

# **Haine Middle School**

## **Grades 5 – 6**

### **STUDENT HANDBOOK**

#### **2024-2025**



## Welcome to Haine Middle School!

The staff and administration have worked hard to design a program of studies which you will find to be both diverse and challenging. Now it is up to you to put forth your best effort and take advantage of the many opportunities. Our middle school is specifically designed to meet the academic and developmental needs of adolescents. Several of the unique features include:

- An activity period, which provides students with an opportunity to sample a variety of activities.
- WIN – What I Need, which provides students with an opportunity to receive an intervention or extension of learning.
- An interdisciplinary curriculum, which creates connections between subject areas to enhance comprehension.
- Teaming, where students are organized into CORE teams which include, math, science, ELA and social studies.

**BE PROUD OF YOUR SCHOOL!** Take good care of it and be appreciative of the efforts of others. You are fortunate to be a part of an outstanding school district which offers a comprehensive quality educational program. We have established a proud tradition and remain committed to excellence in the future.

Please read the following student handbook information carefully to find out about general procedures and important school policies.

# SENECA VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT

## Seneca Valley School Board Members for 2024-2025

Eric DiTullio – President  
Jeff Widdowson – Vice President  
Leslie Bredl  
Nick Brower  
Susan Harrison  
Timothy Hester  
Mike Jacobs  
Frederick Peterson  
Kari Zimmer

## Seneca Valley School District Administrative Personnel

Superintendent of Schools  
Dr. Tracy Vitale

Assistant Superintendent K-6  
Dr. Sean McCarty

Assistant Superintendent 7-12  
Dr. Matthew McKinley

Assistant Superintendent, Curriculum & Assessments  
Dr. Marie Palano

Director for Human Resources and Pupil Services  
Ms. Kyra Bobak

Director of Student Services  
Dr. Cassandra Doggrell

Assistant Director of Student Services  
Dr. Mallory Eyles

Supervisor of Special Education  
Ms. Ashley Pattison

Transportation Director  
Mr. John Demkowicz

School Guidance Counselors for Haine Middle  
Mrs. Kristen Kress  
Mrs. Jennifer Shipe

Haine Middle School Administration  
Dr. Erin Wilcher, Principal  
Mr. Jeremy Womer, Assistant Principal

# Seneca Valley School District Mission Statement

In collaboration with family and community, the mission of the Seneca Valley School District is to provide a nurturing and safe environment with academically challenging opportunities, emphasizing digital citizenship, innovation, and global awareness in order to prepare our students to be productive and contributing citizens.

**Nondiscrimination Policy** The Seneca Valley School District shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, creed, religion, sex, gender, sexual orientation, genetic information, ancestry, national origin, marital status, pregnancy, handicap/disability or limited English proficiency in its educational programs and activities or employment policies, and shall provide equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth programs, as required by Title IX of the 1972 Educational Amendments, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 Regulations of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Boy Scouts Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act. The requirement not to discriminate in the Education Program or Activity extends to admission and employment. The District shall not use or distribute any publication stating that the District treats applicants, students, or employees differently on the basis of sex except as such treatment is permitted by Title IX or the applicable regulations. The Board also declares it to be the policy of this district to comply with federal law and regulations under Title IX prohibiting sexual harassment, which is a form of unlawful discrimination on the basis of sex. Inquiries about the application of Title IX and the Regulations to the District may be referred to the District's Title IX Coordinator, Supervisor of Equity.

## Seneca Valley Portal

The SV Portal provides secure central access to all personalized resources available to SV parents/guardians and students. Available at this site for 24/7 viewing and/or updates are grades, contact/emergency information, health information, classroom calendar, sports forms and more.

To access the portal information, please utilize the SV Portal wallet cards that were mailed to you (multiple children within one family can be viewed with one card – individual cards are not needed for each child). If you are in need of a replacement wallet card, please contact the Central Office Front Desk at (724) 452-6040, ext. 1675, and one will be provided for you via U.S. Mail. Passwords and usernames cannot be supplied verbally over the phone. We apologize for the inconvenience; however, this procedure is necessary due to the sensitivity of the information involved.

The parent portal can be found on the district homepage at [www.svsd.net](http://www.svsd.net) (icon tab can be found in top right hand corner) or by going to <https://portal.svsd.net/>. There is also an SV app you can obtain for free through the App store.

## **Arrival and Dismissal**

The school opens at 8:40 a.m. as the first bus arrives. Students should **NOT** be dropped off at school prior to that time as supervision is not available. While teachers are in the school building from 8:10 a.m. until 3:40 p.m., they are required to attend administrative and team meetings upon arrival.

### **School hours are:**

8:40 a.m. -School opens

8:45-9:03 a.m. -Breakfast offered in the cafeteria

8:55 a.m. -Classes begin

\*Note: **A student arriving in the office at 8:55 a.m. is considered tardy.**

3:20 p.m. -Dismissal (walkers & special pick-ups)

3:25 p.m. -Bus Dismissal

### ***Morning arrival 8:40 – 8:55***

Parents bringing children to school enter the lower parking lot “Student Drop-Off” lane. A school employee will be present on the lower sidewalk to supervise. Students should only exit the vehicles when they are in the drop-off lane; never on Haine School Road or at the entrance of the parking lot.

