

Murray Lake Elementary Parent/Student Handbook

2017-2018



Working Together to:
Achieve Academic Excellence,
Build Self Esteem, and
Care for Others.

Molly Burnett, Principal

3275 Alden Nash Ave NE
Lowell, MI 49331
www.lowellschools.com

Phone: 616-987-2750
Attendance: 616-987-2775
Fax: 616-987-2761

Non-Discrimination Policy
The Lowell Area School District does not discriminate based on race, color, national origin,
sex, age or disability in its programs and activities.

Table of Contents	Page
Lowell Area Schools District Calendar	2
Murray Lake Staff Directory	3
Accident Insurance	4
Attendance/Tardy	4
Birthdays/Holidays/Special Events	4
Bullying	4
Bus Transportation	5
Cell phones	6
Child Care Program	6
Code of Conduct/Positive Behavior Intervention PBIS	6
Communication/Teacher Contact Procedure	14
Dismissal	15
Dress Code	15
Drills: Armed Intruder/Fire/Tornado	16
Drop off/Pick up/Parking	16
Emergency Contact Information	16
Food Services	17
Food Service Charge Policy	17
Grievance Procedure	18
Statement of Nondiscrimination and Equal Employment Opportunity	19
Health/Medication	19
Homework Procedures/Homework Pick-Up	20
Lockers	20
Lost and Found	20
Media Center	21
Newsletter	21
Parent Involvement/Family Links	21
Parent-Teacher Conferences	21
Pets/Wildlife	22
Principal Appointments	22
Promotion, Retention, Transfer and Acceleration	22

Recess	22
Report Cards/Progress Reports	22
Student Classroom Placement	22
Student Permission Form	23
Student Registration/Review of Student Records	23
Student Release Procedure	24
Student Technology Use Agreement	24
Visitors/Volunteers	25
Weather	26

August 2017

Dear Murray Lake Families,

Welcome to Murray Lake! We look forward to working with you, and invite you to actively participate in our school.

Murray Lake is a PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports) school. PBIS focuses on creating and maintaining school-wide, classroom, and individual systems of support that improve the educational environment for all children. We routinely teach behavioral expectations and recognize students when they make positive behavior choices. Staff have been trained on research-based strategies that support both academic and behavioral success for students. We are:

- Safe
- Responsible
- Respectful

This handbook will provide you with helpful information about school procedures and events. After you and your child have read this handbook, we ask that you sign paperwork provided by our school office. Paperwork contains: technology use agreement Form, which gives permission for your child to access our school's technology; agreement that you have read and are aware of the policies outlined in this handbook; field trip and picture usage permission forms; concussion awareness forms. Thank you in advance.

We look forward to developing a partnership with you, and anticipate a wonderful school year. Feel free to call or stop in if you have additional questions or suggestions. Sharing your thoughts and ideas helps us to make our school better!

Warmly,

Mrs. Molly Burnett, Principal

Lowell Area Schools District Calendar 2017 - 2018

August 21, 2017	Staff Professional Development
August 22, 2017	First Day of School
August 25, 2017	No School for Staff and Students
September 1 & 4, 2017	No School for Staff and Students
October 12 & 17, 2017	Parent-Teacher Conferences
November 10, 2017	Half Day for All Students, Full Day for All Staff End of Trimester 1
November 2-24, 2017	Thanksgiving Break - No School for All Students and Staff
December 25, 2017-January 5, 2018	Christmas Break - No School for All Students and Staff
February 19, 2018	Mid-Winter Break - No School for All Students and Staff
February 23, 2018	Half Day for All Students, Full day for All Staff End of Trimester 2
March 1 & 6, 2018	Parent-Teacher Conferences
March 310 - April 6, 2018	Spring Break - No School for All Students and Staff
May 24, 2018	GRADUATION @ 6pm
May 28, 2018	Memorial Day - No School for All Students and Staff
June 1, 2018	Half Day for All Students, Full Day for All Staff End of Trimester 3

Murray Lake Elementary School Staff

Principal

Molly Burnett

Administrative Assistant

Julie Simmons

Office Assistants

Alice Bush
Cathy Noffke

Teachers

Kindergarten Karla Byrne, Maria McGovern, Amy Pike, Rosa Lancioni
First Grade Nancy Breuker, Karen Eldridge, Denise Washburn
Second Grade Lori Cyrocki, Kristin Durfee, Nancy Russell
Third Grade April Simmons, Mackenzie Aaron, Katherine Wills
Fourth Grade Julie Fuss, Stuart Kohl, Robin Picarazzi
Fifth Grade Paul Jacobus, Ausma Pupel, Matt Jablonski, Alana Teasdale

Educational Support Services

Amber Rediske - School Psychologist Pat Sinen - Occupational Therapist
Erin Rose - Social Worker Megan Baker - Speech Therapist
Brooke Culver - Resource Room

Specials Teachers

Nicole Bosco - Art Andrew Allmon - Music
Brent Steele - Physical Education

Support Staff

Sarah Ponchaud - Food Service Kylie Golden-Paraprofessional
Yvonne Hodges - Intervention Asst. Deanna Mears-Paraprofessional
Sue Wernet - Intervention Asst. Heidi Organek - Paraprofessional
Janet Fabis - Intervention Asst. Misty VanTimmeren - Paraprofessional
Carmen Tawney-Intervention Asst. Criss Kaminski-Head Custodian
Nancy Dood - Individual Needs Para Jim Willett-Custodian
Alisha Martin-Individual Needs Para Patti Harreld - Media Center
Pam Anderson-Individual Needs Para

Central Office Administration (616) 987-2500

Gregory Pratt - Superintendent
John Zielinski - Chief Financial Officer
Mari Price - Director of Special Education

Board Of Education Members

Jim Turner - President Brian Krajewski - Vice-President Pat Nugent - Secretary
Maureen Fleet - Treasurer Gary Blough- Trustee Laurie Kuna - Trustee
Tom Kaywood - Trustee

Accident Insurance

LAS District does not pay for any type of health or accident insurance for injuries incurred by your child at school. As a service to our students and families, LAS makes a student accident insurance policy available for purchase for your child at a very nominal cost. Information and an application form are available at the beginning of the school year.

