Coach Manager will conduct a re-entry meeting with the scholar and parent(s)/guardian(s) before the scholar returns to school. The purpose of the meeting is to review the incident, reinforce HOPE's behavior expectations, identify appropriate supports, and establish a plan for successful re-entry.
- **At the 5th Suspension:** The Impact Coach Manager and School Social Worker will meet with the scholar and parent(s)/guardian(s) to review the scholar's behavioral history, reinforce HOPE's behavior expectations, identify underlying needs or barriers, and develop or strengthen a behavioral support plan.
- **At the 8th Suspension:** The Impact Coach Manager, Chief Academic Officer, and Executive Director will meet to review the scholar's behavioral history, interventions and supports provided, and the effectiveness of those interventions. The team will determine whether additional or alternative nonexclusionary supports, interventions, assessments, or services are needed.
- **At the 10th Suspension:** The Impact Coach Manager and Executive Director will conduct a comprehensive review of the scholar's disciplinary history, including the circumstances of each suspension, interventions and supports provided, and the effectiveness of those interventions. If the conduct meets the statutory grounds for dismissal under Minnesota law and nonexclusionary disciplinary practices have been appropriately attempted, HOPE may initiate exclusion or expulsion proceedings in accordance with the Minnesota Pupil Fair Dismissal Act, including all required notice and hearing procedures.
- **Expulsion Hearing and Due Process:** Any proposed expulsion will be subject to the requirements of Minnesota Statutes §§ 121A.40–121A.56. An expulsion may not be imposed without a hearing unless the scholar and parent/guardian waive the hearing in writing. The scholar and parent/guardian must receive the required written notice and information regarding their rights, including the right to have a representative or legal counsel present at the hearing.
 - **Appeal:** Following a school board decision to expel or exclude a scholar, the scholar or parent/guardian may appeal the decision to the Minnesota Department of Education within **21 calendar days** of the school board's action.



Protection Rights for Students with an IEP or 504 Plan

HOPE Community Academy will implement disciplinary actions involving scholars with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 Plan in accordance with the Minnesota Pupil Fair Dismissal Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and other applicable federal and state laws.

A scholar's disability, IEP, or Section 504 Plan does not prevent HOPE from responding to behavior that violates school expectations. However, disciplinary decisions will consider the scholar's disability-related needs, the services and supports provided through the scholar's IEP or Section 504 Plan, and whether required accommodations, modifications, supplementary aids, behavioral supports, and services were implemented.

1. Review of IEP or Section 504 Plan

When a scholar with an IEP or Section 504 Plan is being considered for suspension or other disciplinary action, the appropriate school administrator will consult with the appropriate special education or Section 504 personnel to determine whether the scholar's plan contains relevant accommodations, behavioral supports, services, or other provisions that should be considered in responding to the behavior.

HOPE will document whether relevant supports and accommodations were implemented at the time of the incident and whether additional interventions or supports may be appropriate.

2. Short-Term Suspensions

HOPE may suspend a scholar with an IEP or Section 504 Plan when permitted by applicable law and consistent with the scholar's legal protections. For a scholar with an IEP, removals from the scholar's educational placement will be tracked to determine whether the removals constitute a change in placement under applicable federal or state law. A dismissal of one school day or less may constitute a day or partial day of suspension for a scholar with a disability if the scholar does not receive regular or special education instruction during that period.

3. Multiple or Extended Suspensions

When a scholar with an IEP has been suspended for more than five consecutive school days or ten cumulative school days in the same school year, HOPE will follow the requirements of Minnesota Statutes § 121A.43 and applicable federal law. Relevant members of the scholar's IEP team, including at least one of the scholar's teachers, will meet as required to determine the extent to which the scholar needs services to:

- Continue participating in the general education curriculum, although in another setting;
- Continue progressing toward the goals in the scholar's IEP; and
- Receive the special education and related services required by law.

The meeting will occur as soon as possible and within the timeframe required by law. When a suspension exceeds five consecutive school days, HOPE will provide alternative educational services as required by Minnesota law.



