

Student Handbook

Student Planner Version

2019 - 2020



Spring Branch Middle School

1000 Piney Point Road
Houston, Texas 77024-2796
School Phone: 713.251.4400
School Fax: 713.251.9469

School Website: <http://sbm.springbranchisd.com>

PTA Website: <http://sbmspta.com>

School Hours

8:30 a.m.-3:35 p.m.

Students enrolled in zero hour, fine arts, or another adult sponsored activity may enter the building at 7:15 a.m. to make their way to their classes. Students arriving before school to eat breakfast must arrive 7:50am. Students will come through the front doors and make their way to the cafeteria at 7:50am.

SBM ATTENDANCE GUIDELINE

Students will be considered absent from class if they miss more than 15 minutes of the class period.

State Law, as well as local policy, identifies several types of absences. These include, but are not limited to the following:

- **Excused Absences:** All absences must be verified by a parent with either a written note, including email, or a telephone call to the office or Attendance Office. Written notice must be given to the Attendance Office within two (2) school days if the absence is to be excused. All notes and/or phone calls may be subject to verification by the campus administration.

Absence for the following reasons shall be considered unavoidable and shall be classified as **excused** for the student:

- Student Illness: Five consecutive days or longer requires a doctor's note to be excused.
- Death/Funeral of a Family Member or Serious Illness of a Family Member
- Health Care Appointments: The principal shall require a note signed by the parent/guardian requesting that a student be released for a health care appointment. Students are required to bring a note by the health care professional upon return from the appointment.
- Religious Holy Days: Any child of an established faith will be excused if his/her absence is for the purpose of observing a religious holy day, consistent with his/her creed or belief. The parent/guardian must submit, to the office, a written request for an excused absence.
- Authorized School-Sponsored Activities: A student may receive excused absences for participation in off-campus school-related activities. The District will not, however, permit students to participate in such activities that would require, permit, or allow a student to be absent from any class more than 10 times during the school year.
- Court Appearance: The principal shall require the presentation of appropriate court document, subpoena, etc. which indicates when a student is to appear in court.
- Weather (announced bad weather closings)
- Quarantine
- Medicaid-Eligible Children: Children participating in the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT) programs implemented by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission.
- Naturalization / U.S. Citizenship: A student who misses school for the purpose of appearing at a government office to complete paperwork required in connection with the student's application of U.S. Citizenship or for the purpose of taking part in a U.S. Naturalization oath ceremony, including traveling for that purpose.

Unexcused: An absence for any reason other than those listed above shall be classified as unexcused. Absences that are classified as excused shall not be excused if the parent fails to

notify the office of the reason in writing for the absences within two (2) school days of the absences. The Building Principal may review reasons other than those listed above and determine that they, too, may be excused.

- SBISD considers family trips, absences for personal business, and absences due to passport application as unexcused.

NOTE: Parents should make a special effort to request scheduled appointments at a time after school hours. When several appointments must be scheduled during school hours, a different hour of the day should be used each time to avoid the student's missing the same class period several times and falling behind in his/her class work.

The Texas Education Code (TEC) provides for compulsory attendance. The District attendance officer may be used to encourage regular attendance.

- **By state law, to obtain credit for a class, a student must attend 90% of the days the class is offered. TEC 25.092**

In order to determine if a student's tardiness or absence is excused, a note or email is needed and must include:

- Date(s) of Tardiness/Absence
- Cause of Tardiness/Absence
- Parent/Guardian Signature

The note is to be taken to the Attendance Office by the student on the day of his/her return to school. Failure to bring a note explaining excuse within two (2) days of the absence will result in an unexcused absence.

- **Absences of 3 or more consecutive days, if unexcused, will be referred to the district attendance officer for investigation.**

An absence will be considered **unexcused** if it meets the following:

- If a student is absent from school three (3) days or parts of days in a four-week period without excuse, the parent will be notified by school personnel of the unexcused absences and will have a chance to meet with school personnel.

