

# SENECA FALLS MIDDLE SCHOOL

## STUDENT HANDBOOK

2023-2024



I will ...  
be respectful  
and live responsibly  
so we can **ALL** unite  
together  
and excel daily!  
**Let's BE BLUE!**

**Kevin Rhinehart**  
Principal

**Kevin Korzeniewski**  
Asst. Principal/Athletic Dir.

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## **Bell Schedule:**

|           |                                                             |
|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| Period 1  | 7:35 – 8:18 am                                              |
| Period 2  | 8:21 – 9:03 am                                              |
| Period 3  | 9:06 – 9:48 am                                              |
| Period 4  | 9:51 – 10:33 am                                             |
| Period 5  | 10:36 – 11:18 am – Lunch Gr. 6                              |
| Period 6  | 11:21 – 12:03 am – Lunch Gr. 7                              |
| Period 7  | 12:06 – 12:48 pm – Lunch Gr. 8                              |
| Period 8  | 12:51 – 1:33 pm                                             |
| Period 9  | 1:36 – 2:18 pm ( <b>BUS 2:23 pm</b> )                       |
| Period 10 | 2:25 – 2:55 pm ( <b>BUS 3:00 pm/Tuesday thru Thursday</b> ) |
| Period 11 | 3:00 – 4:00 pm (Clubs/Detention <b>BUS 4:00 pm</b> )        |

Seneca Falls Middle School (SFMS) utilizes three (3) dismissals; following 9<sup>th</sup> period at 2:18 pm, following 10<sup>th</sup> period at 2:55 pm and following 11<sup>th</sup> period at 4:00 pm. Buses are available, with the exception of Fridays (2:18 pm bus ONLY). ***NO late buses on Fridays.***

## **Academic Assistance Period**

### **(Period 10, 2:25 - 2:55 pm)**

Academic Assistance occurs during Period 10, ***Tuesday through Thursday***. Students assigned to a specific teacher/class are required to attend, as this **is part of the school day**. This period is designed for students to receive extra help and make up back work. Students will also be able to attend the Academic Assistance Period in a non-assigning classroom on days they are not required to stay. Students assigned to 10<sup>th</sup> period who fail to report, will be dealt with in a disciplinary manner.

## **A & B Days**

Some classes in the middle school meet every other day. These alternating days are called A & B Days. The classes that meet every other day are Physical Education, Music, Chorus, Band and Computer Literacy Skills

## **Positive Behavior Standards & Student Conduct**

The Seneca Falls Middle School standards for student behavior follow common sense rules of responsibility, courtesy and decency. These rules are necessary to ensure that all students and staff in the Seneca Falls Middle School can work together effectively to achieve an environment that promotes learning. The SFMS community (faculty, staff, students and parents) has established six (6) positive behavior standards:

- Show Respect
- Be a Good Citizen
- Do Your Best
- Demonstrate Self-Control
- Be Responsible
- Cooperate

## **Character Education Program**

SFMS has been recognized as a New York State School of Character and has incorporated a school-wide Character Education Program. Ten (10) monthly themes (e.g. Responsibility, Listening, Initiative, etc.) are chosen and promoted throughout the building. Faculty and staff also have the opportunity to recognize students for demonstrating outstanding characteristics related to the monthly theme. Recognized students receive a certificate.

## **General Student Expectations**

Middle School students are expected to:

- Report to school/class on time.
- Attend all scheduled classes.
- Complete assigned class work/homework.
- Remain on school property throughout the entire day, unless permitted to leave.
- Conduct oneself in accordance with established rules for student behavior.
- Avoid situations and refrain from behavior that might be harmful to oneself or others, including fighting and possession of dangerous objects or substances
- Refrain from carrying valuables or large amounts of cash.
- Use the locker assigned for articles of outer clothing. Coats, jackets and hats are to remain in the locker until the end of day. Regular, unannounced inspections of the lockers may take place throughout the school year
- Refrain from running in classrooms and hallways.
- Refrain from entering the high school, unless it is for a scheduled class.

## **Cell Phones**

Cell phones have become a way of life, a convenience that has impacted all of our lives in one way or another. However, in the school environment, cell phones have become a distraction, interruption and a method of exchanging inappropriate information via social media. The ringing of the cell phone during class the text-messaging takes away from the valuable time needed for instruction and most importantly, student learning.

The following procedures will be implemented to minimize classroom disruptions caused by cell phones.

