

# Grades K-6

## Student-Parent Handbook

### 2024-2025

#### Mission and Vision:

- Create a culture of academic excellence through inclusive and innovative learning opportunities for the whole child.
- Empower all learners to reach their full potential in a globally competitive world.

<b>Blue Ash Elementary</b> 9541 Plainfield Road Cincinnati, Ohio 45236 513-686-1710	<b>Maple Dale Elementary</b> 6100 Hagewa Drive Cincinnati, Ohio 45242 513-686-1720	<b>Montgomery Elementary</b> 9609 Montgomery Road Cincinnati, Ohio 45242 513-686-1730	<b>Symmes Elementary</b> 11820 Enyart Road Loveland, Ohio 45140 513-686-1740	<b>Edwin H. Greene Intermediate</b> 5200 Aldine Drive Cincinnati, Ohio 45242 513-686-1750
<b>Natalie Jimenez</b> Principal  <b>Lindsay Combs</b> Assistant Principal	<b>Mindy Zellner</b> Principal  <b>Danielle Gray</b> Assistant Principal	<b>Amy Debelak Ed. D.</b> Principal  <b>Sally Ganz</b> Assistant Principal	<b>Jessica Ralston</b> Principal  <b>India Richardson Ed. D.</b> Assistant Principal	<b>Greg Cole</b> Principal  <b>Natalie Moss</b> Assistant Principal  <b>Patricia Constable</b> Assistant Principal

**Be Respectful! Be Responsible! Be Safe! Be a Problem Solver!**

## TABLE of CONTENTS

<b>Statement of Purpose</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>District Mission</b> -District Vision -District Values	<b>3</b>
<b>District Directory</b> -District Office Administration -Board of Education -Child Nutrition -Registration -Transportation	<b>3-4</b>
<b>K-6 Directories</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Attendance</b>	<b>4-9</b>
<b>Edwin H. Greene Intermediate Arrival and Dismissal</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Bicycles/Roller Skates/Skateboards</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Birthdays</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Building Unification Plan</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Cafeteria</b> -Meal Prices -Meal Charge Procedures	<b>10-11</b>
<b>Change of Address, E-Mail Address, or Phone Number</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Child Abuse</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Communication and Social Media</b>	<b>11-12</b>
<b>Computer and Network</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Confidentiality</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Culture</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Discipline</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Distribution of Materials</b>	<b>13-14</b>
<b>Emergencies</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Extracurricular Activities</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Federal Grant Information</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Fees</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Field Trips</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Grading/Report Cards</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Health Information</b> -Allergy Information -Students with Special Dietary Needs -Hearing and Vision Screenings -Immunizations -Medication Dispensing at School	<b>16-18</b>
<b>Homework</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Lockers/Cubbies</b>	<b>18</b>

<b>Lost and Found</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Nondiscrimination</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Parent Portal</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Parental Rights</b> -Child Custody -Custody - Joint/Shared Parenting	<b>19</b>
<b>Parent-Teacher Conferences</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO)</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Parking/Driving on School Property</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Phones</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Photos and Media</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Problem-Solving Model</b> -Levels of Appeal	<b>20-21</b> <b>22</b>
<b>Recess</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Safety Drills</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>School Closing and Delays Due To Emergencies</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>School Closing and Delays Due To Inclement Weather</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>School Property</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>School Supplies</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Search</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Surveillance Equipment</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Support Programs in Sycamore Community Schools</b>	<b>24-25</b>
<b>Transportation</b>	<b>25-27</b>
<b>Visitors</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Volunteer Background Checks</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Volunteers</b>	<b>28</b>
• <b>Student Code of Conduct</b>	<b>28</b>
• <b>Cell Phones</b>	<b>29</b>
• <b>Dress Code</b>	<b>29</b>
• <b>Hazing and Bullying</b>	<b>32</b>
• <b>Sexual Harassment (Title IX)</b>	<b>34</b>

## **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

The purpose of this handbook is to provide Sycamore Community Schools' students and parents with specific information concerning major policies, procedures, and regulations.

While every effort is made to present the information accurately, the information contained in this handbook is continually updated and the actual text of the policy, procedure, or law should be consulted as the authoritative source of information.

Questions regarding this handbook should be directed to the school principal.

## OUR DISTRICT MISSION:

Create a culture of academic excellence through inclusive and innovative learning opportunities for the whole child.

## OUR DISTRICT VISION

Empower all learners to reach their full potential in a globally competitive world.

## OUR DISTRICT VALUES

- Academic Excellence
- Diversity and Inclusion
- Community
- Character
- Collaboration

## DISTRICT DIRECTORY

### District Offices Administration

**5959 Hagewa Drive, Cincinnati, Ohio 45242**

Superintendent	Chad Lewis	513-686-1700
Assistant Superintendent	Meghan Lawson	513-686-1700
Community Relations Director	Mallory Bonbright	513-686-1700
Assistant Superintendent	Brad Lovell	513-686-1703
Director of Curriculum and Instruction	Becky Tompkins	513-686-1700
Director of Student Services	Stacey Spencer	513-686-1780
Director of Technology	Christian Long	513-686-1700
District Gifted Coordinator	Jamie Jackson	513-686-1700
ESOL Supervisor	Jill Schneider	513-686-1700
Coordinator of Pupil Support Services	Lisa Zelvy	513-686-1700
Coordinator of Special Education	PK-6 Misty Belfrom	
	7-12 Lori Rosen	513-686-1780
Treasurer	Jenni Logan	513-686-1700

### Board Of Education

**5959 Hagewa Drive, Cincinnati, Ohio 45242**

Paul Balent	513-686-1700
Sara Bitter	513-686-1700
Victor Harris	513-686-1700
Adrienne James	513-686-1700
Lynne Stieger	513-686-1700

### Child Nutrition Services

**5959 Hagewa Drive, Cincinnati, Ohio 45242**

Director	Elizabeth Wellman	513-686-1796
Secretary	Chris Zinnecker	513-686-1796

### Registration

**5959 Hagewa Drive, Cincinnati, Ohio 45242**

Registrar	Patrice New	513-686-1709
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### Transportation

**11455 Grooms Rd, Cincinnati, Ohio 45242**

Director	Michael Miller	513-686-1785
Supervisor	Tony Huber	513-686-1785
Dispatcher	Mary Ann Buchanan	513-686-1785
Secretary	Sue Vollman	513-686-1785

**BLUE ASH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL****9541 Plainfield Road, Cincinnati, Ohio 45236**

Principal	Natalie Jimenez	513-686-1710
Assistant Principal	Jenny Ament	513-686-1710
Counselor	Leslie Shoals	513-686-1710
Administrative Assistant	Jennifer Janson-Rizzo	513-686-1710
Administrative Assistant	Lauren Stevens	513-686-1710
Nurse	Diana Wyrick	513-686-1713
Attendance Line		513-686-1714

**MAPLE DALE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL****6100 Hagewa Drive, Cincinnati, Ohio 45242**

Principal	Mindy Zellner	513-686-1720
Assistant Principal	Keena Westmoreland	513-686-1720
Counselor	Caroline Tersigni	513-686-1720
Administrative Assistant	Kathy Lake	513-686-1720
Administrative Assistant	Heather Voellmecke	513-686-1720
Nurse	Carolyn Adee	513-686-1723
Attendance Line		513-686-1726

**MONTGOMERY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL 9609 Montgomery Road, Cincinnati, Ohio 45242**

Principal	Amy Debelak	513-686-1730
Assistant Principal	Sally Ganz	513-686-1730
Counselor	Sammie Block	513-686-1730
Administrative Assistant	Shelley Westendorf	513-686-1730
Administrative Assistant	Teresa Hagedorn	513-686-1730
Nurse	Susan Linton	513-686-1733
Attendance Line		513-686-1736

**SYMMES ELEMENTARY SCHOOL****11820 Enyart Road, Cincinnati, Ohio 45242**

Principal	Jessica Ralston	513-686-1740
Assistant Principal	India Richardson	513-686-1740
Counselor	Beth Hill	513-686-1740
Administrative Assistant	Heather Shultz	513-686-1740
Administrative Assistant	Alyssa Schmeling	513-686-1740
Nurse	Julie Ferron	513-686-1743
Attendance Line		513-686-1748

**EDWIN H. GREENE INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL 5200 Aldine Drive, Cincinnati, Ohio 45242**

Principal	Greg Cole	513-686-1750
Assistant Principal	Lindsay Combs	513-686-1750
Assistant Principal	Tricia Constable	513-686-1750
Counselor	Elizabeth Morelli	513-686-1750
Counselor	Chelsea Rose	513-686-1750
Administrative Assistant	Deanna McKeown	513-686-1750
Administrative Assistant	Tricia Thomas	513-686-1750
Administrative Assistant	Mollie Knowles	513-686-1750
Nurse	Laurie Dobrowolski	513-686-1753
Attendance Line		513-686-1756

A directory of all staff can be found on the district website: [www.sycamoreschools.org](http://www.sycamoreschools.org)

**ATTENDANCE**

Regular attendance is essential for successful school achievement. Therefore, students are expected to attend class on a regular basis. Please refer to board policy [JED](#), [JED-R](#), and [JEDA](#). To this end, the following guidelines will be followed by all schools within the Sycamore Community Schools:

## Legal Requirement

All children between ages six (6) and eighteen (18) are of compulsory school age and must attend school. **(Ohio Revised Code, Section 3321.01:)** It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to ensure their child attends school, therefore, it is the obligation of the parent/guardian to report the child's absence or tardy each day the student is absent. **(Ohio Revised Code, Section 3321.03:)**

## Procedure for Reporting Absences

1. On the day of the absence, a parent/guardian should email or call **(Attendance Line for All: 513.686.1707)** to report the absence before 10:10 a.m. for elementary and 8:50 a.m. for Greene. No note is required if the parent calls or emails that the student is absent.  
BA - [baattendance@sycamoreschools.org](mailto:baattendance@sycamoreschools.org)  
MD - [mdattendance@sycamoreschools.org](mailto:mdattendance@sycamoreschools.org)  
MT - [mtattendance@sycamoreschools.org](mailto:mtattendance@sycamoreschools.org)  
SY - [syattendance@sycamoreschools.org](mailto:syattendance@sycamoreschools.org)  
GR - [ehgattendance@sycamoreschools.org](mailto:ehgattendance@sycamoreschools.org)
2. If notification was not made to the school on the date of absence, the student must report to the Attendance Office with a note or the Parent Communication Form including the following information:
  - a. Date(s) of absence
  - b. Reason
  - c. Phone number where parent/guardian may be reached
  - d. Signature of parent/guardian
3. Students who are absent due to a doctor's appointment **must** provide a note from the physician/medical provider upon return
4. If the student forgets to bring a note, the student absence will be recorded as an "unexcused" absence. If an appropriate note is presented within one school day the absence will be changed to an excused absence.
5. Students who are absent without notification to the school will be marked as "unverified." This can be modified if notification is provided to the school following the absence. Unverified absences are considered unexcused.
6. Students who provide a reason for absence that is permitted per board policy, will be marked as "excused."
7. Students who provide written documentation from a medical provider for medical appointments or procedures, personal illness, or hospitalization will be marked as "medically excused."
8. Students who provide a reason for absence that is not permitted per board policy will be marked as "unexcused."
9. Unverified absences will receive an automated notification via phone within 120 minutes of the start of the school day.

## Excused Absences

A school logged parent/guardian phone call or written notification received by the attendance office (on each day of the student's absence), for any of the excused absences below, is sufficient to excuse the child's absence.