In order to maintain the safest environment for all students exiting cars, stay in a single file line; please do not pass cars that are dropping students off.

**\*Under NO circumstance should a child be dropped off at the school prior to 8:40am.**

**\*\*Students who arrive at 8:55 a.m. must check in at the office before proceeding to their classrooms. Students should have tardy excuses completed to give to the office staff.**

Students arriving between 8:40 and 8:55 a.m. must report to, and stay in, the designated student area. They will be dismissed at 8:50 a.m. to go to their lockers and homerooms.

### ***Dismissal 3:20***

Any student that is being picked up must either submit a request on the parent portal or send in a signed note and give it to their teacher upon arrival to school. **Please do not email teachers requesting early dismissals. Due to their schedules, they are unavailable to respond to such requests during the school day. The office will begin dismissal at 3:20.** Parents will not be granted access to the classrooms during dismissal unless you have a pre-scheduled meeting.

## **Attendance**

### **Attendance (as per Policy #204)**

School attendance and prompt arrival to school are the responsibilities of the students and their parents/guardians. In order to learn the expected skills, regular school attendance is required. A child cannot learn these skills when frequent absences occur. Students are expected to attend 180 days of school during the course of a school year.

### Student Absence:

When a student is absent, parents/guardians will be notified during the school day.

Following a child's absence, parents can submit an excuse on the Parent Portal, or upon returning to school, students must submit a signed excuse from the parent or guardian to their homeroom teacher. If the student went to the doctor, a medical excuse should be provided so that the absence can be recorded as medically excused.

The fact that a parent/guardian provides a written explanation for the student's absence/tardy does not in itself qualify the absence as excused. The absence must be for a legal reason according to the law. **Under NO circumstances should a student be permitted to write his/her own excuse, even if it is signed by the parent/guardian. Such day(s) of absence(s) will be considered "Unexcused."**

Upon returning to school, students should immediately make plans with their teachers to make up all work missed during the absence. This is the student's responsibility.

Illness/injury (be specific) may be verified by a medical doctor's excuse or parental note indicating the nature of the illness or injury. A written excuse from a parent/guardian will be accepted to excuse up to five (5) consecutive and/or twenty (20) days in session. After this time, the district will send notification to require parents/guardians to verify any future illness/injury with a specific written excuse from a medical doctor. Note: After ten (10) parent/guardian notes have been presented to verify chronic illness/injury, a medical note may be required. An excuse/letter may be provided by the student's doctor that states he/she may miss school due to a specific illness and parent must refer to that specified illness when writing an excuse for each subsequent absence. These absences will then be excused. A new excuse/letter from a doctor must be provided every 90 days.

### Early Dismissal

Early dismissals from school require advance notification through the Parent Portal or through a signed note. Simply go into the portal, to "Attendance," where you will find "Dismissals," to submit a new early dismissal request. Each early dismissal student is added to a list, which is provided to teachers for a reminder. At the early dismissal time, the student will be called to report to the office to meet his/her parent when the parent has arrived. **Parent must provide photo identification.**

If someone other than a parent/guardian is picking up a student, parents must inform the office prior to the dismissal. Acceptable reasons for early dismissal are medical appointments and family emergencies.

If a student is being picked up by a parent/guardian – and their assigned transportation by SVSD is to ride a bus, the student **MUST** get signed out in the office.

One all-school announcement will be made at approximately 3:20 daily to inform students to report to the office for dismissal.

The Seneca Valley School District recognizes two types of absences: **excused absences** and **unexcused absences**. Excused absences, according to state law, are those that entail missing school for the following reasons:

- Religious holiday
- Medical related absences
- Sudden illness or other emergency situation
- Pre-planned educational trips
- Death in immediate family
- Inclement weather or impassable roads

**In order for an absence to be considered excused, a written note must be turned into the school office or submitted on the SV Parent Portal by using the attendance option.** The student's parent or guardian is required to submit a written statement that specifically states the reason for the absence. The date of the absence(s), child's full name, and detailed reason for the absence must be listed on the written statement. The written statement should be sent to the school with the child and given to the child's teacher upon his/her return to school. By District Policy, five (5) or more consecutive days of absence requires a doctor's excuse. Any absence without this written statement will be unexcused.

An absence is considered to be unexcused if a child would miss school for any reason other than what is listed under excused absences or if a written statement regarding the excused absence is not submitted.

Being absent from school does not excuse a student from any work or assignments which were assigned during his/her absence. It is the student's responsibility to see each his/her teacher(s) to request make-up work. Please contact your child's teacher(s) for classroom specific absent assignment policies.

In the event that a child is absent from school on the day of a school sponsored event (field trip, assembly, after school activity/club/meeting), regardless of whether that absence is excused or unexcused, he or she is not permitted to attend that event.

Once a student reaches the fourth unexcused absence, parents will be contacted by the school district to notify that any subsequent absences without a valid excuse will be marked as unexcused. Students who are absent for three (3) unexcused absences will receive a letter of concern from the school district. Six (6) unexcused absences will result in a second letter and a parent meeting at the school. An attendance improvement plan will be put into place at this time.