- Our primary goal is to have students keep their cell phone in their locker (turned off) throughout the day; however, if a student does enter the classroom with their cell phone, there are designated cell phone holders in each classroom. The students will be required to put their cell phone in the holder until the end of the class period.
- Students in possession of a cell phone during class will be assigned consequences according to our school code of conduct.
- **Students may use their cell phone during their assigned lunch period ONLY.** If we run into any issues during the lunch period with students' texting, posting to social media, taking pictures or doing anything inappropriate, cell phones will be banned for all students, from that lunch period.

**The consequences for any cell phone infraction will be as follows:**

**1st offense:**

- Cell phone held in the main office until the end of the school day.

**2nd offense:**

- Cell phone held in the main office until the end of the day.

**3rd offense:**

- Cell phones will only be returned to a parent/guardian. A parent/guardian and the student will need to meet with the principal. **Additional offenses will be considered an act of insubordination.**

A student who refuses to comply with a request to surrender their cell phone by any member of the faculty, staff and/or an administrator will be considered insubordinate. Rules governing insubordination will apply as outlined in the SFMS Code of Conduct. Our goal is to create a safe environment, conducive to learning and free of all distractions that hinder the learning process.

**Safety Reminders**

A.) Please be advised that, due to safety reasons, skateboards and roller blades are **NOT** permitted on school grounds.

B.) Students are **NOT permitted** to play ball or congregate in the bus loop, parking lots and/or driveways after school hours.

**Disciplinary Procedures**

The disciplinary procedure for students who behave inappropriately is very clear. In all instances, teachers will initially deal with any behavioral concern. If the teacher cannot resolve the issue, the principal, assistant principal or guidance counselor will get involved. The school will make every effort to keep parents/guardians informed of any behavior concerns. Listed below are procedures to be followed for students who do not behave properly.

**I. Student Warning**

- A. The teacher will warn the student that his/her behavior is inappropriate.
- B. If the student corrects his/her behavior, he/she will remain in class.

**II. Student Referral to the Principal**

A. The student will be sent directly to the principal when his/her behavior interferes with classroom instruction/learning. Teachers will complete a Student Conduct form, electronically, in School Tool. Behavior warranting this action may include:

1. Physical violence
2. Refusal to follow directions of a faculty/staff member.
3. Abusive language

B. A conference between the principal and student will take place. The principal may contact the student's parents/guardians.

**Disciplinary action may include the following:**

1. Parent Conference
2. Student removed from class
3. 11<sup>th</sup> Period Detention
4. In-School Suspension
5. Out-Of-School Suspension

**In School Suspension**

Based on the severity of a student's behavior, he/she may be assigned to serve an In-School Suspension. The student will complete all work by himself/herself for a period of time that may range from 1-5 days. Students may also be assigned to serve an In-School Suspension for receiving a frequent number of referrals (conduct forms) to the principal. Parents will be informed via telephone and/or email in School Tool of their child's assignment to In-School Suspension.

**Out of School Suspension – Please refer to the district's Code of Conduct**

**Superintendent's Hearing – Please refer to the district's Code of Conduct**

**Attendance**

Attendance at school is mandatory. Students are required to attend all classes, including the recess and lunch period. All absences require a written, signed excuse from a parent or guardian (or email), indicating the date and reason for the absence. ***Absences without excuses are marked as illegal. Legal absences include the student being sick, a religious holiday, a family members' funeral, or a medical appointment.*** The excuse is due upon return to school and is to be given to the main office. All student absences will receive a "robo" call inquiring about the student's absence, at which time, parents can respond through ParentSquare, providing an excuse for the absence, which is required by New York State. ***IT IS NO LONGER NECESSARY TO CALL THE SCHOOL FOR STUDENT ABSENCES. PLEASE UTILIZE PARENT SQUARE, AFTER RECEIVING THE ROBO CALL.***

**Homework Hotline**

Assignments are available to students/parents, via the school district's web site ([www.senecafallscsd.org](http://www.senecafallscsd.org)) and clicking on "Seneca Falls Middle School." Faculty/staff information, e-mail addresses, phone extensions and daily homework assignments can also be accessed online.

**Early Dismissals**

If a student needs to leave school early, a written, signed request (or email) from a parent/guardian is to be given to the main office, prior to 8:00 a.m., on the day to be

excused. **Upon returning to school, students are required to stop at the office to sign in.** Students are not to leave the building, for any reason during the school day, without permission.

If a student feels ill during the school day, **they must report to the school nurse before calling home or leaving school.** The nurse or administrator must give permission for a student to leave school due to illness. **Students may not use classroom phones to call parents** if they are ill. All illnesses need to be reported to the nurse.

