

Elementary Code of Student Conduct 2020-2021

SOUTH BRUNSWICK SCHOOL DISTRICT

Please note that the expectations detailed below apply to both in-person and remote learning.

CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT (CSC)

All schools in the South Brunswick School District share the common mission to foster positive school citizenship. To that end, we embrace the following core values or CARES:

- C Cooperation*
- A Assertion*
- R Responsibility and Respect*
- E Empathy*
- S Self-control*

As students progress through the school system and into the high school, they continue to build upon these basic core values while also emphasizing the values of Honesty, Respect, Kindness, Service, and Responsibility.

Our primary goal is to maintain a safe and caring learning community where all members feel that they belong and are significant. This is supported by the District’s proactive, intentional approaches to Character Education—Elementary *Responsive Classroom*, Middle School *Developmental Designs*, and High School *Strive for Five* (Ethics and Excellence)-- which foster social, emotional and academic growth.

The ultimate purpose of the Code of Student Conduct is the development of self-discipline and self-regulation. In all of the South Brunswick Schools, we strive to be consistent, firm but fair, and aware of the pride and dignity of every student. We expect students to behave responsibly, to respect the rights and properties of others, and to work cooperatively with all members of the school community. We expect students to follow the code of student conduct and the specific behavioral guidelines established in each class. Students are accountable to all school personnel for their behavior while on school property, at any PTO-sponsored or school-sponsored function, at the bus stop, on a school bus, walking to and from school, on field trips, in the before or after school programs, or off school grounds, when substantial disruption occurs to the orderly operation of the school. This includes but is not limited to behavior when using an electronic device for such things as instruction, shared documents, text messaging, video taping, social media posting, email, blogging, website posting and apps.

When a student commits an offense, the school staff helps the student to see the relationship between the offense and the related core value. When disruptive behavior occurs, developmental and/or age appropriate logical consequences are applied. The student’s developmental needs and history of unacceptable behavior, as well as the circumstances of the offense are taken into consideration when deciding consequences.

ELEMENTARY RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Cooperation

I have the right to be an active participant in the school community, and the responsibility to do my best work with others.

- *I follow the rules at work and play.*
- *I take turns and share.*
- *I strive to include others and their ideas when at work or play.*

Assertion

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I have the right to have my ideas heard and appreciated by others, and the responsibility to listen to others and deal peacefully in the event of a conflict.

- *I listen to others.*
- *I speak up respectfully for what I believe.*
- *I tell the truth.*
- *I am an up-stander, not a bystander.*

Responsibility/Respect

I have the right to learn and the responsibility to do my best.

- *I come to school prepared and ready to learn.*
- *I let other students learn.*
- *I am accountable for my choices.*
- *I take care of myself, others and the school environment.*
- *I use technology in agreement with the district's Acceptable Use Policy.*

Empathy

I have the right to be treated with respect, and the responsibility to respect others.

- *I try to understand feelings, emotions, and actions of others.*
- *I respect that everyone is different.*
- *I act in a way that respects other people's feelings.*

Self-control

I have the right to be safe and the responsibility to treat others in a safe manner.

- *I solve problems using appropriate school words and actions.*
- *I think before I act and consider the consequences of my actions.*

ELEMENTARY LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES

The assignment of logical consequences is a classroom and school-wide practice designed to assist children in developing self-discipline. When children break rules, logical consequences help students to fix their mistakes and to learn from them.

Logical consequences help teachers respond to misbehavior, in a developmentally appropriate way, that allows children to fix and learn from their mistakes while preserving their dignity.

These are examples of different types of logical consequences:

- Reparations (You break it; you fix it.)
- Time-out
- Loss of privilege
- Apology- oral and/or written

On occasion, when offenses are repeated, when an infraction is severe (such as vandalism, theft or cheating), or when a student is not learning from logical consequences, additional remediation is necessary. This may include a parent-teacher conference, referral to the counselor, participation in a social group, detention or loss of recess, removal from an area, meeting with a building administrator, or development of a behavior plan. It is up to the teacher/counselor/administrator's discretion to apply remediation based on the incident or pattern of incidents. This could be in the form of restorative justice such as service opportunities.