*For more detailed information about Seneca Valley's Attendance Policies, please see School Board policy 204*

### **Automated Attendance Notification Program**

Please be aware that this school uses an automated attendance system. It will notify parents/guardians of a student's absence at the telephone number they predetermined. If this number is changed, parents must notify the school office. Due to the system's inability to randomly update information, when students are tardy, parents may receive an absence call. Please be assured the office will update the information for official attendance purposes. In addition, the response time for calling parents will vary depending on the total number of district students absent. If parents feel their child is present at school and is not tardy, or who feel this is an error, should call the school immediately.

## **Emergency Information/School Closing/ Delays/Early Dismissals and School Messenger**

When Seneca Valley School District has a closing or delay, the district will first utilize School Messenger, a parent notification system, which will be programmed to call the primary phone number as listed for each child. In an emergency situation or in the event that the district goes from a two-hour delay to a closure, an emergency call will be sent to all provided numbers per student (this is the primary number and up to two additional numbers provided per child) to ensure that the information reaches all those effected by the emergency or change in status.

School Messenger information will be collected/updated at the beginning of every school year, and parents are encouraged to update the parent portal with any changes.

## **Recorded and On-Line Messages**

Seneca Valley Central Office: 724-452-6040

[www.svsd.net](http://www.svsd.net)

The Seneca Valley School District will make every effort to close or delay school by 5:30 a.m. of the affected day. Delays that turn into closures will be made by 7:30 a.m. of the affected day. Please know that early dismissals will be avoided whenever possible, but if necessary, will be made by 11:00 a.m. of the affected day.

Please note the following with regards to a two-hour delay:

- Afternoon and evening activities will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Please note the following with regards to early dismissals/cancellations:

- NO after-school activities.
- NO home or away evening activities.
- NO groups will be permitted to assemble at any school facility.
- NO facilities will be used by rental groups.

When an early dismissal is called, all students are expected to board their regular buses and return home.

## **Educational Trip Forms**

The Seneca Valley School District recognizes that students may have the opportunity to participate in pre-planned trips and educational experiences during the regular school year. A written request (Seneca Valley Pre-Approved Educational Request Form) must be received at least two weeks prior to the actual trip. Pre-approval forms are available in the school office. Only one educational trip (maximum 5 consecutive days) will be approved per school year. The determination of each request will be based on the following: prior attendance records; current grades; previous requests; frequency of such requests; and the educational value of the experience.

**Seneca Valley School District will NOT approve absences for educational tours or trips during the first two weeks, or the final two weeks of the beginning or end of the school year, nor during PSSA and Keystone testing.**

**It is the student's responsibility to obtain all classroom assignments before he or she departs for their trip. It is further understood that all classroom assignments are due the day the student returns from the trip.**



### **Withdrawal and Transfer**

If you are moving to another area or permanently withdrawing from school, you must first officially notify personnel in the school office and sign a withdrawal form. All parents/guardians of students leaving the district must complete an exit survey.

## **Student Services**

### **Guidance**

Our counseling program is concerned with all phases of a student's development. Counselors assist students with personal and social issues that arise during the school day. The counselor will be available to help students with scheduling classes, with academic issues and with beginning to look at future educational plans. Emphasis is directed toward personal, academic and career growth that will prepare students as they transition into Middle School.

Counselors are an integral part of the CORE team of teachers. They attend team meetings and act as a liaison for parents, teachers, and students.

Any parent or guardian who has a question or concern about their child's progress in school is encouraged to contact your child's school counselor:

- Haine Middle School's Guidance Counselor at 724-776-1325.

### **Students Experiencing Homelessness, Foster Care and Other Educational Instability (as per Seneca Valley Policy #251)**

Any student who has experienced one or more changes in school enrollment during a school year due to: homelessness, dependency related to children youth and family involvement, or foster care is eligible for support services through the school.

Homelessness encompasses individuals lacking a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence, including: those that are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reasons; living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds; living in emergency, transitional or domestic violence shelters; and those who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation. Also, children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and migratory children living in circumstances listed above. Additionally, unaccompanied homeless youth are eligible for services. They include any child who is "not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian." This includes young people who have run away from home, been kicked out, or been abandoned by their parents or guardians.

Local agencies, including the school, will collaborate to ensure school stability and continuity. Collaborative decisions including all team members will ensure that each student is served effectively. The federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and in the document linked below provide details. Every youth has a right to a free, appropriate education. The school will keep a homeless student enrolled in their original school, if possible, while considering the student's best interests.

Students living in shelters in the district will be enrolled to attend at Seneca Valley. Homeless families are not required to verify their residency to enroll. The District has a staff person who serves as liaison to help homeless children and youth. Their responsibilities include identifying students who qualify as homeless, informing parents about their rights, distributing information to the public, mediating conflicts, and informing families of transportation options. Furthermore, the liaison helps with immediate enrollment of homeless children, referrals for human needs such as health care, food, and shelter, special education needs, and preschool needs, all while maintaining the privacy and dignity of all involved.

The school will continue the youth's education in the school of origin while they are homeless and for the remainder of the school year once they are no longer homeless. During homelessness, school nurses will collaborate with previous schools to obtain immunizations and other health records, but enrollment will not be delayed for a homeless child. Each homeless student is eligible for free meals through the National School Lunch Program. Additionally, the school enrolling the student is to arrange reasonable transportation to the school of enrollment and may work with other school districts to coordinate services. The district will also transport a homeless student to their school of origin within the district. The homeless student is eligible for support services, the same as a non-homeless student. Furthermore, the school must provide written explanations and the right to appeal decisions made by the school. The whole dispute resolution process is explained in the Basic Education Circular, which is linked below.