### **Tardy to School/1<sup>st</sup> period class**

Students arriving late to school/1<sup>st</sup> period, must sign in at the office. Students may sign themselves in, preferably with a parent/doctor note, explaining the reason for being late.

### **Unexcused tardiness includes:**

Arriving late to school due to oversleeping, missing the bus, etc.

### **Excused tardiness includes: (Does not count toward the student)**

- All medical appointments. An excuse from the parent or doctor's office is required.
- Illness. An excuse signed (or email) and dated by a parent, stating illness.
- School Bus is late, religious holiday or funeral, with a note submitted.

### **Tardy to Class**

Attendance is taken every class period. Students who know they will be late to the next class must obtain a pass from the teacher/staff member at the previous location. Students arriving late to class, without a pass, will follow the expectations set by that classroom teacher. These expectations will be given during the 1<sup>st</sup> week of school/semester.

### **Activities**

Participation in activities is an important part of the middle school. Some activities students may join are Chorus, Band, Jazz Band, Student Council, Yearbook Club, Annual Musical Production, Modified Sports and/or Intramurals.

### **Campus Visitors**

1. Only visitors with school-related business will be allowed on campus and must report directly to the main office to sign-in with a photo ID to obtain a visitor's pass.
2. All Parents/Guardians wishing to see their son/daughter during the school day need to report directly to the main office to sign in and obtain a visitor's pass.

### **Student Breakfast**

Breakfast is available to all SFMS students from 7:10–7:30 a.m. and is served in the High School cafeteria. Middle School students are expected to be in their 1st period class by 7:35 am. All cafeteria rules apply during breakfast.

## **Family Information Sheets**

All students will be sent family information sheets. These sheets are important and need to be returned to school, as the information is used to update our records. Family Information sheets can be updated throughout the school year by notifying the main office. (address, phone numbers, change of employment etc.)

## **DRESS CODE POLICY (STUDENTS)**

### **Board of Education Policy #7312**

The Seneca Falls Central School District and the Board of Education recognize that each student's mode of dress and grooming is a manifestation of personal style and individual preference. Student dress and personal appearance is and always has been the responsibility of each student and their parents/guardians. Student dress reflects the quality of the school. Our schools take pride in the appearance of our students.

**The Board will not interfere with the right of students and their parents to make decisions regarding their appearance, except when their choice affects the educational process of the schools.**

The Superintendent designates the Principal as the arbiter of student dress and grooming in his/her building to ensure the following regulations are enforced:

- To promote the health/safety of the student body, footwear must be worn.
- Teachers of specialized classes or activities, such as Physical Education, Technology, Family & Consumer Science and Science laboratories, may regulate students' dress when it is appropriate for health, safety or educational reasons.
- Students may not wear clothing (including accessories; hats, jewelry, belts, backpacks, outerwear), which promotes the use of alcohol, illegal drugs or tobacco, contains sexual connotations or is lewd or offensive.
- Students may not wear clothing (hats, jewelry, belts, backpacks, outer wear) or accessories that pose a health/safety hazard to the student/student body.
- Students may not display tattoos that promote the use of alcohol, illegal drugs or tobacco, contain sexual connotations or are lewd or offensive.
- Clothing (including accessories, hats, jewelry, belts, backpacks, outer wear) may not advocate racial, religious or other forms of prejudice or infringe upon the rights of others.
- Display of undergarments – by all – is prohibited! It is prohibited for students (males and females to wear shirts that have the arms cut out where undergarments can be seen.
- Students may not wear hats, headgear or head coverings (**K-5 only**).
- Students may not wear hooded sweatshirts; except for medical or religious reasons in the classroom.
- Students will not be allowed to wear sunglasses in the building during the school day (7:35 – 3:55) unless written documentation from a physician has been submitted to the school nurse in advance.
- Students in violation of the Dress Code will not be allowed to attend class until after the violation has been corrected.

### Discipline actions include:

- Change.
- Cover-up.
- Wear inside out.
- Item(s) subject to being confiscated.
- Parent contact.

### APPROPRIATE



### INAPPROPRIATE CLOTHING NOT ALLOWED



### Health Services

A full-time School Nurse and Health Aide provide health services to all students. If a student is injured, that student should report the injury immediately to the school nurse or principal. Except in cases of emergency, students who request to go to the Health Office must have written permission from the classroom teacher.

