



2024-2025

STUDENT RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES HANDBOOK

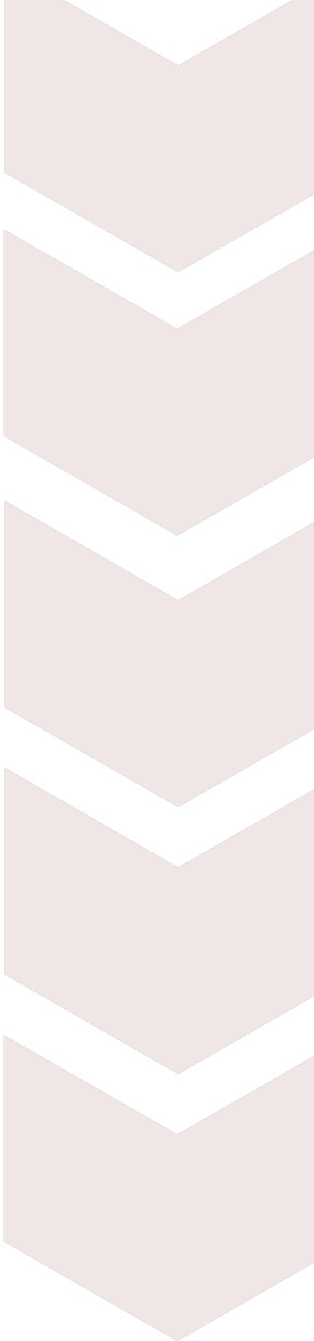
DISTRICT-WIDE STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

South St. Paul
Public Schools



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TRANSLATIONS

Upon request, the district will make the Student Rights & Responsibilities Handbook available in languages other than English. If you would like to receive this information in another language, please contact your school.

Si usted desea recibir esta informacion en español, por favor contactese con su escuela.

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yihinini mereja besipanishi lemek'ebeli kefelegu ibakiwoni timihiriti betiwoni yanegagiru

SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

September 2024

Dear SSPPS Families,

At South St. Paul Public Schools (SSPPS), our top priority is to create a safe, welcoming, and culturally inclusive environment for all students and staff. We are dedicated to supporting our students so they can remain engaged and succeed both personally and in their educational journey here at SSPPS.

The Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook is an essential tool that helps us achieve our mission to ignite a passion in every learner to inquire, continuously improve and engage in positively changing our world. To do this, we are committed to fostering a learning environment based on mutual respect, problem-solving and restorative practices among all students and staff across all of our schools. Working together with the School Board, we have developed comprehensive policies and procedures that outline the rights and responsibilities of our students, ensuring a positive and supportive learning environment. This handbook is a resource for students, families and staff in understanding these policies and how they align with district expectations.

Our staff will review this information with students at the start of the school year. We encourage you to also review this important document and discuss it with your students(s) to reinforce its significance.

Most importantly, thank you for your continued partnership as we strive to prepare every student for their future. Together, we can help our students stay engaged and take full advantage of the numerous learning opportunities available to them each day.

Sincerely,



Brian Zambreno, Ed.D.
Superintendent
South St. Paul Public Schools

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DISTRICT MISSION AND CORE VALUES

SSPPS MISSION (our core purpose)

Ignite a passion in every learner to inquire, continuously improve and engage in positively changing our world.

SSPPS CORE VALUES (what drives our words and actions)

RESPECT

Recognizing and celebrating the goodness in oneself and others, seeing our differences as strengths and showing care and appreciation for people, property and the entire South St. Paul community.

PRIDE

A welcoming, inclusive and supportive Packer community that honors and celebrates its rich history while collectively inspiring new traditions.

COLLABORATION

Building community together through trust, hard work, innovation, and a shared commitment to building the South St. Paul that our community aspires to be.

INTEGRITY

Being thoughtful, honest, transparent in our words, and actions, and accountable for our decisions.

RESILIENCE

The courage to adapt, change and persevere when presented with challenges and opportunities.

EQUITY

A safe and supportive environment that provides opportunities for all to be seen, heard, and valued.



GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND STRATEGIES

At South St. Paul Public Schools (SSPPS), our top priority is to create a safe, welcoming, and culturally inclusive environment for all students and staff. We are dedicated to supporting our students so they can remain engaged and succeed both personally and educationally here at SSPPS.

We aim to foster a learning environment based on mutual respect, problem-solving, and restorative practices among students and staff at every school. Our approach is informed by evidence-based research using a variety of strategies aimed at fostering a positive and supportive learning environment.

PATHWAY TO PACKER PROMISE

With the sunsetting of the International Baccalaureate Primary Years and Middle Years program at the end of the last school year, SSPPS is thrilled to announce our new academic strategic plan, Pathway to Packer Promise. Our mission with the [Pathway to Packer Promise](#) is to ignite a passion in every learner to inquire, continuously improve, and engage in positively changing our world. This plan is dedicated to preparing each and every student for their future through high-quality, individualized programs, services, and personalized learning tailored to every stage of their educational journey. Covering early learning, elementary, middle, and high school experiences, this comprehensive plan provides students with opportunities to explore real-world experiences, interactive discussions, guest speakers, enriching field trips, and flexible curriculum options, allowing students to fully engage with their learning paths. The development of the Pathway to Packer Promise is the result of extensive feedback from our stakeholders, ensuring it aligns with the collective goals and values of our learning community. Visit our website to learn more about the [Pathway to Packer Promise experience!](#)

INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE (IB) DIPLOMA PROGRAM (DP)

SSPPS offers a rigorous academic program for students in grades 11 and 12. It focuses on creativity, innovation, self-discipline and the ability to function as part of a team. The Diploma Program consists of a common pre-university curriculum and a common set of external exams for students in schools throughout the world. It seeks to provide students with an international education that encourages an understanding and appreciation of other cultures and societies. Visit our website at: <https://highschool.sspps.org/about/ib-info>

For more information on the IB-DP program, contact:

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MULTI-TIERED SYSTEMS OF SUPPORT (MTSS)

Our academic and student support team in each school includes teachers and paraprofessionals, mental health professionals (counselors, psychologists, and social workers), and instructional leaders (administrators and instructional coaches). This team works collaboratively to provide high-quality instruction and intervention support to match each student's needs.

The framework for MTSS in SSPPS includes:

- Tier 1: Academic and behavioral support with differentiated instruction for all students in a general education setting.
- Tier 2: Targeted supplemental instruction and intervention
- Tier 3: Intensive individualized instruction and intervention

TALENT DEVELOPMENT AND ADVANCED ACADEMICS

SSPPS is excited to launch a K-12 Talent Development program this fall that provides equitable access in developing talents in students of all abilities, races, ethnicities, languages, genders, and socioeconomic circumstances. Our newest initiative is aimed at nurturing and honoring the unique talents and abilities of all our students while providing depth, complexity and acceleration to students who need advanced instruction. At its core, this program is designed to not only identify, cultivate, and celebrate the diverse strengths of each of our students, but to provide specialized opportunities and tailored support as we aim to empower each student to reach their full potential and excel both academically and personally. Through this program, we envision a learning environment where every student feels inspired, valued, and equipped to thrive.

TALENT DEVELOPMENT AND ADVANCED ACADEMICS (CONT'D)

Program Priorities

- Identifying and nurturing strengths and interests for all students
- Ensuring all students have the opportunity to enhance their critical thinking skills and develop high level educational routines
- Respecting students knowledge and empowering them to actively engage in their academic pathway
- Elevating the depth, complexity and acceleration to students who need advanced instruction
- Providing supplementary enrichment opportunities for support and success

POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION AND SUPPORTS (PBIS)

PBIS is a framework that assists schools in identifying and implementing research-based behavioral interventions in an effort to improve social and academic outcomes for all students. PBIS is based on the idea that students learn appropriate behavior through instruction, practice, feedback, and encouragement. Key features of PBIS include: outlining a clear set of defined positive expectations and behaviors, the teaching of expected behaviors, recognition of meeting expected behaviors, monitoring and correcting errors in behaviors, and using data-based information for decision-making, monitoring, and evaluating results at individual school sites.

BUILDING ASSETS, REDUCING RISKS (BARR)

BARR is a strengths-based educational model that will provide our grades 9-12 with a comprehensive method to address the academic, social, and emotional needs of all students through the power of data and relationships. By putting relationships first, the BARR model allows students and teachers to connect more powerfully with each other. A key component is the weekly lessons focused on helping students learn and practice life skills. Called “I-Times” or “U-Times,” these lessons focus on building skills in self-management, communication, social, research, or thinking.