TRUANCY

- Absence from school or class without prior knowledge and approval of the parents, guardian or school officials will be considered truancy.
- Each absence due to truancy will result in a grade of zero for any activity, test or assignment missed if all the members of the class are assigned grades for the same work.
- School personnel will refer student absences to the SBISD Police Department using the following guidelines:
 - Three (3) days or parts of days for unexcused absences within a four-week period.
 - Ten (10) days or parts of days for unexcused absences within a six-month period.

TARDY / EXCUSED/ UNEXCUSED ABSENCE CLASS POLICY

Excused: is defined as arriving to class with an acceptable excuse or admit within the first (15) minutes of the period. Excused arrival after (15) minutes of the class period shall be regarded as an excused absence.

Unexcused: is defined as arriving to class without an acceptable excuse or admit within the first (15) minutes of the period. Unexcused arrival after (15) minutes of the class period shall be regarded as an unexcused absence.

Late Arrival - If a student arrives at school after 8:45am, he/she must sign in at the attendance office.

NOTE: There are no excused tardies to first period for students who assume responsibility for their own transportation instead of riding the school bus. Excess tardies can result in the assignment of an after school detention or other consequences.

BULLYING

Bullying occurs when a student or group of students engages in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic methods, or physical conduct against another student on school property, at a school-sponsored or –related activity, or in a District operated vehicle, and the behavior:

- Results in harm to the student or the student's property
- Places a student in reasonable fear of physical harm or of damage to the student's property, or
- Is so severe, persistent, and pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment.

This conduct is considered bullying if it exploits an imbalance of power between the student perpetrator(s) and the student victim and if it interferes with a student's education or substantially disrupts the operation of the school.

Bullying is prohibited by the District and could include hazing, threats, taunting, teasing, confinement, assault, demands for money, destruction of property, theft of valued possessions, name-calling, rumor-spreading, or ostracism. In some cases, bullying can occur through electronic methods, called "cyberbullying."

If a student believes that he or she has experienced bullying or has witnessed bullying of another student, it is important for the student or parent to notify a teacher, counselor, principal, or another District employee as soon as possible to obtain assistance and intervention. The administration will investigate any allegations of bullying or other related misconduct.

If the results of an investigation indicate that bullying has occurred, the administration will take appropriate disciplinary action. Disciplinary or other action may be taken even if the conduct did not rise to the level of bullying. The District will also contact the parents of the victim and of the student who was found to have engaged in the bullying. Available counseling options will be provided to these individuals, as well as to any students who have been identified as witnesses to the bullying.

Any retaliation against a student who reports an incident of bullying is prohibited.

The principal may, in response to an identified case of bullying, decide to transfer a student found to have engaged in bullying to another classroom at the campus. In consultation with the student's parent, the student may also be transferred to another campus in the District. The parent of a student who has been determined by the District to be a victim of bullying may request that his or her child be transferred to another classroom or campus within the District.

A copy of the District's policy is available in the principal's office, superintendent's office, and on the District's web site.

A student or parent who is dissatisfied with the outcome of an investigation may appeal through policy FNG(LOCAL).

Bullying also includes any form of harassment or the making of a hit list. Hit list is defined as a list of people targeted to be harmed using a firearm as defined by *Section 46.01(3), Penal Code*; a knife as defined by *Section 46.01(7), Penal Code*; or any other object to be used with intent to cause bodily harm.

Harassment is defined as threatening to cause harm or intimidating conduct, causing physical damage to the property of another student, subjecting another student to physical confinement or restraint, or maliciously taking any action that substantially harms another student's physical or emotional health or safety.

The penalty under this section could range from Level II to Level IV. The level will depend upon the specific actions of the student as well as the overall effect of the school.

In addition, any person on the SBMS campus who feels they may be experiencing bullying, hazing or harassment may fill out an anonymous discipline form found on the front page of the SBMS website.