4. Manifestation Determination

Before initiating an expulsion or exclusion of a scholar with an IEP, HOPE will comply with applicable federal and Minnesota requirements concerning a manifestation determination. The relevant IEP team members and the scholar's parent(s)/guardian(s), as required by law, will determine whether:

- The conduct was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to, the scholar's disability; or
- The conduct was the direct result of HOPE's failure to implement the scholar's IEP.

HOPE will not proceed with exclusion or expulsion in a manner inconsistent with applicable IDEA or Minnesota requirements.

5. Section 504 Scholars

For a scholar receiving services under a Section 504 Plan, HOPE will comply with applicable Section 504 and ADA requirements when imposing disciplinary consequences. When disciplinary action may constitute a significant change in the scholar's placement, HOPE will follow applicable Section 504 procedural safeguards and conduct the required review to determine whether the behavior was related to the scholar's disability and whether the scholar's Section 504 Plan and accommodations were appropriately implemented. A Section 504 Plan will not be used to excuse behavior that is unrelated to the scholar's disability; however, HOPE will not impose discipline in a manner that discriminates against a scholar because of a disability or that fails to provide required procedural protections.

6. Behavioral Supports and Re-Entry

When behavior indicates that a scholar with an IEP or Section 504 Plan may need additional behavioral, social-emotional, academic, or other support, HOPE may convene the appropriate team to review existing interventions and determine whether additional supports, accommodations, services, or assessments are appropriate.

This may include, as appropriate:

- Review or revision of the scholar's IEP or Section 504 Plan;
- Development or revision of a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA);
- Development, review, or revision of a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP);
- Review of academic, behavioral, social-emotional, or environmental supports;
- Restorative or re-entry interventions;
- Social work or counseling support;
- Family collaboration; and
- Referral for additional school or community-based services

7. Documentation and Coordination

All suspensions involving scholars with an IEP or Section 504 Plan will be documented and tracked by the appropriate school personnel. HOPE will monitor cumulative removals and coordinate with the appropriate special education or Section 504 personnel to ensure that disciplinary decisions do not inadvertently result in a violation of the scholar's rights.



Nothing in this policy limits the rights or protections provided to a scholar under federal or Minnesota law. Where this policy conflicts with applicable federal or state law, the requirements of applicable law will control.

Bullying and Harassment Prevention

HOPE Community Academy prohibits bullying, cyberbullying, and harassment of any kind, consistent with Minnesota's Safe and Supportive Minnesota Schools Act (Minn. Stat. 121A.031). Bullying means intimidating, threatening, abusive, or harmful conduct that is objectively offensive and either repeated or highly likely to be repeated.

- Any student, family member, or staff member can report bullying to a teacher, Impact Coach, Social Worker, or school administrator.
- Reports are investigated promptly, and both the student who was targeted and the student accused of bullying are supported through the process.
- A response may include a restorative conversation, a behavior support plan, and/or discipline under the Disciplinary Behavior Matrix, depending on severity.
- Retaliation against a student for reporting bullying is itself treated as a major behavior.

Phone Policy

Elementary

If a child brings a cell phone, it is given to the classroom teacher at the start of the day for safekeeping (lockers do not lock) and returned at the end of the day. The office can relay messages to students during the school day if needed.

Secondary

Cell phones and other personal electronic devices (smart watches, earbuds, tablets, etc.) must be kept off and out of sight - in a locker, backpack, or the classroom's designated phone holder - from the start of the school day until dismissal, unless a teacher gives specific permission for instructional use.

- **First time:** A verbal reminder; the device is returned to the student at the end of class or the school day.
- **Second time:** The device is held in the office for the rest of the day, and a parent/guardian is notified.
- **Third time and beyond:** The device is held in the office and a parent/guardian must pick it up; continued violations may become part of the student's individual behavior support plan, which can include turning the phone in each morning.

In an emergency, the office can always reach a student through their teacher. Parents needing to reach a student during the school day should call the main office rather than texting or calling the student's phone directly.



Field Trips

All students have the opportunity to participate in class field trips, and there is never a charge for a field trip from HOPE Community Academy. We want students to have real-life learning experiences and apply their classroom learning as often as possible, and no student will be kept from a field trip unless there is a student safety concern. Field trip notices and information are sent home by classroom teachers ahead of time, and a signed permission slip is required for a student to leave school grounds. Parents are always encouraged to help chaperone class field trips.