If you need assistance or have questions, please contact the district office at (724) 452-6040 and request to speak to the homeless liaison.

**More information can be found in the [Pennsylvania Department of Education Basic Education Circular](#)**

### **Homebound Instruction**

If a student is confined to his or her home for a period of more than two weeks, he/she may be eligible to receive homebound instruction. In submitting requests, a parent/guardian must present a statement from a medical doctor indicating the appropriateness of such a program. All requests will be processed through the School District's Central Administration Office.

### **Seneca Valley Academy of Choice**

The Academy of Choice provides students with a world-class virtual and performing arts education with opportunities to participate in a wide range of district activities and individualized instruction and support by **certified** and **highly qualified** members of the Seneca Valley School District professional teaching staff. Benefits include flexibility of scheduling, traveling and exploring career options! Please visit the Seneca Valley School District website for more information.

<http://www.svsd.net/Domain/1092>

### **Y.E.S.S. Student Assistance Program** **(as per Policy # 236)**

Y.E.S.S., the Youth Education Support Services program is Seneca Valley School District's Student Assistance Program. Student Assistance is the Commonwealth's vehicle to identify

barriers to a student's learning and to provide programs to address these barriers thereby enhancing a student's academic and personal development. Barriers to a student's learning can be complex and may include things such as a recent move or relocation, sudden grief and loss, attendance issues, use of substances, being the victim of violence or harassment, poor coping skills, depression and anxiety, poor organization and study skills, and strained relationships.

The goal of Y.E.S.S. is two-fold. First, Y.E.S.S. provides intervention and referral services via existing school programs, the school mental health liaison, and/or outside community resources. Existing school programs may include school-based support groups individual counseling, and mentoring. Second, Y.E.S.S. has a prevention component which promotes healthy lifestyles through student education, leadership programs, and alternative activities. Y.E.S.S. also provides support services and education to school personnel and parents regarding those issues which effect a student's personal growth and ability to learn.

The Y.E.S.S. Core Team facilitates each building's programs. The Core Team may consist of a coordinator, teachers, counselors, a school nurse, administrators, and liaisons from the community. Some members of the Core Team are specially trained and certified by state student assistance providers to work with students.

The Y.E.S.S. program provides ongoing information and resources to students, parents, school personnel and the community. Additional information can be found on the Middle School webpage under "Services."

### **Sprigeo (Online) Reporting System**

Sprigeo is a safe, anonymous way to report bullying and/or safety concerns. The system is intended to facilitate the reporting of sensitive information to school officials, including information regarding student safety, bullying, violence, drug use, or students who may be in need of assistance. Reports submitted here will be forwarded electronically to a predetermined list of school officials and, at the school administration's option, to local enforcement agencies, for possible investigation or action. When a person really needs help we hope you will step up and send in a report. This link will take you to a form where you can make a report.

<https://app.sprigeo.com/district/seneca-valley-school-district>

### **Therapy Dogs**

There are numerous educational benefits for trained therapy dogs to support education. A human handler always accompanies therapy dogs. Periodically, therapy dogs will visit school buildings to support learning. If you have concerns about therapy dogs relating to your child(ren), please contact the school office.

## **District-wide Food Services**

### **Food Allergies**

Parents of students with food allergies should inform the school nurse's office in writing. They may fill out the special dietary form found on the SVSD Food Services website and return it to the nurse, who will communicate it with the cafeteria staff.

Due to the severity of peanut allergies, peanut products are not sold in the cafeteria.

### **Breakfast Program**

Breakfast is available, and free, to all students at all schools within the Seneca Valley School District each morning.

### **Lunch Program**

All students are required to eat lunch in the cafeteria; however, they are always welcome to bring a packed lunch. Students who choose to bring a packed lunch may still purchase milk, snacks, and other food in the cafeteria. If students are bringing drinks from home, they should not be in glass containers.

The Seneca Valley School District Food Service Department uses a point-of-sale system called Etrition. We utilize this system to track/maintain student account balances, student purchases, free/reduced meal benefits and monitor allergies. Each student has a unique PIN that can be typed into the PIN pads at the register when making purchases.

Our point-of-sale system also utilizes an online payment feature through [www.myschoolbucks.com](http://www.myschoolbucks.com). Online payments can be made, but are subject to a small convenience fee, with the funds being deposited onto the student's account within 24 hours. Payments can also be made via check or cash. Please place cash/check in an envelope with the student's name and grade written on it. This will allow the cashier to find your student and deposit the money onto the correct account. When paying via check, please make the check out to **SVSD Food Service**. Unfortunately, our system does not support credit card payments outside of online deposits via MySchoolBucks.

Students are welcome to purchase any item available in the cafeteria with the funds available on their accounts. Parents do have the ability to put restrictions on their student's account. Please reach out to the cafeteria via email to request any account restrictions.