CATALYST APPROACH

The mission of the Catalyst Approach is to empower staff through professional development, observations and skill building to build a culture of relationship-building and equity in all our learning environments. Its vision is to have every student supported by leaders who understand, nurture, inspire, and encourage them.

CONSCIOUS DISCIPLINE (CD)

CD is an innovative social-emotional learning and classroom management program with a proven track record of sustainable results. Focused in Early Learning, CD provides an array of behavior management strategies and classroom structures that teachers can use to turn everyday situations into learning opportunities. By integrating social-emotional learning, discipline and self-regulation, educators spend less time policing behavior and more time teaching vital life skills. This method eliminates the need for reward and punishment-style discipline and instead gives children a voice, empowering them with the ability and help to achieve behavioral goals, while also creating stronger communication within families.

Each school site has a leadership team responsible for creating specific school-wide examples of appropriate behavior and academic interventions based on the framework of MTSS. By braiding the research-based principles and proven strategies including PBIS, BARR, and Conscious Discipline, SSPPS hopes to better ensure safe and supportive learning environments at all levels, early learning through graduation.

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

STUDENT BILL OF RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

RIGHTS	RESPONSIBILITIES
You have the RIGHT to be treated with respect and dignity by your fellow students, teachers and other school employees without regard to race, religion, sex, sexual orientation including gender identity and expression, age, disability or family structure.	You have a RESPONSIBILITY to treat your fellow students and all school employees with respect.
You have the RIGHT to be treated as a unique individual with different needs, learning styles and abilities.	You have a RESPONSIBILITY to complete assignments to the best of your ability and to adapt to different teachers and teaching styles.
You have the RIGHT , along with your parents, to participate in decisions affecting your educational program	You and your parents have a RESPONSIBILITY to actively participate in conferences and meetings held on your behalf.
You have the RIGHT to a comprehensive curriculum.	You have a RESPONSIBILITY to take advantage of the curriculum
You have the RIGHT to expect a building environment that is safe, clean and comfortable.	You have a RESPONSIBILITY to do your part in maintaining the safety, cleanliness and comfort of that environment.
You have the RIGHT to attend classes where dedicated, caring teachers are well prepared to teach.	You have a RESPONSIBILITY to be well prepared to learn.

It is the responsibility of the School Board to set reasonable policies and rules for governing behavior and conduct while in the school environment. These policies and rules apply any time a student is present on district property, at a school-sponsored activity, and while traveling in district vehicles.

In addition, students who are participants in district activities need to understand the behavioral expectations and consequences for violations as outlined by the Minnesota State High School League and the district related to chemical use, hazing or any other infraction covered by the High School League or district policies or rules.

While this policy pertains to all schools in the district, the School Board recognizes the uniqueness of each building and classroom in which the policy must be implemented. This policy may be supplemented by additional policies, rules and procedures that recognize those unique needs.

RESPONSES TO VIOLATIONS OF STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

The SSP School Board has adopted Policy 506, which outlines the School Board's expectations for student behavior and a Student Code of Conduct outlining examples of unacceptable student behavior. A copy of Policy 506 is included in the Appendix to this handbook. This Student Rights & Responsibilities Handbook incorporates the expectations outlined in Policy 506 and provides information regarding how SSPPS administration enforces the provisions of Policy 506 as well as other behavior-related policies (i.e. policies on bullying, violence and harassment).

Students must follow the provisions of Policy 506 and this Rights and Responsibilities Handbook before, during, and after school. The expectations outlined in Policy 506 and this Rights and Responsibilities Handbook apply inside school buildings, on school grounds, and at school-related activities and events. Students must also follow these expectations on school buses or vans and at bus stops. An off-campus violation of these expectations may result in disciplinary action taken by SSPPS if the violation has a direct and immediate effect on school discipline or the general safety and welfare of students or if the violation is a continuation of or has a connection with misconduct that occurred on school grounds or at a school event.

RESPONSES TO VIOLATIONS OF STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT (CONT'D)

The general practice of the school district is to utilize progressive discipline to the extent reasonable and appropriate based upon the specific facts and circumstances of student misconduct. The specific form of discipline chosen in a particular case is solely within the discretion of the school district. At a minimum, violation of school district rules, regulations, policies, or procedures will result in a discussion of the violation and a verbal warning. The school district shall, however, impose more severe disciplinary sanctions for any violation, including exclusion or expulsion, if warranted by the student's misconduct, as determined by the school district.

BEHAVIOR GUIDELINES, EXPECTATIONS AND CONSEQUENCES

Every student and employee of South St. Paul Public Schools is entitled to learn and work in a safe school environment that is aligned with the core values, mission, and vision of the district. Parents/guardians, teachers, staff and administrators are expected to mutually support each other in efforts to help students exhibit responsible behavior within the school community as part of learning basic life skills. Students are taught ways to handle differences in a non-violent manner and are expected to use those methods to handle disputes or conflicts. Our desire is that every child that comes to our school has the right to feel safe and free to be who they are without feeling any more or less significant than any other student in school.

To ensure this safe environment, the district and each school have established clear student discipline policies, consequences appropriate to behaviors, and a practice to implement these guidelines fairly. Students are expected to behave in accordance with federal, state and local laws, district policies and guidelines, and in a way that respects the rights and safety of others.

The following are district-wide discipline guidelines. These guidelines and the potential consequences apply any time a student is present on district property, participating in a school-sponsored activity, or traveling in a district vehicle. These guidelines and the potential consequences also apply to student behavior that has a connection to school property or the student's status as a district student. Student conduct that occurs off-campus, but has a connection to the school environment, may form the basis for school discipline. This specifically includes activities that occur off-campus over the internet, on social media, or through other communications. Listed are the violations and the recommended consequences; although all determinations will be made on a case-by-case basis. Minnesota State High School League consequences may also apply in accordance with its rules and district policy.

A student who accumulates excess violations of these disciplinary guidelines or for serious behavior may be disciplined in light of the student's overall record. The student and parent/guardian will have a conference with the principal and/or other(s) to make them aware that the student is accumulating excessive infractions. Any student who has been suspended for violations of the guidelines may be recommended for expulsion upon their return if they commit additional offenses of the same nature.

The general practice of the district regarding disciplinary action is to use a progressive and restorative form of discipline to the extent that is reasonable and possible based on the determined facts and situation of the student misconduct.

The specific form of discipline utilized is at the discretion of the building principal. At a minimum, violation of district rules, regulations, policies or procedures will result in a discussion of the infraction, verbal warning by school administration, and some restorative action by the student. Note that infractions and consequences may also be modified or disregarded if circumstances require mitigation or exception (e.g., student whose misbehavior is related to their disability). These discipline guidelines are based on school policies, located on the district's website at www.sspps.org/about/school-board/policies.

Behavior Definitions and Consequences

*It is the general policy of the school district to utilize progressive discipline to the extent reasonable. The specific form of discipline chosen in a particular case is solely within the discretion of the school district. The school district shall, however, impose more severe disciplinary sanctions for a violation, including suspension or expulsion, if warranted by the student's misconduct. **The following consequences provide a guideline for violations of school rules and policies. Additionally, each situation is reviewed on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the student's age or developmental ability, and where appropriate, restitution or restorative practices are employed to help students learn and grow from their mistakes.***

BEHAVIOR PRACTICES: LEVELED VIOLATIONS & IMPACT ON COMMUNITY

PARENTS/GUARDIANS AND STUDENTS

LEVELS OF BEHAVIOR

Behaviors are divided into four levels with examples of strategies and responses, which:

- Teach positive behavior so students can learn and be kind, responsible and safe
- Maintain the continuity of the student's instruction within the classroom and broader school community
- Ultimately focus on repairing harm, restoring relationships, teaching replacement skills, and changing behavior

Level 1 reflects minor behaviors and Level 4 reflects most serious behaviors. In the Definitions of Behavior Categories and Disciplinary Responses grids beginning on page 13, rows highlighted in pink denote behaviors that are State Reportable through the Discipline Incident Reporting System of which a student may be assigned an in-school or out-of-school suspension.