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There are also several situations when the consequence of an in- or out-of-school suspension may be warranted. These include but are not limited to the following: unethical use of technology, trespassing, leaving school grounds without permission, unacceptable language or gestures, endangerment, threats, fighting, theft, vandalism, violation of the Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) policy, assault, insubordination (defiance), distribution of tobacco or tobacco products or drugs/alcohol, weapons, false alarms, or arson. Misbehavior of a chronic or a cumulative nature may also lead to suspension.

We ask that parents with concerns regarding behavior, consequences, or the Code of Conduct, start by reaching out to school administrators so that we can assist you in a timely manner.

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

In New Jersey, there is a uniform Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between school districts and law enforcement officials. The MOA, which is approved by the NJ Department of Law and Public Safety and the NJ Department of Education, documents the commitment for schools and law enforcement agencies to work together as equal partners to enforce the law on school grounds. The MOA also details how schools are to report suspected incidents involving alcohol or drugs, weapons, child abuse, hazing, harassment, intimidation and bullying, or problems that compromise school security or safety. School administrators use the MOA to determine their course of action when faced with matters that rise to this level.

DUE PROCESS

Parents and students have procedural due process rights under the Fourteenth Amendment with respect to discipline that involves the possibility of serious sanction and consequences such as suspension or expulsion. Specific procedures are posted on our District Web Site at www.sbschools.org and are available upon request at the main office of the school that your child attends.

BEHAVIORAL SUPPORTS

A current list of community and school-based health and social service provider agencies and other resources are available to support a student and a student's family. In addition to outside providers (help lines, referral services, counseling services and crisis services), there is a host of District supports including Student Support Teams in each school (multidisciplinary teams that provide a coordinated system for the identification, planning and delivery of interventions to assist students who are experiencing learning, behavior or health difficulties), Child Study Teams, counselors, and school nurses.

Please refer to the District Web Site at www.sbschools.org under Department of Student Services for this information or call the main office at the school your child attends for assistance.

BOARD OF EDUCATION K-12 POLICIES

Detailed information regarding the following Board policies is available in the main office of all schools, at the Board of Education Office, and on the District web page at www.sbschools.org. What follows is a synopsis.

ATTENDANCE

Punctuality and attendance are important habits for students to develop and maintain. In accordance with the laws of the *State*, the South Brunswick School District requires students to attend school regularly to ensure continuity of instruction and classroom participation.

NJ State Law requires that we document all days when a student is absent from school. As such, the school will monitor your child's attendance and timely arrival throughout the year. Parents of middle and high school students

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are also encouraged to monitor their child's attendance through Genesis Parent Portal. **NOTE: Students who have missed 18 or more days of school, excused or unexcused, will be labeled as "chronically absent" by the State of New Jersey.**

Excused Absence: In keeping with the *NJ State Education Code*, we expect that, except in the case of illness (particularly contagious illness, vomiting, or fever), State-recognized religious observances, emergencies such as family illness or death, special educational opportunities (e.g. a required college visit) or as per an individualized education, health or accommodation plan, your child should be in school and arrive on time. To be considered "excused" for these reasons, there **must** be parental/guardian notice to the school with the reason for absence/lateness.

Note: Even if absences have been "excused," letters will be sent home regarding any areas of concern, if there are instances where parents/guardians are permitting excessive absenteeism or late arrivals, or when the number of cumulative absences is high. A total of 18 absences per year are considered to be excessive whether excused or unexcused.

Unexcused Absence: On a day when an absence/lateness is for reasons other than those noted above as "excused," the day of absence/lateness is recorded as "unexcused" and will go into your child's permanent record marked as such. Please note that family vacations and other non-educational activities are not included in the list of "excused" absences above. They are considered "unexcused" absences, and should be planned so they do not interfere with school attendance. Parents/guardians must assume full responsibility for all missed academic assignments. Teachers will not provide work in advance of such absences but may provide work upon a student's return.

In addition, in accordance with *NJ Statutes Annotated (NJSA) 18:A* and *NJ Administrative Code (NJAC) 6A*, the following guidelines will be followed when absences are "unexcused."