[Free and reduced lunch applications](#) may be picked up in the school office, printed from the Seneca Valley School District website or applied for online by going to the COMPASS website [www.compass.state.pa.us](http://www.compass.state.pa.us). COMPASS allows Pennsylvanian's to apply for social service programs online. **Free/Reduced meal applications must be completed each school year.**

Students will never be left without a meal, regardless of the circumstances. If a student forgets their packed lunch at home, or simply doesn't have money on their lunch account, they will still be provided a lunch unless the parents/guardians have indicated otherwise. Students are permitted to charge meals (lunch and breakfast) to their accounts if they don't have enough money to pay for that day's meal. However, students are not permitted to charge a la carte items to their accounts – chips, cookies, extra meals, etc. Emails are distributed weekly to the parent/guardian email(s) to notify them of low/negative lunch account balances. For more information, contact Ms. Kelly Bommer, Cafeteria Manager at 724-776-1581 ext. 4055.

**Thank you for the opportunity to feed your student each day!**

*For more detailed information about the District's [Meal Accounts Policies](#), please refer to [Board Policy #809](#) or the district [Food Services Policy #808](#).*

The Seneca Valley School District is pleased to provide a cafeteria payment service over the internet. Seneca Valley accepts payments for school meals through [www.mySchoolBucks.com](http://www.mySchoolBucks.com) online payment service.

## **Transportation**

Riding a school bus is a privilege and not a right. Proper behavior is an absolute necessity while riding on the bus. Don't compromise your safety or the welfare of others. Be considerate. Be responsible. Eating food, drinking beverages or using tobacco products on the bus is forbidden.

Student seating assignments will be made at the discretion of the bus driver. Students who are involved in any bus misconduct may lose their riding privileges. Those who are suspended from the bus are still mandated to attend school. Students should be at their bus stop five (5) minutes prior to the scheduled arrival of their bus in the morning.

**PLEASE NOTE:** A cell phone is a personal device, not a community device. Please use your cell phone responsibly. It is illegal to take photos and videos without consent and without the person knowing they are being captured on a cell phone. Also, a policy is in place forbidding cell phones in our school restrooms.

### **Audio and Video Monitoring**

The School Board has adopted a policy that authorizes audio and/or visual recording on school buses or school vehicles for safety, disciplinary or security purposes. The audio/video recordings on school vehicles would be exempt from disclosure under the Public Right to Know Law because such recordings constitute an educational record protected from disclosure by FERPA. Principals, their designees, bus garage managers, and transportation department personnel are the only people allowed to view the recordings. Law enforcement may also view the recordings if school officials deem necessary. Each school bus or school vehicle with audio and/or visual recording devices, will post a notification in clear sight so driver and passengers understand their actions and communication may be recorded. The audio and or video recording will not be operating if the vehicle is used for other purposes not school related. <http://www.svsd.net/cms/lib5/PA01001234/Centricity/Domain/117/policies/800/810-1.pdf>

### **Temporary Change for Student Transportation (Exceptions)**

Per School Board Policy 810 no transportation is provided for work, music lessons, dance classes, gymnastics, to visit a friend, or go to a friend's house so a parent can drive to an after-school event. Examples of requests that will be approved are: A death in the family, the hospitalization of an immediate family member, or when a temporary guardian is needed due to a parent(s)/guardian(s) being absent from home. Requests for "**Exceptions**" to transportation can be made by accessing "Transportation Requests" on the Transportation Department website [www.svsd.net](http://www.svsd.net) **Click on departments and from the drop-down menu, click on Transportation.** The links to transportation requests will be on the left of the web page. Each written request will be evaluated on an individual basis by the Transportation Director. The district will not add additional buses or loading zones (bus stops) or alter established routes to accommodate an individual transportation request. Any change is dependent upon the availability of space on the alternative bus.

Unless a request arises from an emergency situation, requests for changes in transportation assignments must be made in advance and will not be granted on the date of the request.

Processing requests may take three to five business days to complete. During the school day, contact the Transportation Department at 724-452-6040 ext. 1758. For bus emergencies (before 8:00 a.m. and after 4:00 p.m.) contact ABC Transit 724-473-4500. Valley Lines can be reached at 724-473-4411.

### **Custody Agreements or Daycare (Alternate Stops)**

Parents sharing equal custody of a child or parents needing daycare before and/or after school may need an alternative stop location. However, only one alternative stop location can be requested. An alternative stop is only set up in case of a custody agreement or daycare. Parents and/or guardians need to alert the Transportation Department of an alternate address if needed. Requests for “**Alternate Stops**” to transportation can be made by accessing “Transportation Requests” on the Transportation Department website [www.svsd.net](http://www.svsd.net) **Click on departments and from the drop down menu, click on Transportation.** The links to transportation requests will be on the left of the web page.

The days for an alternative stop need to be consistent and a regular schedule. A regular schedule consists of specific days and is consistent each week of the school year. No alternating Fridays will be accepted. All alternative stops will be deleted at the end of the school year and parents will need to submit a request for an alternative stop before the beginning of the following school year. Processing requests may take three to five business days. The district will not add additional buses or loading zones (bus stops) or alter established routes to accommodate an individual transportation request. Any change is dependent upon the availability of space on the alternative bus.

No requests for alternative stops will be taken after **July 31, 2024**. The transportation department will begin taking requests after **Labor Day**. Parents missing the deadline will be responsible for transportation.