Factors to Consider Prior to Determining the Disciplinary Response

School staff must consult this document when determining disciplinary measures. In determining how best to address inappropriate behavior, it is necessary to evaluate the totality of the circumstances surrounding the behavior. The following must be considered prior to determining the appropriate disciplinary measures:

The student's age, maturity, culture, and developmental level
The student's ability and/or willingness to repair the harm caused by their behavior
The student's disciplinary record including the nature of any prior misbehavior, the number of prior instances of misbehavior, and the staff strategies and responses applied for each
The nature, severity and scope of the behavior
The circumstances/context in which the conduct occurred
The frequency and duration of the behavior
The number of persons involved in the behavior
The impact of the behavior on the school community
The social-emotional status/needs of all persons involved in the behavior
The student's Individualized Education Program (IEP), Positive Behavior Support Plan (PBSP), Safety Plan and/or 504 Accommodation Plan, if applicable

LEVEL 1: CLASSROOM

Level 1 primarily focuses on tier 1 in the classroom. Student behaviors are minor in effect and are addressed at the classroom level. The staff response is to first self-regulate and then prompt, re-teach or practice the expected behavior so students learn and demonstrate kind, responsible and safe behaviors. Staff members are expected to use a variety of teaching and management strategies.

Examples of Strategies and Leveled Responses- Classroom Managed

REGULATION	LEVELED RESPONSES
<p>Adult self regulation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pause, breathe, self-talk • Focus on what you want the student to do • Use Noticing language <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I see _____, Is there something I can do to support you? <p>Nonverbal redirection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eye contact • Pause • Proximity • Pre-arranged signal • Planned ignoring <p>Verbal redirection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiet word • Give choice • Cue desired behavior skill • State consequence (simple, reasonable, enforceable) • Cue Safe Place/calming space • Cue student specific break plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-teach/review SEL/behavior skill • Discuss behavior in private • Seat change • Role-play SEL/behavior skill • Daily progress sheet on behavior • Break from class to another supervised classroom (less than 15 minutes) • Parent/guardian communication • Restitution • Loss of privileges • classroom community service • Reflective activity • In-class time out

LEVEL 2: COMMUNITY

Level 2 primarily focuses on behavior incidents that impact individuals and community. The staff response is to first self-regulate/ ensure safety and then prompt, re-teach or practice the expected behavior so students learn and demonstrate kind, responsible and safe behaviors. Level 2 behavior incidents include: 1) repeated or significant incident(s) of Level 1; 2) unexpected behavior towards another student, staff, volunteers, etc; 3) behavior that is generally managed with a brief strategy by an adult present in that setting, and may include additional brief contact with support staff such as Dean, Social Worker, Student Support Assistant, Assistant Principal, or other trusted adult.

Examples of Strategies and Leveled Responses- Community

LEVELED RESPONSE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of lower-level strategies and responses • Parent/guardian communication • Loss of classroom/setting privileges • Assigned seat on bus • Implement a 2x10 strategy • Teacher/student problem solving conference • Restorative practices • Conflict resolution • Restitution (fix-it plan) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflective activity • Apology • Peer mediation • School community service • Behavior contract: expected student behaviors/consequences and incentive • Referral to formal Check-In/Check-Out plan with adult • Referral to school based, skill building group • Loss of transportation (bus) privileges for behavior on the bus (unless conflicting with IEP) • In School Suspension • Potential police notification

LEVEL 3: SCHOOL

Level 3 behavior incidents are more serious and impact safety and learning. They are usually addressed outside the classroom by the student support team. These actions aim to correct behavior by stressing the seriousness of the behavior while providing access to educational programming.

Examples of Strategies and Leveled Responses- School

- **Use of lower-level strategies and responses**
- Loss of classroom/setting privileges
- Restorative practices
- Parent/guardian and/or staff conference
- Contract between teacher, student and parent/guardian
- Restitution for property incidents
- Referral to building SRT or BARR team
- Change in schedule
- Referral to outside resources
- Removal from classroom
- Alternate in-school educational programming, during which school work is completed, for less than half a day
- In-school suspension, during which school work is completed
- Out of school suspension
 - Suspension re-entry
- Dismissal
- Collaborative conversation with district support team
- Threat Assessment
- Potential police notification

LEVEL 4: DISTRICT

Level 4 behavior incidents have a more serious impact and are addressed outside the classroom, by the school and/or district administration for additional support. The school's response may include the recommendation of expulsion. These strategies or responses focus on maintaining the safety of the school community and ending self-destructive and/or dangerous behavior.

Examples of Strategies and Leveled Responses- District

- **Use of lower-level strategies and responses**
- Parent/guardian conference
- Restitution for property incidents
- Check in/process with staff
- Out of school suspension
- Collaborative conversation with district support team
- Referral to building SRT or BARR team
- Referral to outside resources
- Monetary restitution
- Potential police notification
- Interim alternative educational placement
- Expulsion or exclusion (an act of the Board of Education)

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS TO THE MN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION THROUGH THE DISCIPLINARY INCIDENT REPORTING SYSTEM (DIRS)

1. There is a school disciplinary action involving a student, including:
 - In-school Suspension;
 - Out-of-school Suspension;
 - Expulsion (report within 30 days of effective date);
 - Exclusion (report within 30 days of effective date);
 - Administrative Transfer;
 - Offender Requested to Transfer within the School District;
 - Offender Requested to Transfer to Another District;
 - Offender Withdrew from School;
 - Unilateral Removal to An Alternative Educational Setting; or
 - Removal by Hearing Officer on Determination of Likely Injury.
2. A student is referred to law enforcement as a result of a school-related incident, regardless of the disciplinary outcome.
3. A student is arrested as a result of a school-related incident, regardless of the disciplinary outcome.
4. Possession or use of a dangerous weapon in a school zone, regardless of the disciplinary outcome.
5. Physical assault of a district employee, including all teachers and staff, by a student (report within 30 days of assault), regardless of disciplinary outcome.

DEFINITIONS OF BEHAVIOR CATEGORIES AND DISCIPLINARY RESPONSES

Districts are required to report the incidents highlighted in pink through the State's Discipline Incident Reporting System as explained above

DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR					
DEFINITION	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	L1	L2	L3	L4
<p>Inappropriate Language</p> <p>Students are expected to use language that is appropriate in an educational setting. The use of inappropriate language includes language when not directed at a specific person and involves profanity, general sexual connotations or innuendo, put-downs to a particular group of people, or is otherwise not appropriate for a school setting. Isolated references to alcohol, drug and tobacco use, or other illegal behavior, will be inappropriate language, unless the references are made for an educational purpose in connection with an assignment from a classroom teacher.</p>		X			
<p>Sexual Inappropriate Behavior/ Misconduct</p> <p>Sexual misconduct includes verbal and nonverbal attempts to initiate sexual contact with another person and any form of touching of a sexual nature, with or without consent of the other party. Sexual misconduct also includes exchanging pornographic, obscene, or otherwise sexually suggestive photographs or messages with another person, including behavior commonly referred to as "sexting." Pornographic material or pornography is defined as material (such as writings, photographs, or videos) depicting sexual activity or erotic behavior in a way that is designed to arouse sexual excitement.</p>				X	
<p>Abusive Language, Verbal Abuse</p> <p>Abusive language consists of verbal abuse directed at a specific person, such as a teacher, staff member or classmate. Verbal abuse is the improper or excessive use of language to humiliate someone, to undermine someone's dignity, or to undermine someone's authority. Profanity and insults specifically directed at an individual are considered bullying or harassment.</p>				X	

BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

DEFINITION	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	L1	L2	L3	L4
<p>Bullying Per Policy 514 and Minn. Stat. §121A.031, bullying means intimidating, threatening, abusive or harming conduct that is objectively offensive and</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There is an actual or perceived imbalance of power exists between the student engaging in the prohibited conduct and the target of the prohibited conduct, and the conduct is repeated or forms a pattern; or 2. Materially and substantially interferes with a student's educational opportunities or performance or ability to participate in school functions or activities or receive school benefits, services, or privileges. <p><i>"Intimidating, threatening, abusive, or harming conduct"</i> includes, but is not limited to, conduct that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Causes physical harm to a student or a student's property or causes a student to be in reasonable fear of harm to person or property; 2. Under Minnesota common law, violates a student's reasonable expectation of privacy, defames a student, or constitutes intentional infliction of emotional distress against a student; or 3. Is directed at any student or students, including those based on a person's actual or perceived race, ethnicity, color, creed, religion, national origin, immigration status, sex, gender, age, marital status, familial status, socioeconomic status, physical appearance, sexual orientation including gender identity or expression, academic status related to student performance, disability, or status with regard to public assistance, age, or any additional characteristic defined in the Minnesota Human Rights Act ("MHRA"). However, prohibited conduct need not be based on any particular characteristic defined in this paragraph or the MHRA. 	<p>The term, "bullying," specifically includes Cyberbullying - Cyberbullying means bullying using technology or other electronic communication, including, but not limited to, a transfer of a sign, signal, writing, image, sound, or data, including a post on a social network, Internet website or forum, transmitted through a computer, cell phone, or other electronic device. The term applies to prohibited conduct which occurs on school premises, on school district property, at school functions or activities, on school transportation, or on school computers, networks, forums, and mailing lists, or off school premises to the extent that it substantially and materially disrupts student learning or the school environment.</p> <p><i>To report an incident of bullying, students and/or families should contact their building administrator.</i></p>			X	
<p>Discrimination School Board Policy 102 states that the purpose of the policy is to ensure that an equal educational opportunity is provided for all students. To that end, SSPPS prohibits students from engaging in acts of discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, gender, marital status, parental status, status with regard to public assistance, disability, sexual orientation including gender identity and expression, or age</p>				X	