- For up to 4 cumulative unexcused absences, the school will conduct an investigation including contact with the student's parents to determine cause of absences, will develop an action plan as necessary, and will contact law enforcement and other authorities or agencies as appropriate;
- For between 5 and 9 cumulative unexcused absences, the school will conduct a follow-up investigation including contact with the parents, will evaluate and revise the action plan above to include referrals, consultations or assessments, and will cooperate with law enforcement and other authorities and agencies;
- For cumulative unexcused absences of 10 or more, the student is considered truant. For students between the compulsory school ages, the school district will make mandatory referral to the court program as required by the *NJ Administrative Office of the Courts*. The school will consult with the parents, cooperate with law enforcement and other authorities and agencies, and will proceed in accordance with *NJSA 18:A, Compelling Attendance at School*, and other applicable State and Federal statutes, as required.

A reasonable attempt to notify the parent of an "unexcused" absence will be made. The school will proceed in accordance with the law's provision if a potential missing or abused child situation is detected.

Unexplained Absence: Parents/guardians must provide the school with a reason for a child's absence. If the child is not in school and the school office has not received parental/guardian notification as to reason, this absence will be considered "unexplained" and will be marked as "unexcused" in the child's permanent record and the guidelines above will be applied. In the event of "un-notified" absence, the school will make a reasonable attempt to contact the child's parents to determine the reason for the absence prior to the start of the following day.

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Absences during Testing and Instructional Periods: If a student has an absence during the District or State standardized testing periods as advertised on the District calendar, he/she will only be able to make-up the test during the scheduled retake period that follows the testing period. This includes end-of-year final exams and math tests at all levels including those that determine placement and acceleration.

Excessive absences may result in an incomplete or not applicable grade on a student's report card. Missing instructional time may limit the teacher's ability to issue a complete grade.

Absence and After School/Evening Events: Please note that except under previously-approved and special circumstances, a student who is absent from school during the day may NOT participate in any after school or evening events. (Note: A student who is absent due to illness may NOT participate.)

Reporting Absence: It is a parent's/guardian's responsibility to call the school when a child is going to be absent. The District's voicemail system is operative 24 hours a day and parents are requested to call the school by 8:00 AM (or by 10:00 AM if it is an afternoon absence only). When calling the school to report an absence, please listen to the prompts for the attendance line and give the child's full name, reason for absence and the date(s) of absence. It is District policy that any "un-notified absence" will result in a call from the school. If left "unexplained," the absence will be classified as "unexcused."

Reporting Lateness: If a student must report to school late, the parent must escort the student to the office and provide the office staff with the reason for the tardiness. The parent must sign the student in at the main office or the receptionist desk.

Reporting an Early Sign-out: Early sign-out from school is discouraged; however, we realize there are times when this will occur. Please send a note in advance to alert us of the need to sign your child out early from school. The parent must come into the main office to sign the student out.

Readmission after Absence: A physician's statement explaining a non-communicable absence of *more than five days* is required. The school nurse must receive a written physician explanation if the student has been absent with a communicable disease for *any length* of time. This will serve as evidence of the student being free of the communicable disease.

Retention or Credit Loss: Prolonged or repeated absences or lateness, excused or unexcused, from school or class may result in retention or the loss of credit toward graduation.

Religious Holidays: A list of the State of New Jersey Approved Religious Holidays is included in the South Brunswick School District Calendar. It can also be found at the NJ Department of Education website at <http://www.state.nj.us/education/>.

ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY (A.U.P.)

The South Brunswick School District believes that all students should have access to technology tools, resources, and services when they act in a responsible, efficient, courteous and legal manner. Internet access and other online services, available to students and teachers, offer a multitude of global resources. Our goal in providing these services is to enhance the educational development of our students.

We educate students about appropriate online behavior including awareness and response to cyber-bullying and interacting with others on social websites. In addition, we take steps to block access to inappropriate content,

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monitor safety and security when students use electronic communications, prevent unauthorized access including “hacking,” and prevent unauthorized disclosure, use and dissemination of students’ personal information.

Acceptable uses of technology are devoted to activities that support and enhance teaching and learning. Use of “technology tools” refers to all digital tools and equipment that are used in South Brunswick classrooms and schools— whether district-owned or privately-owned. Therefore, the A.U.P. also covers students in upper grades who participate in Bring Your Own Device (B.Y.O.D.) at the invitation of their teachers and under the conditions outlined in the B.Y.O.D. Guidelines.