Vision and hearing tests are done in Grade 7. Scoliosis screenings are done in Grade 6, 7 & 8. Physicals are done on all 7<sup>th</sup> grade students, unless a report of one done by the student's own physician is submitted by Sept. 30<sup>th</sup>. Sports physicals are required for 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grade students to play all school sponsored sports and are done in August every year. A student may receive a physical from his/her own physician and submit a report to the Health Office, prior to the start of the sports season. ***Any questions, please contact the school nurse (315-568-5500, ext. 2500 or 2501)***

### Medication

**Carrying and taking one's own medication is not permitted in school, unless specific directions from a physician are on file with the nurse.** Parents are encouraged to administer medication outside of school hours, when possible. However, when a student needs medication (prescription or over-the-counter) during school hours, the nurse will be able to give it, providing there are signed orders from the doctor and signed permission from the parent. All medications are to be brought to and from school by the parent and are

to have the original label on the containers. Contact the Health Office for further information and forms to be filled out, although most doctors' offices have the forms.

### **Medical Gym Excuses**

All students **MUST** participate in the Physical Education Program. In cases of injury or illness, students may be excused from Physical Education class as follows:

- A written excuse by a parent or guardian will be accepted for up to one (1) Physical Education class.
- If a student is to be absent from Physical Education class for more than one week, a written statement from a physician is required, indicating the nature of the medical problem and the expected period of time the student will need to be excused from gym.
- Any student who has a prolonged absence from school due to a serious illness or injury must have a written statement from a physician to permit the student to resume full participation in Physical Education class.
- Any student who has a temporary or extended medical excuse from Physical Education class may not take part in recess, school sponsored extracurricular sports or intramurals.

### **Communicating with Teachers via E-Mail**

Parents are welcome to communicate with teachers via e-mail. E-mail addresses are the teacher's first initial and last name, followed by the suffix @senecafallscsd.org. Teachers' e-mail accounts can also be accessed via the SFMS web site.

### **Grading**

Students receive numerical grades for most courses. Letter grades are used for Library Skills (6<sup>th</sup> grade), Resource Room, Reading Lab and Math Lab classes.

-**Honor Roll** status - average of all grades is an 85-89.9 with no grade below 65, no unsatisfactory grades and no incompletes.

-**High Honor Roll**- average of all grades is 90-100 with no grade below 65, no unsatisfactory grades and no incompletes. In addition to High Honor Roll:

- **Principal's List** – Average of all grades is 95 – 100 with no grade below 65. No Unsatisfactory grades and no incompletes.

### **Promotion/Retention Policy**

Students that fail any of the core subjects: ELA, Social Studies, Science or Math will be required to attend summer school. If a student is not progressing academically, parents will be informed throughout the school year by interim reports, report cards and letters from the principal regarding the danger of failing and the grade at the end of the school year.

### **Grade 8 Students Failing 1 Core Subject**

Students who are failing one core subject will be allowed to participate in the field trip and Promotion Ceremony, as long as they have signed up for summer school.

## **Grade 8 Students Failing 2 Core Subjects**

Students failing two (2) or more core subjects will not be allowed to participate in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade field trip or the 8<sup>th</sup> grade Promotion Ceremony. Students must attend summer school and successfully complete all course work to be promoted to 9<sup>th</sup> grade.

## **Lockers**

Each middle school student will be assigned a hall locker. You may only use the locker assigned to you. **Remember**, this is where you will keep your personal belongings. Each locker has a built-in lock. Students will be provided with the combination and should not share the combination with others. Lockers are to remain closed and locked at all times. Students are not to bring valuables or large sums of money to school.

### **To Open Lockers**

1. *Turn right, all the way around 2 or 3 times, then go to your 1<sup>st</sup> number. Always make sure you land directly on your number*
2. *Next, turn left, making sure you go around at least once, passing your first number and stop on your 2<sup>nd</sup> number.*
3. *Turn right until you get to your 3<sup>rd</sup> number, BUT DO NOT GO PAST IT!!*
4. *Lift the latch up and then out toward you.*

## **Library**

The Middle School Library is open throughout the school day. Students may visit the Library from academic assistance or class with a signed pass. Students should have an academic reason for going to the Library and come prepared with the necessary materials. Students are limited to one trip a day from an academic assistance. Students with overdue books are restricted from the Library. In an effort to give all students a chance to use the Library, students should not ask to go to the Library every day, unless they are working on a project that requires Library materials.

## **Computer Loan Procedures**

Students are allowed to sign-out Chromebooks from the Library/Media Specialist to complete academic assignments outside of school, providing they abide by the following procedures:

- Student is responsible to return signed-out equipment the very next day school is in session, as the equipment is needed during the school day. In the event the student is absent, the equipment still must be returned the next school day.
- Student accepts responsibility for damage, theft or loss of equipment that is loaned.
- Failure to adhere to these terms and conditions may result in the student not being allowed to sign out equipment for the remainder of the school year.

