Calendar of Events

October
18-19  Education MN (MEA) Days
       NO SCHOOL
26    Conference Prep Day
       NO SCHOOL
31    Halloween

November
6     Election Day- No evening
      events after 6:00 PM
13    Evening Conferences 3:45 - 6:45
15    Evening Conferences 3:34 - 6:45
      Pre-K - NO SCHOOL
16    Conferences - 8:15 - 3:15
      NO SCHOOL
22-23 Thanksgiving
       NO SCHOOL

Website: highwoodhills.spps.org

Dear Families:

Thank you again for a good start of the year. I appreciate all those who,
by words or deeds, contributed to the successful beginning, despite the
staffing changes and some necessary modifications. I have always
believed that in as much as it takes two to tango, it always takes more than
two to make peace and create a sound, warm and welcoming learning
environment for our students. I also appreciate all those who volunteer
every day to help in the classrooms, other areas of the school, and
accompany their students to school and help them set a good tone for the
day every morning!

As we continue this journey together as a school, I would like to remind
you that we must always remain positive about our children’s education.
At Highwood Hills, the staff and I are committed to providing the best
possible elementary education to all of our students, while at the same
time doing what it takes to adhere to State and District standards, policies
and procedures as we are required to do! Paramount among our mission
in this work is the safety, security and well being of all. Sometimes this
may involve a change in long-term practices that are unsafe, as well as
modifying some that need improvement. Through all this, our goal will
be to offer the safest learning environment and a rigorous educational
opportunity for all of our students regardless of socio-economic status or
other factors.

Proper conduct is very important in promoting and maintaining a healthy
school environment. I am imploring families to please work with us in
reminding students of proper etiquette, and the need to work with their
teachers/adults in building a collaborative, peaceful learning
environment. We have not had some serious behavior problems so far,
but it would help to remind all our students of school expectations. Please
refer to the Rights & Responsibilities Handbook to give you an idea of the
guidelines that principals use to impose consequences following an
infraction. Please check your child’s backpack for any items that may be
demed dangerous and do not allow him/her to bring it to school. For
your information, a knife with a total blade length (tip to hilt) of 2.5 inches
or greater is a level 5 offense and a mandatory expulsion referral. If the
blade length is shorter, but the student makes a threat to harm another
person, that is also a level 5 offense. When such infractions occur, the
school is required to submit the expulsion referral to the District office
and then the Student Transfer Committee will make the decision on next
steps. Sometimes, by simply asking them whether they have such items
in their possession before they leave for school will help. It will serve as
a reminder for those who may forget that they have such items in their
backpacks.
Highwood Hill's and St. Paul District's ATTENDANCE POLICY
When students are not in school, they cannot learn. Please make sure
that your children attend school every school day, except in cases of
illness, doctor and dentist appointments that cannot be made after
school hours, religious holidays, and family emergencies. If absences of
more than 2 days occur due to illness, a doctor's note may be requested.

Your child WILL NOT be excused for babysitting, oversleeping, missing
the bus, travel, weather conditions, or visiting relatives. If it becomes
imperative for families to travel, please complete a Travel Request Form
for approval by the principal. Please also note that students must make
up any work missed as a result of the travel.

We are required to contact the Ramsey County Truancy Intervention
Program after five (S) non-excused days. This is a District /State Policy
and is enforced.

Halloween
Halloween is a cultural celebration for some, and also for some newcomers to the country who are excited
about this American tradition that is generally recognized as an acceptable cultural event in our society by a
majority of people in the larger community. As such, we will honor the need to recognize the day for those
who want to celebrate it. Therefore, it will be an optional uniform day to allow those who celebrate it to
come to school in their costumes with the exceptions below. Note that the school as a whole does not
celebrate it, but those who feel the need to celebrate it may come to school costumed on Wednesday
October 31st. We will also seize the opportunity to emphasize the educational and enrichment benefits that
this event may present to our predominantly immigrant students for the following reasons:
• It could be a motivating theme in social studies or reading for students
• It could trigger higher order thinking and creativity as student design or choose their costumes
• Cooperation and social skills are practiced in preparation for and during class activities
• It gives us another opportunity to work together as we help students to expand their cultural and
environmental horizons by learning about other cultures and costumes.

Due to the safety of your child and others, students may not wear masks or other things that disguise their
identity markedly. For instance, the school bus driver will like to know who gets in and out of the bus even
on Halloween Day! There will be NO SCHOOL-WIDE parades or celebrations of any sort, however, wearing
uniforms on this day will be optional.

For those going to send their students in costumes, please note also that teachers have been working in their
classrooms to establish an environment in which children feel secure and relate to one another positively.
We would like to encourage you to help us by keeping this in mind when helping your child to choose a
costume. Please avoid costumes that are scary or gory, or those that reflect a message of violence of any
kind. We would like to remind parents that weapons, including toys, such as fake knives, swords, or guns are
not allowed in school, even if they are part of the costume. This is only for those who celebrate Halloween,
and those not celebrating it should not be pressured by their children to participate. We respect your
decision in this matter. Thank you in advance for your kind consideration. Please remember to access this
newsletter in our website, as well at www.highwoodhills.spps.org.

Respectfully,

Fatima Lawson

Fatima Lawson, Ph.D.
Principal