### **Lost Items on the Bus**

It is best to contact the bus garage immediately when an item is missing. The garage managers are able to call the driver to confirm if the lost item is on the bus. Please have the bus number available before calling the garage. Please call ABC Transit.

### **Behavior Expectations on the Bus**

Proper behavior is an absolute necessity while riding on the school bus. The bus driver has the authority to enforce discipline on the school bus as the teacher has in the classroom. Student behavior on the bus should be an extension of their classroom behavior. Student responsibilities are as follows:

- \* Report to your bus stop no earlier than five minutes before the bus is scheduled to arrive.
- \* While waiting for the bus, stay a safe distance from the roadway. Shoving, tripping, or fighting is strictly prohibited. Bus stops are not play areas!
- \* Board the bus in an orderly, safe manner and go directly to the seat assigned to you by the driver. Remain seated until the bus comes to a complete stop at the school or at your bus stop.
- \* Do not distract the driver’s attention from driving. Any talking must be done quietly, so the driver may concentrate and hear warning sounds inside and outside the bus. Please use indoor voices only.
- \* Ask the driver for permission to open windows. You must keep arms and head inside the bus at all times.
- \* Eating or drinking on the bus is not permitted.

- \* Throwing objects inside or out of the bus is prohibited.
- \* When the bus arrives at school, exit in an orderly fashion, and go directly to your assigned room.

The primary reason for bus rules is student safety. Therefore, all requests from a bus driver to change your behavior must be obeyed. Drivers will document inappropriate bus behavior using bus conduct forms which will be sent to building administrators.

## **Building Operations**

### **Visitor Procedure**

Access to Seneca Valley School District buildings is restricted to visitors during the school day. Those wishing to gain entrance are required to be given access by office personnel. Please note that video cameras tape activity at all school entrances and in various parts of the buildings.

***ALL visitors are required to provide their driver's license and information regarding time of visit, and person/place they are visiting.*** Visitors will then be provided with a visitor badge that must be worn at all times while on school property.

Upon leaving the building, visitors are required to leave the visitor badge with the office staff, so that they may be taken out of the system.

### **Closed Campus**

To ensure the safety of our students, Seneca Valley School District maintains a closed campus environment. All building exterior entrance doors, including those doors at the main lobby, will be locked from the outside during school hours. Students must remain in areas assigned to them in their schedules. No student is permitted to be in the school building unsupervised or unauthorized, this includes after school hours for forgotten and/or lost items.

All visitors to the building must immediately report to the main office. Violation of this policy is a serious offense which may require the assistance of local law enforcement agencies.

### **Field Trips**

A student with excessive absences will not be permitted to attend school sponsored field trips or activities if the activities require additional absences from regularly scheduled classes.

A specific dress code may be required for participation on the field trip. School dress code always applies.

Any field trip participant who is suspended or assigned to the Alternative Learning Center on a day of a field trip, will not be permitted to attend the trip and will forfeit any monies paid for the trip without refund.

### **Fire Drills**

Fire exits have been posted throughout the building. When the fire alarm is sounded, students should follow the signs. When out of the building, keep moving to an area designated by your teacher. Return to your classroom when directed by the teacher or principal.

### **Lost and Found**

Any person finding articles that someone else may have lost should take the articles to the main office. A lost article may be reclaimed after proper identification of article has been established. All unclaimed items will be donated to a good cause after a reasonable length of time.

Lost books that are submitted to the office will be returned to the appropriate subject area teacher.

You are responsible for all materials which are assigned to you, and you will be required to make payment for any lost books or other school materials.

### **Media Release**

As part of an on-going process to generate good news about our schools, the Seneca Valley School District often invites the media inside the classroom to learn about our outstanding academic programs and events. **If you do not want to appear in either a photograph or to be interviewed for a story, parents should provide written notification to the building principal.**

### **Obligations**

Students are responsible for the satisfactory settlement of costs for lost or damaged books and other school property, unpaid fees, school equipment not returned, etc. A student who has incurred this type of debt must satisfy all obligations at the end of each grading period.

### **Rest Rooms**

You may use the rest rooms before and after school, between class periods, and during lunch periods. You are expected to keep them clean! If you are feeling ill, report to the nurse's office; do not remain in the rest rooms. Students are to refrain from asking for a rest room pass during class time except for emergencies. If this is necessary, make sure to follow the classroom sign out procedure in each classroom.

### **Sale or Transactions**

The selling or purchasing of items in school between students is not permitted without permission from the principal.

We thank you in advance for following these procedures for the safety of all students and staff.

## **Educational Programs**

### **Homework Guidelines and Procedures**

Homework assignments should complement classroom instruction. Assignments should develop responsibility, good study habits, and organizational skills. All new material is covered in class and then used in home study assignments. Parent's questions concerning methods used or values of assignments should be directed to the child's teacher.



Students returning from an illness will have an equal number of days to make up homework as to the number of days they were absent with an excuse.

Homework is:

- Targeted and purposeful.
- Practice, reinforcement, and extension of classroom content.
- Differentiated based on age, developmental capacity, and academic needs.

Homework should:

- Not require extra resources or excessive adult support in order for the student to be successful but can provide opportunities for peer and adult involvement.
- Have flexible schedules to support a family's busy schedule, as well as not requiring student to work over extended breaks.