Toys / Fidgets

Fidget toys can help some students focus and self-regulate. Teacher-provided fidgets are available in the classroom for any student who needs one, and should be used quietly and returned to the classroom bin at the end of the day. Personal toys, electronic games, and other non-school items should stay home; if a personal item becomes a distraction, staff will store it safely and return it at the end of the day.

Photo Permission

HOPE Community Academy may take photos of your child during normal school activities. HOPE may publish these photos in brochures, yearbooks, and on the website according to the parent authorization form on file.

Sports / Afterschool Programs

After-school sports for grades 5–12 may include boys' basketball, girls' basketball, co-ed flag football, girls' badminton, boys and girls volleyball, and soccer, along with guitar club, Lego exploration, sewing, academic support, and more. Information for each activity is provided at the time of sign-up.

Guidance

The goal of counseling at HOPE is to help students understand themselves so they can make better decisions about their lives.

Together the Student and Social Worker Can

- Sort out what the problem is or what decision needs to be made
- Discuss needs and feelings
- Explore alternatives and discuss how they will affect the student's goals
- Make decisions the student is comfortable with

What the Social Worker Can Help Students With

- Personal life (self-image, feelings, group interactions, drugs, alcohol, and sex)
- Family problems
- Strengths and weaknesses
- Developing a positive attitude
- Truancy

Social Workers Lead Small Groups About

- Divorce
- Friendship
- Anger
- Death/Loss
- Student issues

How to Connect with a Social Worker or Impact Coach

Students can be connected with a Social Worker or Impact Coach in several ways: a student can self-refer by asking any trusted adult, a teacher or staff member can make a referral, a parent/guardian can request a meeting, or a student may already be receiving support as part of HOPE's Tier 2 or Tier 3 PBIS plan.

Confidentiality

What a student shares with a Social Worker is kept as private as possible to build trust. However, Minnesota law requires all HOPE staff, including Social Workers, to report any concern of abuse, neglect, or serious risk of harm to self or others to the appropriate authorities, consistent with HOPE's Mandated Reporter policy (Minn. Stat. 260E).

Crisis Support

If a student is in crisis or immediate danger, staff follow HOPE's crisis response protocol, which may include contacting a parent/guardian, a Social Worker, county crisis services, or 911. Families are always notified as part of any crisis response involving their child.

Health Information

Medications at School

For any medication use, HOPE Community Academy requires a Medication Authorization Form completed and signed by a physician and a parent. This form is available in the health office. A new form is required every school year and any time the doctor's order changes. The school can only administer medication as ordered by the doctor, and all medication must be provided by the parent.



Allergies / Health Conditions

To keep your child safe, please report any allergy or health condition that could affect the school day to the health office right away. For conditions that could become an emergency, medical documentation (such as an Asthma Action Plan, Seizure Action Plan, Diabetes Management Plan, or Severe Allergy/Anaphylaxis Plan) and any emergency medication must be turned in to the health office as soon as possible.

Special Medical Assistance

If a student has a medical condition that may require the nurse's assistance - temporarily or ongoing - a written note from both a physician and a parent is required.

Illness of a Student

The following are recommended guidelines for deciding whether a student should stay home due to illness:

- A fever of 99 degrees or more. Students may return to school once they have been fever-free for 24 hours without Tylenol or Ibuprofen.
- Vomiting or diarrhea: students may return to school once they have been free of episodes for 24 hours.
- Communicable diseases: these must be reported to the health office as soon as they occur, so the office can track them and notify affected classrooms. Students may return once they have been on antibiotics for 24 hours. Written physician and parent permission is required if a student needs medication at school. Our goal is to slow the spread of illness by notifying families of exposure at school.