- Written documentation from the parent/guardian/non-doctor note may be in the form of an e-mail or fax to the proper school authority or directly from a physician's/medical provider's office, if permitted by the physician's/medical provider's office. Doctor's notes must specify a period of time for which excused absence is necessary.
- The parent/guardian (and not the school) maintains responsibility to make certain the telephone call and/or absence note was submitted to the proper school attendance authority in a timely fashion.
- If the parent/guardian fails to contact the school and school personnel have to initiate contact with the parent/guardian via a phone call and they DO NOT make direct contact with a parent/guardian, the absence

will be considered unexcused until a parent/guardian makes direct contact with the attendance office to verify the student's absence.

- The school should be notified in advance by the parent/guardian for any **planned** absence that includes 3 or more consecutive days.

**The School Administration will make the final decision whether an absence/tardy is excused or unexcused.**

Reasons for which students may be medically excused include, but are not limited to

1. personal illness of the student;
2. illness in the student's family necessitating the presence of the child;
3. quarantine for contagious disease or
4. emergency or other set of circumstances in which the judgment of the Superintendent constitutes a good and sufficient cause for absence from school, which may include but not be limited to absences due to documented medical appointments.

Reasons for which students may be nonmedically excused include, but are not limited to:

1. needed at home to perform necessary work directly and exclusively for parents or legal guardians for a limited period of time when approved by the Superintendent (applies to students over 14 years of age only);
2. death in the family (applies to absences of up to 18 school hours unless a reasonable cause may be shown for a longer absence);
3. observation of religious holidays consistent with a student's truly held religious belief;
4. traveling out of state to attend a Board-approved enrichment activity or extracurricular activity (applies to absences of up to 24 school hours);
5. college visitation;
6. absences due to a student's placement in foster care or change in foster care placement or any court proceedings related to their foster care status;
7. absences due to a student being homeless;
8. technical difficulties for individual students or households occurring at inopportune times such as during a teacher-led remote learning lesson or;
9. as determined by the Superintendent.

**In general, unexcused absences/tardies include (but are not limited to):**

- Missing the school bus.
- Experiencing transportation problems at home or on the way to school, including traffic.
- Remaining at home to complete school assignments.

- Missing school without legitimate illness.
- Oversleeping. Alarm clock (student's or parent's) failed to work.
- Working at a job during the school day
- Any form of recreation.
- Personal business that can be done after school or on weekends.
- "Helping at home" or "Was needed at home."
- Personal, non-medical appointments during the instructional day

### **Attendance Accounting Definitions:**

- A student is considered to be on time for school when they are in their classrooms at the time school begins. Our school day begins at 7:50 for E.H. Greene and 9:10 for our Elementary buildings.
- A student will be considered tardy to school if they arrive within 60 minutes of the school day beginning.
- Students arriving to school by school bus, even if the bus is delayed, will be considered on time for arrival regardless of arrival time.

### **Excessive Absences**

- A student is considered to be excessively absent from school with a nonmedical excuse or without legitimate excuse from the public school the child is supposed to attend for thirty-eight or more hours in one school month, or sixty-five or more hours in a school year. A student who is considered to be excessively absent must have a medical note for absences beyond the absence threshold. Doctor's/medical provider's notes will be presented to the main/attendance office. Any student who has an extended period of illness will need to have a doctor's/medical provider's note on file explaining the chronic illness.
- When a student has been absent, with a nonmedical excuse or without legitimate excuse for thirty-eight or more hours in one school month, or sixty-five or more hours in a school year, a notification letter will be sent
- Families and students may be asked to engage in a problem solving meeting to address excessive absenteeism at any time

### **Procedures for Student Attendance K-6 and truancy**

- Any child of compulsory school age who is absent without legitimate excuse for thirty or more consecutive hours, forty-two or more hours in one school month, or seventy-two or more hours in one school year is considered to be habitually truant
- A student determined to be habitually truant student, along with their guardian, must engage in a meeting to develop an Absence Intervention Plan.
- Students that do not demonstrate improvement in their attendance following the development of this plan will be referred to Hamilton County Juvenile Court

### **Tardies:**

1. **Contact #1:** After a child has repeated unexcused tardies of **6 or more**, a letter is sent by the assistant principal. The Assistant Principal meets with the student.
2. **Contact #2:** After a child has repeated unexcused tardies of **9 or more**, a letter is sent by the assistant principal after a phone call to the parent/guardian inquiring about the tardiness. The Assistant Principal meets with the student.
3. **Contact #3:** After a child has repeated unexcused tardies of **12 or more**, a letter is sent by the assistant principal and a meeting is scheduled with the parent/guardian about the tardiness. Letter will clearly state any further tardies will result in a referral for an attendance diversion hearing with the District Attendance Officer. The Assistant Principal meets with the student.
4. **Contact #4:** After a child has any unexcused tardies after step 3 is complete, the student/family will be referred for an attendance intervention meeting.
  - Monitor progress of students for a period of 60 days. Attendance intervention team will initiate another referral if progress is not being made. Second diversion meeting will be held and a home visit by the district social worker.



## Extracurricular Activities Attendance

A student may not miss more than 10% of any school year to participate in activities, unless there has been an extended illness. Students absent from school for more than four periods in one day will not be permitted to participate in after school activities. Special circumstances may be appealed to the building administration.

Mandatory rules applying to students participating in extracurricular activities are as follows:

1. Participating on the Day of Practice, Meeting, or Performance
  - a. Students absent from school for more than four periods in one day will not be permitted to participate in after school activities.
  - b. Special circumstances however, may be appealed to the administration
  
2. Class Cutting / Truancy – When a student who is involved in any extracurricular activity cuts class or is truant, the activity sponsor will be notified by the administration. Proper disciplinary action will be in accordance with the specific rules of the organization/activity with a minimum of being denied participation from the next scheduled practice or meeting.

## Attendance Summary Chart

School/Attendance Office Contact Information	Start of school day (students must be in the classroom at this time)	Absence notification needed prior to		Late Arrival and-Early Dismissal Procedures	End of school day	Habitual Truancy	Excessive Absences
Sycamore High School 7:20 A.M. - 2:20 P.M. (513) 686-1707 <a href="mailto:HSattendance@sycamoreschools.org">HSattendance@sycamoreschools.org</a>	7:20 AM	8:20 AM		Parent notification must be received in writing or via phone call prior to dismissal  Parent must enter the building to sign student out if no written notification has been received prior to dismissal time.	2:20 PM	30 consecutive hours unexcused  42 hours unexcused in a month  72 hours unexcused in a year	38 hours non-medically excused or unexcused in a month  65 hours excused or unexcused in a year
Sycamore Junior High School 8:10 A.M. - 3:15 P.M. (513) 686-1707 <a href="mailto:JHattendance@sycamoreschools.org">JHattendance@sycamoreschools.org</a>	8:10 AM	9:10 AM		Parent notification must be received in writing or via phone call prior to dismissal  Parent must enter the building to sign student out if no written notification has been received prior to dismissal time.	3:15 PM	30 consecutive hours unexcused  42 hours unexcused in a month  72 hours unexcused in a year	38 hours non-medically excused or unexcused in a month  65 hours excused or unexcused in a year
Edwin H. Greene Intermediate School 7:50 A.M. - 2:50 P.M. (513) 686-1707 <a href="mailto:EHGattendance@sycamoreschools.org">EHGattendance@sycamoreschools.org</a>	7:50 AM	8:50 AM		Parent notification must be received in writing or via phone call prior to dismissal  Parent must enter the building to sign student out if no written notification has been received prior to dismissal time.	2:50 PM Parents picking up children at dismissal will pick them up in the car line at the end of the day. Students must be picked up no later than 4:05 pm. If a parent/guardian has an emergency situation and can not pick up their child by that time, they must notify the office as such. School staff	30 consecutive hours unexcused  42 hours unexcused in a month  72 hours unexcused in a year	38 hours non-medically excused or unexcused in a month  65 hours excused or unexcused in a year



occasion when a parent needs to pick up their child early but did not know ahead of time or provide a note to the teacher, the parent should call the school's main office before 3 p.m. Parents are not permitted to go directly to a classroom to pick up their child.

## **BICYCLES/ROLLER SKATES/SKATEBOARDS**

Students assume the risk of using bicycles, roller blades, skates, and skateboards on school property and/or at school events. Schools are not liable for accidents, property damage or theft related to the use of such items on school property or at school events. Students who ride bikes, use rollerblades, or skateboards to get to and from school must wear a helmet. Students who have their parents' permission may ride their bicycles to school if the school permits it. Some schools have bike racks to enable students to ride a bike to/from school. Elementary students who choose to ride a bike to school need adult supervision therefore it is recommended that elementary students are not permitted to ride bikes to school.

## **BIRTHDAYS**

Students often like to celebrate their birthday with their classmates. Parents **must** contact the child's teacher prior to making any birthday celebration arrangements or bringing in items or snacks to share to be made aware of student allergies and the number of students in a class. Due to student allergies, certain foods, and balloons are not permitted in school or certain classrooms. As an alternative, we ask parents to consider donating an indoor recess game or a book to the Media Center. A special bookplate commemorating the child's birthday will be added to the book. Invitations to birthday parties outside of school are not to be distributed at school unless the entire class is invited.

## **BUILDING UNIFICATION PLAN**

In the event an emergency evacuation of the building is deemed necessary by the building administration, all persons will evacuate and may be directed to an off-site location. If the evacuation will be for a prolonged period of time, require family reunification, or due to severe weather or other considerations, the school will transport students and faculty to the following locations:

**Blue Ash Recreation Center (4433 Cooper Road)**

## **CAFETERIA INFORMATION**

Breakfast, lunch, snacks, and beverages are available to purchase for all students each school day. Students may also bring their lunch to school, providing no glass containers are sent to school.

Thanks to our point-of-sale system, students in Sycamore Community Schools can purchase school meals or a la carte items by simply entering their student identification number into a Personal Identification Number pad, which immediately and confidentially alerts the cafeteria cashier of the child's food allergies, eligibility for federally-funded free- or reduced-price meals, and the student's account balance. The cafeteria staff can ~~also~~ look up a student's identification number if the ID number is forgotten.

The point-of-sale system also makes district cafeterias more efficient as sales transactions are streamlined and Child Nutrition Supervisors or the Child Nutrition Office can provide parents with a report of meal transactions. Parents can also add funds to their child's meal account online using Mastercard or Visa through Parent Portal, thus eliminating any concerns associated with students handling paper money and eliminating the possibility of losing a check. For help in creating a Parent Portal account, contact the Technology Department at 513-686-1790.

For those who do not wish to add funds online, students can continue to visit the cafeteria before school if they have cash or a check to add to their accounts. Checks should be made payable to Sycamore Child Nutrition Services. At the end of the year, money remaining in a student's meal account will automatically roll over to the next school they attend. If a student leaves the district or graduates, the remaining balance will be refunded when requested.

Parents who have questions regarding the foodservice program, lunch menus, point of sale system, or daily lunch activity, or food choices being offered, should see our website at <https://www.sycamoreschools.org/domain/492> [www.sycamoreschools.org](http://www.sycamoreschools.org) or call Child Nutrition Services at (513) 686-1796.

## **Meal Prices**

### **Breakfast:**

\$1.55

### **Lunch:**

\$2.80, \$3.05

## **Meal Charge Procedure**

The Sycamore Child Nutrition department strives to provide all students with an opportunity to have a well-rounded meal to be prepared to learn. The district has adopted a meal charge procedure to ensure students have a healthy meal on days when they don't have cash or funds available in their child nutrition accounts. **Only meals** will be able to be charged on lunch accounts at the K-6 level. No a la carte purchases such as snacks, ice cream, milk, etc. will be permitted when a student has a negative balance.