Attendance/Tardy (616) 987-2725

-
Please call the attendance line whenever your child is absent.

Call this 24-hour attendance line by 9:30am, each day your child is absent.

The Michigan Compulsory Attendance Law requires students between the ages of 6 and 16 to attend school on a regular basis. Regular attendance at school is vitally important to each student. While we expect that all students make up work they miss when they are gone, it is often difficult for students to do this independently, without teacher support. In Kent County, truancy is defined as 10 days of unexcused absences; chronic absenteeism is more than 10% of scheduled school time that is missed. We work with families and the Kent ISD to monitor attendance. Per school policy, letters of concern about attendance will be sent home after 5 and 10 days of absence. It is the schools' responsibility to report truanancies to county truancy officer; additional absences after 10 days (excused and/or unexcused) may result in truancy reporting to the Kent Intermediate School District's Truancy Office. Exceptions will be made for unique documented health issues.

Students attend school from 8:50 to 3:43 every day, unless indicated on the school calendar. Students arriving after 8:50 must sign-in at the office before proceeding to the classroom. Please call our attendance line if your child is absent or late; if we do not receive notification calls we will contact families to ensure your child is safe.

Birthdays, Snack Ideas, and Class Celebrations

Birthdays are special, and children are always welcome to bring in a small treat for their special day. We are responsible for helping children learn good nutrition and healthy lifestyles, and prefer that snacks are nutritious. Here are some snack suggestions to consider:

Fresh fruit and vegetables	yogurt	pretzels	trail mix	string cheese	baked chips
Low-fat popcorn	granola bars	cereal, cereal bars	animal crackers		

Your child's teacher will communicate information about specific allergies within the classroom; we appreciate your sensitivity to individual health needs. Celebrations with friends are special and we ask that they take place after school hours. Elaborate recognitions may become disruptive and result in students feeling left out. So that educational routines may continue, we ask that you not send flowers, or other delivery items to school or on the school bus. Please—NO BALLOONS due to known latex allergies in our school.

Bullying

"Bullying" is defined as any gesture or written, verbal, graphic or physical act (including electronically transmitted acts - i.e. internet, telephone, or cell phone, personal digital assistant or wireless hand-held device) that, without regard to its subject matter or motivating animus, is intended or that a reasonable person would know is likely to harm one or more students either directly or indirectly by doing any of the following:

- A. substantially interfering with educational opportunities, benefits or programs of one or more students;
- B. adversely affecting the ability of a student to participate in or benefit from the school district's educational programs or activities by placing the student in reasonable fear of physical harm or by causing substantial emotional distress;
- C. having an actual and substantial detrimental effect on a student's physical or mental health; and/or
- D. causing substantial disruption in, or substantial interference with, the orderly operation of the school.

Bullying can be physical, verbal, psychological, or a combination of all three. Some examples of bullying are:

- A. Physical - hitting, kicking, spitting, pushing, pulling, taking and/or damaging personal belongings or extorting money, blocking or impeding student movement, unwelcome physical contact.
- B. Verbal - taunting, malicious teasing, insulting, name calling, making threats.
- C. Psychological - spreading rumors, manipulating social relationships, coercion, or engaging in social exclusion/shunning, extortion, or intimidation. This may occur in a number of different ways, including but not limited to notes, emails, social media postings and graffiti.

Bus Notes and Bus Transportation (616) 987-2540 Fax (616) 987-2544

Bus transportation is provided for students living within a designated distance from the school. We have a walk-zone for students who reside within a reasonable walking distance from school. Please call the transportation department if you have questions about the walk zone area.

Safety precautions are in place to ensure your child's safe walk to and from school. Remind your child to report suspicious people or vehicles to school personnel.

Riding a bus to school is a privilege. Student safety is a primary consideration in our school district and vital on our school busses. If the driver's attention is distracted away from the road, danger exists. This is why there are rigid standards of discipline on our buses. We expect proper behavior at all times.

If your child is to go to a different location following school, the office must be notified by a note or a phone call. Written notes are appreciated because they lessen the probability of mix-ups, particularly at the end of the school day, which is a busy time in the office. Please call the office with any changes before 3 p.m.

No "EXTRA RIDER" Policy-- Lowell Area Schools policy is to allow only those students assigned to a bus route to ride that bus. This helps to assure that each rider gets the correct locations in AM and PM. Exceptions will be permitted only for a necessary change in Day-Care provider, or for a **family emergency**. A parent or legal guardian **must first** contact the Transportation Office

at 616-987-2540, notifying us of the emergency, before any transportation change will be permitted. It is a good idea for parents or guardians to follow up with a note to the driver as well.

Bus Behavior Expectations

	SAFE	RESPONSIBLE	RESPECTFUL
Bus	Walk in the bus area. Stay behind the yellow line. Get on the bus in a single line. Keep seat to seat, back to back	Keep hands and feet to yourself. Keep food in your backpack. Keep backpack on your lap.	Follow directions the first time. Use quiet voices. Respect others' space and property.

Cell Phones/Electronic Devices

Students may carry a cell phone for emergencies. Phones may not be used during the school day without permission of the classroom teacher. If used without permission or in a non-emergency situation, the phone may be taken away by a staff member and an adult family member must pick it up in the school office.

Child Care Program/YMCA **(616) 855-9571**

Hours: 6:30 a.m. to 8:40 a.m. and 3:33 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. We are fortunate to have the Lowell YMCA providing children with a safe, well-supervised and developmentally-appropriate program for those hours before and after school. The childcare program is located in Room C100 (main hallway, right of lobby).

Code of Conduct/Behavior Expectations

PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Support) is a positive, proactive approach to behavior at school. Clear expectations are taught; these are listed below. At Murray Lake we are safe, responsible, and respectful. Data about behavior is kept and analyzed to help us make decisions on which behaviors are improving and which require re-teaching.

Many items from home are not appropriate to bring to school. Please leave these items at home: hard balls, electronic devices, laser pointers. The use of weapon-like toys, knives, and lighters are prohibited and may result in consequences that include suspension/expulsion, per State law.