To use any technology in our instructional environment and while on school grounds, students must have an “Acceptable Use Policy: Technology Agreement” on file. All students and their parents/guardians must sign and/or electronically acknowledge this document. The Agreement, which is written in age-appropriate language, covers the following intervals: Kindergarten (which covers K-2), Third Grade (which covers 3-5), Sixth Grade (which covers middle school), and Ninth Grade (which covers high school). Copies of these divisional “A.U.P. Technology Agreements” may be found on the District website, www.sbschools.org, under “Policies.”

BRING YOUR OWN DEVICE (B.Y.O.D.)

The B.Y.O.D. Policy applies to students in grades 6-12 only. On occasion, an elementary teacher in 4th or 5th grade may choose to invite students to bring their own privately owned devices to school for use with a particular project during a specified time period. A communication will be sent home with the specifics should this occur. A student who does B.Y.O.D. must adhere to the Student Code of Conduct, the Acceptable Use Policy, and all applicable Board policies and the guidelines for B.Y.O.D. The use of personal devices by students is optional; students who do not participate in B.Y.O.D. will not be penalized, and alternative modes of participation will be available.

BUS CONDUCT

NJ Statute provides that the bus driver shall be in full charge of the school bus at all times. Infractions deeming the student to be unmanageable can be reported to the school principal by the driver and disciplinary action taken as necessary. Please refer to the *Student Transportation Brochure* [included here](#) for further description of the Rules & Responsibilities. Students are only permitted to ride on their assigned bus. In addition, the Code of Student Conduct, and all regulations herein, also applies to bus behavior, as well as behavior at the bus stop. It also applies to the behavior of walkers to and from school.

DRESS CODE

The wearing of clothing bearing obscene writing or promoting indecent or unacceptable behavior, whether stated or implied, will not be permitted. In all such cases, students wearing inappropriate items will be asked to remove or replace them. When it is determined that students are in violation of these guidelines, they will be sent to the nurse’s office and provided with temporary clothing for the remainder of the school day.

No student is permitted to wear a hat or any other head covering in school, unless required to do so by religious custom or medical condition.

Since students at the elementary level have recess every day, students should wear sneakers or other safe footwear (no flip-flops) to school daily. In addition, students should dress for the weather, since recess occurs throughout all seasons of the school year.

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS POLICIES

Policies #3283/#4283: "Electronic Communications Between Teachers / Support Staff Members and Students."

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These two policies (teacher and support staff) protect students from receiving or exchanging any improper or inappropriate electronic communications with any members of the staff. Students may not communicate with a staff member through anything other than the district email system, district telephones, and district-sponsored or district-approved (e.g. Edmodo) social media sites and web pages. Likewise, a staff member may not use or provide a personal email address to communicate with students, may not use a personal phone to communicate with students, is prohibited from text messaging communications with students, and prohibited from communicating with any student through a personal social networking website or other personal Internet-based website. A staff member may not offer or accept “friend” requests. Note: Under special circumstances (e.g. field trips, sports team events, club activities), a staff member may receive permission from the principal to use a personal device or personal media site for the purpose of communicating emergency/information notification in a timely manner.

HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION, AND BULLYING (H.I.B.) POLICY

It is the intent of the NJ Legislature in its January 2011 enactment of the new Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying (HIB) Law to strengthen the standards and procedures for preventing, reporting, investigating, and responding to incidents of HIB of students that occur in school and off school premises.

The District prohibits all acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying. HIB is defined as any gesture, written, verbal or physical act or any electronic communication (that is, transmitted by an electronic device) whether it be a single incident or a series of incidents that:

- Is reasonably perceived as being motivated by either any actual or perceived characteristic such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical or sensory disability or by any other distinguishing characteristic; and
- Takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, on a school bus, or off school grounds that **substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students**; and that
- A reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, that the act will have the effect of physically or emotionally harming a student or damaging the student’s property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm to person or damage to property; or
- Has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or group of students, or
- Creates a **hostile educational environment** for the student by interfering with a student’s education or by **severely or pervasively** causing physical or emotional harm to the student.