BULLYING AND HARASSMENT (CONT'D)

DEFINITION	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	L1	L2	L3	L4
<p>Harassment</p> <p>School Board Policy 413 prohibits acts of harassment and violence on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation including gender identity and expression, age, marital status, familial status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, or disability. Policy 413 generally defines harassment as behavior that consists of physical or verbal conduct, including, but not limited to, electronic communications, relating to an individual's or group of individuals' race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation including gender identity and expression, age, marital status, familial status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, or disability when the conduct:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or academic environment; 2. has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance; or 3. otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment or academic opportunities. <p>Students may not use microaggressions, which are verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership, often about race.</p>				X	
<p>Hazing</p> <p>School Board Policy 526 specifically addresses hazing. Hazing is defined as committing an act against a student, or coercing a student into committing an act, that creates a substantial risk of harm to a person, in order for the student to be initiated into or affiliated with a student organization, or for any other school-related purpose. The term hazing includes, but is not limited to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Any type of physical brutality such as whipping, beating, striking, branding, electronic shocking, or placing a harmful substance on the body; 2. Any type of physical activity such as sleep deprivation, exposure to weather, confinement in a restricted area, calisthenics or other activity that subjects the student to an unreasonable risk of harm or that adversely affects the mental or physical health or safety of the student; 3. Any activity involving the consumption of any alcoholic beverage, drug, tobacco product, or any other food, liquid, or substance that subjects the student to an unreasonable risk of harm or that adversely affects the mental or physical health or safety of the student; 4. Any activity that intimidates or threatens the student with ostracism, that subjects a student to extreme mental stress, embarrassment, shame or humiliation, that adversely affects the mental health or dignity of the student or discourages the student from remaining in school; and 5. Any activity that causes or requires the student to perform a task that involves violation of state or federal law or of SSPPS policies or regulations. 					X

PHYSICAL AGGRESSION

DEFINITION	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	L1	L2	L3	L4
<p>Horseplay and Play Fighting</p> <p>Horseplay and play fighting involves no intent to harm. Behaviors include, but are not limited to, the following: (1) pretending to hit, punch, kick, or otherwise make physical contact with another individual; (2) pranks; (3) rough or boisterous play involving physical contact; and (4) running in the building.</p>			X		
<p>Innapropriate Physical Contact</p> <p>Students are expected to keep their hands to themselves. Intentionally touching or making physical contact with another individual, without that individual’s permission, is not allowed. The contact may or may not involve harm.</p>			X		
<p>Physical Aggression</p> <p>An intentional act by a student resulting in bodily harm. Students engage in non-serious but inappropriate physical contact, such as pushing and intimidation. Physical aggression is defined as hitting, kicking, pushing, shoving, tripping, and other similar acts of physical conduct carried out with an intent to cause harm to another individual. Physical aggression does not include conduct that falls within the definition of horseplay, play fighting, or fighting.</p>				X	
<p>Fighting</p> <p>It is the policy of the school district to maintain a learning environment that is safe and free from fear and violence. Fighting is defined as intentionally hitting, kicking, punching, pushing, shoving, or tripping another individual who is a mutual combatant (both parties participate) in a physical altercation involving two or more people. Fighting is distinguishable from physical aggression because physical aggression does not involve a mutual combatant. School district administrators possess the discretion to determine what conduct constitutes a “fight” or an “assault.”</p>				X	
<p>Group Violence</p> <p>Students should interact in a positive manner with their peers. Students must not plan, instigate or participate with another or others, in an incident of group violence. This includes but is not limited to physical aggression, fights, riots, assault, gang-related activities and cyberbullying. Group violence can occur on school grounds, during school-sponsored events, or through electronic means.</p>				X	
<p>Threat of Violence</p> <p>Threats of violence are either direct or indirect threats to commit an act of violence for the purpose of causing serious inconvenience or disruption in the school environment or to cause the evacuation of a school building, event, or vehicle. A bomb threat or school shooting is an example of a threat of violence. Students may not engage in any behaviors that meet the Minn. Stat. 609.713 definition of terroristic threats.</p>					X

PHYSICAL AGGRESSION (CONT'D)

DEFINITION	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	L1	L2	L3	L4
<p>Assault Assault is doing an act with intent to cause fear in another of immediate bodily harm or death or intentionally inflicting or attempting to inflict bodily harm upon another.</p>					X
<p>Sexual Assault Sexual assault is any type of sexual contact or behavior such as rape, fondling, or molestation that occurs without the explicit consent of the individual who is the recipient of the contact or behavior. Students of all genders can be victims of sexual assault.</p>					X

OTHER DISCIPLINARY CONCERNS

DEFINITION	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	L1	L2	L3	L4
<p>Alcohol, Chemicals, Prescription, Over the Counter (OTC) products or Controlled Substances , Illegal Drugs —Possession/ Use Students may not possess or use controlled substances, including but not limited to, any narcotic drug, inhalant, hallucinogenic drug, toxic or mood-altering substances, intoxicating beverage, tobacco (including e-cigarettes, pipes, etc.), items regarded as a drug, or any paraphernalia associated with controlled substances., The unauthorized use of prescription drugs is strictly prohibited on school property, on the school bus, or at any school-sponsored extracurricular activity or event.</p>					X
<p>Alcohol, Chemicals, Prescription, Over the Counter (OTC) Drugs or Controlled Substances — Soliciting/ Selling Students may not purchase, intent to purchase, sell, intend to sell, distribute, and/ or give away controlled substances, including but not limited to, any narcotic drug, inhalant, hallucinogenic drug, toxic or mood-altering substances, intoxicating beverage, tobacco (including e-cigarettes, pipes, etc.), items regarded as a drug, or any paraphernalia associated with controlled substances.</p>					X
<p>Arson Arson is the unauthorized, intentional burning of one's own property or someone else's property. Students must not plan and/or participate in malicious burning of property. The use of a combustible or flammable liquid is prohibited. Minn. Stat. 609.561-5632 (arson in 1st through 5th degrees).</p>					X

OTHER DISCIPLINARY CONCERNS (CONT'D)

DEFINITION	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	L1	L2	L3	L4
<p>Attendance, Tardiness, Truancy</p> <p>In addition to the compulsory attendance mandate of state law, the school board recognizes and emphasizes the intrinsic value of attendance each school day by each student. It enables every student to profit to the maximum degree from the enhanced learning environment that full attendance promotes. Compulsory attendance policies for students under the age of 17 years will be applied in cases of chronic absence or tardiness. Parental notification will occur when a student is determined to be truant by the school. A student under the age of 17 years with seven or more unexcused absences may be referred to appropriate services.</p> <p><i>Attendance disciplinary action is outlined in the district's attendance policy (Policy 503).</i></p>	<p>All students are expected to be on time for class. A student is tardy when they are not present in class and prepared to receive instruction at the scheduled start time of the class. Elementary students may be considered tardy if they are not on time for school at the beginning of the school day.</p>	X			
<p>Dishonesty/Academic Dishonesty</p> <p>Students are expected to tell the truth. A student is dishonest when they do not tell the truth or provides information that is misleading. Intentional behavior including, but not limited to, plagiarism, copying another's work, cheating, or altering records. Students are expected to do their own work and to provide proper citations and attributions when their work references materials created by others. Cheating occurs when a student represents another individual's work as their own, obtains data or answers through acts of deception or dishonesty, or uses tools or resources that are not authorized by a teacher when completing an assignment. Plagiarism involves copying the work of others or copying portions of books, magazines, research materials, or Internet sources without using proper citations or attributions. Cheating and plagiarism also could involve distributing academic materials or other information to other students, either hand-to-hand or through the use of technology, to facilitate cheating or plagiarism.</p>			X		
<p>Failure to Follow Instructions</p> <p>Students are expected to follow the instruction of all SSPPS personnel, regardless of whether employed by SSPPS directly or through a contractor, and volunteers.</p>			X		
<p>Fraud/Forgery</p> <p>Falsely making or altering a writing by which the legal rights or obligations of another person are apparently affected; simulated signing of another person's name to any such writing.</p>			X		