It is very important for families to send money with their students or place money on their meal account online to avoid meal debt on their Child Nutrition account.

Notifications of low balances will be sent out from the district by an automated email every week. Parents can set up email notifications via parent portal to help track their student's lunch balance. The Principal or Child Nutrition Department may recommend that a family apply for free and reduced-price meals or recommend a payment plan. Applications can be found [here](#). Payment arrangements can be made by contacting the Sycamore Child Nutrition department at (513) 686-1796.

For more information, please see board policy [EF/EFB](#).

## **CHANGE OF ADDRESS, EMAIL ADDRESS, OR PHONE NUMBER**

In order for school records to be current, and in the event it is necessary to contact parents for emergency purposes, parents must make any changes in a student's address and phone number, as well as parents' work telephone numbers or email addresses in Final Forms located on the district's home page at [www.sycamoreschools.org](http://www.sycamoreschools.org). Proof of residence must be provided to the school when changing an address.

## **CHILD ABUSE**

All Sycamore employees with reason to believe that a child under 18 years of age or a handicapped/disabled child under 21 years of age who has suffered, or faces a threat of suffering, abuse/neglect are required to report such information to appropriate authorities.

## **COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL MEDIA**

### **Instant Communication System**

Positive outreach and interaction are essential elements of a thriving school district. With that in mind, Sycamore Community Schools uses an instant communication system that enables district and school administrators to record a voice message, schedule the message delivery time, and deliver the message via a telephone call or email to parents.

When schools are delayed or closed, the district will place a detailed announcement on the district website, [www.sycamoreschools.org](http://www.sycamoreschools.org). In addition, Sycamore parents/guardians will receive a voice at the home phone and mobile phone that is associated with their contact information in our student database system. If a parent/guardian would like to change or remove their contact number, please call the building or send an email to [helpdesk@sycamoreschools.org](mailto:helpdesk@sycamoreschools.org) with your request.

### **Social Media**

Sycamore Community Schools uses social media to assist in communicating district information with parents, students, and community members. While the district will continue to communicate in traditional ways (website,

newsletters, etc.), social media provides a platform for individuals to learn more about the district through exclusive content, videos, a showcase of events, two-way communication, and much more.

The integration of social media into the district's communication plan is the result of months of careful planning with input from staff, parents, students, and businesses and school districts that use social media. The district also developed social media guidelines to help individuals understand, from a wide range of perspectives, proper participation in social media. Students are expected to adhere to these guidelines, the district's Internet/Network Acceptable Use Policy for Students, and the Student Code of Conduct. Questions regarding district social media platforms should be directed to the Community Relations Director at 513-686-1706.

### **District social media platforms are:**

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/sycamoreschools/>

Instagram: @sycamore\_schools

YouTube: @SycamoreCommunitySchools <https://www.youtube.com/@SycamoreCommunitySchools>

Individuals wishing to launch a social media platform on behalf of the district, a school, or a school/district organization/club/team should obtain permission from the district's Community Relations Director.

## **COMPUTERS AND NETWORK**

The Chromebook is the preferred device chosen by Sycamore Community School District. It will allow the school district to monitor student use at school and push out applications that students can use for classwork. The Chromebook was chosen for numerous factors including its lightweight, long battery life, integration with Google Apps for Education and security. School-issued Chromebooks will contain additional services and filters that non-district purchased Chromebooks will not. .

link. For additional information about technology use and access, including the One2One Device Usage Agreement, please access [goav.es/techinfo](http://goav.es/techinfo). For more information, please see board policy [EDE](#) and [EDE-R](#).

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

The District proposes to designate the following personally identifiable information contained in a student's education records as "directory information"; it discloses that information without prior written consent, except that not even directory information will be released for a profit-making plan or activity. Such information includes:

1. student's name;
2. student's address;
3. student's date of birth;
4. participation in officially recognized activities and sports
5. student's achievement awards or honors
6. the student's weight and height, if a member of an athletic team
7. major field of study
8. dates of attendance ("from and to" dates of enrollment)
9. date of graduation

Names, addresses school email addresses and telephone listings of secondary students must be released to a recruiting officer of the armed forces unless a parent or student (age 18 or older) submits a written request not to release the information. The District notifies parents and students (age 18 or older) of their right to submit a written request not to release such information. For more information, please see board policy [KKA](#).

For more information, please see board policy [JO-R](#).

## **CULTURE - Positive Behavioral Intervention Supports (PBIS)**

PBIS is a multi-tiered school-wide, behavioral framework developed and implemented for the purpose of improving academic and social outcomes and increasing learning for all students. The District implements PBIS on a systemwide basis in an effort to promote positive interactions and solutions within the District. The District encourages family involvement as an integral part of its PBIS system.

## **DISCIPLINE**

The Sycamore Student Code of Conduct identifies in greater detail the expected behavior of students while in our classrooms, on our campus, and attending our events. Positive acknowledgement of these expected behaviors is an essential component in the PBIS framework, and is embedded in our culture. However, when students are not able to demonstrate expected behaviors, we believe in a proactive and instructional approach. This may include re-teaching of the expected behaviors, considering the impact of the behavior on others and our culture, and considering opportunities to make amends. Additional consequences may be administered for inappropriate or unexpected behavior. Administrators may exercise discretion in determining appropriate consequences for inappropriate behavior. Prior history, seriousness of the offense, and individual student circumstances will be taken into consideration by the administrator.

## **DISTRIBUTION OF MATERIALS**

The District recognizes that students and employees have the right to express themselves on school property. This protection includes the right to distribute, at a reasonable time and place and in a reasonable manner, non-school-sponsored material. In order to protect First Amendment rights, while at the same time preserving the integrity of the educational objectives and responsibilities of the District, the following requirements apply to the distribution of non-school-sponsored material on school property and at school activities. For more information see board policy [KJA](#) and [IGDB](#).

### Prior Approval Required

Individuals or groups not affiliated with the District, who desire to distribute materials to the members of the school community, must first receive approval of such materials through the Superintendent/designee.

Students and staff members who desire to distribute materials to members of the school community must first receive approval from the building principal and when in doubt the Superintendent.

### Types of Material Restrictions

Materials must be approved if they fall under one of the following categories:

- publications of services, special events, public meetings or other items of interest to students or parents/guardians;
- distribution of promotional materials of a commercial nature to students or parents/guardians;
- paid advertisements on District property, including but not limited to billboard advertisements;
- paid advertisements on or in school-sponsored publications, yearbooks, announcements and other school communications and/or
- products and materials donated by commercial enterprises for use in the classroom, as long as they serve an educational purpose and do not unduly promote any commercial activity or products.

### Manner and Mode of Distribution

The Superintendent/designee may approve the use of District time, personnel and resources in the distribution of materials if the materials are of an educational nature. The Superintendent will not, however, approve the use of

District time, personnel or District resources for distribution if the materials are not of an educational nature and/or considered to be conducting business by soliciting participation, campaigning for membership or registering participants.

The building principals designate appropriate times, locations and means for which distribution of non-school-sponsored materials is appropriate. Determinations are made on a case-by-case basis.

Distribution with or without District involvement does not mean to imply sponsorship or support for that which the materials endorse. The District takes no responsibility for problems arising between the sponsoring individual or group and the student or staff member who accepts the materials.

#### Limitations on Content

Non-school literature is not distributed on District property if:

- the materials are obscene, vulgar or otherwise inappropriate for the age and maturity of the audience;
- the materials endorse actions endangering the health or safety of students;
- the distribution of such materials would violate the intellectual property rights, privacy rights, or other rights of another person;
- the materials contain defamatory statements about public figures or others;
- the materials advocate imminent lawless or disruptive action and are likely to incite or produce such action;
- the materials are hate literature or similar publications that scurrilously attack ethnic, religious or racial groups; contain content aimed at creating hostility and violence and the materials would materially and substantially interfere with school activities or the rights of others or
- there is reasonable cause to believe that distribution of the non-school literature would result in material and substantial interference with school activities or the rights of others.

#### Campaign Materials

Except at the PTO-sponsored candidate forum, no campaign materials or items (brochures, buttons, stickers, etc.) may be distributed at any school or school events (sporting events, PTO meetings or events, booster/advocate meetings, homecoming parade, etc.). Candidates or ballot issue campaign ads are not permitted to be placed in the student newspaper. The district website, newsletters and e-mail will not be used to distribute campaign literature. Further, campaign signs are prohibited from being placed on school property.

Failure to comply with this policy regarding distribution of non-school literature shall result in appropriate administrative action, including but not limited to confiscation of nonconforming materials and/or suspension of use of District facilities. Appropriate law enforcement officials may be called if a person refuses to comply with this policy or fails to leave the premises when asked.

## EMERGENCIES

District staff are prepared to take action should an emergency arise during the school day. Fire, tornado, intruder, and special security drills are conducted periodically to provide students the opportunity to practice and be prepared for such scenarios. In addition, bus drivers conduct evacuation drills with their students. Should an emergency cause school to be closed early, announcements will be made on local television stations and on the district website. In the event of an emergency, every attempt will be made to provide a safe and reassuring environment for all students. It is in the best interest of both parents and students for parents to refrain from driving to the school to pick up their child since it could be extremely disruptive to the emergency procedure being implemented.

## EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Get involved!!! A complete listing of all the activities and clubs that students can join is provided at the start of the school year. If a student needs financial aid to enable him/her to participate in any of these programs, the student should contact the club/activity sponsor or coach to obtain that support.

For school-sponsored functions, every effort is made to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. If specific auxiliary aids and/or accommodations are needed, please notify the building principal's office at least two working days prior to the event.

## FEDERAL GRANT INFORMATION

At the beginning of each year, the district notifies the parents of each student in any Title I building that they may request information regarding the professional qualifications of their child's classroom teacher. Additional information regarding [Federal Grant compliance](#) can be found on our website under Parent Resources.

## FEES

An academic fee may be charged to offset the cost of consumable instructional materials (workbooks, art and science supplies, etc.). Fees can be paid online using Mastercard or Visa through Parent Portal or by check payable to Sycamore Community Schools

The **Academic Fee** is \$40.00 per student. Fees will be collected at the beginning of the school year. Students entering the district after the end of the semester will be charged a fee of \$20.00 and no fee to those beginning after the start of the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter.

Students participating in the federal free and reduced price lunch program will receive a waiver of student academic and extracurricular fees.

## FIELD TRIPS

Sycamore recognizes that there are multitudes of learning resources outside of school walls that can enhance education through hands-on, meaningful experiences. Therefore, field trips that are educational in nature may be arranged.

Field trips are not to be considered "outings" or days off from school. They are, in fact, extensions of the curriculum and of the school. Therefore, all field trips will be educational in nature and will be related to the subject matter and the objectives of instruction at a particular grade level. Field trips are lessons. Appropriate instruction will precede and/or follow each field trip.

No student will be allowed to participate in a field trip without the permission of a parent and a completed "Medical Authorization" form in Final Forms. Written permission slips will be sent home by the classroom teacher several days prior to the trip. Parents should sign and return the permission slip promptly. Parents acting as chaperones will be asked to cover costs associated with field trips for him/her. Background checks will be required for chaperones if they will be accompanying students "out of sight and sound" of a Sycamore employee. (Also see "Volunteer" section) For more information, please see board policy [IICA/IICA-R](#).