MURRAY LAKE BEHAVIOR MATRIX

Murray Lake Mustangs - We know our ABCs and 123s

	SAFE	RESPONSIBLE	RESPECTFUL
Playground	Keep hands and feet to yourself. Woodchips, snowballs, ice, and objects stay on the ground. Follow equipment rules. Stay within defined boundaries.	Leave food and candy inside the building. Enjoy recess without electronics. Take care of playground toys and personal belongings. Ask permission before going inside. Dress appropriately for the weather.	Follow directions the first time. Take turns, share. Let others play. Play fair and be nice. Line up quietly and stand in a straight line.
Hallways	WALK! Keep hands and feet to yourself. Walk on the right side. Walk facing forward.	Keep your locker area neat. Pick up trash on the floor.	Follow directions the first time. Be silent or use quiet voices if necessary. Respect others' belongings. Be courteous of other classes.
Classrooms/ Computer Lab/ Media Center	Keep hands and feet to yourself. Walk. Get permission to leave the room.	Listen to others. Be responsible with supplies. Keep area and items organized. Be prepared. Stay on task and complete assignments.	Follow directions the first time. Use appropriate voice level. Raise your hand/ wait your turn. Respect everyone.
Cafeteria	Walk. Keep hands and feet to yourself. Stay seated.	Stick with your lunch choice. Food is for eating. Finish your meal. Clean up your area.	Follow directions the first time. Keep your place in line. Use good manners. Raise your hand for help. Use appropriate voice level.
Bathrooms	Water stays in the sink. Keep hands and feet to yourself. Get permission to use bathrooms.	Leave supplies in class. Flush. Leave the bathroom clean. Wash hands.	Use quiet voices. Respect others' privacy. Leave the bathroom clean.
Arrival/ Dismissal	Walk. Stay in class line.	Be where you are supposed to be.	Follow directions the first time.

		Be in line when 2nd bell rings. Be in seat by the time announcements start.	Use appropriate voice level. Listen during announcements.
Bus	Walk in the bus area. Stay behind the yellow line. Get on the bus in a single line. Keep seat to seat, back to back	Keep hands and feet to yourself. Keep food in your backpack. Keep backpack on your lap.	Follow directions the first time. Use quiet voices. Respect others' space and property.
Office	Walk. Check in with office staff.	Let office staff know why you are there. Only get ice/band aids if necessary.	Follow directions the first time. Use quiet voices. Speak with respect.

Positive Behavior Acknowledgement System

An important part of our PBIS plan is to recognize the positive behavior shown by students.

Mustang Moment tickets: Students may be individually recognized when they show behavior that is safe, respectful, and/or responsible. Staff members will acknowledge and compliment students who are showing positive behaviors by giving specific, positive feedback; students may also receive a Mustang Moment ticket. We also have a Mustang Moment Store, where students may spend tickets on activities and tokens.

MLE PBIS Behavior Parties: Every student will have the opportunity to attend a special celebration each month. Criteria for attending these parties include:

- No major office referrals
- Students who are on "Green" (or the occasional yellow, 2 oranges, or 1 red) at the end of the day all month, and who have no major behavior infractions outside of the classroom, are eligible to attend the monthly Behavior Party.
-

Classroom Behavior Clip Chart: Every classroom has a clip chart that looks like this.

Purple:	Super Star
Blue	Great Job
Green	Ready to Learn
Yellow	Slow Down
Orange	Think about It
Red	Parent Contact/Office Referral

Staff directs students to move clips up or down based on behavior, effort, self-control, responsibility. Each student begins every day on green—"ready to learn". Behavior choices impact movement of a student's clip.

Discipline Procedures

Murray Lake Elementary School will use a consistent procedure for handling discipline. Teachers will address all minor infractions in the classroom. Repeated minor infractions, or major behavior infractions, will result in an office referral. Descriptions of major/minor behaviors, and definitions of behavior infractions, are listed on the next pages.

If a student receives an office referral, parents will be notified. Suspensions will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Students committing major offenses will have an opportunity to share their version of the incident, and other students and/or staff members involved will also report their involvement in or witness of the incident. After gathering all facts, the administrator will make the decision to suspend or not. In the event of suspension, parents will be contacted by the principal.

Murray Lake Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) System

HOW PARENTS CAN SUPPORT THE BEHAVIOR SYSTEM

Family involvement in a child's education increases your child's likelihood of success. Your help with our behavior system is very important. We ask that you support our staff in the following ways:

- Please remind your child of the school's behavior expectations each day before he/she leave for school:

**BE SAFE
BE RESPECTFUL
BE RESPONSIBLE**

- Ask your child to give examples of how he/she demonstrated expectations while at school.
- Praise your child for following expectations while at school.
- If your child has had some difficulty behaving, use the school's behavior matrix (chart) as a tool to review and reinforce specific expected behaviors. If this is done before each school day, you will be helping to remind and prevent behavior issues.
- Support your child to BE HERE and BE READY. Help your child start the day off right....be on time.
- We work towards a consistent and fair behavior system. If your child has earned a consequence, please support the decision. Taking responsibility is an important life-skill. The behavior choice and consequence will be discussed at school; your child should be able to tell you exactly what occurred. If you have a question regarding the situation, please call the classroom teacher or principal. Family discussions about behavior choices, referencing our behavior expectations at school, are very helpful!

- After school, ask your child if he/she earned an acknowledgement. Murray Lake uses Mustang Moment tickets to acknowledge desired behaviors. Find out what behaviors were exhibited in order to earn these tickets. Please offer your child extra praise and reinforcement for these behaviors.
- At home you might try to use the same behavior language as the school—"Were you safe, respectful, and/or responsible?"
- You might add a column to the behavior matrix (chart) showing expected at-home behaviors.
- Display the school's expectations in a place where you and your child will be frequently reminded.

Thank you...your support sends an important message to your child that we are working together as a team to help him/her be successful in all parts of his/her life. We appreciate your daily support.