CHEATING POLICY

Cheating is defined as the following:

1. Giving or receiving information during a test/quiz.
2. Possession of any unauthorized material during a test/quiz.
3. Copying and/or viewing another student's work.*
4. Allowing another unauthorized student to copy and/or view his/her work.*
5. Submitting duplicate work.*
6. Having someone else complete an assignment/test/quiz on his/her behalf.
7. Using another's ideas or products as his/her own (plagiarism).

*Student work = homework and/or class work.

Any student involved in cheating will be subject to the following disciplinary action:

1. The teacher will issue an automatic zero for the work assigned to all students involved in cheating.
2. The teacher will telephone the parents of students involved in cheating.
3. The teacher will complete a Discipline Referral Form and submit it to the grade level Assistant Principal who will then assign discipline.

DETENTION

Morning/Lunch Detention:

- Morning and/or Lunch Detentions may be assigned by teachers.
- Student will sign a receipt of notice for detention assignments.
- If a student fails to attend a morning and/or lunch detention, they will face additional discipline as outlined in the SBISD Handbook.

After-School Detention:

- After-school detention is held at SBMS on Monday through Thursday from 3:35 p.m. to 4:25 p.m.
- There are two different types of after-school detention: administrative or teacher-assigned.
- Student will sign a receipt of notice for detention assignments.
- Students are responsible to alert parents regarding all assigned detentions.
- It is the student's responsibility to attend their assigned detention.
- If a student fails to attend an after-school detention, they will face additional discipline as outlined in the SBMS Handbook.
- There will be a late bus provided for students to ride when assigned an after-school detention. The late bus leaves SBMS at 4:35 p.m.

Friday Detention:

- Friday detention is held every other Friday after-school for two hours from 3:35 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.
- Students are responsible for bringing appropriate materials to occupy their time during Friday detention.
- No SBISD transportation is provided for Friday detention. Parents are responsible for transportation from Friday Detention.
- A student who fails to attend an assigned Friday detention will receive stronger consequences.

DISCIPLINE MANAGEMENT PLAN

- Discipline & consequences for improper actions shall be based upon a careful assessment of the circumstances of each case.
- The Spring Branch Independent School District *Student Code of Conduct, Levels of Behavior* shall govern disciplinary action. Please refer to the SBISD Handbook (Student Code of Conduct) for more detailed information.
- SBISD *Student Code of Conduct* is located on the SBISD web page. Select "*For Students*" and choose "*Code of Conduct*".

DRESS CODE "FAST FACTS" 2019-2020

Shirts:

- Must be sized to fit in traditional, modest manner.
- Must not include offensive designs or overt, covert, or implied messages relating to sexual innuendo, alcohol, drugs, tobacco products, or weapons.
- Must not be sheer, unless undershirt meets dress code guidelines.
- Must not show a bare midriff.
- No bra straps or cleavage may be showing.
- No tank tops.

Shorts Must:

- Measure longer than the tip of the middle finger and/or fall above the bottom of the knee.

Leggings/Jeggings:

- May be worn, but t-shirts and/or sweatshirts must be long enough to be appropriate (cover the front and back of individual) over the leggings/jeggings.
- Leggings/jeggings with shear inserts must be in compliance with the fingertip rule.

Pants and Shorts Must NOT:

- Contain writing on the seat of the pants or shorts.
- Have holes, rips, cuts, tears, frays, or fringe.
- Sit low enough for undergarments to show above the top of pants or shorts.

Jackets and Hoodies:

- Jackets and Hoodies may be worn, but the hood part of the appeal may not be worn anywhere except for H/F or athletics. Should a student require persistent redirection to refrain from the hoodie, he or she may be told that his or her privilege to wear items of this nature is revoked.

Air Pods/Headphones:

- Air Pods/Headphones may be worn in hallways and the cafeteria, but should not be worn unless the teacher has created student instructional moments that require the use of headphones or air pods. Otherwise, these devices should be stowed away until passing periods or lunch. . Note: only one air pod or headphone may be worn during the passing period.