## GRADING/REPORT CARDS

Report cards are sent home at the end of every quarter (approximately 45 days). Special subject report cards will be given at the end of the 2nd and 4th quarter. Interim reports will be sent home following the midpoint of the grading period at the discretion of the teacher. The procedures used for communicating student progress on daily assignments will vary among the teaching staff. Parents can access student grading information via Parent Portal. (See Parent Portal section of handbook) 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Although Canvas is used as our Learning Management System, Parent Portal will continue to be the location for graded assignments that result in cumulative, quarter, semester, and yearly grades. Parents are always welcome to contact the teacher when questions or concerns arise regarding a subject or a student. The recommended grading scale is:

90-100 =	A
80-89 =	B
70-79 =	C
60-69 =	D
59 and below	F

In grades K-2, Sycamore Community Schools utilizes a standards-based report card to report student progress. The grades are reported as follows:

An 'M' stands for Mastery. This indicates that the student demonstrates academic achievement and/or engagement characteristics that meet expectations for this grade level. Student consistently applies the learning standard at an independent level or with minimal teacher support and guidance.

An 'A' stands for Approaching. This indicates that the student demonstrates progress toward meeting academic achievement and/or engagement characteristic expectations for this grade level. Student demonstrates inconsistencies in applying behaviors, concepts and skills. Student requires additional teacher support and guidance. It is expected that progress will continue.

A 'D' stands for Developing. This indicates that the student demonstrates emergent learning toward academic achievement and/or engagement characteristic expectations for this grade level. Student demonstrates inconsistencies in applying behaviors, concepts and skills. Student requires individualized support and/or additional learning experiences. It is expected that progress will continue.

An 'E' stands for Exceeding. This indicates that the student demonstrates academic achievement and/or engagement characteristics that exceed what is expected for this grade level. Student consistently applies the learning standard independently, across disciplines and in a variety of settings.

X = Exempt

NA = Not assessed at this time

Shaded Area = Not evaluated at this time

## HEALTH INFORMATION

Parents are required to complete an Emergency Medical Authorization Form each year to let the school know who to contact and/or what to do in the case of a student illness or emergency and should be completed on Final Forms. In the event a child becomes ill at school, it is the parent's responsibility to get the child home or to a doctor. No contagious children will be placed on the school bus. Therefore, parents should choose an emergency contact who is readily available and lives within a short distance from school. Parents should also inform the alternate person that they might be called upon to pick a child up from school if the student is ill. The school's main office must be notified of any changes in emergency contact information.

If a parent/guardian is going out of town and student(s) are to be left in the care of someone else, parents must complete and return to school an Out of Town Vacation form, available at each school and on the district website, [www.sycamoreschools.org](http://www.sycamoreschools.org).

Medical information will be shared with pertinent staff members. If you have any questions, please call the school nurse.

For more information, please talk to your school nurse or review the Student Health Handbook, available at each school and online at [www.sycamoreschools.org](http://www.sycamoreschools.org).

## **Allergies**

**Animal/Pets in The Classroom:** Due to the large number of children and staff members at risk for illness or allergic reaction to animals, animals/pets with fur or feathers are not allowed in classrooms. The exception to this is:

- Zoo presentations. (It is felt that professionals can manage this situation, and that children with allergies can be maintained at a safe distance. Teachers will assess this on an individual basis.)
- Authorized service animals.

Reptiles, amphibians, and fish may be used for educational purposes; however, students are to be discouraged from handling these. If contact is made, hand washing should be required.

## **Balloons**

Rubber balloons that decorate parties, carnivals, proms, etc. can pose a serious health threat to latex-sensitive individuals. People with chronic health conditions (spina bifida, hydrocephalus treated with shunts, etc.) who have been frequently treated with latex products are especially predisposed to this severe and possibly life threatening allergies. Latex allergy is also reported in healthy individuals, especially those with common conditions such as asthma and eczema. Routes of exposure include contact with skin, wounds, mucous membranes, and inhalation of latex laden powder particles from items such as rubber gloves or balloons. For these reasons, latex balloons are not permitted in all school buildings. Mylar balloons are suggested as safe substitutes.

## **Food items from outside the building**

Many students suffer from severe food allergies and eating, smelling, or touching certain allergens (i.e. peanuts, nuts, etc.) can be fatal to people who are sensitive. Because of issues such as these, any food items purchased for classroom parties etc. must be sealed by the manufacturer, individually packaged, and have the manufacturers ingredient list, and approved by the teacher when planning for the event. Should you wish to bring homemade items for a celebration or activity, you must include the ingredient list and contact the teacher prior to the event.

## **Food Allergies and Special Dietary Needs**

For any student with a food allergy, special dietary need or religious preference regarding food you will need to fill out the Food Allergy Notification Form and submit it to the school nurse. Once filled out once, this form does not need to be filled out yearly, only as the form needs to be updated due to changes. It can be found on the school website under the Child Nutrition Services tab or in final forms. Once the nurse gets a copy of the Food Allergy Notification form, it will be sent to the Child Nutrition and Wellness Director and placed on the student's meal account. This notification will pop up every time the student's account is pulled up at mealtime.

If a student has a severe life threatening allergy or disability and is requesting a substitution the form has to be signed by a medical authority. Substitution requests need to be clearly stated on the form and do not pertain to food intolerances or non life threatening allergies. An example for a student severely allergic to milk would be "substitute juice or water for fluid milk".

Please contact the Child Nutrition and Wellness director if you have further questions. 513-686-1796.

## **Hearing and Vision Screening**

Vision and hearing screening tests are given by the school nurse. For more information, please talk to your school nurse or review the Student Health Handbook, available at each school and online at [www.sycamoreschools.org](http://www.sycamoreschools.org).

## **Immunizations**

The Ohio Department of Health requires that students have proper immunizations. For more information, please talk to your school nurse or review the Student Health Handbook, available at each school and online at [www.sycamoreschools.org](http://www.sycamoreschools.org).

## **Dispensing Medication at School**

Sycamore Community Schools has a medication policy that is in compliance with the Ohio Revised Code. Medication should not be given at school unless it is absolutely necessary for the health and well-being of the student. If medication must be given at school, a Physician/Dentist Medication Orders form must be on file at school, signed by a parent/guardian and a physician, before prescribed medication or over-the-counter medication may be administered. Such orders are also needed for students to carry inhalers or Epi-Pens (epinephrine auto-injectors). This form is available on the district website, [www.sycamoreschools.org](http://www.sycamoreschools.org). For more information, please talk to your school nurse or review the Student Health Handbook, available at each school and online at [www.sycamoreschools.org](http://www.sycamoreschools.org).

## **HOMEWORK**

Homework is an extension of what is taught in the classroom and an opportunity for students to apply skills and concepts learned. Parents should stress that homework is the students' responsibility. Homework in grades K-6 is given on a fairly regular basis. Guidelines for daily homework are as follows: 10-15 minutes for students in grades K-1, 20-30 minutes for students in grades 2-3, and 30-60 minutes for students in grades 4-6.

When a family emergency prevents the student from completing assignments and/or when a student frequently does not understand or cannot complete homework assignments, the parent should notify the teacher.

## **LOCKERS/CUBBIES**

All school lockers/cubbies are the property of the Sycamore Board of Education and, in accordance with the law, lockers/cubbies and the contents therein may be the subject of a random search at any time. The Sycamore Board of Education may direct the principal or a designee to conduct random searches as a proactive means to reduce behavior that is not in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct, and/or the law. Building administrators/designees are permitted to search the person and personal property (purse, backpack, gym bag, etc.) of a student where there is reason to believe that evidence will be obtained indicating the student's violation of either the law or school rules. Please refer to board policy [JFG](#) and [JFG-R](#).

## **LOST AND FOUND**

To help students when they misplace items, it is advised that parents write a student's name on clothing, backpacks, and lunch containers. Each school also has a "lost and found" for misplaced items. Students should check this area from time to time to see if he or she has misplaced an item of importance. Articles of value such as eyeglasses, watches, jewelry, keys, calculators, electronic devices, retainers, etc. will be kept in the front office. Please contact the school's main office if you or a student is missing one of these items. Any items not claimed will be donated to a local charity at Winter Break, Spring Break, and the end of the school year.

## **NONDISCRIMINATION**

The Board is committed to an environment in which all individuals, including students, staff, job applicants, the general public and individuals with whom it does business, are treated with dignity and respect. The Board prohibits discrimination based on race, color, national origin, ancestry, citizenship status, religion, sex, economic status, age, disability, military status or legally acquired genetic information.

The Board designates the following individual to serve as the District's compliance officer:

Name/Title: Brad Lovell, Assistant Superintendent

Address: Sycamore Community Schools, 5959 Hagewa Drive Cincinnati, OH 45242

Phone: (513) 513-6861700

Email: [lovellb@sycamoreschools.org](mailto:lovellb@sycamoreschools.org)

The compliance officer is responsible for coordinating the District's efforts to comply with applicable Federal and State laws and regulations, including, but not limited to, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendment Act of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1975.

The compliance officer is responsible for addressing any inquiries or complaints regarding discrimination or retaliation in a prompt and equitable manner.

## **PARENT PORTAL**

Parent Portal is a portion of the Sycamore Community Schools website that allows parents to play an active role in their child's education 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Parent Portal is a portion of the Sycamore Community Schools website that allows parents to:

- have access to class assignments and notes
- view a student's most current grades online, 2-12
- pay academic, athletic, and summer school fees online with a MasterCard or Visa credit card
- track school expenses
- add funds to a student's meal account electronically
- online emergency forms

Parent Portal also meets the busy schedules of parents and families as the information on Parent Portal is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week! Parents can also have peace of mind during financial transactions as payments are credited to a student's account within 24 hours, credit card information is not saved, a password is required, and transmissions are secure!

For information on creating a Parent Portal account, visit the district website [www.sycamoreschools.org](http://www.sycamoreschools.org) or email [helpdesk@sycamoreschools.org](mailto:helpdesk@sycamoreschools.org).

## **PARENTAL RIGHTS**

### **Child Custody**

It is the parent's responsibility to provide the school with the most current copy of child custody documents to be kept in the student's cumulative file. Any natural parent, adoptive parent, or legal guardian has the right to review student records and communicate with school personnel concerning his/her child's progress in school. To pick a child up from school, parents should be prepared to show identification. Custodial parents must present a note specifying when a non-custodial parent may pick up their child.

### **Custody-Joint/Shared Parenting**

If a parent would like school or class information sent to more than one address (ie: in the case of shared parenting), parents must notify their child's teachers. It is the parent's responsibility to keep the school informed of any changes in custody. In order for school personnel to follow custody orders, a current copy of the court-ordered arrangement must be on file in the school office. For student safety, identification may be required when picking up students from school until school staff is familiar with both parents. (Also see section "Parental Rights")

## **PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES**

Schools have specific days not in session or classes are dismissed early for the purpose of holding parent-teacher conferences. See the school district calendar for these designated days. Conferences may also be scheduled by parents or teachers anytime throughout the school year.

Parents wishing to have a conference with a teacher should call, email, or send a note to the teacher requesting a conference.

Per a law called the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), student records and information may not be shared with anyone who is not a legal parent or guardian and therefore, these individuals must be excluded from parent-teacher conferences.

If a situation requires the inclusion of a non-parent (such as a tutor, or grandparent), a conference waiver form must be signed by the parent, guardian, or custodial parent. Step parents living with the child have the same FERPA rights as a non-custodial parent regarding access to records however, they have no decision-making authority unless procured through court order.

## **PARENT-TEACHER ORGANIZATION (PTO)**

The PTO helps to organize and implement programs that serve students, the staff, the community, and the world. All parents and guardians are encouraged to join the PTO as statistics indicate that there is a strong correlation between parental involvement and student achievement. PTO meeting times and locations are available through the school's main office, on the district calendar, and online at [www.sycamoreschools.org](http://www.sycamoreschools.org). All parents and guardians are welcome at PTO meetings.