LAS: PBIS Minor-Major Behavior Grid

MINOR	MAJOR
<p>1. Inappropriate Language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Name calling/teasing ● Negative comments <p>2. Physical Contact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pushing/shoving ● Bumping ● Tripping <p>3. Disruption</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Making noise ● Yelling out ● Disruption during instruction ● Constant talking/off-task ● Throwing objects ● Unprepared for class/incomplete homework <p>4. Defiance/Disrespect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Uncooperative behavior/not participating ● Talking back ● Verbal argument ● Cheating ● Dishonesty ● Out of assigned area/wandering ● Cutting in line <p>5. Property Misuse</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ripping materials ● Breaking pencils, crayons, or classroom toys ● Pushing furniture ● Writing on desk, books ● Going into another person's desk and/or backpack ● Playing in the bathroom 	<p>1. Inappropriate Language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Swearing ● Abusive/inappropriate language ● Harassment (racial, sexual, and religious) ● Bullying (i.e., threats/ intimidation, repeated name calling) <p>2. Physical Contact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Physical aggression (i.e., hitting, punching, kicking, hair pulling, scratching, biting) ● Fighting (involved in mutual participation in an incident involving physical violence) <p>3. Disruption</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Disruption (i.e. sustained screaming, yelling, horseplay, etc.) <p>4. Defiance/Disrespect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Skip/leave class (i.e., leave classroom, library, computer lab, lunchroom, etc. without permission) ● Inappropriate location/Out of bounds area ● Defiance (i.e., excessive arguing with refusal to redirect) ● Disrespect (i.e., student delivers socially rude or dismissive message/s to adults or students) <p>5. Property Misuse</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Property damage (including vandalism and graffiti) ● Arson ● Use/possession of combustibles (fire

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Running in the hall ● Misuse of playground equipment ● Electronics out for recess 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● crackers, snaps, etc.) ● Theft <p>6. Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Technology violation ● Use/possession of weapons ● Use/possession of alcohol/drugs/tobacco ● Other (problem behavior not listed)
---	--

Definitions of Major Problem Behaviors

Major Problem Behavior	Definition
Abusive / Inappropriate Language (Inapp Lan)	Student delivers verbal messages that include swearing, name calling, or use of words in an inappropriate way.
Arson (Arson)	Student plans and/or participates in burning of property.
Bullying (Bullying)	The delivery of direct or technology-based messages that involve intimidation, teasing, taunting, threats, or name calling.
Defiance (Defiance)	Student engages in refusal to follow directions or talks back.
Disrespect (Disrespect)	Student delivers socially rude or dismissive messages to adults or students.
Disruption (Disruption)	Student engages in behavior causing an interruption in a class or activity. Disruption includes sustained loud talk, yelling, or screaming; noise with materials; horseplay or roughhousing; and/or sustained out-of-seat behavior.
Fighting (Fight)	Student is involved in mutual participation in an incident involving physical violence.

Theft (Theft)	Student is involved by being in possession of, having passed on, or being responsible for removing someone else's property.
Harassment (Harass)	The delivery of disrespectful messages in any format related to gender, ethnicity, sex, race, religion, disability, physical features, or other protected class.
Inappropriate Location/ Out of Bounds Area (Out Bounds)	Student is in an area that is outside of school boundaries (as defined by school).
Other Behavior (Other)	Student engages in problem behavior not listed.
Physical Aggression (Pagg)	Student engages in actions involving serious physical contact where injury may occur (e.g., hitting, punching, hitting with an object, kicking, hair pulling, scratching, etc.).
Major Problem Behavior	Definition
Property Damage	Student participates in an activity that results in destruction or disfigurement of property (including vandalism and graffiti).
Skip/leave class (Skip)	Student misses class or leaves classroom, library, computer lab, lunchroom, etc. without permission.
Technology Violation (Tech)	Student engages in inappropriate (as defined by school) use of cell phone, pager, music/video players, camera, computer, and/or internet.
Use/Possession of Alcohol (Alcohol)	Student is in possession of or is using alcohol.
Use/Possession of Combustibles (Combust)	Student is/was in possession of substances/objects readily capable of causing bodily harm and/or property damage (matches, lighters, firecrackers, gasoline, or lighter fluid).
Use/Possession of Drugs (Drugs)	Student is in possession of or is using illegal drugs/substances or imitations.
Use/Possession of Tobacco (Tobacco)	Student is in possession of or is using tobacco.
Use/Possession of Weapons (Weapons)	Student is in possession of knives (> 6 in., < 6 in.) and guns (real or look alike), or other objects readily capable of causing bodily harm.

MLE Discipline Referral Form

Student: _____ Staff Reporting: _____

Grade: _____ Teacher: _____ Date: _____

Location

- Arrival/ Dismissal
- Bathroom
- Bus
- Bus Loading
- Cafeteria
- Classroom
- Hallway
- Playground
- Special Event/ Assembly/ Field Trip
- Other _____

Problem Behavior

- Abusive/ Inappropriate Language
- Arson
- Bullying
- Defiance
- Disrespect
- Disruption
- Fighting
- Harassment
- Inappropriate location/ out of bounds
- Physical Aggression
- Property Damage
- Skip/ Leave Class
- Technology violation
- Theft
- Use/ Possession of Alcohol
- Use/ Possession of Combustibles
- Use/ Possession of Drugs
- Use/ Possession of Tobacco
- Use/ Possession of Weapons
- Other _____

Description of Incident: _____

Possible motivation/cause for behavior: _____

Others involved in incident: _____

Communication & Teacher Contact Procedure

We believe that cooperation and collaboration between parents and school staff is vital if the school is to function in the best interest of your child. You are the expert regarding your child. Part of this cooperation must include 'open and two-way' lines of communication. You have an obligation to let us know of concerns, questions and ideas you have regarding your child, or the school as a whole. You may call the office and leave a voicemail message for the teacher or e-mail them at: Teacher first initial last name @ lowellschools.com (for example:

keldridge@lowellschools.com). You can also access teacher email at the Lowell Schools web site www.lowellschools.com. (Select Schools, Murray Lake Elementary, Staff Directory)

If you wish to contact your child's teacher, please call school before or after class time (8:20 a.m. - 8:35 a.m. or after 3:35 p.m.).

If you have questions or concerns about a situation, please follow this course of action. By following this procedure, your questions and concerns about school-related matters can and will be resolved.

1. First, discuss your question or concern with your child's teacher.
2. If you then feel you have not received a satisfactory answer or solution, contact the school principal.
3. If the principal does not resolve the matter to your satisfaction, the next step is a meeting with the superintendent.
4. The final step, if necessary, is to request an appearance before the Lowell Board of Education. You must notify the superintendent if you wish to address the Board of Education.

