



NORTHSTAR

**Parent Information Handbook
Expectations and Procedures**

School Year 2023-2024

Table of Contents

Welcome Letter & Contact Information	3-4
Mission & Overview Information	5
Enrollment	6
Student Pick-Up & Late Fees	7
Communication	8
Emergency Procedures	8-9
Visitors	9
Lost and Found	10
Expectations	10
Access to Technology	11
NorthStar Adventure	11
NorthStar Athletics	12
Social Media	12

NorthStar Parents/ Guardians,

On behalf of the entire NorthStar team, we want to welcome you! We also want to take this time to thank you for considering NorthStar as your choice for after school and/or summer camp programming. We take your vote of confidence seriously, and we want you to know that we will do our best to cultivate this partnership with quality programing, communication, and overall excellence.

If you have questions or concerns, please contact us. You can reach us through REMIND, by leaving a voicemail message, sending us an email, or asking the receptionist to locate one of us when you are in the building. **While it is our goal to be available to all parents, please understand that we are not always available at a point of need, so if you do not find us on your first attempt, please consider one of the other communication options. We will try to reconnect with you as quickly as possible.**

How to contact us: NorthStar Foundation– 402-614-6360

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NORTHSTAR

NorthStar Mission

To change young men's lives through programming that supports, challenges, inspires, and instills a life rooted in education, self-discipline, and service to the community.

In Fall of 2014, NorthStar opened its doors to boys in North Omaha for academic support and skills development, along with the intentional advancement of physical, emotional, and social skills through athletics and adventure.

Academics

NorthStar after-school academic programs focus on supporting boys in daily homework along with academic tutoring in areas of challenge. NorthStar believes boys can be on grade level and prepared for graduation!

Athletics

Boys will be able to learn skills in a variety of athletic and team-building activities in the after-school program. Utilizing Fritz Field and indoor gymnasium, NorthStar also partners with established athletic organizations to ensure continued athletic opportunities, even when students have not transitioned to varsity sports.

Adventure

Through participation in NorthStar programs boys develop leadership and teambuilding skills that challenge them to do more than they thought possible. The NorthStar Adventure experience includes participation in several outstanding programs which include Hitchcock Indoor Rock Wall, Hitchcock High Ropes Challenge Course, hiking, biking, leadership development, and summer expeditions.

Career Readiness

NorthStar partners with several local organizations to provide young men with valuable experiences to help them set goals for their future careers. Both on-site presentations and off-site tours help NorthStar students to envision themselves in the workplace, whether as an engineer with HDR, a finance professional at First National Bank, or an entrepreneur.

THE NAME "NORTHSTAR"

Looking to the evening sky, the North Star is used to help identify direction when a person is lost. The NorthStar Foundation seeks to do the same for male youth in North Omaha: encouraging an upward view, providing a constant resource, and offering direction.

NorthStar Program Handbook

This handbook is designed to give parents/guardians a helpful insight into the programs offered by NorthStar. It includes NorthStar after-school program and summer camp procedures that support a safe and purposeful experience. Please read this handbook carefully and keep it available for reference during the year.

Enrollment

Student enrollment is renewed annually at the beginning of the school year. Parents must complete the enrollment process through our website and complete all required forms, along with a \$50 enrollment fee for each student enrolled. The enrollment process requires account creation through PowerSchool and verification of your account. Please allow for 2-3 days processing time with the Enrollment office. Once a student is enrolled, the parent/guardian is responsible for keeping all student information up to date. Information can be updated at any time by logging into the Parent portal with NorthStar- PowerSchool.

Open/Closed Enrollment

- Students can enroll year-round. However, once a grade level group reaches capacity, the enrollment office may close that groups registration. If that happens, the student can go onto a waiting list until a spot opens in that class.

Daily Schedule

- After School Program Hours: Monday –Friday 3:00-7:00 pm
- Camp NorthStar (Summer) Hours: Monday-Friday 9:00am- 3:30pm
(early arrival 7:30-9:00am, dismissal 3:30-5:00pm)

After-school daily schedule follows the same structure each night; however, if your child's schedule changes because of a special activity or field trip we will communicate via the **Remind System**. Camp schedules vary in program activities, and weekly schedules with events, programming and fieldtrips are sent weekly.

Remind : alert and communication app

Once a student is enrolled for NorthStar, parents/ guardians are sent an invite to our Remind Communication system. Accept NorthStar's invite to receive texts and/or emails about safety/ health notifications, upcoming events, and closures and our weekly engagement newsletter.

Students Early Arrival

The staff that work with programming for the after-school program are also involved in transporting/supervising students from various schools to NorthStar each afternoon. Students are not allowed to arrive at NorthStar until after Omaha Public Schools' students have been dismissed (secondary schools dismiss at 3:05 p.m. and elementary schools dismiss at 4:05 p.m.).

Transportation from School

During the 2023-2024 school year, NorthStar will provide transportation from these target schools to NorthStar on days that Omaha Public Schools is in session. Parents, please note that when OPS students are not in session, NorthStar programming is not in session.