## **PARKING/DRIVING ON SCHOOL PROPERTY**

Parking in places other than designated parking spots is not permitted. Use caution when parking and walking through parking lots when school buses are in the parking lots. Do not drive through playground or school driveway areas when buses or students are in the vicinity. Drive slowly through parking lots at all times.

## **PHONES**

Students may use the school telephone when necessary. They must receive permission from their teacher or other adult supervisor. Students will not be called from class to answer telephone calls except in cases of emergency. (Please also refer to the "cell phones" section of this handbook.)

## **PHOTOS AND MEDIA**

The district knows and understands the desire of a proud parent to videotape or photograph memorable school events and share those photos with friends and family members. However, families are reminded that not everyone wants to be in pictures or videos. Sycamore Community Schools will respect the rights of those parents who have requested that their children not be included in publicity efforts, website posting, videos, and photographs for various reasons. Thus, the district respectfully requests that parents obtain approval from their school principal prior to posting photos and videos on the internet and social networking sites such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram or YouTube.

The Community Relations Director is responsible for submitting district information or story ideas to the media and creating social media channels on behalf of the district. Individuals who wish to release a photo or news item to the media and those who want to start a social media channel for the district or a school should contact the Community Relations Director at 513-686-1706.

## **PROBLEM-SOLVING MODEL**

Students and parents are encouraged to follow our Problem Solving Model. Within this framework students and parents are encouraged to address any questions or concerns with the adult staff most directly involved with their concern, (i.e. grading, detentions, etc.) to find a workable solution. Should a student still have concerns after working directly with a teacher/staff member, they are encouraged to seek out the assistance of their school counselor. Parents are encouraged to follow the same guidelines prior to contacting school administration.

Define the problem	Gather the facts; what you know and what you need to find out. Check your facts and sources for accuracy. Write a clear, objective description of the problem.
Determine who is involved	Initially include only those individuals who are at the point of concern and whose participation is necessary to solve the problem. For example, if your child is having a problem with a particular teacher, the problem at this point belongs only to you, your child, and that teacher.
Meet with those involved	Calmly share, listen to, and acknowledge all points of view.
Restate the problem together	Start by listing points of agreement. Move to the question that you need to address together.
Identify solutions and their consequences	Offer and consider all options. Be flexible. Discuss the potential outcome of each solution. Eliminate solutions unacceptable to either party. Choose the solution satisfactory to both parties.
Select a plan of action	Determine what needs to be done, by when, and in what time frame. Specify a means of assessment outcome.

**Do both parties agree?**  
**If YES, follow the plan. The problem is resolved.**  
**If NO, contact the next level of authority.**

Next level of authority	An appeal may be necessary due to the complex nature of the problem, the need for additional resources, or due to disagreement over the most appropriate course of action. The appeal may be initiated by a phone call, a scheduled visit, or a letter to the person at the next level. (See levels of appeal)
Meeting to appeal	A problem-solving meeting may occur with all parties to come to a resolution. Both parties should provide the person at the next level with a review of the outcome of the first meeting, the reasons for the appeal, and their recommendations.
Receive feedback	Within 10 working days beyond the appeal, all parties should receive a response that includes a strategy for dealing with the concern and a rationale to support all recommendations.

**If the parties do not agree, the appeal process may be repeated, if necessary, throughout all the consecutive levels of authority. For additional information please see board policy [KLB](#) for complaints about Curriculum & Materials or [KLD/KLD-R/JFCF-R](#) for complaints about District Personnel.**

*Note: Directors of Transportation, Maintenance, Guidance and Child Nutrition Services are not part of the appeal process and may be called directly to address specific concerns unrelated to the education program.*

# Levels of Appeal

Remember, problem resolution always begins with those closest to the problem...

**Involve the**

**Teacher/Counselor**

...to resolve issues related to classroom management, instruction, student or teacher conflict

If there is no resolution, appeal to the

**Building Principal or Asst. Principal**

To deal with issues to school goals, procedures and policies, staff performance, student services, extracurricular activities, community groups, and communications.

If there is no resolution, appeal to the

**Assistant Superintendent**

To resolve issues related to the performance of building principals; the instructional programs of the district, including curricular offerings, budget, and expenditures.

If there is no resolution, appeal to the

**Superintendent**

To review issues from other levels; policy amendments and additions; school calendar; community relations; district goal setting and other concerns of a district-wide nature.

If there is no resolution, appeal to the

**Board of Education**

To resolve issues that have passed through all other levels.

## RECESS

When the weather permits (no rain, no ice or snow accumulation and temperatures above 20 degrees Fahrenheit considering the wind chill factor), all students will be taken to the playground with their class during recess times. Parents should ensure children are dressed appropriately for the weather. During recess, students are supervised by school personnel. When a parent feels it absolutely necessary that a student not go outside due to illness, parents must send a note to the teacher expressing their request.

## SAFETY DRILLS

During the school year, we practice the following “safety drills” in an effort to prepare our students for emergency situations on our campus:

- Fire drills** once a month
- Tornado drills** once a month
- Lockdown/Intruder Response** once a quarter

Students are expected to participate in the drills in a serious manner to decrease the risk of harm to themselves and others. Plans for emergency drills are posted in each classroom and other areas accessible to staff and students where required by law.

## SCHOOL CLOSING AND DELAYS DUE TO EMERGENCIES

When schools are delayed or closed, the district will place a detailed announcement on the district website, [www.sycamoreschools.org](http://www.sycamoreschools.org) as well as on the district’s social media pages. In addition, Sycamore parents/guardians will receive a recorded call and text message at the home phone and mobile phone that is associated with their contact information in our student database system. All changes to contact information should be made in Final Forms.

## SCHOOL CLOSING AND DELAYS DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER

School closings and delays are based on concern for the safety of students, parents and employees, and most school closings occur during winter months. During inclement weather, Sycamore Community Schools will typically operate as follows:

### School is Closed for the Day:

- Before and after school programs will not operate
- All after-school activities will be canceled, unless otherwise notified.

### School Opening is Delayed:

- All schools and buses will run on a 2 hour delay
- Dismissal times will remain the same for all grades, except Preschool and Head Start
- Morning Preschool classes will be canceled
- Afternoon Preschool classes will operate as usual
- Morning kindergarten will be canceled
- Afternoon kindergarten classes will begin at 12:50 p.m. and end at 3:45 p.m.
- Latchkey operates under a 90-minute delay

If schools are delayed or closed, the district will inform all media and place an announcement on the district website ([www.sycamoreschools.org](http://www.sycamoreschools.org)), the district Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/sycamoreschools](http://www.facebook.com/sycamoreschools)) and the district Twitter account ([@sycamoreschools](https://twitter.com/sycamoreschools)).

## SCHOOL PROPERTY

Damage to school property must be paid for by students and/or their parents. Students will be assessed the replacement cost of the lost or damaged book or item.



## SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Parents must provide school supply items that are outlined on school supply lists, available at each school and online at [www.sycamoreschools.org](http://www.sycamoreschools.org).

## SEARCH

The right to inspect students' school lockers or articles carried upon their persons and to interrogate an individual student is inherent in the authority granted school boards. All searches are conducted sparingly and only when such search is reasonably likely to produce tangible results to preserve discipline and good order and the safety and security of persons and their property. The Board permits building administrators/designees to search any unattended bag for safety and identification purposes. Student lockers are the property of the district, and since random searches have a positive impact on reducing drugs and other criminal activity, it is the policy of the Board to permit the building administrator to search any locker and its contents as the administrator believes necessary. Students are advised that the Sycamore Schools board policy provides for the random, unannounced search of student lockers and for the use of canines in detecting the presence of drugs. Building administrators/designees are permitted to search the person and personal property (purse, backpack, gym bag, etc.) of a student where there is reason to believe that evidence will be obtained indicating the student's violation of either the law or school rules.

## SURVEILLANCE EQUIPMENT

The Board recognizes the value of electronic surveillance systems in monitoring activity on school property and in school vehicles in protecting the health, welfare and safety of its students and staff. Carefully weighing the rights of privacy of students and staff against the District's duty to maintain order and discipline, the Board authorizes the use of electronic surveillance systems. Cameras are used on school property and vape detectors are used in the high school. For more information please see board policy [ECA-R](#).

## SYCAMORE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Counseling	Counselors are available to coordinate the counseling program and work with teachers, small groups of children, or individual children to provide a variety of support experiences. The school counselor is not trained for long-term counseling concerns.
ESOL (English Speakers of Other Languages)	The goal of the Sycamore Community Schools ESOL Program is for students to become proficient in all areas of English language acquisition so that students may participate fully in all mainstream classes in which the target language is English. ESOL teachers provide support services to help students reach English proficiency in areas of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Instructional services for ESOL students in Sycamore Community Schools are based on the philosophy of inclusion and participation to the maximum extent possible.
Gifted Services	Gifted Education/Intervention Specialists provide services inside and outside of the regular classroom. Students who are gifted are identified annually by qualified professionals using a variety of assessments. Qualified teaching staff provides gifted services to students with opportunities aligned to their gifted identification area. Parents are notified if their child qualifies for gifted service.
Intervention	Intervention teachers provide specific skill and behavioral interventions. Students will receive individual and/or small-group instruction based on the results of various assessments. Academic and behavioral supports will be provided based on areas of need. Support instruction may occur in the regular education setting or in a small group by a specialist.
McKinney-Vento	Students meet the McKinney-Vento definition of homeless when they lack a fixed, regular, adequate nighttime residence. Students who are sharing the housing of another person (doubled up) due to loss of housing, economic

	hardship or similar reason meet the definition of homeless. This includes students living in motels, hotels, RV parks or campgrounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations, as well as those living in emergency or transitional shelters or abandoned in hospitals.
Parent Mentor	The ParentMentor helps support families in understanding the special education process by providing the information and resources needed to become effective partners for the education of their child/children with special needs. The Parent Mentor's role is to listen to questions and concerns expressed by parents and provide helpful information. The Parent Mentor focus is working with families and school personnel to collaboratively solve as a team to help maximize and support the learning process for the student.
Special Education	Special education is instruction that is specially designed to meet the unique needs of a student eligible to receive special education services. Special education is provided at no cost to parents and includes related services a student requires to access her/his educational program. Eligibility is determined through an evaluation process as per Ohio Operating Standards for the Education of children with Disabilities.
School Social Worker	Sycamore's School Social Worker is an integral link between school, home, and community in helping students achieve academic success. They work directly with school administrations as well as students and families. They are a member of an interdisciplinary team to help students succeed. Our School Social Workers also facilitates access to community resources for students and families, and advocates for student success.

## TRANSPORTATION

Every day, each bus driver in Sycamore Community Schools transports students on three separate routes in both the morning and afternoon to seven district schools, four vocational schools, several non-public schools, and one charter school.

Elementary students may be asked to walk to a designated bus stop, usually located at the corner of their residential street, or at the clubhouse or common area of an apartment complex. By grouping bus stops together, the Sycamore Transportation Department is able to maintain time schedules and consolidate costs by not having to pay for additional fuel, drivers and buses, which would be required if each student was to be picked up and dropped off at their home.

Busing assignments will be available prior to the first day of school. To ensure students have continuous transportation service, please notify the Registration Office (513-6861709) and the student's school.

Any questions or concerns regarding transportation should be referred to the Transportation Department at 513-686-1785.

Parents have the responsibility for the safety and well-being of their child until the child boards the bus and after the child gets off the bus. Therefore, it is recommended that parents or designee be visible at the elementary bus stop areas.