OTHER DISCIPLINARY CONCERNS (CONT'D)

DEFINITION	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	L1	L2	L3	L4
<p>Grooming, Dress</p> <p>Students are expected to dress appropriately for school activities and in keeping with the needs of the learning environment as defined in School Board Policy 504. This is a joint responsibility of the student and the student's parent(s) or guardian(s).</p>	<p>The following are considered inappropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apparel that can be hazardous to them or present a health problem • Apparel or footwear that can damage school property • Apparel that includes words or visuals that are lewd, obscene, disruptive, or discriminatory or advertise drugs, alcohol or tobacco; or any products or activities that are illegal for use by minors. • Apparel that includes objectionable emblems, badges, symbols, signs, words, objects or pictures on clothing or jewelry communicating a message that is racist, sexist, or otherwise derogatory to a protected minority group, evidences gang membership or affiliation, or approves, advances or provokes any form of religious, racial or sexual harassment and/or violence against other individuals as defined in Policy 413 are prohibited. 	X			
<p>Hazardous and Nuisance Objects</p> <p>Hazardous and nuisance objects as judged by teachers or administration are prohibited from school property and school-sponsored events. The following are examples of prohibited items: toys, skateboards, rollerblades/roller-wheel objects, laser pointers, lighters, perfumes, and body sprays. The administration reserves the right to examine district property and the person. The school district assumes no responsibility for finding or protecting items mentioned above.</p>			X		
<p>Leaving Class without Permission</p> <p>Students are expected to be in their assigned area and not to leave to other parts of the building or to elope outside of the building. Students are expected to be in class until they are excused, and may not leave class before the end of a class period without permission.</p>			X		

OTHER DISCIPLINARY CONCERNS (CONT'D)

DEFINITION	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	L1	L2	L3	L4
<p>Misuse of Technology</p> <p>The use of the school district computer system and access to the internet is a privilege, not a right. Students are expected to utilize technology in a manner that is consistent with the educational mission of SSPPS. Policy 536- Student Information Technology Acceptable Use Policy, outlines SSPPS's expectations for student use of technology, to include the use of all electronic devices (e.g. cell phones, smartphones, smartwatches, etc.). All students are expected to act in accordance with this policy. Misuse of technology includes conduct resulting in harm or potential harm to the student, another individual, or another individual's property. Students should be aware that misconduct involving the misuse of technology may also meet the definitions of other offenses outlined in this handbook (e.g., cheating or plagiarism, cyberbullying, harassment or discrimination).</p>				X	
<p>Ordering Food</p> <p>Parents and students are not allowed to order or receive food from an outside vendor/restaurant for delivery during the school day.</p>		X			
<p>Photographic or Recording Device Misuse</p> <p>Any photographic, video image or audio recording taken of a teacher or student during the instructional day without the consent of the individual(s). Any photographic or movie image taken of a teacher or other students during the instructional day cannot be published or posted on a public forum (e.g., YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, etc.) without the written consent of each individual. District Policy 514 states posting or sending images without permission is a violation and could be considered Cyberbullying.</p>				X	
<p>Property Damage, Vandalism</p> <p>Property damage is a violation when it involves the intentional damage, destruction, vandalism, or breaking of another individual's property or SSPPS property. For example, property damage includes intentional acts such as damaging or destroying textbooks and other school equipment, using technology to download or deploy unauthorized or malicious software, spray painting surfaces, acts of vandalism, and damaging or destroying the property of another student. Students are expected to be respectful of all property. Misuse of property occurs when a student uses property without permission or uses property in a way that is inconsistent with the intended use of the property.</p>	Property under \$500		X		
	Property over \$500			X	

OTHER DISCIPLINARY CONCERNS (CONT'D)

DEFINITION	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	L1	L2	L3	L4
<p>Possession of Dangerous Weapon or Other Dangerous Object</p> <p>Students must keep dangerous weapons out of school. Students may not bring dangerous weapons to school. A “dangerous weapon other than a firearm” is defined as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any device or instrument designed as a weapon and capable of producing death or great bodily harm; • Any device modified so that it may be used as a weapon and capable of producing death or great bodily harm; • Any combustible or flammable liquid or other device or instrumentality that, in the manner it is used or intended to be used, is calculated or likely to produce death or great bodily harm; • Any fire that is used to produce death or great bodily harm; • Any knife with a blade; • Any replica firearm, BB or pellet gun. • Minn. Stat § 609.02, subd. 8 (def. great bodily harm) • Minn. Stat § 609.02, subd. (def. of dangerous weapon) • Minn. Stat § 609.66, subd. 1d, 18 U.S.C. § 930(g)(2) (def. dangerous weapon) <p>“Other weapon” includes any device or instrument – including any non-conventional weapon – which, in the manner it is used or intended to be used, is calculated or likely to produce bodily harm or substantial bodily harm, or fear of any degree of bodily harm. Other weapons include but are not limited to knives with blades, fake knives, look-alike weapons, clubs, metal knuckles, chains, poisons, arrows, bats, nunchucks, throwing stars, stun guns, mace and other propellants, and other objects that have been modified to serve as a weapon, etc. This includes pyrotechnics such as firecrackers, fireworks, smoke bombs, etc. that contain flash powder, gunpowder, blackpowder, or any other explosive compound constructed to produce detonation or deflagration.</p> <p>A student who finds a weapon on the way to school or in the school building, or a student who discovers that they accidentally have a weapon in their possession, and takes the weapon immediately to the Principal’s Office shall not be considered to possess a weapon.</p> <p>“School Location” includes a school building, school grounds, school activities or trips, bus stops, school buses or school vehicles, school-contracted vehicles, the area of entrance or departure from school premises or events, and all school-related functions.</p> <p>“Possession” means having a weapon on one person or in an area subject to one’s control in a school location.</p>	<p>With No Intent</p>			X	
	<p>With Intent to Use or Use</p>				X
<p>Possession of a Firearm</p> <p>Students may not bring firearms to school. Firearms are banned from all property owned or controlled by South St. Paul Public Schools. A firearm is defined in Minn. Stat. § 609.666, subd. 1(a) as a device designed to be used as a weapon, from which is expelled a projectile by the force of explosion or by the force of combustion.</p>					X
<p>Substantial Interruption to the Learning Environment</p> <p>A substantial interruption to the learning environment occurs when a student engages in behavior that creates a substantial risk of or results in injury, or that significantly disrupts learning (e.g., throwing chairs, causing the evacuation of classrooms, eloping to unsafe areas, verbal arguments disrupting the learning of other rooms, etc.). Students do not have the right to interfere with other students’ right to receive an education.</p>				X	

OTHER DISCIPLINARY CONCERNS (CONT'D)

DEFINITION	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	L1	L2	L3	L4
Theft Theft is taking the property of another individual or the school without permission, with the intent of not returning the property to the owner. No force is involved in the taking of property.	Theft under \$500		X		
	Theft over \$500			X	
Trespassing Students may not be on school property or in parts of school property without permission, including while suspended or expelled; includes breaking and entering into locked or private areas, such as other students' lockers, administrative office areas, and supply cabinets.				X	
Truancy/Violation of Closed Campus Students may not leave the school campus during school hours without prior approval.			X		

Misconduct that occurs which is not covered by the infractions and guidelines above will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Behaviors that are willful and disruptive or potentially harmful may be subject to disciplinary action regardless of whether the specific behavior is defined above. Unique or special situations at a particular school may call for an adjustment in the discipline policies to meet the needs of the school and/or district.

DISCIPLINE GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS (504, IEP AND STUDENTS UNDER EVALUATION)

In accordance with state & federal law, the following provides guidelines for discipline consequences for students identified as special education.