Please report the following illnesses as soon as possible:

- Chickenpox
- Measles
- COVID-19
- Influenza
- Strep throat
- Impetigo
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- Diarrhea
- Ringworm
- Head lice

Immunizations

Updated immunizations are required at the following grades:

Entrance into Kindergarten

- 5 doses of DTaP (the 5th dose is not needed if the 4th was given after the 4th birthday)



- 4 doses of Polio (the 4th dose is not needed if the 3rd was given after the 4th birthday)
- 2 doses of MMR
- 3 doses of Hepatitis B
- 2 doses of Varicella (chickenpox)

Entrance into 7th Grade

- 1 dose of Tdap
- 1 dose of meningococcal vaccine

Entrance into 12th Grade

- 2nd/booster dose of meningococcal vaccine

Students cannot be in school without these required immunizations. Each day a student is absent due to a missing immunization is counted as an unexcused absence.

Lockers

Every student is assigned a locker. Lockers may not be locked at any time, and students may only access their locker at the beginning and end of the school day. Teachers and administration may check lockers at any time without notifying students in advance.

Backpacks, hats, hooded sweatshirts, and jackets must be kept in student lockers. Students should not bring valuables to school and leave them in a locker. If a student needs to bring money for a school-related activity, it should be turned in to the teacher as soon as possible — and not shown to other students.

Personal Belongings

Students may not bring unnecessary or prohibited items to school. If such an item is brought to school, the teacher will confiscate it; it may or may not be returned to the student, at the discretion of the teacher and administration. If a child brings a cell phone, it is given to the classroom teacher at the start of the day for safekeeping (lockers do not lock) and returned at the end of the day. The office can relay messages to students during the day if needed.

Items to Be Kept at Home Include, But Are Not Limited To

- Character cards
- Electronics
- Toys
- Cell phones
- Toy or real weapons
- Drug- or alcohol-related items, including T-shirts, jackets, and jewelry



- Electronic games
- Perfume/hair products

Confiscated Items

When a prohibited item is confiscated, it is kept in the office. A parent or guardian may need to pick up certain items in person. Items not picked up by the end of the school year may be donated or discarded.

Lost, Stolen, or Damaged Personal Items

HOPE Community Academy is not responsible for personal belongings that are lost, stolen, or damaged at school, on the bus, or during field trips. We strongly encourage families to leave valuables at home.

Safety and Security

All guests, volunteers, visitors, and family members are expected to sign in and out at the front office, and all staff wear photo ID badges at all times to help keep the building secure and visitors identifiable. Parents must give the teacher advance written notice whenever a student will leave school early or miss any part of the school day. If a student will not ride their normal bus, a note is required so arrangements can be made no later than 12:00 p.m. that day.

Building Access

Exterior doors remain locked during the school day. All visitors, guests, and family members must be buzzed in at the main entrance and sign in at the front office before entering the building.

Early Dismissal

If your child needs to leave school early or will miss part of the school day, please give the teacher and office advance written notice. If your child will not be riding their normal bus, send a note so arrangements can be made no later than 12:00 p.m. on the day of the change.

Custody Situations

If a custody agreement or court order restricts a parent's or guardian's access to a student, the office must have a current, signed copy of that order on file. Without documentation on file, HOPE cannot restrict either legal parent's access to their student.

Safety Drills

HOPE practices a variety of safety drills throughout the school year so students and staff know how to respond in an emergency. See "What is your safety drill procedure?" in the Frequently Asked Questions section for a description of each drill type.



Reporting a Safety Concern

Students, families, and staff can report a safety concern to any staff member, the front office, or the School Director at any time.

School Property

Students are expected to treat all HOPE Community Academy property - including textbooks, library materials, furniture, and technology - with care and respect.

Computers, Including Laptops, iPads, and Hand-Held Devices

School computers are for education only. Students may not use them for social media, games, downloading programs, listening to music, or viewing inappropriate material, and may not print without permission. Any damage or loss of school property results in a repair or replacement fee. Misuse of technology may lead to loss of computer privileges, in-school suspension, or out-of-school suspension, depending on severity.

Damage or Loss of School Property

Families will be billed for the cost of repair or replacement of any HOPE property that is lost, damaged, or destroyed due to student misuse or negligence. See Fees, under Dress Code, for a summary of common replacement costs, including library books, textbooks, and school-issued technology.