The bus driver's primary responsibility is to safely transport students to and from school. Strict discipline must be maintained by the driver in order to accomplish this. Students are assigned seats and are notified of the rules during the first few days of school. When a student insists on regularly disregarding the rules established for the bus, the bus driver, after verbal warnings, will complete a bus discipline report and submit it to the school administration. A copy of the report will be sent home so parents are aware of the misconduct. Should other instances of misbehavior occur, the bus driver might again refer the child to the office. At this point, the student and his/her parents will be notified that future bus referrals may result in suspension from the bus. If misconduct continues to occur by the same student, a longer bus suspension or expulsion could result. Bus transportation is a privilege reserved for those students displaying appropriate and safe behavior. Failure to follow rules and regulations may result in administrative

discipline and/or forfeiture of the privilege of transportation by school bus. Please see board policy [EEACC](#) and [EEACC-R](#) for more information.

## **School Bus Safety Rules**

1. Wait at the bus stop in the driver-designated place of safety in an orderly manner. Avoid getting in the way of traffic and respect private property where you may be waiting. Do not ask to get in front of another student in line.
2. Help the driver maintain his schedule by being ready when the bus arrives. **Students are required to arrive at the designated school bus stop five (5) minutes prior to the scheduled arrival of the bus.** Too frequent stops and unnecessary waiting increases traffic congestion and multiplies hazards for the bus and its occupants.
3. Wait until the bus stops and you get a signal from the driver before boarding the bus.
4. Always cross at least 10 feet in front of the bus so that the driver can see you. Look both ways before crossing the street.
5. Avoid crowding or pushing when getting on or off the bus.
6. Take your assigned seat as soon as you get on the bus and remain in your seat until the bus stops at your stop and you are ready to get off.
7. Share seats with other students when directed by the driver to do so.
8. Always keep arms inside the bus when a window is open.
9. Do not throw anything in the bus or out through open windows.
10. Do not eat or drink on the bus at any time, unless there is a documented medical reason for a student to do so. Do not use tobacco, tobacco products, or any form of a vaping product while on the bus or at the bus stop at any time.
11. Do not hit, push, or otherwise abuse another pupil while riding the bus.
12. Talk quietly at all times. At intersections and at railroad crossings there is to be no talking.
13. Book bags, backpacks, etc must be secured on the student's lap.
14. Do not damage the bus furnishings in any way. Damages will be paid for by the student.

## **School Bus Responsibilities of Driver**

1. The driver is responsible for the orderly conduct of his passengers. While on the bus, the student is under the authority of and directly responsible to the bus driver.
2. In the event of unacceptable misbehavior, the driver may report the offending student's name to the principal.
3. Parents may be informed should a second occurrence of unacceptable behavior be written up by the Transportation Department and reported to the principal. Necessary disciplinary measures will be taken, including suspension from riding the bus, if unacceptable behaviors continue.

## **School Bus Responsibilities of Parents**

1. Parents are responsible for the safety and supervision of their children to and from the designated bus stops and while the children are waiting for transportation. Bus stops may be located up to five-tenths of a mile from the child's residence. Parents may want to personally supervise the stop or arrange a schedule with other parents to rotate supervision.
2. Ensure that children are at their bus stop at least five minutes prior to the scheduled bus arrival time. Please note that drivers may not wait for a child that is late because of the impact on the rest of the route.
3. Ensure that children are dressed appropriately for the weather conditions. Please avoid clothes with drawstrings.
4. Ensure that children ride their assigned bus and exit the bus at their designated stop.
5. Parents are responsible for any damage done to a bus by their child and will be required to make restitution to Sycamore Community Schools.
6. All parents are responsible for reviewing, explaining and discussing the importance of following the rules and school bus safety with their children. The school bus is an extension of the classroom.

## **School Bus Responsibilities of Students**

Students have duties and obligations to contribute to a safe and orderly bus ride, and therefore, are responsible for complying with the following rules:

1. Students are to arrive at their designated stop in their driver-designated place of safety five minutes prior to the scheduled pickup time.
2. Students should stand on the sidewalk or in a driveway, not in the street. Students must respect the property of others while waiting for the bus.
3. All students board or depart from the bus shall wait for the driver to signal to cross. If the student has to cross the street to board the bus, the student shall then cross the street, staying at least ten feet from the front of the bus. After exiting the bus, students must proceed to their driver designated place of safety. Students must remain at the place of safety until the bus has left the area. Students may then proceed to their home.
4. Immediately upon entering the bus, students shall take the seat assigned to them by the driver.
5. Students shall not be loud or use offensive language.
6. Windows and vents shall not be adjusted without permission of the driver. Students shall not stick any object or part of their body out the bus window.
7. No student shall attempt to get on or off the bus until it has come to a complete stop. Students shall remain seated at all times during the route.
8. Students should not talk to the driver except when necessary. This causes the driver's attention to be diverted from the traffic and could jeopardize everyone's safety.
9. Students shall conduct themselves on the bus as they would in an orderly classroom. Reasonable quiet conversation is permitted except at all railroad crossings.
10. Students are never permitted to bring animals, glass objects, balloons or other potentially dangerous objects on the bus.
11. The use of tobacco products (smoke and smokeless) and lighters/matches is absolutely prohibited on the bus.
12. No possession of and/or lighting of firecrackers and/or explosives on the bus.
13. Students must not have alcohol or drugs in their possession on the bus. Prescription medication may be transported, but must remain in the possession of the driver. The driver will then release the medication to a school official.
14. Students are prohibited from bringing any weapons and/or firearms on the bus.
15. Skateboards, hockey sticks and lacrosse sticks are prohibited on the bus.
16. Eating or drinking on the bus is not permitted under Ohio State Law unless there is a documented medical reason for a student to do so.
17. No littering. A receptacle for waste is provided on the bus.
18. No student will enter or exit the bus through the emergency door unless specifically instructed to do so by the driver or emergency personnel. The exit (aisle way and doors) must always remain free of obstructions.
19. After a student has entered a bus, she/he may not leave the bus without the permission of the driver. Students may only exit the bus at their designated stop.
20. Students may only bring items on the bus that can be held in their laps.
21. All the rules in the "Student Code of Conduct" apply to students while they are on the bus.

## **VISITORS**

All individuals who are not part of a normal school day (regular students, staff, or faculty) shall report directly to the school office and state the reason for their visit each time he/she enters the school. For the safety of students and staff, Sycamore Community Schools is utilizing the digital visitor badge system. All visitors must obtain a visitor's badge which must be worn at all times while in the school building. Parents who wish to visit a classroom must contact the teacher in advance to establish a time to visit the classroom. Once an appointment is made, parents must sign in at the school's main office and obtain a visitor badge. No person may disrupt, disturb or interfere with the teaching of any class of students or any other activity conducted in a school building or upon the campus or grounds at any time. For more information please see board policy [KGB](#).

## **VOLUNTEER BACKGROUND CHECKS**

In an ongoing effort to ensure a safe and secure environment for all students, Sycamore has instituted a volunteer background check process. This process requires a criminal background check for any volunteer that is accompanying a school group on an overnight field trip or is working with students in an environment out of sight and sound of a district employee. Examples of individuals who do not need a criminal background check include, but are not limited to, playground volunteers (as long as there is a regular teacher or aide on the playground), an individual volunteering in the regular classroom, or any volunteer under staff supervision. Background checks will be conducted only on those individuals authorized by the building principal and will be completed at the District Offices. Volunteers may be required to pay for their background check.

## **VOLUNTEERS**

**Volunteers will be permitted at the discretion of the principal.**

All classroom volunteers are under the direction of the teacher and are asked to honor their commitment with punctuality and attendance. Each volunteer area will have specific guidelines and contingency plans in the event someone is unable to fulfill their responsibility on a particular day. Volunteers must maintain the confidentiality of the educational setting related to student academic and behavioral issues and must not divulge information of this nature to any individual or group with the exception of the teacher in charge or other appropriate personnel. Discussing individual staff members or programs in a critical manner is not allowable. When volunteering in the classroom, media center, or on a field trip, it is inappropriate to bring younger children. The volunteer's attention must be totally directed to the task at hand. When performing duties and questions or concerns arise, volunteers should consult with the person in charge at an appropriate time. Volunteers should be a positive example and role model for the children by being aware of verbal and nonverbal communication. Cell phones should be turned off or put on vibrate.

## **STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT - SYCAMORE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS**

While Sycamore embraces the Positive Behavior Intervention and Support framework for encouraging desired behavior, student accountability is imperative in teaching our children to be responsible citizens. The Sycamore Student Code of Conduct identifies in greater detail the expected behavior of students while in our classrooms, on our campus, and attending our events. Positive acknowledgement of these expected behaviors is an essential component in the PBIS framework, and is embedded in our culture. However, when students are not able to demonstrate expected behaviors, we believe in a restorative approach. This may include re-teaching of the expected behaviors, considering the impact of the behavior on others and our culture, and considering opportunities to make amends. Additionally, consequences may be administered for inappropriate or unexpected behavior. Administrators may exercise discretion in determining appropriate consequences for inappropriate behavior. Prior history, seriousness of the offense, and individual student circumstances will be taken into consideration by the administrator.

The violation on the part of a student of any one or more of the following rules of conduct may result in disciplinary actions, including, but not limited to, suspension, emergency removal and/or expulsion. This code of conduct applies to all school events, facilities, school buses, campus locations, and any other venue or activity that is sponsored by Sycamore Community Schools. Students with special needs may be subjected to disciplinary action for violations of the Student Code of Conduct consistent with applicable Federal and State statutes. (*orc. 3313.661 and 3312.662*) regardless of where it occurs, is directed at a district official or employee, or the property of such official or employee.

**Alcohol, Drugs, or Narcotics, THC and CBD products:** A student shall not possess, handle, transmit, conceal, use, smell of, or consume any alcoholic beverage, drug (prescription and over-the-counter), inhalant, or narcotic except as prescribed by a duly licensed medical practitioner and registered with the school nurse or principal, nor shall a student possess, transmit, conceal, or use any counterfeit drug, rolling papers or other drug paraphernalia, or narcotic. A student shall not allude to possessing or providing, attempt to sell, distribute, trade, or provide alcohol, drugs, narcotics, THC/CBD products to another student. Students are not permitted to present, reference or simulate the use of alcohol, drugs, narcotics, THC and CBD products using lookalike, imitation, or simulated products. A student is not permitted to possess or use electronic devices or accessories utilized for storage, possession or

consumption of alcohol, drugs, narcotics, thc, or cbd products including but not limited to vape devices, chargers, pods, vaporizers, tanks, coils, oils, and cartridges.

**Assault:** A student shall not assault or cause physical injury or mental anguish or behave in such a way that could cause physical injury or mental anguish to school personnel, other students or visitors. Hazing in any form is forbidden.

**Academic Dishonesty:** A student shall not possess, sell, transmit, or receive any test information or other information that is meant for individual completion or preparation. Nor shall a student plagiarize or present another person's work as his/her own. Could be subject to grade reduction.

### **Cell Phones/Electronic Devices**

If children bring cell phones and electronic devices to school they must be turned off and must be kept in backpacks at elementary schools and lockers at Edwin H. Greene Intermediate, unless given permission by a school official. Smart watches may be worn but must be turned off. If cell phones or electronic devices are seen or heard during the school day, they will be kept in the front office until a parent comes to school to retrieve it. The school is not responsible for devices that are lost, stolen or broken. Please refer to board policy [JFCK](#) and the code of conduct.

**Classroom Disruption:** A student shall not engage in any activity that interrupts, interferes, or prohibits the learning of themselves or others in an instructional setting.