Skirts:

- Length must measure longer than the tip of the middle finger when arms are fully extended at side.
- The top of a slit in a slit skirt must be below the middle finger.
- No undergarments or skin may show above the top of the skirt.
- No fringe or writing on the seat of the skirt.

Shoes Must NOT Be:

- Shower shoes, plastic or rubber slides, or bedroom slippers/house shoes. NOTE: Sandals are permitted, but must have a strap around the heel for safety purposes.
- Untied or unsecured; Velcro straps and laces must be fastened.
- Worn with the tongue of the shoe outside or on top of the pant bottom.

Jewelry:

- Body piercing that is distracting is inappropriate for school and school-related activities. Piercing of the face will be limited to the ears only. Gauging of the ears is not allowed. Piercing of the eye area, brow, lids, forehead, scalp, cheeks, nose, lips, tongue, chin or neck is prohibited.
- If jewelry presents a safety hazard, it must be removed.

Hair:

- No colored hair spray or glitter; natural hair color only (i.e. not pink, blue, purple, etc.).
- No facial hair of any kind.

Hats/Caps:

- Are not permitted anywhere on campus except H/F or Athletics.
- Are not to be worn attached to any article of clothing (i.e. not attached to belt loop).

NO visible tattoos permitted. Students will be asked to conceal any visible tattoo.

***As fact change, the school administration reserves the right to adjust dress code.**

GRADING SYSTEM

Numerical grades are reported in accordance with state law:

A	90-100	Excellent Progress
B	80-89	Good Progress
C	75-79	Average Progress
D	70-74	Poor Progress
F	50-69	Failure
I	Incomplete	Must be completed within two weeks from the end of the marking period.

- Please refer to the SBISD Handbook (Secondary Grading Expectations) for more detailed information on grades.

Conduct grades are given as follows:

- **E** = Excellent/Exemplary: Exemplary attitude, always cooperative, always observes school rules and regulations.
- **S** = Satisfactory: Good attitude, generally cooperative, generally observes school rules and regulations.
- **N** = Needs Improvement: Attitude needs to improve, infractions of school and classroom rules and regulations.
- **U** = Unsatisfactory: Poor attitude and uncooperative, disrupts class and shows little respect for school rules and regulations.
- Grades in subjects cannot be raised or lowered due to discipline or disciplinary action unless otherwise noted.

HOMEWORK POLICY

- The purpose of all types of homework shall be to promote high quality student learning and achievement. Homework is an out-of-classroom learning experience assigned by a teacher to enhance student learning. Homework shall be reviewed by teachers to ensure an accurate assessment of students' skills and knowledge to better direct them towards their learning goals.
- Homework shall target specific learning outcomes, reinforce TEKS taught in the classroom and provide practice in specific skills.
- Student shall be provided sufficient information and direction needed to complete homework independently.
- Homework shall be sufficient but not excessive to its intended purpose.

Student shall be responsible for:

1. Completing assigned homework.
2. Ensuring that he/she clearly understands the homework assigned, including assignments, expectations and requests for clarifications or assistance from the teacher when homework assignments and/or expectations are not clear.
3. Managing time and materials to complete any assigned homework.

The family shall be encouraged to:

1. Provide an environment for successful completion of assigned homework.
2. Provide encouragement and support for successful completion of assigned homework without doing the homework for their child; and
3. Contact the classroom teacher if their child is not consistently able to do the homework by him/herself or if challenges or questions arise.

Effective homework assignments:

1. Are curriculum based and meet the needs of students through differentiation.
2. Are designed to require no additional teaching outside of the classroom.
3. Are clearly articulated and designed so students know what is expected of them before leaving the classroom.
4. Are engaging and relevant to student learning.
5. Do not require resources or technology to which a student may not have access; and
6. Do not require parents/guardians to teach new concepts.