Dismissal

If there will be a change to your child's end-of-day routine, please send a note to your child's teacher. We realize that situations occur throughout the day that may require a change to your child's routine. In this instance please call the office before 3:00 pm so we can get the message to your child's teacher. Please communicate bus changes to the Transportation Department (987-2540) as well.

Classes dismiss at 3:33 pm for all students. When picking up your child, we ask that you wait in the main lobby and the teacher will escort your child to you. This prevents congestion and having students being distracted unnecessarily while teachers may be offering last-minute instructions and reminders. Classroom teachers will also escort students to their busses.

Parents meeting their child outside may pull up along the curb to wait for students to be dismissed. Parents who are entering the building to meet their child must park in the parking lot area before entering the building.

Dress Code

We encourage a high standard of dress, grooming and cleanliness. Fire Safety Regulations require that shoes be worn at all times. During the times of the year when boots should be worn, each child must have a pair of shoes to wear in the building. Your child will also need gym shoes to participate in gym class. Slippery dress shoes pose a hazard, especially on the playground and on gym floors.

Students are required to adhere to the following dress requirements:

- Students shall not wear clothing with profanity, satanic symbols or offensive designs that may infringe upon the rights and freedoms of other students.
- Students shall not wear clothing that contain slogans or statements using improper language.
- Students shall not wear clothing with cigarette, alcohol or drug advertising.
- Clothing must properly cover undergarments.
- Clothing must cover the stomach. All sleeveless shirts must have straps at least two inches wide and cover both shoulders.
- Long pierced earrings are not permitted as they can tear the earlobe if caught on something.
- Distracting jewelry, long chains, non-traditional hairstyles or colors and inappropriate oversized clothing are not permitted if they are disruptive or distracting to the educational process.
- Shoes with roller wheels (Heely's) may be worn, but the **wheels cannot be used** at school.

If a student's clothing or dress is deemed disruptive or distracting and interferes with the educational process, then a child will be asked to call home and make arrangements for necessary

changes. The discretion in determining what is deemed appropriate will be left up to the school principal.

Drills: Armed Intruder/Fire/Tornado

Armed Intruder Drills: House Bill 4460 requires that all Michigan public schools conduct lockdown drills three times per school year. Students and staff practice the importance of moving quickly to a designated "safe wall" in the nearest classroom, following the safety practices and staying quiet until given the all clear signal.

Fire Drill: The State of Michigan also requires that fire drills be conducted five times throughout the school year. Students practice the quickest and safest way to leave the building in case of fire. Fire instruction includes the actual practice of filing out, moving to a safe distance, and remaining there until given the 'all clear' signal.

Tornado Drills: The students practice two mandated tornado drills during the school year. The practice includes going to the designated "safe place" in the building and assuming a safe position until given the 'all clear' signal.

Drop-Off/Pick-Up/Parking

Classes begin at 8:40 am. Students should not arrive before 8:20 am because there is no outside supervision before that time. Breakfast is served from 8:20 am to 8:40 am. Breakfast students can enter the building as soon as they arrive and all other students will be directed to their specific grade-level area outside. Students will enter the building at 8:35 am in order to go to their lockers and get to class by 8:40 am.

Procedures for parents coming into the building to drop off and/or pick up students:

1. Use the east drive of the parking lot
2. Park in the visitor (east) parking lot
3. Walk to the designated crosswalk area to meet your child so children are not walking across the parking lot unsupervised.

Procedure for remaining in the vehicle to drop off and/or pick up students:

1. Use the east drive of the parking lot
2. Follow the drive around the semi-circle to the furthest empty spot.
3. Allow student to exit only on the passenger side of the car
4. Cautiously pull out, being mindful of traffic behind you, and exit round the semi-circle

Be mindful of children and adults using the crosswalk.

Any students not picked up by 3:40 pm are brought to the office for parent pick-up.

Emergency Contact Information

Emergency contact information is provided during the enrollment process and at the beginning of each school year. Copies of all legal documents regarding guardianship and custody issues must be given to the office. If we are ever in a situation where we are unable to reach you during an emergency, we will release your child only to adults whose names have been provided by the parent. We must have at least one working phone number to use in case of emergency, and it is very

important that all information be kept current in the school office. Let the office know immediately of changes in your family situation and of any special arrangements concerning guardianship.

Food Service

Mindy Grant, Director of Dining Services

Phone 616-987-2964 Fax 616-987-2952 Email mgrant@lowellschools.com

Applications for free and reduced meals are available online at www.lunchapp.com or in the school office and sent to all students at the beginning of the school year. Every family has the opportunity to apply and will be advised if they qualify based on USDA guidelines for income. We have a daily breakfast and hot lunch program. The lunch includes a balanced meal and milk. Monthly menus will be sent home in Friday parent emails and posted weekly in the Lowell Ledger, Buyers Guide and Cable T.V.

- **Elementary Breakfast:** Full Pay \$1.10 Reduced Breakfast .30
- **Elementary Lunch:** Full Pay 2.30 Reduced Lunch: .40
- **Milk sold separately for:** .50

Students may pay for their meals on a daily, weekly or monthly basis. To guarantee proper accounting, money should be put in an envelope marked with the student's name, grade, teacher and amount. The money goes into individual accounts and reminders will be sent home when the account is low. LAS serve breakfast and lunch at all buildings. The food service department works on a debit system. Please send a check for your children's meal purchases; one check for your family may be written. In an effort to operate a fiscally responsible department, we ask you to monitor your child's account. Web access to view your children's account may be set up by contacting Mindy Grant at 987-2964 or mgrant@lowellschools.com.

Food Service Charge Policy

Elementary, Middle School and High School: Students will be allowed to charge up to two (2) meals (includes "Type A" breakfast and/or lunch.) A "Type A" breakfast consists of four components: (two breads or one bread and one protein, fruit/vegetable or juice, and milk). A "Type A" lunch consists of five components: (protein, bread, fruit, vegetable, and milk). To be eligible for a free, reduced, or paid "Type A" breakfast or lunch, students must take a minimum of three components at breakfast and three components at lunch.

At the Middle and High School, food items are available for ala carte purchase. To purchase these items, students must have cash or money on account for the entire purchase. "Type A" breakfast and lunch are the only meals which may be charged. Milk is always an ala carte purchase. Students approved free meals, if purchasing milk only, must have cash for the milk.