**Creating a Hazardous/Unsafe Situation:** A student may not engage in any activity that knowingly or unknowingly may cause a hazardous situation for students, staff, or the community while on school property or at school sponsored events.

**Damage or Destruction of Property:** A student while under the jurisdiction of the school shall not deface, damage or destroy, or attempt to deface, damage or destroy, school or private property. Disciplinary action may include restitution.

**Disrespect/Provocation:** Students are expected to be courteous, considerate, and solve problems peacefully with all students and staff. Students shall refrain from the use of profane or obscene language, motions, signs, electronic or written messages, and derogatory comments based on race, religion, gender and/or sexuality. Students are expected to be honest and truthful. Students are expected to honor the reasonable requests of their peers and adults.

**Disruption of School:** A student shall not engage in any activity that requires the daily operations of the school to be significantly disrupted or halted. Including but not limited to; disruptions resulting in student's being removed from their intended building locations, administrators coordinating large scale responses to reported student code of conduct violations, and disruptions requiring law enforcement response.

**Dress Code:** Appropriate attire should ensure the health, welfare and safety of all members of the student body. Any form of dress or grooming that attracts undue attention, disrupts the learning environment, or violates the previous statement is unacceptable. Students shall refrain from the use of profane or obscene language, motions, signs, electronic or written messages, and derogatory comments based on race, religion, gender and/or sexuality. Dress and grooming standards require cleanliness in the interest of health, sanitary conditions and safety requirements. When a student is participating in school activities, his/her dress and grooming must not disrupt his/her performance or that of other students or constitute a health threat to himself/herself or other students. Dress and grooming will be such as not to disrupt the teaching-learning process nor infringe upon the rights of others.

**Electronic Equipment:** Students are not permitted to use electronic devices that cause disruption to the educational process or school functions.

**Extortion:** A student shall not borrow or attempt to take money or a thing of value from another person by using intimidation or threat, real or implied.

**Falsifying Information/Lying In An Investigation:** A student shall not knowingly report or provide details in an investigation that are false, embellished, or inaccurate for the purpose of misleading the administration in an investigation, as retaliation towards peers or staff, to or to protect themselves or others in an investigation.

**Fighting, Physical Altercation, Horseplay:** A student may not engage in a physical exchange with another student that may, or does, cause physical discomfort or harm with other students.

**Forgery:** A student shall not write the name of another person or alter the date, time, grade, or other data on any school form or on correspondence directed to the school.

**Gambling:** A student shall not engage in any act of gambling, including but not limited to in person or online gambling activities.

**Gangs:** A student may not wear, carry, or display gang paraphernalia, or exhibit behavior or gestures which symbolize gang membership, or cause and/or participate in activities which intimidate or negatively affect other students.

**Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying, and Dating Violence:** In accordance with policy, a student shall not verbally, non verbally, or physically threaten, harass, coerce or menace another person in any manner including electronically transmitted photos. Definitions of hazing, harassment, intimidation, or bullying are found in the Bullying and Hazing Policy.

**Insubordination:** A student shall not fail to comply with the directive of authorized school personnel during any period of time when the student is under the authority of the school.

**Public Display of Affection:** Students will refrain from any form of physical contact between couples that may make others in close proximity uncomfortable or serves as a distraction for themselves as well as onlookers.

**Public Indecency:** A student shall not uncover or expose parts of the body which are regarded as private.

**Skiping/Out of Assigned Area:** Students are expected to be in their designated or assigned space within the school building at all times. Students out of their assigned area are only permitted to do so with specific permission from school officials. Students are not permitted to leave school grounds without explicit permission and by signing out and following the outlined procedures for leaving school grounds.

**Theft:** A student shall not remove, have in his/her possession, or take property belonging either to the school or another individual.

**Threats/Intimidation:** A student shall not act in a way, through written, electronic, verbal or physical communication the desire, intent, or possibility of causing harm to another student. Harm is defined as physical, mental, social or emotional damage to a person, property, social standing, opportunities, or any extension of the person that has importance.

**Tobacco/Nicotine or Tobacco Simulating Products:** A student shall not use or possess tobacco or nicotine/tobacco-simulating products in any form including but not limited to cigarettes, cigars, clove cigarettes,

e-cigarettes/vaporizer pens, chewing tobacco, snuff and any other tobacco. A student is not permitted to possess or use electronic devices or accessories typically utilized for nicotine including but not limited to vape devices, chargers, pods, vaporizers, tanks, oils, coils, and cartridges.

**Trespassing/Loitering:**

A student shall not enter a school building or school grounds or school sponsored event where the student is not authorized to attend. Students are not permitted on school property before or after operating hours without specific purpose or permission from a school official to attend or participate in a supervised school approved activity.

**Truancy:** A student shall not be absent from school or from a class except for the reasons provided by Ohio Revised Code and confirmation by the parent or guardian. Excessive unexcused absences may result in referral to a student attendance intervention meeting and/or in truancy charges being filed with the Hamilton County Juvenile Court.

**Unauthorized/Inappropriate use of Electronic Devices:** In accordance with the Acceptable Use Policy for technology, unauthorized, illegal use of computers, software, access to computer networks, telecommunications and related technologies; or being involved in willful acts that cause physical, financial, or other harm, or disruption of information technology in any manner by the student is prohibited. Students are not permitted to use personal devices on school grounds to engage in illegal, unwelcomed, or illicit contact with others. Students may not use the district network to engage in illegal, unwelcomed, or illicit contact with others. Using extensions, apps or software that bypass district filters or programs is not permitted. The Acceptable Use Policy is expected to be followed 24/7, whether the device and/or account is on or off Sycamore’s campus. The following guidelines and procedures shall be complied with by staff, students or community members who are specifically authorized to use the District’s computers or online services.

1. Use appropriate language. Do not use profanity, obscenity or other language, that may be offensive to other users. Illegal activities are strictly forbidden.
2. Do not reveal your personal home address or phone number or those of other students or colleagues.
3. Note that electronic mail (email) is not guaranteed to be private. Technology coordinators have access to all messages relating to or in support of illegal activities and such activities may be reported to the authorities.
4. Use of the computer and/or network is not for financial gain or for any commercial or illegal activity.
5. The network should not be used in such a way that it disrupts the use of the network by others.
6. All communications and information accessible via the network should be assumed to be property of the District.
7. Rules and regulations of online etiquette are subject to change by the administration.
8. The user in whose name an online service account is issued is responsible for its proper use at all times. Users shall keep personal account numbers and passwords private. They shall use this system only under the account numbers issued by the District.
9. The system shall be used only for purposes related to education or administration. Commercial and/or political use of the system is strictly prohibited. The administration reserves the right to monitor any computer activity and online communications for improper use.



10. Users shall not use the system to encourage the use of drugs, alcohol or tobacco nor shall they promote unethical practices or any activity prohibited by law or board policy.
11. Users shall not view, download or transmit material that is threatening, obscene, disruptive or sexually explicit or that could be construed as harassment, intimidation, bullying or disparagement of others based on their race, color, national origin, ancestry, citizenship status, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, economic status, military status, political beliefs or any other personal or physical characteristics.
12. Copyrighted material may not be placed on the system without the author's permission.
13. Vandalism results in the cancellation of user privileges. Vandalism includes uploading/downloading any inappropriate material, creating computer viruses and/or any malicious attempt to harm or destroy equipment or materials or the data of any other user.
14. Users shall not read other users' mail or files; they shall not attempt to interfere with other users' ability to send or receive electronic mail, nor shall they attempt to read, delete, copy, modify or forge other users' mail.
15. Users are expected to keep messages brief and use appropriate language.
16. Users shall report any security problem or misuse of the network to the teacher, their immediate supervisor or building administrator.

For more information please see board policy [EDE](#).

**Weapons or Explosives:** A student shall not possess, handle, transmit, or conceal any weapon or object capable of causing injury to another person, including but not limited to chains, guns, knives, ice picks, brass knuckles, objects that propel projectiles, lighters, matches, firecrackers, smoke bombs, fireworks and chemicals or other look alike objects which could be construed as causing harm. The definition of a firearm is any weapon (including a starter gun) which is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive; the frame or receiver of any such weapon; any firearm muffler or firearm silencer or any destructive device (as defined in 18 U.S.C.A. Section 921), that includes any explosive, incendiary or poisonous gas, bomb, grenade, rocket having a propellant charge of more than four ounces, missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than one-quarter ounce, mine or device similar to any of the devices described above. A knife is defined as a cutting instrument having a sharp blade that is capable of causing serious bodily injury.

**Other:** A student shall not engage in any other activity which the pupil knows or should know will disrupt the academic process or a curricular or extracurricular activity.

Adopted by the Sycamore Board of Education: 8/76, 5/83, 4/85, 7/88, 8/91, 5/93, 7/97, 6/98, 5/03, 6/13, 9/17, 2/23

## **HAZING AND BULLYING** **(Harassment, Intimidation and Dating Violence)**

The Board does not tolerate hazing, harassment, intimidation or bullying of any student on District property or at any school-sponsored event, regardless of whether the event occurs on or off District property (including on school buses and other school-related vehicles). Students who engage in such behavior are subject to disciplinary action, including suspension or expulsion from school. The Board's commitment to addressing such prohibited behavior

involves a multi-faceted approach, which includes education and the promotion of a school atmosphere in which hazing, harassment, intimidation, dating violence and/or bullying will not be tolerated by students, staff or administration.

Hazing means doing any act or coercing another, including the victim, to do any act of initiation into any student or other organization that causes or creates a substantial risk of causing mental or physical harm to any person.

Throughout this policy the term bullying is used in place of harassment, intimidation and bullying.

Bullying, harassment and intimidation is an intentional written, verbal, electronic or physical act that a student has exhibited toward another particular student more than once. The intentional act also includes violence within a dating relationship. The behavior causes mental or physical harm to the other student and is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment for the other student. This behavior is prohibited on school property, on a school bus or at a school-sponsored activity. Students found responsible for harassment, intimidation or bullying by an electronic act may be suspended. Discipline procedures will not infringe on any student's rights under the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. When the behavior is sexual harassment, the Title IX sexual harassment grievance process will be followed, if applicable, prior to imposing any discipline that cannot be imposed without resolution of the Title IX process.

Permission, consent or assumption of risk by an individual subjected to hazing, bullying and/or dating violence does not lessen the prohibition contained in this policy.

The District includes, within the health curriculum, age-appropriate instruction in dating violence prevention education in grades 7 to 12. This instruction includes recognizing warning signs of dating violence and the characteristics of healthy relationships.

Prohibited activities of any type, including those activities engaged in via computer and/or electronic communications devices or electronic means are inconsistent with the educational process and are prohibited at all times. The District educates minors about appropriate online behavior including interacting with other individuals on social networking websites and in chat rooms and cyberbullying awareness and response.

No administrator, teacher or other employee of the District shall encourage, permit, condone or tolerate any hazing and/or bullying activities. No students, including leaders of student organizations, are permitted to plan, encourage or engage in any hazing and/or bullying.

Administrators, teachers and all other District employees are particularly alert to possible conditions, circumstances or events that might include hazing, bullying and/or dating violence. If any of the prohibited behaviors are planned or discovered involved students are informed by the discovering District employee of the prohibition contained in this policy and are required to end all such activities immediately. All hazing, bullying and/or dating violence incidents are reported immediately to the principal/designee and appropriate discipline is administered. When employees have actual knowledge that the behavior is sexual harassment, they must contact the Title IX Coordinator.

The Superintendent/designee must provide the Board President with a semiannual written summary of all reported incidents and post the summary on the District's website, to the extent permitted by law.