RETEACH / RETEST POLICY / MAKEUP WORK

Goal: Students will have another opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and mastery of the content tested if they score below a 70.

- ALL students will have Retest availability including Pre-AP and GT students.
- The retest will cover the same content of the original test; however, the retest/project resubmission may be in a different format with questions changed.
- Students and teachers must communicate and plan for the retest within a reasonable time period after the teacher notifies the student of a failing grade.
- The student may be required to attend a tutorial prior to retesting.
- Students caught cheating on a test may not request a subsequent retest.
- Only ONE retest opportunity will be allowed for each failed test.
- If a student scores lower on the retest, the original test grade will stand.
- Grade received for retest will be no higher than 70.
- All semester final exams are ineligible for retest.
- Retest policies will be consistent among grade level teams and departments.
- Students who have excused absences are allowed makeup time for work according to days missed. Example: 1 day absent = 1 day makeup time.

LOCKERS

Students will not be utilizing lockers this year. The students can apply to have a locker on a limited bases after the first two weeks of school. The lockers, however, remain the property of SBISD and are subject to inspection. Students having items in the lockers in violation of District policy will be subject to disciplinary action. If approved for a locker, students will need to provide their own dial master lock for their locker recognizing that they understand that if there are concerns with the locker and the student is unavailable or unable to open the locker for SBISD Administrators, it may be cut to gain access to the locker. While we do not foresee this occurring, in the rare event it must occur SBMS will not be held responsible for replacement of these locks.

As a precaution against loss of materials from lockers, students are urged to keep lockers locked at all times, not to give the combination to other students, and not to place books and

materials in another's locker. **The school cannot be responsible for property placed in the lockers.**

LOST AND FOUND

Each school maintains a lost and found service for all students who misplace their belongings. All items not claimed within two weeks after school is out will be given to a charitable organization.

SAFETY -- EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

- SBMS and SBISD employees go through extensive training in order to facilitate the various safety issues and/or emergencies that might occur during a given school year.
- Please refer to your Student Handbook for the District School Safety and Security Policy, found in the section titled General Information, Procedures and Services.
- Students are encouraged to discuss any uncomfortable or unsafe situations immediately with a teacher, counselor, or their grade level principal.
- Each classroom door has posted emergency exit signs.
- Safety drills are held every month to teach students what to do in case of a real emergency. Students are to walk quietly in a straight line.
- Once outside, students are to stand quietly and wait for the "all clear" signal.
- In the event that weather or other emergencies require school to be closed, radio stations and television stations are notified.
- School will be in session unless specifically stated otherwise.

TECHNOLOGY (Parents)

- SBISD and SBMS use technology innovations designed to enhance the communication between parents, teachers and students.
- SBMS uses a web portal system that mandates teachers to have individual web pages. The content on these pages are entirely governed by each individual teacher, however each teacher will have important information such as lesson plans, important documents, dates, tutoring times and parental access to teacher e-mail.
- The SBMS administration will monitor these sites to make sure they are current and informative.
- SBISD uses a parent portal monitoring system that allows each legal parent / guardian to have access to their student records online.
- Records will include grades, assignments, attendance etc. Each parent will have to acquire a password from SBMS to gain access.
- Parents returning to SBMS will **NOT** need a new parent portal password.
- All new students will be assigned a password at the SBMS Open House night.

TECHNOLOGY (Students)

Monitored Use of Electronic and Web-Based Accounts:

Electronic mail transmissions and other use of the electronic communications system by students shall not be considered confidential and may be monitored at any time by designated District staff to ensure appropriate use for educational or administrative purposes.

Suspected violations of acceptable use by students shall be reported first to the campus principal and, if necessary, by the campus principal to the Associate Superintendent for Administration and Operations.

District-issued Student Email Accounts:

Students understand use of the student email account is viewed as a privilege and as such access may be used for educational and research purposes only. Misuse may result in school disciplinary action and in loss of email privileges.