	IEP Team Required	Manifestation Determination	Alternative Education Services Required
Student suspended for one school day or less	NO*	NO*	NO*
Student suspended for less than five consecutive school days	NO*	NO*	NO*
Student suspended for five OR MORE consecutive school days	YES	NO*	YES
Student suspended for more than 10 cumulative days in a school year or more	YES*	YES*	NO*
Student placed on in-school suspension	NO**	NO**	NO**
Student suspended from the bus	DEPENDS***	DEPENDS***	DEPENDS***

* Unless the student has been suspended 11 or more than 10 cumulative days in a school year. (Minn. Stat. §121A.43(a)).

** In-school suspension is not considered a day of suspension for a student with a disability as long as the student continues to receive regular and special education services during the in-school suspension.

*** If bus transportation is part of the student's IEP, a bus suspension would be treated as a removal unless the school provides transportation in some other way, because that transportation is necessary for the student to obtain access to the location where all other services will be delivered. If bus transportation is not a part of the student's IEP, a bus suspension typically would not be a removal.

1 Manifestation Determination" is a process to determine if a student's behavior problem was or was not a manifestation of the student's disability.

STUDENT BUS RIDER RESPONSIBILITIES

South St. Paul Public Schools is committed to providing a safe and enjoyable riding experience for its bus riders. Parents or guardians are responsible for the safety of their student(s) until they are on the school bus. The district's student bus rider responsibilities section has been established by the district. Please review this information and discuss it with your child(ren). This information is being provided so that your child(ren) will clearly understand bus behavior expectations.

Riding the school bus or school van is a privilege, not a right, that can be revoked if a student chooses not to comply with the rules for bus riders. The school district's general student behavior rules are in effect for all students on school buses. Consequences for school bus/bus stop misconduct will be imposed by the school district under adopted administrative discipline procedures. In addition, all school bus/bus stop misconduct will be reported to the school district's transportation department. Serious misconduct may be reported to local law enforcement.

STUDENT BUS RIDER RESPONSIBILITIES

The district's goal is to provide safe and enjoyable transportation for our students. This occurs when we work in cooperation with students, parents, teachers and drivers. Students are expected to ride their assigned bus everyday, and be picked up and dropped off at their assigned bus stop, unless alternative plans are approved by administration. All students who ride the bus are expected to follow and observe the school district's safety rules, as well as those of the bus driver. Students who do not follow rules will be subject to suspension of bus-riding privileges as designated in the policy below. For the safety of all riders, please review the following rider responsibilities with your child(ren) before the school year begins.

Going to the Bus Stop

- Use sidewalks where provided.
- If there are no sidewalks, walk single file on the left shoulder of the street facing traffic.
- Cross streets only at corners.
- Use a direct route, but avoid crossing yards or empty lots.
- Arrive at your bus stop no more than five minutes before the scheduled stop. The bus driver cannot wait for late students.
- Be aware of suspicious individuals on foot or in motor vehicles. Report these persons to your bus driver or school principal. Even if you have missed the bus, do not accept rides from strangers.

Waiting at the Bus Stop

- Wait away from the traffic. Stay at least five feet off the road or street.
- Respect the property of others while waiting at the bus stop. Do not pick flowers, disturb shrubs, throw stones or snowballs, litter, etc.
- Use appropriate language at all times.
- Respect other students by not pushing, shoving or fighting.
- Stay back from the street until the bus is actually stopped. A push at the middle or end of the line can send the front person into the bus or under its wheels.
- Older students should be helpful to younger ones.
- The district's student behavior policies, guidelines, and rules are enforceable while a student waits at the bus stop.

Boarding the Bus

- Wait until the bus has stopped and the door is opened before starting to board.
- Board the bus single file.
- Continue to show respect for others by not pushing or shoving.
- Use the handrail to keep from slipping, falling, or tripping.
- Greet the bus driver.
- Move directly to your seat and sit down.
- Put large items (e.g. musical instrument, packages) in seat area or under the seat, but not in the aisle.

STUDENT BUS RIDER RESPONSIBILITIES (CONT'D)

Riding on the Bus

- Follow directions of the driver.
- Stay in your seat.
- Keep all parts of your body in the bus.
- No pushing, shoving, cutting in, fighting at any time.
- No eating, drinking, smoking, or spitting.
- No loud talking, horseplay, throwing things, or inappropriate language.

Getting off the Bus

- Wait for the bus to be completely stopped and the door to be opened before standing up.
- Stay respectful of others – no shoving or pushing.
- Walk five big steps away from the bus, turn and look at the bus driver.
- Wait until the bus is at least a half a block away before proceeding home.
- Do not go in back of or underneath the bus for any reason

CONSEQUENCES FOR MISBEHAVIOR ON THE BUS

If a student chooses to break a rule, the following consequences are applied:

1st incident	Verbal warning
2nd incident	Bus conduct report is issued. Parents contacted via phone or email and letter sent home. Letter must be signed and returned. Possible consequences include apology, assigned seat or suspension from riding the bus.
3rd incident	A second bus conduct report is issued and a one to three day suspension from riding the bus is applied.
4th incident	A third bus conduct report is issued and five-day suspension from riding the bus is applied
5th incident	A fourth bus conduct report is issued and permanent removal from bus privileges may be applied, which includes all school activities.

*The following inappropriate behavior will result in **automatic suspension of transportation privileges**:*

- Physical harm to another student
- Property damage
- Physical harm or threat of physical harm to driver (may result in arrest)
- Refusal to obey driver or verbal abuse of driver
- Disruption; which creates a safety hazard
- Possession of any dangerous weapon

STUDENT USE OF PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES

South St. Paul Public Schools believes the use of personal electronic devices is a privilege and can be an acceptable communication and educational tool that requires responsible use by all students. Use of electronic devices including, but not limited to, cellular phones, smartphones and smartwatches, digital cameras, laptop computers, tablets and other personal electronic devices capable of transmitting data or images during instructional time **may be allowed with explicit permission from the instructor.**

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES FOR PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICE

SSPPS is not responsible for lost or stolen property. Personal property includes personal electronic devices. All property should be clearly identified or labeled. Articles are much more likely to be returned to the proper person if they are marked clearly.

Expectations of Use

GRADE	EXPECTATIONS	POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES
<p>Grades K-8</p>	<p>Use of personal computers and tablets is reserved for use during instructional time only and is forbidden in all other settings of the school grounds.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are required to turn off all devices when entering the building. Students may turn the devices back on again when exiting the building, Uses of these devices in the school will result in the phones being confiscated, and the family needing to come pick them up. <p>Parents are asked to not disrupt the school environment by contacting their children via their cell phone and should instead contact the school's main office to leave their child a message. Students should turn their cell phones off while in school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are not allowed to contact parents during the school day using their personal device. Students must ask permission to contact parents and will use a school phone when given permission by school personnel. It is highly suggested that students memorize their family's phone numbers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Verbal warning Confiscation and family must pick-up device Classroom consequences Parent notification Removal from class Detention Team meeting (teacher, parent, counselor, admin) Check in device at office each morning Loss of other technology privileges
<p>Grades 9-12</p>	<p>Use of personal devices is subject to teacher discretion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of personal electronic devices is a privilege, not a right. Students are discouraged from using personal electronic devices during the school day unless for instructional use. Misuse of devices in the classroom or at other times during the school day are subject to the consequences listed. <p>Parents are asked to not disrupt the school environment by contacting their children via their cell phone during class.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Verbal warning Confiscation Classroom consequences Parent notification Removal from class Detention Team meeting (teacher, parent, counselor, admin) Morning check-in Loss of other technology privileges

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is the role of a school resource officer?

School resource officers are not SSPPS employees. SSPPS expects school resource officers to demonstrate professionalism at all times and to act as a positive role model for students. Their role in the school setting is outlined in a contract between SSPPS and the City of South St. Paul. The primary role of a school resource officer is to deter and address criminal activity on school property and at school-sponsored events and activities. School resource officers are not involved in determining student discipline and they are not involved in addressing student misconduct that does not involve suspected criminal conduct.

SSPPS staff will consult with school resource officers to the extent necessary to report any potential criminal activity at school or a school-sponsored event or activity. In addition, SSPPS staff will consult with school resource officers to the extent necessary to comply with mandatory reporting obligations, such as the obligation to report suspected maltreatment of minors under Minn. Stat. § 626.556. To the extent permitted by State and Federal law, SSPPS staff may also disclose information to law enforcement in emergency situations where law enforcement's knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health and safety of a student or other individuals.