The administration provides training on the District's hazing and bullying policy to District employees and volunteers who have direct contact with students and by November 30 annually reports to the Ohio Department of Education compliance with this requirement through the consolidated school mandate report. If the District reports noncompliance the Superintendent/designee must provide a written explanation to the Board within 30 days explaining this noncompliance and a written plan of action for accurately and efficiently addressing the problem.

Additional training is provided to elementary employees in violence and substance abuse prevention and positive youth development

District employees, students and volunteers have qualified civil immunity for damages arising from reporting an incident of hazing and/or bullying. Administrators, teachers, other employees and students who fail to abide by this policy may be subject to disciplinary action and may be liable for civil and criminal penalties in compliance with State and Federal law.

No one is permitted to retaliate against an employee or student because they file a grievance or assist or participate in an investigation, proceeding or hearing regarding the charge of hazing and/or bullying of an individual.

Please see board policy [JFCF-R](#) for school personnel responsibilities and complaint procedures.

## **SEXUAL HARASSMENT (TITLE IX)**

The District does not discriminate on the basis of sex in any education program or activity that it operates, including admission and employment. The District is required by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and the regulations promulgated through the U.S. Department of Education not to discriminate in such a manner. Inquiries about the application of Title IX to the District may be referred to the District's Title IX Coordinator, to the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights of the Department of Education, or both. Please refer to board policy [ACAA](#) and [ACAA/R](#).

The Board designates the following individual to serve as the District's Title IX Coordinator:

Name/Title: Meghan Lawson, Assistant Superintendent  
Address: Sycamore Community Schools, 5959 Hagewa Drive Cincinnati, OH 45242  
Phone: (513) 686-1700  
Email: lawsonme@sycamoreschools.org

Any person may report sex discrimination, including sexual harassment, at any time, including during non-business hours. Such a report may be made in person, by mail, by telephone or by electronic mail, using the contact information listed for the Title IX Coordinator, or by any other means that results in the Title IX Coordinator receiving the person's verbal or written report.

For purposes of this policy and the grievance process, "sexual harassment" means conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following:

1. A District employee conditioning the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of the District on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct;
2. Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the District's education program or activity or
3. "Sexual assault" as defined in 20 USC 1092(f)(6)(A)(v), "dating violence" as defined in 34 USC 12291(a)(10), "domestic violence" as defined in 34 USC 12291(a)(8) or "stalking" as defined in 34 USC 12291(a)(30).

When the harassment or discrimination on the basis of sex does not meet the definition of sexual harassment, the Title IX Coordinator directs the individual to the applicable sex discrimination process for investigation.

### **Retaliation Prohibited**

The District prohibits intimidation, threats, coercion or discrimination against any individual for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX or this policy, or because the individual has made a report or complaint, testified, assisted, or participated or refused to participate in any manner in an investigation proceeding or hearing, if applicable. Intimidation, threats, coercion, or discrimination, including charges against an individual for code of conduct violations that do not involve sex discrimination or sexual harassment, but arise out of the same facts or circumstances as a report or complaint of sex discrimination, or a report or formal complaint of sexual harassment, for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX or this part, constitutes retaliation.

## **Confidentiality**

The District must keep confidential the identity of any individual who has made a report or complaint of sex discrimination, including any individual who has made a report or filed a formal complaint of sexual harassment, any individual who has been alleged to be the victim or perpetrator of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment, and any witness, except as may be permitted by Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) or as required by law, or to carry out the purposes of the Title IX regulations, including the conduct of any investigation, hearing or judicial proceeding arising thereunder.

## **Notice Requirements**

The District provides notice to applicants for admission and employment, students, parents or legal guardians of elementary and secondary school students, employees and the union(s) with the name or title, office address, email address and telephone number of the Title IX Coordinator and notice of the District grievance procedures and process, including how to report or file a complaint of sex discrimination, how to file a formal complaint of sexual harassment and how the District will respond. The District also posts the Title IX Coordinator's contact information and Title IX policies and procedures in a prominent location on the District website and in all handbooks made available by the District.

## **Training Requirements**

The District ensures that Title IX Coordinators, investigators, decision-makers, and any person who facilitates an informal resolution process, receives training on the definition of sexual harassment, the scope of the District's education program or activity, how to conduct an investigation and grievance process including hearings, appeals and informal resolution processes, when applicable, and how to serve impartially including by avoiding prejudgment of the facts at issue, conflicts of interest and bias. The District also ensures that decision-makers and investigators receive training on issues of relevance of questions and evidence, including when questions and evidence about the complainant's sexual predisposition or prior sexual behavior are not relevant as set forth in the formal procedures that follow, and training on any technology to be used at a live hearing, if applicable. Investigators also receive training on issues of relevance to create an investigative report that fairly summarizes relevant evidence. All materials used to train individuals who receive training under this section must not rely on sex stereotypes and must promote impartial investigations and adjudications of formal complaints of sexual harassment and are made publicly available on the District's website.

## **Conflict of Interest and Bias**

The District ensures that Title IX Coordinators, investigators, decision-makers, and any person who facilitates an informal resolution process do not have a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or an individual complainant or respondent.

## **Determination of Responsibility**

The individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment is presumed not responsible for alleged conduct. A determination regarding responsibility will be made by the decision-maker at the conclusion of the investigation in accordance with the process outlined in the accompanying procedure. No disciplinary sanctions will be imposed unless and until a final determination of responsibility is reached.

## DISCIPLINE CONSEQUENCES

Learning communities that are successful are those in which students and staff respect each other and share a common purpose toward excellence. An orderly and properly behaved student body is an essential component in order for everyone to be successful. Clear expectations for behavior and consequences for poor choices help to maintain the environment and our mission of excellence. While Sycamore embraces the Positive Behavior Intervention and Support framework for encouraging desired behavior, student accountability is imperative in teaching our children to be responsible citizens. Students who violate the Code of Conduct will be held accountable through disciplinary responses that promote behavioral change while also educating the child. Based on the severity of the offense, the final determination of a disciplinary consequence is at the discretion of the Administration. This code of conduct applies to all Sycamore events, facilities, campus locations, and any other venue or activity that is sponsored by Sycamore Community Schools.

### Consequences Utilized By Administrators (Not Limited To)



#### Emergency Removals

A student in grades Pre-K - 3 may be removed only for the rest of the school day and shall return the next day. No written notice or hearing is required for these removals and returns the next day. Per Ohio Revised Code, students in grades PreK-3 may be suspended from school in the event that they pose significant danger.

#### Suspension/Expulsion

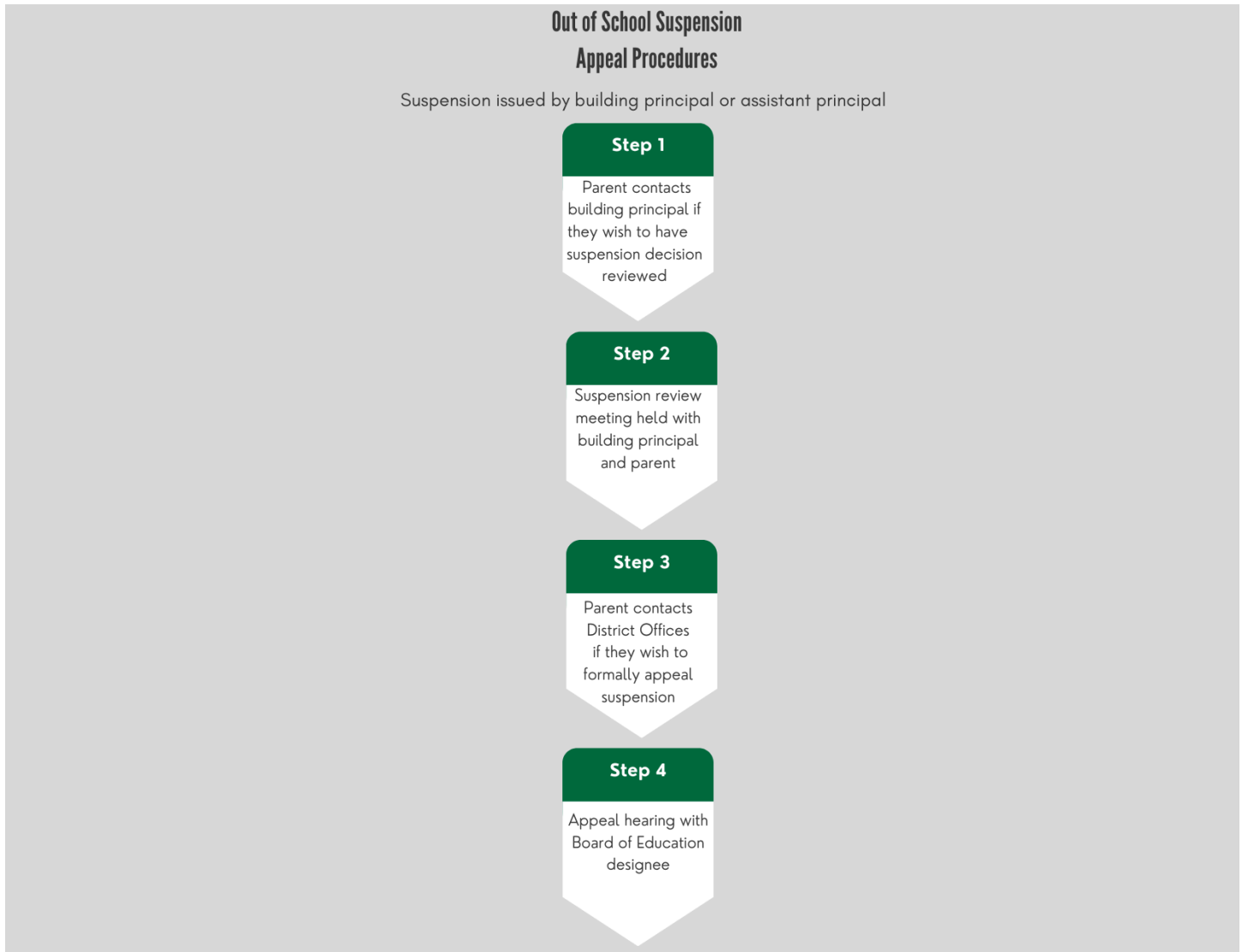
##### Out of School Suspension

A student may be suspended from school for up to 10 days. A suspended student is not allowed on school grounds or permitted to attend or participate in any school activities. In accordance with Ohio law any student that misses class for a suspension is allowed full make up privileges for assignments missed for at least partial credit. Appeals to suspensions should be done first through contacting the building principal and making an appointment. If a

student's presence poses a continuing danger to persons or property or an ongoing threat of disrupting the academic process, the Superintendent, principal, assistant principal or personnel employed to direct, supervise or coach a student activity program may remove the student from the premises. For additional information please see board policy [JGD](#).

### Expulsion

Only the superintendent may expel a student from school. The length of an expulsion may be for any length of time, up to and including eighty (80) consecutive school days. A student who may have committed a serious offense or have chronic repeated offenses may be recommended for expulsion. An expulsion hearing will then be set up at the Sycamore Community Schools District office in accordance with student due process procedures.



## Expulsion Appeal Procedures

Suspension for 10 days, with recommendation for expulsion, issued by building principal or assistant principal

### Step 1

Expulsion hearing with District Office administration, building principal, and parents within 10 days of issue

### Step 2

Recommendation made to superintendent on how to proceed

### Step 3

Superintendent makes final decision based in recommendations

### Step 4

Parent contacts District Offices if they wish to appeal

### Step 5

Appeal hearing with Board of Education designee