A HIB complaint will be investigated promptly within the defined timeline and in adherence with the procedures set forth in the District HIB Policy. This policy can be accessed in full on the District web page at www.sbschools.org along with contact information for the District’s Anti Bullying Coordinator and each school’s Anti Bullying Specialist.

PUBLIC COMPLAINTS AND INQUIRIES

Policy provides a forum for members of the community to resolve any misunderstandings between the public and the school district regarding school personnel, district operations or instructional materials. Resolution is initially attempted through discussion between the involved parties and generally takes place at the classroom or school level.

RECORDING POLICY

The taking or sharing of pictures and/or video during school hours is prohibited unless required for an academic task and under the direction of a staff member. Students may not use devices to record, transmit, or post photographic

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images or video of a person or persons on campus during school activities or school hours, unless otherwise allowed by a staff member.

SOCIAL MEDIA

The district and its schools will maintain Web pages, Facebook pages and Twitter accounts. Expanding Internet presence and utilizing social media sites will allow building and central administration to share information at any moment, thereby allowing the community to access this information via commonly used platforms.

WEAPONS, DANGEROUS INSTRUMENTS AND VERBAL THREATS

Board of Education Policy regarding Weapons and Dangerous Instruments and State Law states that “any item known to be a weapon or any item used in such a way as to intimidate or physically hurt another person is prohibited from being on school property.” In addition, the Board Policy prohibits all imitation weapons and “the Board reserves the right to initiate and impose disciplinary action for conduct involving weapons.” It is essential that our students learn early that threatening language is not acceptable. Expressions like the following will not be tolerated: “I’m going to shoot you. I’m going to bring a gun to school and shoot you. I’d like to kill you.” Verbal comments, written notes, and gestures along these lines will be taken seriously and dealt with accordingly. The school may have to consider police involvement in such instances.

EMERGENCY & GRADE LEVEL PARENT E-MAIL NOTIFICATION

South Brunswick School District offers a variety of e-mail notification services including Board meeting agendas/highlights and individual grade level e-mailings to parents to keep them informed of information pertaining to their child’s particular grade. An Emergency E-mail Notification keeps subscribers informed of emergency closings or delayed openings or other instances where parents may be required to take action (school evacuation due to power outage, etc.). Signing up is simple. Visit www.sbschools.org for instructions.

MEDIA AND WEB NON-CONSENT FORMS

Annually, South Brunswick School District sends parent/guardians information about federal and state laws as it pertains to the “personally identifiable information” of students and their rights when it comes to the school district using a child’s name/likeness in the media, district sponsored publications or on its website. These forms can be found online at http://www.sbschools.org/our_schools/policies/consent_forms.php. If a parent/guardian does not want his/her child’s name and/or photograph to appear in the local newspapers, district’s sponsored publications or on the district’s website, they must sign and return the related form to the school’s grade level office. Permission may be rescinded at any point during the school year by sending a note to the building principal. This will take effect upon receipt of the school. For further details, contact the main office.

NUTRITION

South Brunswick School District contracts its school dining services through Chartwells Dining Service which provides school lunch options in compliance with the State-mandated Nutrition Policy. Due to the growing number of students who have been diagnosed with peanut allergies, which can be fatal to some, Chartwells School Dining Services no longer serves items that are peanut-based or use foods prepared with peanut-based products in any of our cafeterias. While this change does not impact “packed” lunches, breakfasts, or snacks, we ask that you be mindful of the existence of food allergies among children and discourage sharing of snacks.

SCHOOL SAFETY PROCEDURES

School Safety: All district schools conduct drills and have plans in place to keep students, staff and community members visiting the school safe and secure. Among such safeguards are the following: Bus evacuation drills (twice a year); fire drills (once a month); lockdown and other state mandated drills (once a month).

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School Security: All district schools have camera and buzzer entry systems which restrict visitors' access to the buildings. To ensure the safety of our students, staff and community, the district also has an identification (ID) card system for all district staff. Visitors are issued temporary ID badges upon sign in at the reception desk. Requiring visitors to present identification cards will help us to distinguish persons in our school and enhance safety. We recommend that parents make appointments when meeting with professionals at the school.