Lost and Found

Lost and Found is located in the front office. Families are welcome to check Lost and Found when visiting the school (see "How do I visit school or volunteer?" in the Frequently Asked Questions section). Unclaimed items are periodically donated.

Special Occasions – World New Year & Hmong Day

HOPE honors the World New Year and Hmong Day each year with school assemblies, and families will be notified of dates and times. Other holidays may be incorporated into the curriculum as an educational experience, at the discretion of the teacher.

Student Records

HOPE Community Academy provides access to student academic records. Parents have the right to:

- Inspect and review the contents of the educational records.
- Obtain one copy of the education records at no charge.
- Receive an explanation and interpretation of the educational records from school personnel.



- A hearing related to the contents of the educational records.
- Bring an attorney or parent advocate to review educational records.

A written request must be made to the School Director, and access will be granted within ten business days of receipt. Parents who disagree with information in a student's record may submit a written statement explaining their view; that statement becomes part of the student record.

The school will not permit access to, or release, educational records to third parties without parental consent, except:

- When the student is transferring to another school.
- When the school is complying with a judicial order.

Transportation

JME Transit Inc. provides transportation for HOPE Community Academy. Please report any change of address to HOPE at least one week in advance so the bus stop can be updated. All students riding the bus must follow JME's safety procedures. Students receive a safety demonstration each fall, and the rules include:

- Students must be at their bus stop 10 minutes before pick-up time and dressed appropriately for the weather.
- Students must stay seated at all times, with hands and head inside the bus's windows at all times.
- Students must show respect for others on the bus and for the driver.
- Students must not run or move from seat to seat while the bus is moving.
- No food or drink on the bus.
- Students must keep feet and belongings out of the aisle.
- Students must keep hands, arms, and body inside the bus.
- Students must cross at a safe distance from the front of the bus.
- Students must ride their assigned bus to and from school.
- A student who needs to ride a different bus must bring a signed note from a parent.

Bus drivers write up students who do not follow the rules and share the report with the HOPE office. School administration handles all bus issues in cooperation with the bus company. If negative behavior continues, a student may lose the privilege of riding the bus for the remainder of the school year.



Dress Code

HOPE Community Academy does not have a uniform, beginning with the 2026–2027 school year.

Our dress code is designed to keep students safe, comfortable, and ready to learn, while respecting the diverse cultural, religious, and personal expression of HOPE families. The dress code applies equally to all students, regardless of gender, and exceptions are always made for religious and cultural attire, including traditional Hmong and Karen clothing worn for school celebrations.

Appropriate Coverage

Tops must cover the midriff, back, and chest. Spaghetti straps, halter tops, and tube tops are generally not permitted unless worn under a jacket or sweater.

Skirt and Short Lengths

Bottoms must be an appropriate length, generally measured as reaching a student's fingertips when their arms are extended down at their sides.

Prohibited Graphics

Clothing, patches, or pins may not display profanity, violence, drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or gang-related symbols.

Footwear Safety

Closed-toe, secure shoes (like sneakers) are required for physical education and safe outdoor play. Crocs must have the heel strap engaged, and flip-flops or open-toed sandals are not permitted.

Hats and Hoodies

Headwear can make it harder for staff to quickly identify students in the hallway and can sometimes be used to conceal earbuds, phones, or other prohibited items. At the same time, HOPE wants students to be able to dress for Minnesota winters and to wear culturally or religiously significant headwear without any hassle. This policy balances both.

Inside the building: Hats and other non-exempt headwear should be removed once a student enters the classroom and stored in a backpack or locker rather than worn during instruction. Hooded sweatshirts may still be worn in the building, but hoods should be down, not up over the head, during the school day.

The following are always permitted, in every grade, with no approval needed:

- Religious head coverings, such as a hijab, patka, or turban
- Head coverings needed for a documented medical reason
- Traditional Hmong and Karen head coverings worn for cultural celebrations and Special Occasions events



Outdoors: Hats, stocking caps, and hoods are expected outside for arrival, dismissal, and recess, especially during Minnesota winters, and should come off again once students are back inside the building.