## **Types of Homework**

**Practice:** Homework that is designed for students to reach a level of self-sufficiency in performing a learned skill previously introduced through previous instruction.

**Preparation:** Homework that is designed for students to access prior knowledge and experiences about a topic to be learned or expanded upon.

**Elaboration/Extension/Enrichment:** Homework that is designed to require students to conduct research, compare items, support a position, or develop a graphic organizer of information.

**Reading:** Homework that is designed for students to spend time reading to increase fluency and comprehension while preparing for discussions or key writing assignments.

**Study:** Homework that is designed to require students to review material in notes and assignments to commit key information, ideas and concepts to long-term memory and to enhance understanding of a subject.

**Creativity/Authenticity:** Homework that is designed for student to integrate and apply many skills and concepts learned in various disciplines.

*For more detailed information about the District's Homework policy, please refer to Board Policy #130.*

## **Care of Textbooks**

Each student is entrusted with various supplies for study. These may include textbooks, paperbacks, supplemental reading materials, lab manuals, etc. Because these materials represent a major investment for the school district, students should immediately report lost, stolen or damaged books to their teacher. If books or supplemental materials are damaged or not returned, students will be charged a replacement or rebinding fee at the time of the damage or loss.

Please place covers on your textbooks, handle them with care and assume complete responsibility for those materials assigned to you.

### **Homeroom**

Good order must always prevail in homerooms. Students should be in their seats when the 8:55 a.m. bell rings. Those not in homeroom at 8:55 are considered tardy. Students are not permitted to leave homeroom during announcements unless they have been given permission from a staff member. This year, during homeroom, students will also participate in morning meetings focused on social-emotional learning.

### **Library**

The Seneca Valley Library program provides both print and digital materials for our diverse community of students. Our schools have comprehensive, up-to-date library facilities and technology resources for instruction and practice. These resources help to create information-literate students who are effective users of data to support learning. By promoting recreational reading, we encourage students to appreciate and value literature.

For grades 5 through 12, library is not a weekly class; instead the library is a resource classroom for all. Students will be scheduled in the library by class for research skills instruction and to choose novels. At the card catalog's website, <http://destiny.svsd.net> students can access the card catalog, e-books, digital databases, and other resources.

Students are responsible for returning the library books by the due date. Fines are charged for overdue materials at an established rate of 5 cents per day. It is our goal in the HMS Library to meet the information and curriculum needs of our students and faculty.

### **Making Up Missed Assignments**

After an absence, it is the student's responsibility to see each teacher and make up all classroom assignments. Students will be afforded the same number of days to make up assignments as the duration of their absence (except for pre-approved education trips). See the previous section "Educational Trips."

All homework requests should be made through the office by 9:00 a.m. as to the expected length of the absence and the need for homework assignments. Parents can pick up their child's missed assignments by 3:30 p.m. on the day of the request.

## **Report Cards/ Report of Student Progress**

### **5th Grade Report of Student Progress**

A new system for reporting student progress in Grade 5 was introduced for the 2022-2023 school year. As such, all report cards are being restructured to better communicate to parents what students should know and be able to do by the end of each school year. Since grading is the primary means of sharing feedback about a student's level of learning, this new grading system will benefit students, teachers, and parents/guardians.

### **Grading**

Report cards are posted on-line every trimester.

**Q. What is the rationale for revising the report card?**

A. The purpose was to improve communication and provide additional feedback for parents, students, and teachers. Standards-based grading includes more information about student learning and reports how the student is progressing toward grade level goals. The district's new reporting method reflects PA Core standards, current research, and effective instructional strategies.

**Q. What was the process for updating the report card?**

A. The district began this process during the 2017-2018 school year by forming a committee of teachers and administrators to review research around grading systems. The committee identified the most important learning targets aligned to the PA Core Standards and our district curriculum. Administrators, teachers, and parents met periodically to provide feedback to the committee. The district technology department was also involved and incorporated the new format into our online portal system.

**Q. What are Essential Standards?**

A. Essential standards are the most important learning targets of the PA Core Standards and district curriculum. Essential standards represent what all students are expected to know and be able to do at the conclusion of the school year. These select standards contain important concepts that will be used in multiple disciplines and content areas.

**Q. How does standards-based grading differ from traditional grading?**

A. Standards-based grading measures student understanding in more detail. This system focuses on student achievement and growth by collecting and analyzing evidence to assess the student's learning against a standard. Standards-based grading measures student understanding over time and separates academic performance from work habits and behaviors.

**Q. What is a proficiency scale and how will they be used in reporting progress?**

A. Proficiency scales articulate learning progressions for each essential standard. Learning progressions are beneficial because they describe how student understanding of a topic develops over time.

The proficiency scales along with a consistent grading language for all subjects in all grades represent a student's progression in the learning continuum (Beginning, Progressing, Meets Standard, Exceeds Standard). Therefore, student progress on each standard is specific and based on learning.

**Q. How will this new report card support student growth and understanding?**

A. The clear communication of the new reporting system gives students, parents and educators useful feedback that can be used to improve performance and increase knowledge and skills. We are confident the revised report card will better inform students and parents/guardians of their child's strengths and opportunities for growth.