## **Internet Use Procedures**

All students will have the opportunity to access the Internet, providing they adhere to the rules established by district policy. When attempting to log-on to the Internet, all students

will be provided an introductory screen, explaining the district's Internet policy and the consequences for violating the policy. The procedures for Internet use are as follows:

- First time violation of Internet use will result in one-month loss of privilege to its access.
- A second violation will result in loss of the privilege for the remainder of the school year (one semester minimum). In addition to loss of Internet privileges, students could also face additional disciplinary actions if the internet/e-mail abuse is of a threatening manner or is in violation of other school policies/regulations.

***Students who are restricted from accessing the Internet will be allowed to access it for a required academic assignment. The student must have a pre-signed pass from the teacher who requires the assignment and with direct supervision from a staff member.***

### **Academic Assistance (Study Hall) Rules**

Many students will have academic assistance (Study Hall) during their day and it is a place for quiet work.

#### Expectations:

- maintain an atmosphere for study
- do schoolwork or read
- ask permission if talking to another student.
- leave academic assistance only when necessary and with a pass
- leave the academic assistance room in a well-kept condition

#### Consequences:

- verbal warning
- short conference with staff member at the end of period
- student sent to office with a conduct form

Sustained Silent Reading in Academic assistances – In an effort to promote reading for enjoyment, students who do not have homework will be required to read during academic assistances. Students may choose their own school-appropriate reading material.

### **Cheating, Copying and Plagiarism**

SFMS recognizes the fact that the concepts of sharing and/or copying of schoolwork, cheating and plagiarism (classroom work, laboratory information & reports, projects, and/or homework) may need to be addressed during the middle school years. It is the intent of faculty and staff to teach students about these concepts in a proactive manner, so they have a thorough understanding of them. On occasion, these issues need to be dealt with as acts of inappropriate behavior. In such instances, consequences and disciplinary measures may be explored.

### **Definitions**

Cheating – (defined in the Webster's Dictionary as) the deliberate intention by which to mislead, fool, and/or defraud.

Even though "group work" and cooperative learning are strategies that are occasionally utilized by SFMS teachers, it is important to understand the difference between working together and copying another student's work. The following is an example of unacceptable

sharing of information: verbally and/or non-verbally and intentionally providing (complete) answers to homework assignments and/or test questions.

\*\*\*It must also be emphasized that students who willingly allow their classmates to cheat/copy (as defined above) are equally at fault with regard to cheating/copying.

Copying - an imitation or reproduction of something original.

An example of copying is as follows:

- The use of a classmate's work, either in a classroom setting (during testing or lab assignments) and/or the sharing of information as part of a homework assignment, without the full benefit of the understanding of the information shared.

Plagiarism - the use of identical published works, ideas or writings of an author without acknowledging the author as owner of those works. Specific examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

- written material taken from textbooks, resource books, newspapers, etc. without proper acknowledgment of the author/source.

Students will be taught in Grade 6 Library Skills class and Grades 6, 7 and 8 English Language Arts classes about these specific concepts. Classroom instruction, leading to an understanding of cheating, copying and plagiarism, will enable students to know about proper procedures for completing assignments and projects.

**Disciplinary Measures:** Students involved with (observed) willful copying, cheating and plagiarizing will be subject to disciplinary action. Such action may range from a verbal warning to loss of credit for the assignment or being assigned to After School Planning for one or more days (determined by the building Principal). In such instances, parents will be contacted and provided with the known information.

### **Substance Abuse Policy**

Substance abuse (alcohol and drugs) refers to the use and/or possession of controlled substances. The use of these substances is prohibited in school buildings, on school grounds, in school buses at all times and in extracurricular activities.

Students that possess, or use, substances on school grounds are subject to an Out-of-School Suspension and Superintendent's Hearing.

### **School Closing**

A connect-ed phone call will be initiated when there is a delay or closing of school due to extremely bad weather or other severe emergencies. This phone call is made to the primary number listed on the information sheet you submit at the beginning of the school year.

Radio Stations WNYR, WMBO, and WHEN and TV Channel 3 will also carry this information.

### **Student Pictures/Videotape Disclaimer**

The SFCSD uses photos, video, live streams, etc. to promote the district. It is understood that the photos, video, and streams will be used on the district's web site, social media and publications. In the event that your child's image is **NOT permitted** to be included in such promotions, please contact the building principal or Athletic Director.