Enforcement: As with the rest of the dress code, a hat or hood indoors is treated as a simple, low-key redirect - "hood down, please" - not a discipline issue. If non-exempt headwear becomes a repeated, ongoing concern, staff may hold the item for the day, the same way personal electronics are handled under the Phone Policy, and will follow up with the family directly rather than referring it under the Disciplinary Behavior Matrix.

Weather Adjustments

Because elementary students have daily outdoor recess even in the coldest Minnesota winters, students must be dressed for the weather - including snow pants and boots.

If a student comes to school out of dress code, they may be asked to call home and have appropriate clothing brought in. If a student borrows clothing from the school, their original clothing is kept in the office until the borrowed items are returned. If dress code becomes an ongoing issue, the Impact team will reach out to the family to help resolve it.

Enforcement

Dress code concerns are addressed respectfully and privately, and are never treated as a major behavior on their own. If a student comes to school out of dress code, staff first offer a simple, low-disruption solution - such as a layer from the school's extra clothing supply - before involving the family.

Fees

If lost or damaged, students are responsible for the cost of the following items:

- Library books (Media Center Library and classroom library)
- Textbooks
- School-issued technology

Weather

HOPE Community Academy may officially close for bad weather. That decision is made and announced by 6:00 a.m. For school closing information, please check:

- WCCO Radio (830 AM)
- WCCO TV (Channel 4)
- wccoradio.com
- School Messenger (via phone/email)



Frequently Asked Questions

Can I change how my child goes home at the end of the day?

If you're changing your child's end-of-day transportation, please call the office by 12:00 p.m. so we have time to communicate the change to the teacher. Please don't use Talking Points or email for this - someone will always answer the phone, or check the office voicemail.

If this is a permanent change, please email the teacher in advance. If you haven't heard back within 48 hours, contact the school office.

How do I visit school or volunteer?

Visiting (Lunch with your child or checking Lost & Found)

Always bring your driver's license (physical picture ID, not a photo of it on your phone) when visiting the school. We have two iPads available for you to use at check-in. For safety, we need to add every visitor into our system before entering the building or meeting with a student in the office.

Volunteering / Chaperoning

Background checks must be completed before your visit, and are required every school year. Forms are available in the office or on our website, and we'll also need a copy of your current driver's license.

What is your safety drill procedure?

HOPE follows the Standard Response Protocol, a set of five common drill types used by schools across Minnesota. We practice a variety of these drills throughout the school year so students and staff are prepared to respond calmly and quickly.

- **HOLD:** Used when the hallway needs to be kept clear for a reason inside the building (such as a medical situation). Classroom doors stay open and instruction continues as normal.
- **SECURE:** Used when there is a situation near, but not inside, the building. Classroom doors are locked, but instruction continues as normal inside the room.
- **LOCKDOWN:** Used when there is a threat inside or very close to the building. Doors are locked, lights are off, and students and staff stay silent and out of sight until an all-clear is given.
- **EVACUATE:** Used when it is safer to leave the building. Students and staff move in an orderly way to a designated location, following the posted evacuation route.
- **SHELTER:** Used for severe weather (such as a tornado) or a hazardous materials situation. Students and staff move to a designated safe area and take protective action, such as the tornado "duck and cover" position.

Parents and guardians are notified after a drill (or a real event) through the same communication channels used for other school updates - see "How does communication work at HOPE?" below.



What are the school hours?

Student drop-off starts at 8:30 a.m. for both parent drop-off and the bus. Students dropped off before 8:30 a.m. should remain in the car, since HOPE does not have supervision available before then. At 8:30 a.m., students may head to free breakfast or go straight to class, and should be seated and ready to learn by 8:45 a.m. Students arriving after the 8:45 a.m. bell are considered tardy, and all late students must be walked in and signed in at the office by a parent.

What phone numbers should I use?

- School Office: 651-621-7800
- Attendance Line: 651-621-7801 (voicemail only — open 24 hours/day)
- Health Office: 651-621-7804
- Bus Company: 651-621-8900
- District Transportation: 651-621-6027
- Staff Directory (phone numbers & emails) is available on our website

How does communication work at HOPE?