Students WILL NOT:

- Send electronic mail inappropriate for educational purposes
- Subscribe to inappropriate newsgroups
- Use inappropriate language
- Reveal personal information about themselves or another person
- Participate in illegal activity
- Engage in activity which may pose a risk to anyone
- Use email for commercial, political, or advertising purposes
- Allow others to use their account name or password
- Access their personal email accounts during the instructional day

Use of Personal Devices from Home

With campus/teacher approval students may use personal devices as part of the classroom instructional program and may access the Internet. Students will assume responsibility for any technical issues related to their personal devices. The District will not install, troubleshoot, or access the personal device. The District is not responsible for installation of software, peripheral devices, or for any loss or damage of personal devices.

When using devices for instructional purposes while on campus, students must use the District's wireless Internet services and are prohibited from using a personal wireless service.

Telecommunications devices shall not be used to take pictures or video at any time during the school day or on school grounds, unless authorized by the classroom teacher for instructional purposes.

When use of any telecommunications or personal electronic device is granted, the use may not in any way:

- Disrupt the educational process in the District
- Endanger the health or safety of the student or anyone else
- Invade the rights of others at school
- Involve illegal or prohibited conduct of any kind

Specifically, the use of a cell phone or any device that may be used to take pictures, capture images or video in any locker room, bathroom, or other areas in which students dress is prohibited at all times.

A staff member who discovers a student in possession of a personal telecommunication device in violation of District policy guidelines set forth in the Student/Parent Handbook shall confiscate the device and turn it over to a campus administrator by the end of the same school day.

The District is not responsible for telecommunications or electronic devices brought onto campus or school-related events that become lost or stolen.

SBMS IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY LOST OR STOLEN CELL PHONES OR TELECOMMUNICATIONS DEVICES. ANY CELL PHONE OR TELECOMMUNICATIONS DEVICE BROUGHT TO SBMS IS DONE AT YOUR OWN RISK!

TEXTBOOKS & TEXTBOOK REPLACEMENT

- Since SBMS will be going 1 to 1 (every child has a laptop), electronic textbooks will be online. If a student wants a hard copy of a textbook, the student can check one out with the textbook clerk.
- State approved textbooks are provided to students free of charge for each subject or class.
- A student who is issued a damaged item should make a report to the school immediately.
- Any student failing to return an item in acceptable condition loses the right to free textbooks and technological equipment until the item is returned or paid for by the parent; however, the student will be provided textbooks and equipment for use at school during the school day.
- SBMS uses an electronic monitoring system to distribute and collect textbooks. If a student turns in a textbook that is not their textbook, the original owner is given credit for that textbook.

NJHS MEMBERSHIP

Purpose: The purpose of this chapter shall be to create an enthusiasm for scholarship, to stimulate a desire to render service, to promote worthy leadership and citizenship, and to encourage the development of character in students of Spring Branch Middle School.

Section 1: Membership in this chapter is an honor bestowed upon deserving students by the faculty and shall be based on the criteria of Scholarship, Service, Leadership, Citizenship, and Character.

Section 2: Membership in this chapter shall be known as active, honorary, and alumni. Active members become alumni members at graduation. Honorary members are selected at the discretion of the Faculty Council. Alumni and honorary members have no voice or vote in chapter affairs.

Section 3: Eligibility

- Candidates eligible for selection to the chapter shall have a minimum cumulative grade average of 93% (92.5 to 92.9 is considered a 93%) through the 3rd nine-weeks grading period of the seventh grade year only. Core classes and electives courses are included in the cumulative grade average.
- Upon meeting the grade level, enrollment, and grading standards, candidates shall then be considered based on their service, leadership, citizenship, and character.

- Please note: According to the constitution, only those students who have attended this school for the equivalent of one semester may be considered for membership. This period is necessary for students to establish themselves academically and involve themselves in various service and leadership activities, and for the faculty to get to know them and the quality of their character.