Additional schools may be added when the number of registered students reaches or exceeds 10 boys.

Bus/Van Transportation List for 2023-2024

Elementary Schools	Middle Schools	High Schools	Non-Public Schools
Belvedere Central Park Fontenelle Rose Hill Skinner Wakonda	Buffett Davis Nathan Hale King Science Magnet McMillian Monroe Morton	Benson Burke Central Creighton Prep North Northwest	Holy Name Jesuit Academy Phoenix Academy Sacred Heart

Student Pick-Up Options

Not all families have the same needs when it comes to transitioning their students from NorthStar each evening. To better help with this process, we provide 3 options that we believe will cover most parents' needs:

- **Option 1 (recommended)** PikMyKid Parent Dismissal App 
- Option 2: Call the welcome desk and ask for your student to be dismissed.
- Option 3: Walk up to the building to check out their son.
- Option 4: Permission to walk home. **Required:** guardian waiver in enrollment forms.

Before leaving the building, everyone is required to sign out at the front desk or in the vestibule.

Late Pick-Up

We understand that occasional incidents arise where a parent may be late in picking up your son. If that happens, **please call NorthStar immediately at 402-614-6360 ext. 210 to notify the staff. Failure to notify NorthStar staff will result in a fine if you are late.** When we do not know why a student has not been picked up on time, the primary parent/guardian will be called first then others on the approved pick-up list.

Bicycles

Students can ride bicycles to and from NorthStar. Because of heavy traffic near schools, students should be especially observant of safety rules. Students are to walk bicycles through

the safety patrol intersections and continue walking the bicycle to the bike rack. Students should keep their bicycles locked in the bike racks provided. NorthStar is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged bicycles.

Communication

Communicating with families is crucial; we use a variety of tools to keep parents informed about what is going on at NorthStar and to find out what parents are interested in or concerned about. **Our most common means of communication include:**

1. REMIND Communication System: notifications by text or email (see pg. 6 for details)
2. Telephone calls and voicemail
3. Parent meetings
4. Social Media (primarily Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram)
5. E-mail (firstname@northstar360.org — example:john@northstar360.org)
6. NorthStar's website (northstar360.org)

Staff Concerns

It is our desire that staff have open communication with parents of NorthStar students. Program staff are available for phone calls between 12:00-3:00 PM. If you or your child has an issue with a staff member, please speak directly with them. If you are not satisfied that an issue has been resolved, a meeting with the Director is encouraged. Abusive behavior and/or verbal threats by parents toward program staff, children, or other parents will be cause for immediate termination of their student's enrollment at NorthStar.

Complaint Procedures

Constructive criticism is welcome through any medium when it is motivated by a sincere desire to improve the quality of the educational program and to equip NorthStar to perform its tasks more effectively. To resolve all concerns and issues at the earliest stage and through informal methods and procedures, any complaint should first be addressed to a program manager.

When the manager receives a complaint, he/she will immediately address the concerns by conducting an informal conference with the complainant, thereby providing an opportunity for a discussion and informal resolution of the identified concerns.

If the concerns are not resolved by the manager, the complainant may contact the Director, who will conduct an informal conference with the complainant, again providing an opportunity for a discussion and informal resolution of the complainant's concerns.

Severe Weather and School Cancellations

When Omaha Public Schools cancels school or evening activities because of weather concerns, all NorthStar activities will also be canceled for that evening.

If severe weather forces the closing of school, an announcement will also be made on local radio/TV stations informing parents that NorthStar programming will also be canceled. Parents will also receive notification via Remind.

Emergency Procedures

NorthStar staff and students are trained to respond to emergencies by following the Standard Response Protocol (SRP). SRP has been adopted by most after-school programs and law enforcement agencies in Douglas and Sarpy Counties to develop common terminology and procedures to maximize the effectiveness of our response to school emergencies. SRP involves four responses: Lockout, Lockdown, Evacuation, and Shelter.

Lockout is called when one or more persons or animals outside the school pose a potential threat to student safety. The school day proceeds as usual, but students are kept inside the building until the potential threat has passed.

Lockdown is called when there is someone or something inside the building that poses an immediate threat to student safety. Teachers verify that classroom doors are locked and that students are moved to a location in the classroom where they cannot be seen from interior hallways.

Evacuation occurs when conditions inside the building require all students be moved out of it. The most common form of evacuation drill is a fire drill, but students might be evacuated for other reasons, such as a gas leak or damage to the building. If students are unable to be in the building for an extended period or due to extreme weather, students will be moved to a designated temporary evacuation site or to a reunification site where they can be safely released to a parent or guardian.

Shelter requires that all students go to a designated location inside the building designed to withstand severe thunderstorms or tornados.

Students and staff practice these responses throughout the year to ensure that all students and staff know what to do and identify plan elements that may need attention. Except for drills, parents are notified any time conditions warrant the activation of these protocols.