- Weekly newsletter
- ENews blasts as needed
- Facebook
- Talking Points
- Family nights



Closing

Thank you for partnering with HOPE Community Academy this year. This handbook is meant to be a practical, everyday guide for our families - not the final word on every situation. Where a question comes up that isn't fully answered here, HOPE staff and administration will use their best judgment, always guided by our Vision, Mission, and Core Values, and always in the best interest of our students.

Policies and procedures may be updated during the school year as circumstances require. When that happens, families will be notified through the same communication channels described in this handbook - our weekly newsletter, ENews blasts, Talking Points, and family nights - and an updated handbook will be made available.

If anything in this handbook is unclear, or if you simply have a question, please don't hesitate to reach out to the front office at 651-796-4500. We are grateful to partner with you in your child's education, and we look forward to a successful 2026–2027 school year together.

On behalf of the entire staff and leadership team — welcome to the HOPE Community Academy family.



Appendix: 2026–2027 Family Calendar

A printable version of the full family calendar referenced throughout this handbook.

Corrected the Board meeting dates to the 4th of the month.

November 12 and 13, March 25 and 26: Combined staff development days with evening conference and added a No School - full day conference day on Friday. Originally, corrected Memorial day from the 24th to the 31st.

12/26

2026-2027 Family Calendar

July 26						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
		1	2	3	4	
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

August 26						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
						1
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9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

September 26						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
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13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

October 26						
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11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

November 26						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
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13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

December 26						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

January 27						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	2
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10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

February 27						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
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13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28					

March 27						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
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6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

April 27						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
		1	2	3		
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

May 27						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

June 27						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

17 Student Days 17 Staff Days

19 Student Days 20 Staff Days

8 Student Days 9 Staff Days

Key:	
 	First Day of School
 	No School - Staff Development
 	Conferences
 	Staff Last Day
 	Last Day of School

On Calendar 167 Student Days/1085.5 H 187 Staff Days

Min Required Hours: 850 Hrs for kindergarten, 935 Hrs for grades 1–6, and 1,020 Hrs for grades 7–12

July		Time
13	PreK and K Early Childhood Screening	3:00-7:00pm
14	PreK and K Early Childhood Screening	9:00am-3:00pm
21	Board Retreat	9:00am-3:30pm

August		
27	Board Meeting	5:00 PM

September		
3	PreK-12 Open House	10:00am-7:00pm
7	No School - Labor Day	
8	First Day of School for K-12	
14	First Day of PreK	
24	Board Meeting in Conference Room	5:00 PM

October		
15-16	No School - MEA Break	
22	Board Meeting in Conference Room	5:00 PM
30	No School - Staff PD, End of Quarter 1	

November		
12	No School - Staff PD & Evening Conferences	4:30-8:00pm
13	No School - Conferences	8:00am-4:00pm
19	Board Meeting in Conference Room	5:00 PM
26-27	No School - Fall Break	

December		
17	HOPE New Year Celebration	5:00-7:00pm
17	Board Meeting in Conference Room	5:00 PM
18	No School - Staff PD	
21-31	No School - Winter Break	

January		
1	No School - Winter Break	
4	School Resumes	
18	No School - MLK Day	
22	End of Quarter 2	
28	Board Meeting in Conference Room	5:00 PM
29	No School - Staff PD	

February		
15	No School - President's Day	
25	Board Meeting in Conference Room	5:00 PM
26	No School - Staff PD	

March		
25	No School - Staff PD & Evening Conferences	4:30-8:00pm
25	Board Meeting in Conference Room	5:00 PM
26	No School - Conferences & End of Quarter 3	8:00am-4:00pm

April		
5-9	No School - Spring Break	
12	School Resumes	
22	Board Meeting in Conference Room	5:00 PM

May		
14	Hmong Day Celebration & Annual Board Meeting	5:00-8:00pm
21	No School - Staff PD	
27	Board Meeting	5:00 PM
28	Last Day of PreK & Celebration	
31	No School - Memorial Day	

June		
10	Last Day of School for K-12, HS Graduation, End of	
11	No School - Staff Last Day	
18	Board Meeting in Conference Room	5:00 PM