Adult: No charging

After the maximum charges are accrued, food service will provide the student an "alternate choice" and white milk.

Please note: April 30 of each school year will be the final date any student may charge a Type A meal. After this date, students must have cash or cash in their account to cover their meal purchases through the end of the year.

Grievance Procedure
Statement of Non-Discrimination and Equal Education Opportunity
FOR TITLE VI OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964
TITLE IX OF THE EDUCATION AMENDMENT ACT OF 1972
TITLE II OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITY ACT OF 1990
SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973
AGE DISCRIMINATION ACT OF 1975

Section I

Any person believing that the Lowell Area Schools or any part of the school organization has inadequately applied the principles and/or regulations of (1) Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, (2) Title IX of the Education Amendment Act of 1972, (3) section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, (4) the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and (5) Title II of the Americans with Disability Act Rights of 1990 may bring forward a complaint, which shall be referred to as a grievance, to the local Civil Rights Coordinator at the following address:

Administration Building
300 High Street
Lowell, MI 49331

Section II

The person who believes a valid basis for grievance exists shall discuss the grievance informally and on a verbal basis with the local Civil Rights Coordinator, who shall in turn investigate the complaint and reply with an answer to the complaint within five (5) business days. The complainant may initiate formal procedures according to the following steps.

Step 1

A written statement of the grievance signed by the complainant shall be submitted to the Local Civil Rights Coordinator within five (5) business days of receipt of answers to the informal complaint. The coordinator shall further investigate the matters of grievance and reply in writing to the complainant within five (5) days.

Step 2

A complainant wishing to appeal the decision of the Local Civil Rights Coordinator may submit a signed statement of appeal to the Superintendent of Schools within five (5) business days after a receipt of the conclusion, and respond in writing to the complainant within ten (10) business days.

Step 3

If unsatisfied, the complainant may appeal through a signed, written statement to the Board of Education within five (5) business days of receiving the superintendent's response in step two. In an attempt to resolve the grievance, the Board of Education shall meet with the concerned parties and their representative within forty days of the receipt of such an appeal. A copy of the Board's disposition of the appeal shall be sent to each concerned party within ten (10) days of this meeting.

Step 4

If at this point the grievance has not been satisfactorily settled, further appeal may be made to the Office for Civil Rights, Department of Education, Washington, D.C. 20202.

Inquiries concerning the nondiscriminatory policy may be directed to:

Director, Office for Civil Rights, Department of Education, Washington, D.C. 20202.

The local Coordinator, on request, will provide a copy of the district's grievance procedure and investigate all complaints in accordance with this procedure. A copy of each of the Acts and the regulations on which this notice is based may be found in the Civil Rights Coordinator's office, which is located at our Administrative Building at the above address.

Statement of Non-Discrimination and Equal Education Opportunity

LAS does not discriminate against any individual, with regard to receiving the full utilization of or benefit from the District, or the services, activities, or programs provided by the District, on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, ethnicity, sex, age, disability or any other legally protected category as required by state and federal law. In the case of admission to the District, in addition to the above-identified categories, the District does not discriminate based on marital status.

In addition, The District is an Equal Opportunity Employer for all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, religion, color, gender, age, national origin, ethnicity, height, weight, marital status, veteran status, disability, or any other legally protected category as required by state and federal law.

The following individual has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the Non-Discrimination and Equal Education Opportunity Policies:

Greg Pratt, Superintendent, Lowell Area Schools, 300 High St, Lowell, MI 49331,
gpratt@lowellschools.com, 616-987-2500.

Health and Medication

Health: Parents will be asked to pick up their child from school in the event of illness, contagious disease, or serious injury. Criteria for sending a child home will be complaints of general illness, lice, pink eye, vomiting, diarrhea, severe coughing or suspicion of a communicable disease or condition. Students should not return until they are symptom-free for 24 hours. In the event that live lice or other parasitic insects are found in a student's hair, the student's family will be contacted to sign the student out of school for treatment. Once the student's hair has been treated, he or she may return to school. In addition, notes may be sent home to all children in the classroom. For information regarding proper treatment, please contact your child's physician or the health department.

Medication: Medication will be given during school hours if necessary. A school medication permission and instruction form must be filled out for all medication (prescription or over the counter) which is to be given during the school day. This includes aspirin, Tylenol, cough drops, topical creams, etc. All non-prescription medications must be supplied by the parent in the original container. Most medication will be kept in the office; however, there are instances where students may need to self-possess their medication. Students are permitted to self-possess rescue medications, such as asthma inhalers and epi-pens with written permission from their parent AND physician. Medication permission forms are available in the school office and on the Lowell Schools web site (www.lowellschools.com). Medications **MUST** be in the original, correctly-labeled

prescription bottle with the student's name and dosage of medication, with specific directions. The parent or guardian is responsible for transporting the medication to and from school.

Students may not bring in or carry home medication on the bus. The parent or guardian must assume responsibility for informing the school of any change in the child's medication. A new prescription and physician's note to change the original prescription must be provided. Unused medication should be picked up by the parent or guardian by one week following the last day of school in June. Any remaining medications will be destroyed.

Concussions:

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury that changes the way the brain normally works. A concussion is caused by a fall, bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body that causes the head and brain to move quickly back and forth. Children and adolescents are among those at greatest risk for concussion. Concussions can result from a fall, or any time a student's head comes into contact with a hard object, such as the floor, a desk, or another student's head or body. The potential for a concussion is greatest during activities where collisions can occur, such as during physical education (PE) class, playground time, or school-based sports activities. A concussion can happen even if you haven't been knocked out. You can't see a concussion. Signs and symptoms of concussions can show up right after the injury or may not appear or be noticed until days or weeks after the injury. If a student reports any symptoms of a concussion parents and/or guardians will be notified right away.

Homework Procedures/Homework Pick Up

Homework is an activity which is assigned for completion at home to reinforce or extend learning. Homework may also be work that was assigned in class but not completed during the allotted school time. This work is to be completed at home and returned the following day.

Work sent home is also reinforcement work specifically assigned for completion at home.

Special projects and reports are also considered homework since these are assigned for completion at home. Studying required for tests and/or class work can also be considered homework.