2. How does SSPPS address attendance issues?

District Policy 503 generally outlines SSPPS's expectations with respect to student attendance. Policy 503 can be found in its entirety on the school district website. As noted above, isolated instances in which a student is tardy will be handled at the classroom level. Repeated tardiness may warrant an office referral. Unexcused absences are otherwise addressed in the behavior and consequences section of this handbook in accordance with specific statutory provisions related to compulsory school attendance (Minn. Stat. §120A.22).

3. How does SSPPS treat behavior in school parking lots?

School parking lots are considered school grounds for purposes of implementing SSPPS discipline policies and procedures. The same behavioral expectations that apply in school buildings apply in school parking lots. Parking on school grounds is a privilege, not a right. Students only may park in areas that are designated for student parking. In addition to the behavioral consequences outlined in this Handbook, a student who engages in misconduct in a SSPPS parking lot may have their parking privileges suspended or revoked. If a student parks in an unauthorized area or if an unauthorized vehicle is parked in a SSPPS parking lot, SSPPS may move the vehicle, require the owner to move the vehicle, or have the vehicle removed from SSPPS property and towed to a location off SSPPS grounds at the owner's expense. Student vehicles parked on SSPPS property may be subject to a search if SSPPS personnel have a reasonable suspicion that the search will uncover evidence of illegal conduct or a violation of SSPPS rules and policies. Policy 527- Student Use and Parking Motor Vehicles-Patrols-Inspections and Searches, specifically addresses student use and parking of motor vehicles. Policy 527 can be found in its entirety on the school district website.

4. Is there an appeals process for student discipline?

Minnesota's Pupil Fair Dismissal Act provides for an appeals process in situations involving a student expulsion or exclusion. See [Minn. Stat. §121A.47](#). South St. Paul Public Schools focuses on resolving problems as quickly and efficiently as possible at the level closest to the individual. We encourage concerns to be addressed and resolved directly with site administrators, however, if you cannot or have already tried unsuccessfully, individuals may submit a grievance form through the district website at this link: <https://www.sspps.org/resources/school-year/handbooks#fs-panel-9644>

5. What is the district's policy on locker searches?

District Policy 502 addresses locker searches as well as personal possessions. Students have no expectation of privacy in their school lockers and school officials may search student lockers at any time, for any reason, without the permission of the student and without providing any advance notice to the student. However, personal possessions within a locker (i.e. purses, backpacks, jacket pockets) may only be searched by school officials when there is a reasonable suspicion that the search will uncover evidence of a violation of school rules or the law. For example, a school official may open a locker at any time to see what is in the locker, but may only then search a backpack in the locker if they have reason to believe it contains contraband, such as in the case where a drug dog indicates the presence of drugs in a locker.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (CONT'D)

6. What is the district's policy around searches of student cell phones and personal computers?

Searches of student cell phones and computers are similar to the search of locked or closed items in a student locker. If the school official has reasonable suspicion that a search will uncover a violation of the law or school rules, the school official may search a student's personal possessions, such as cell phones and computers.

This search need not be done with a parent present. Normally the school official would request permission from the student and for the student to provide a password. (Note that for school-owned computers, the search would be similar to a locker. Students have no expectation of privacy on such devices, which may be searched at any time, for any reason by school officials.)

Refusal to provide a password or unlock a phone may be grounds for discipline, in the same way that a student who refuses to unlock their car in the school parking lot to allow the district to search the car may be disciplined.

In general, students within the school environment have a lesser expectation of privacy than members of the general population. School districts have broad discretion in determining the extent to which students are allowed to use personal electronic devices during the school day. Violations of district policy are subject to discipline.

7. What is the district communications policy regarding serious incidents, suspensions and expulsions? Do you inform all parents of students who were involved? Do you inform all parents of the school?

In general, the district informs the parents of students who are either victims or perpetrators of serious incidents that may lead to discipline. However, state and federal law prevent the district from discussing the details of any discipline that it imposes against students with any other students or parents.

The [Minnesota Government Data Practices Act \(MGDPA\)](#) and the [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#) bind the district's hands, and only allow the district to discuss a student's discipline with that student and the student's parents/guardians. Even in a situation where a student is a victim of a serious infraction, that student (victim) and their parents/guardians will not find out what discipline, if any, was given to the perpetrator. While this can be very frustrating for both school officials and parents, the district must follow the law.

Similarly, because the students who attend a school may already know the identity of a student involved in a major incident, the District is often prevented from sharing background details or information since sharing such information may tend to identify or confirm the identity of the student or students who were involved.

In certain circumstances, the District may provide general background information to parents of all students in an attempt to be proactive and allow parents to talk to their children about issues that may be occurring at school (e.g. an email regarding Appropriate Use of Technology). While the district is not required to provide such general notice to all parents, we seek to keep parents involved in order to discuss these issues at home and encourage partnership with the district in providing a safe and healthy learning environment.

8. Does SSPPS have recommended resources to assist families in dealing with student behavior concerns and helping students develop self-management skills?

Yes. Information about these resources may be obtained from your building leadership team or by visiting our website at <https://www.sspps.org/departments/student-services>.

9. How is student data kept confidentially?

SSPPS always maintains data confidentiality when working with students and families. We do this out of respect to individuals' right to privacy as well as to comply with state and federal laws that limit the sharing of information.

We also acknowledge that data confidentiality can lead to frustration as it can limit the information we are able to share. This is particularly true when working to support victims and families as it can give the impression that no action is being taken. We ask that our families keep this in mind as we strive for meaningful partnership while also knowing that limits to information sharing can erode trust. [School Board Policy 515](#) has further information on the Protection and Privacy of Student Records.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (CONT'D)

10. How does the district investigate disciplinary situations such as bullying or harassment?

The district conducts thorough investigations into disciplinary situations like bullying or harassment through a multi-step process aimed at ensuring fairness and accountability. When allegations arise, trained personnel collect detailed accounts from all involved parties and witnesses through interviews and/or written statements. These investigations prioritize confidentiality to protect the privacy of those involved while maintaining transparency in the process. Evidence such as electronic communications, surveillance footage, or physical documentation may be reviewed to corroborate accounts. Throughout the investigative process, the district adheres to established policies and guidelines and consults with legal counsel, when necessary. Once the investigation is completed, appropriate disciplinary actions are determined based on the severity of the incident and in accordance with the Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook, district policies, and state and federal laws. The focus of any disciplinary outcome is on fostering a safe and inclusive learning environment for all students.

SUMMARY OF ADDITIONAL DISTRICT POLICIES

Besides the policies that are included and/or referred to in this Handbook, students are expected to be aware of and to abide by all of the district's policies. The following is a summary of SSPPS's policies that define student rights and responsibilities. Complete texts of these and all district policies are available on the district's website at www.sspps.org/policies or upon request from a school office.

Assessment of Standard Achievement (Policy 618)

The district provides a structure and framework for assessing student learning in the district. The grading and assessment should assist in the student's learning experiences. Each school program level will establish standardized assessments and track mastery of academic standards. The criteria will reflect the age of the student and the level of content learning.

Attendance (Policy 503)

Students are required to attend all assigned classes every day school is in session, unless the student has been excused by the school board from attendance because the student has already completed state and district standards required to graduate from high school, has withdrawn, or has a valid excuse for absence. Each school has established attendance procedures that support regular school attendance. These procedures will be shared by each school and require the support of students and families.

Bullying Prohibition (Policy 514)

The district expressly prohibits bullying, by either an individual student or a group of students, on school premises, on school district property at school functions, or activities, or on school transportation. Any person who believes they have been the target or victim of bullying or any person with knowledge or belief of conduct that may constitute bullying or prohibited conduct under this policy shall report the alleged acts immediately to the building principal. Within 3 days of the report, the school district will undertake an investigation into the matter.

Corporal Punishment (Policy 507)

Corporal punishment is prohibited. No employee or agent of the district will engage in or cause the infliction of corporal punishment on any student.

Distribution of Non School-Sponsored Materials on School Premises (Policy 505)

The district seeks to protect students' and employees' rights to free speech, while at the same time preserving the integrity of the educational objectives and responsibilities of the district. This protection includes the right to distribute nonschool-sponsored material at a reasonable time and place and in a reasonable manner. Distribution guidelines have been established by district policy and will be supervised by school administration.

Do Not Attempt Resuscitation (Policy 518)

When any student experiences sudden illness or injury, the role of an employee is to render emergency health care to preserve life and prevent disability. In life-threatening emergencies, the emergency medical system (911) will be activated. School district staff will not accept or honor requests to withhold emergency care or DNR-DNI orders. The school district will not convey such orders to emergency medical personnel. Notwithstanding this school district policy, IEP and Section 504 teams must develop individualized medical emergency care plans for students when appropriate in accordance with state and federal law.