Visitors

During student programming hours, safety is our highest priority. All guests needing to pick up students must identify who they are picking up when entering the facility. Guests must wait in the vestibule where students will join them for departure. If a guest wishes to see their child inside of the facility, they can request a manager who will gladly accompany them inside the building.

Field Trips

At time of enrollment, parents/ guardians are required to complete a general consent form, including field-trip waivers. You may be asked to sign a specific field trip slip based on the provider's requirements.

Student Valuables

NorthStar is not responsible for lost or stolen personal items brought to NorthStar by students. Students are encouraged to leave items of value at home.

Lost and Found

NorthStar maintains a collection of Lost and Found items near the reception desk. Students who lose a textbook, sweatshirt, or anything else should check the Lost and Found for the missing item. Due to the difficulty of maintaining a large Lost and Found collection, it is cleaned out at the end of each week, and unclaimed items are donated to charity.

Expectations

Accidents at NorthStar

NorthStar does not provide health insurance coverage for students, as that is the responsibility of parents/guardians to provide. Parents are responsible for the medical bills, just as they would be if the student were hurt away from NorthStar.

Searches

NorthStar exercises exclusive control over NorthStar property including, but not limited to, student lockers, desks, computer equipment, and other such property owned by NorthStar. Students should not expect privacy when using NorthStar property. Periodic, random searches of lockers, desks, computers, and other property may be conducted at the manager's discretion.

The following rules apply to searches of students' private property, and to the seizure of items in a student's possession or control:

NorthStar managers may conduct a search if there is a reasonable basis to believe that the search will uncover evidence of a crime or a violation. The search is to be conducted under the circumstances.

Illegal items or other items determined to be a threat to the safety of others or a threat to educational purposes may be taken and kept by NorthStar managers or administrative staff. Any firearm or other weapon will be confiscated and delivered to law enforcement officials as soon as practicable.

Nuisance Items

Items that disrupt or interfere with the educational process are "nuisance items" that can be removed from the student's possession. Students are also discouraged from bringing food or snacks, toys, etc. to NorthStar except when their presence serves an educational purpose and

has been assigned and approved by NorthStar. NorthStar is not responsible for items a student chooses to bring that end up lost or broken. Pets are not allowed unless prearranged with the team's manager.

Network, Email, and Other Computer Rules

NorthStar technology, including network and internet access, is the property of NorthStar, and is provided as a tool for students' educational use. Students should not assume that their use of technology at NorthStar is private. Use of NorthStar technology, including email, is not private. In accordance with the Children's Internet Protection Act, NorthStar will monitor computer usage and employ technology protection measures. NorthStar may inspect, copy, review, transfer, and store, at any time and without notice, any usage of NorthStar computers, computer networks, internet access and all information transmitted or received (including e-mail). The Director of Education shall develop regulations, which may include descriptions of inappropriate uses and those included in this policy.

ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGY: Use of NorthStar's technology resources is a privilege and not a right. The Director of Education shall develop appropriate user agreements and shall require that students and their parents/guardians sign such user agreements as a condition of access to the technology resources. Parents and guardians shall inform the Director of Education in writing if they do not want their child to have access. The Director of Education is authorized to establish other regulations, forms, procedures, guidelines, and standards to implement this, Policy. NorthStar technology resources are not considered a public forum. NorthStar reserves the right to restrict any communications and to remove communications that have been posted.

NorthStar Adventure

Leadership, collaboration, and communication are key program outcomes for all participants in NorthStar Adventure Programming. Through participation in NorthStar Adventure programs, NorthStar students develop leadership and teambuilding skills that challenge them to learn more about themselves and do more than they ever thought possible! NorthStar students have the opportunity to participate in onsite and offsite experiences including:

- Hitchcock High Ropes Challenge Course
- Hitchcock Indoor Rock Wall
- In-classroom Programming
- Outdoor Expeditions
- Youth Service Leaders program
- Teambuilding activities
- Biking
- Hiking
- Camping
- Mindfulness

NorthStar Athletics

At NorthStar, boys can compete year-round on our basketball, soccer and lacrosse teams. Sports provide opportunities for young men to develop values of respect, responsibility, teamwork, and character. NorthStar Athletics offers three sports for young men in grades 3-12.

STAY CONNECTED WITH NORTHSTAR

Website

Visit our website (www.northstar360.org) to learn about our events, read our most up-to-date news releases, or download documents. Visit the FAQ (www.northstar360.org/faq) page for specific program resources and information that helps your student be successful here at NorthStar.

Facebook

Follow us at: <http://www.facebook.com/northstar360> Learn more about day- to-day programs, see pictures of the boys, leave comments, and hit the “Like” button if you like what you see.

Remind

Communication App- stay up to date on safety/ health notifications, events, closures and more!

Twitter

You can also follow NorthStar activities on Twitter at [@nstar360](https://twitter.com/nstar360).

Instagram

We are now on Instagram! You can follow us [@nstar360](https://www.instagram.com/nstar360).