Independent reading silently or aloud to the parent also goes under the heading of homework.

Teachers may use recess time to allow students time to finish previous night's homework.

Timeframe guidelines for nightly homework, which includes assigned reading, should not exceed*:

Kindergarten	15 minutes	1st Grade	20 minutes	2nd Grade	30 minutes
3rd Grade	40 minutes	4th Grade	50 minutes	5th Grade	60 minutes

*As always, exceptions may include projects, test preparation etc. If these guidelines are routinely exceeded, please contact the classroom teacher.

When scheduling family vacations, parents are encouraged to follow the school calendar, as missed instruction tends to have a negative affect on student achievement.

Homework Pick Up:

Requests for homework can be made if your child has been out of school two or more days. You may call the school office or e-mail the teacher, by 11:00am and pick the work up after 4:00 p.m. in the front lobby.

Lockers

Each child will be given a locker. Be advised that these lockers do not have locks on them and students are not allowed to put locks on their lockers. We strongly recommend that students do not bring money or possessions that are of value. We advise that all electronic equipment (Gameboys, I-Pods, MP-3 players) be left at home to avoid any heartache if lost or stolen. The school is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

Lost and Found

To avoid ending up in lost and found, all student items from home should be clearly labeled with the student's name. This simple measure will help us to return lost items quickly. When items are missing, students and parents can check the lost and found. When found, items of value, such as money, jewelry and glasses can be claimed in the front office. We will make every effort to help locate missing items; however, for obvious reasons, the school cannot be responsible for lost items. All items left on a bus can be claimed at the bus garage. Please note that at the end of each trimester (November, March and June) unclaimed lost and found items will be donated to the Flat River Outreach in Lowell.

Media Center

One of the most pleasant spots found in our elementary building is the Media Center. Here children can find information on various subjects. Every class has a scheduled period each week. The Media Center assistant is there to service students and teachers. Most of the materials within our Media Center are available to be checked out and taken home. Books may be checked out for two weeks and subsequently renewed if desired. Magazines may be checked out for one week. Families are requested to help their children return these items by their due date. No fines are charged for overdue books, but if books are not returned, the student may not check out new books until the book is returned. If a book is lost or destroyed while checked out to a student, that student is responsible for paying the replacement cost of the book. A letter will be sent home with information regarding any lost materials.

Newsletter

The Murray Lake newsletter is sent home weekly via email. The newsletter includes dates of interest, detailed information of coming events, reports of the Family Links organization, notes from the principal, parenting tips and much, much more. It is very important to read and keep these "information-packed" newsletters. **Please contact the office if you are not able to access the newsletter through email to request a paper copy be sent home with your child.**

Parent Involvement/Family Links

Our parent organization is known as the Family Links. It is an organization of parents that "links" your family to other families in the community, as well as to teachers and school staff. Family Links is responsible for the fundraisers, such as the fall fundraiser, the box tops and labels program, and the book fairs. Family Links also sponsors family events during the school year. Watch the weekly newsletter for more specific information on parent meetings and volunteer opportunities.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

You will be invited to attend two formal parent/teacher conferences during the school year to discuss your child's progress. The parent or teacher may request other conferences, as needed. We ask that you do not show up at a teacher's door right before or after school regarding your child's progress. A teacher needs time to gather their thoughts in order to supply you with the correct information. When approached at an unexpected time, he or she may not be able to give you the information you need. It is by working cooperatively that we can provide the best educational experiences for your child.

Fall conference dates:	November 12 and 19	4:30-8:45 pm
Spring conference dates:	February 18 and 25	4:30-8:45 pm-change dates!

Pets and Wildlife

Pets and wildlife should only be brought into the classroom if prior arrangements are made with the teacher. We must closely monitor animal visits due to student allergies. Animals are not allowed on school busses.

Principal Appointments

If you have a specific concern that needs to be addressed, please make an appointment with the principal's assistant by calling the school office. As with any professional office, appointments scheduled in advance are given priority.

Promotion, Retention, Transfer and Acceleration

In promoting, retaining, transferring or accelerating students, consideration will be given to the student's ability to be successful at the next level. Decisions on retention, transfer or acceleration shall be the responsibility of the Principal and shall be guided by the recommendation of a Child Study team composed of the teacher(s), parents, guardians, itinerants and the student, if applicable.

Recess

All children will go outside, unless the weather is not suitable. During inclement weather, the children will be supervised indoors. This will occur on days when it is raining or the temperature or wind chill factor is at or below zero degrees, as determined by the computer weather program for our area. If your child is well enough to come to school, we can generally assume the child is well enough to go outside for recess. A written request from the parent asking that a child remain inside for recess will be honored for one day. Requests for extended periods inside will require a statement from your doctor.

Report Cards and Progress Reports

Report cards are issued three times per year at the end of each trimester.

Progress reports will be given half way through each trimester to keep you updated on your child's progress. Many teachers do weekly or biweekly updates on student progress.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your child's academic progress, please feel free to contact the teacher at any time.

Student Classroom Placement

Determination of student placement is primarily the responsibility of the principal with a great deal of input from the child's teacher. In order to make a wise decision, the following criteria are utilized.

- Academic abilities
- Teacher and parent input
- Special student interests and needs
- Separation of certain student combinations
- Boy/girl ratio
- Ability levels
- Behavioral factors

A combination of all these factors is considered for each child. It is a very important process and is carefully monitored. The educational, social, and emotional well-being of our students is vital to a good learning experience. If parents have educational concerns regarding a preferred teaching-style (not specific teacher) they may obtain a form from the office the second week of April to be returned by May 1. Due to student mobility and the need to keep classes balanced, classroom assignments will not be posted until a week before school begins in the fall.

Student Permission Forms

Parents will be asked to complete an Elementary Student Permission form at the beginning of each school year. This three-part slip includes the Technology Use agreement, Field Trip Permission, and Picture Permission. You will be asked if you give permission for attendance on field trips; and if you will allow your child to use school technology for educational reasons. Students must also sign this, indicating that technology will only be used for educational purposes. Additionally, permission is asked for your child to be videotaped or photographed for school use (newsletters, school marketing, Facebook). Complete student names are never shown with a student picture, except in our school yearbook.