SUMMARY OF ADDITIONAL DISTRICT POLICIES (CONT'D)

Dress and Appearance ([Policy 504](#))

Students are encouraged to dress appropriately for school activities and in keeping with the standards of a learning environment. The responsibility for student dress lies with both the student and the student's parent/guardian. Additional expectations are outlined in this handbook.

Education of Homeless Children

Students experiencing homelessness as defined under federal McKinney-Vento law shall have access to the education and other services they need to provide educational stability, and school access to meet state and district standards, including transportation to and from their school of origin.

Electronic Technologies Acceptable Use ([Policy 536](#))

Students may access online resources from their classrooms via the internet. Procedures and guidelines have been established for access to the district's networks and acceptable and safe use of the internet. The administration will supervise the guidelines. Specific expectations, including the Online Code of Ethics, are outlined by the district policy.

Parents or guardians must give approval for their child(ren) to access internet resources and students must agree to follow the acceptable use procedures. Forms are available in the district portal and Family Handbook.

Emergency Health Situations and District Insurance Limitations

The district does not purchase medical, health or accident insurance for your child. If your child has an accident, is ill, or is injured while at school or participating in district-sponsored activities; families will need to access their own insurance plans to cover any associated costs (e.g., medical care, emergency transportation). The district cannot pay these associated costs.

Employee Background Checks ([Policy 404](#))

The district places a high priority on ensuring a safe and healthy learning environment for students. This priority includes requiring all applicants who have been offered district positions to complete a criminal background check as part of the process for determining employment. This process meets legal requirements.

Equal Educational Opportunity ([Policy 102](#))

The district provides equal educational opportunity for all students, and does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, parental status, status with regard to public assistance, disability, sexual orientation or age. No student will be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity operated by the district on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, parental status, pregnancy, status with regard to public assistance, disability, sexual orientation or age.

Extended School Year ([Policy 508](#))

Extended School Year (ESY) services are provided to a student who has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) if the IEP team determines the ESY services are necessary during a break in instruction to provide a free appropriate public education.

Field Trips and Travel ([Policy 610](#))

The district supports and approves student field trips and travel beyond the classroom and areas of competition that are properly planned, well organized, and carefully supervised. Students participating in approved field trips and travel will be permitted to prepare assignments in advance or make up work missed in classes from which they are absent. All trips and travel require parent/guardian authorization.

Harassment and Violence ([Policy 413](#))

Harassment against students based on protected class status is a form of discrimination. Harassment by any person, student or staff member, based on race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, disability, sexual orientation, including gender identity or expression, age, family care leave status, or veteran status, that creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working or learning environment, or substantially interferes with the working or learning environment, will not be tolerated under any circumstance. Individuals who believe they may have experienced harassment should report the complaint to the building principal.

SUMMARY OF ADDITIONAL DISTRICT POLICIES (CONT'D)

Immunization Requirements (Policy 530)

Students are required to provide proof of immunization or appropriate documentation exempting the student from immunizations and other data necessary to ensure that the student is free from any communicable diseases, as a condition of enrollment.

Interviews of Students by Outside Agencies (Policy 519)

Generally, students may not be interviewed during the school day by persons other than a student's parents, district officials, employees or agents of the district, except as otherwise provided by law and/or district policy. Upon receiving an interview request, the principal will determine whether the request will be granted.

Medication (Policy 516)

The district acknowledges that students may require prescription and nonprescription medication during the school day. In such cases, medication may be administered only by the licensed school nurse or other trained school employees. The district strongly discourages students from possessing and self-administering nonprescription medication without written authorization from the student's parent/guardian on file in the health office.

Pledge of Allegiance (Policy 531)

Students shall recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States of America one or more times each week. Pursuant to Minn. Stat. §121A.11, subdivision 3(c), anyone who does not wish to participate in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance for any personal reasons may elect not to do so. Students and school employees must respect another person's right to make that choice.

Promotion, Acceleration, Retention and Program Design (Policy 513)

The district is dedicated to the total and continuous development of each student. Students will be placed in the instructional level best suited for their academic, social and emotional needs. Students will usually progress from level to level on an annual basis. Exceptions may be made when they are in the best educational interest of the student. Exceptions will be made only after consultation with the student's family. The final decision will rest with the district.

Protection and Privacy of Student Records (Policy 515)

The district recognizes its responsibilities in regard to the collection, maintenance and dissemination of student educational records and data. District policy defines the procedures and practices for protecting the privacy of student information in accordance with state and federal laws.

Examples of student directory information are below and may be made available to the public. A parent/guardian may refuse to have any or all of the directory information made public by notifying the building principal in writing in accordance with district policy.

- Student name, address, telephone number and electronic mail address
- Student photograph
- Student date and place of birth
- Student dates of attendance, major field of study, grade level, and enrollment status
- Student participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, degree, honors and awards received, and
- Student degrees, awards most recent educational agency or institution attended
- Parent/Guardian name, address, telephone number

Search of Lockers, Desks, Possessions and Persons (Policy 502)

(See FAQ regarding searches, page 26)

School lockers are the property of the district. The district maintains exclusive control of lockers provided for the convenience of students. Inspection of the interior of lockers may be conducted by school employees for any reason at any time, without notice, without student consent, and without a search warrant.

The personal possessions of students within a school locker or on a student's person may be searched only when school employees have a reasonable suspicion that the search will uncover evidence of a violation of law or school rules. As soon as practical after the search of a student's personal possessions within a locker, a school employee will notify the student whose personal possessions within a locker were searched unless disclosure would impede an ongoing investigation by police or school employees. Schools may also use specially trained dogs in school parking areas, to detect and alert officials to the presence of prohibited items and illicit substances.

SUMMARY OF ADDITIONAL DISTRICT POLICIES (CONT'D)

Selection of Instructional Text, Materials and Content ([Policy 606](#))

The district recognizes that the selection of textbooks and instructional materials is vital to supporting the district's academic standards and curriculum. The school board has the authority to make final decisions on the selection of instructional texts, materials and content. The district has a process, referenced in Policy 606 in, for families and community members to review or seek reconsideration of selected instructional texts and materials.

Special Accommodations and Services for Students with Special Needs ([Policy 608](#))

The district provides a full range of special services and accommodations necessary for meeting students' special needs. Families are encouraged to contact building principals for additional information related to student identification, assessment, service availability and other options.

Staff Notification of Violent Behavior of Students ([Policy 529](#))

In an effort to provide a safe school environment, the assigned classroom teacher and other employees with a legitimate educational interest will be notified if a student has a history of violent behavior. The administration will meet with the assigned classroom teacher and other employees with a legitimate educational interest for the purpose of notifying and determining how employees will work with the identified student.

Student Fundraising ([Policy 511](#))

The district recognizes the desire by district-sponsored student groups and student organizations to raise funds to meet their needs and goals and to fund student activities. School groups or organizations raising funds must meet the established district criteria and follow district policy for fundraising. National and international fundraising groups may apply for approval of specific fundraising activities through the building principals. Violations of the student fundraising policy may result in disciplinary action up to suspension or expulsion.

Student Surveys ([Policy 520](#))

The district may conduct student surveys as determined necessary. The superintendent may refuse to permit a survey to be conducted based on the alignment of the survey to the mission of the district or the impact the administration of the survey would have on the instructional day.

Student Use and Parking of Motor Vehicles ([Policy 527](#))

Students are allowed the limited use and parking of motor vehicles in district locations in accordance with district policy. Students permitted to park at a district location do so as a privilege, not a right.

Students With Communicable Diseases and Infectious Conditions ([Policy 420](#))

Students with communicable diseases are not to be excluded from attending school in their daily attendance setting so long as their health permits and their attendance does not create a significant health risk of the transmission of illness to students or employees.

Video/Electronic Surveillance ([Policy 712](#))

Maintaining the health, welfare and safety of students, employees and visitors while on school district property and protecting district property are important functions of the district. The district recognizes the value of video/electronic surveillance systems in monitoring activity on school property in providing these functions.

Wellness ([Policy 534](#))

The district recognizes that nutrition education and physical education are essential components of the educational process and that good health fosters student attendance and learning. The school environment should promote and protect a student's health, well-being and ability to learn by encouraging healthy eating and physical activity. The district encourages the involvement of students, parents, teachers, nutrition service employees, and other interested persons in implementing, monitoring and reviewing district nutrition and physical activity policies.

APPENDIX