Student Registration/Review of Student Records

Students new to the school system are asked to register at the elementary office. If registered by 12:00pm., your child may start school the next instructional day. If registered after 12:00pm., he/she may be asked to delay an additional day to allow time for the teacher to prepare a work area and gather supplies for the child's warm welcome. If your child has additional special needs,

classroom placement may be delayed a couple of days to make certain that his/her programming is appropriately matched to prior placement. At the time of registration, the following information must be supplied to school officials:

- Child's birth certificate
- Record of immunizations
- Latest Report Card
- Proof of Residency (utility bill, purchase agreement, etc)
- Any special education information - latest IEP, Sec. 504, Behavioral plans or student instructional plans
- Current Custody Papers (if applicable)

If a student transfers to another school district, records will be sent at the new district's request. The only exception to this rule is when the district is required by a court order to release records.

A parent/guardian may view their child's permanent school record, also known as the CA60. Prior arrangements with the school office must be made in order to have someone available to supervise the review of your child's records.

Student Release Procedure

Students will only be released to parents/guardians or those listed on the emergency contact information. The office will always make every attempt to contact parents before calling other emergency contacts. We will not release your child to anyone whose name has not been provided by the parent unless we receive a note or phone call from parents/guardians giving specific instructions for pick up. Please do not be offended if we ask for identification; it is for your child's safety. The student must be picked-up and signed-out at the office during regular school hours.

Please remind your child that they are never to leave school grounds without an adult. When a child leaves the property, we will make every attempt to locate them, which may include contacting the local police department.

Student Technology Use Agreement and Parent Permission Form

Technology is an increasingly important facet of education. Teachers use technology (for example, the internet) to enhance the resources available to our students. Parents and students will be asked to complete the following technology use agreement and permission form at the beginning of each school year.

Lowell Area Schools, Lowell, Michigan

TECHNOLOGY USE AGREEMENT FORM FOR STUDENTS

The term "Technology" refers to the use of the network, internet, e-mail, software and hardware.

We are pleased to offer the students of Lowell Area Schools the use of technology. All students must have parental permission with a signed form on file at the school they attend before they are allowed to use technology. Students 18 and over may sign their own form.

Access to technology will enable students to explore online information sources. Although the school district utilizes internet blocking of inappropriate sites, families should be aware that some material accessible via technology may contain items that are illegal, defamatory, inaccurate or potentially offensive. While our intent is to make technology available to further educational goals and objectives, students may find ways to access other materials as well. We believe the benefits provided to students with access to technology, in the form of information, resources and opportunities for collaboration, exceed any disadvantages. Parents and guardians of minors are ultimately responsible for setting and conveying the standards that their children should follow when using media information sources. To that end, Lowell Area Schools supports and respects each family's right to decide whether or not to apply for access.

Users have no expectation of privacy when using technology. The District retains the right to monitor all use, including but not limited to personal e-mail, computer files, databases, web logs, or any other electronic transmissions.

Acceptable Use Guidelines

Students are responsible for appropriate behavior while using technology just as they are in a classroom or a school hallway. It is presumed that users will comply with district standards and will honor the agreement they have signed. *Access is a privilege - not a right.* Access entails responsibility. Communications are public in nature. General school and district rules for behavior and communication apply. Technology is provided for students to access and store educationally relevant material and to conduct research. Technology access is given to students who agree to act in a responsible manner. Parent permission is required, and parents must agree to a waiver of claims and indemnification/hold harmless provision, which is set forth on the attached permission form.

Lowell Area Schools intends to provide technology for educational activities and does not intend to create a forum for non-instructional topics at any time. During school, teachers of younger students will guide them toward appropriate materials. Students using district technology are not permitted to do the following:

- Access offensive messages or pictures
- Use obscene or defamatory language
- Harass, insult, defame or attack others
- Damage computers, alter computer systems or computer networks
- Violate copyright laws
- Use another person's password
- Give out his/her name, address, or phone number online
- Trespass in another person's folders, work or files
- Intentionally waste limited resources
- Employ the network for commercial purposes
- Illegally install software

Misrepresent other users on the local network or internet
Accessing online services other than those provided by Lowell Area Schools

Violations may result in loss of access as well as other disciplinary or legal action. With this agreement, Lowell Area Schools acknowledges and is meeting The Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) - Board policy #4520.

Visitors and Volunteers

We encourage and promote school visits. For the safety of students, during the school day all of our doors will be locked except the main entrance near our main office.

In a continued effort to keep our schools as safe as possible and to comply with State law, we ask volunteer parents and community members to submit to criminal background checks. If you choose to participate as a volunteer, we ask that you complete a Volunteer Consent Form. The Volunteer Consent Form will be maintained solely at the Central Administrative Office and any response will be kept confidential with the Principal of the school building, Superintendent, and/or designee. Volunteer Consent Forms are available in the school office.

Student visitors must make prior arrangements with the classroom teacher who will determine if the visitation is appropriate.

In order to maintain safety and order in our building, we ask that you:

1. Call the office/teacher to let them know of your visit.
2. Enter through the main entrance only.
3. Check at the office for a visitor's pass and sign-in
4. Upon leaving the building, sign-out at the office.

Feel free to join your child for lunch any day. A prior call is never necessary in this instance. Just follow the above procedures of checking in at the office.

Weather

If students are in school when a tornado watch or thunderstorm warning is issued, they will stay at school until regular dismissal time. If a tornado warning is issued, students will go to areas of safety within each building and remain there until the warning is lifted. It is the policy of LAS to not dismiss students during a tornado warning, even if it means holding students beyond the normal dismissal time. If students are held thirty minutes or longer beyond normal dismissal times, school buses may not run and parents or guardians may be required to pick up their students. The school district will make decisions about closing school during a tornado watch or warning on a case-by-case basis, and parents will be notified using the TV/radio/internet/phone sites listed below.

After-school activities may be canceled during a tornado watch or warning. Generally, after-school activities will be resumed if such activities begin two hours after a tornado watch or warning has been lifted. Activities underway when a warning is issued will cease and participants will take cover

in a designated safe place. All information about school closings/delays can be found on local television stations (WOOD, WZZM, FOX). Additionally, find weather and school information on the District website www.lowellschools.com; District's APP; Cherry Creek Facebook page; parents may also opt into the "one call now" communication system.