**Q. How will we know if the new report is effective?**

A. We are committed to providing accurate and specific feedback for every student.

To achieve the overall goal of improved communication, we will continue to collect feedback and make necessary changes.

**6<sup>th</sup> Grade Grading Scale:**

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

Continual access to student progress is available through the Seneca Valley Portal at <https://portal.svsd.net/parents/>.

**Students Rights and Responsibilities**

School Code 510 PA Code (Title 22) 12.1

Above and beyond these general responsibilities, students have specific rights and responsibilities in the following areas:

**Religion**

Right: The school may not interfere with your right to observe any religion (or none at all if you wish) by requiring or conducting religious exercises for you.

Responsibility: Each person has his/her own personal beliefs; you have the responsibility to respect the religious beliefs and observances of others.

**Speech and Expression:**

Right: You have the right to express your views, either orally or symbolically.

Responsibility: When expressing yourself, you must do so in a manner that does not materially or substantially disrupt the instructional environment. You may not, in expressing yourself, violate another person's rights by using slanderous speech or expressions.

**Flag Salute and Pledge of Allegiance:**

Right: You may not be forced to take part in the salute of the flag or pledge of allegiance if doing so violates your beliefs or values.

Responsibility: If you refuse to participate in the salute to the flag or pledge of allegiance, you may not disrupt the activity of others who choose to do so.

**Suspension and Expulsion:**

Right: Before you may be suspended from school for ten days or less, the suspending school official will:

- a. Tell you what rule you have broken;
- b. Explain to you the information gathered;

c. Give you a chance to tell your version of what happened.

Responsibility: You have the responsibility to follow school regulations. You are not shielded from suspension 'properly imposed' according to the above procedures. In such cases a hearing in which the above rules are followed should be given as soon as practical after you are suspended.

### **Racial Discrimination and Segregated Schools:**

Right: The state, or any other governmental body, may not establish racially segregated schools, thus depriving you of your right to an education regardless of race.

Also, every student has the right to an education without any interference. Any acts of hatred toward the race, color, religion or natural origin of another individual or group of individuals can disrupt the educational atmosphere.

Responsibility: To hold respect, understanding and appreciation of each person's worth and individuality, regardless of race.

### **Sexual Harassment:**

Right: Every student has the right to an education without any interference. This defines an educational atmosphere free from unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other inappropriate verbal, written or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

Responsibility: To respect and appreciate each person's worth and individuality regardless of gender or age.

### **Abuse - Physical, Emotional, Neglect, etc.**

All employees of the Seneca Valley School District are identified as Mandated Reporters of child abuse. This means that if abuse of any kind is suspected of occurring to a child in our care, it must be reported to the appropriate authority. Reports of abuse can be made by the student involved or anyone who suspects that abuse is occurring. Staff members who become aware of, or suspect, an abusive situation are required to report suspected abuse to the Guidance Counselor, Nurse, or Building Administrators, Staff members may also contact Childline directly at 1-800-932-0313.

## **Discipline**

### **Student Discipline**

The Seneca Valley School District has adopted a district-wide unified discipline code. We encourage all students to familiarize themselves with this policy, so that an effective and consistent learning environment may be created and maintained in every classroom and throughout our school.

If learning is to prevail, discipline policies and procedures aim to protect and nurture the physical, social, intellectual, and emotional health and growth of our students and staff. In addition, these regulations specifically must limit the opportunity of any individual to interrupt another student's educational growth.

These policies and procedures recognize:

- The inherent dignity and rights of each individual;

- Our society's devotion to humanitarian ideals and loyalty to the principles of freedom, justice and equality;
- The need for direction and encouragement in developing a sense of responsibility for one's actions and decisions; and
- One often has to subjugate one's personal inclinations, whims and comforts to achieve the greater goals of the school and society.

The following principles are guides that school personnel follow in the enforcement of these policies and procedures.

1. All students have worth and dignity! Our school strives to use positive ways of guidance which help communicate belief in self-worth and recognize student needs in relation to their personal growth and histories.
2. All students have the capacity to learn cooperation and respect for others. The school attempts to provide a climate in which mutual respect, trust and communication prevail.
3. Students must understand the reasons for discipline policies and procedures and to foresee the consequences of their behavior and actions.
4. All policies and procedures must be consistently enforced to maintain an attitude of fairness for all students.
5. All students have the right to receive their education in an appropriate learning environment and violations of that right by other students will not be tolerated. Students exhibiting disruptive behavior may be removed from a class with a failing grade for repeatedly destroying another's opportunity to learn.

### **Classroom Disruptions**

When a student is removed from class for a disruption, he or she must report directly to the principal's office as dictated by the offense.

### **Discipline Notification**

If disciplinary consequences are issued to a student, an attempt will be made to notify the parents/guardians.

### **Fighting**

Fighting is NOT permitted at any time! Violators will be subject to disciplinary action and/or criminal penalties.

### **Discipline Records**

Records and verified reports of students involved in recurrent or serious infractions will be maintained beyond the end of the school year. These records may be referenced and included in determining future disciplinary actions for a student.

### **Late Arrivals to Class**

A student is considered tardy if he or she is not in their assigned seat when the class begins at 8:55 a.m. All tardy students must go through the main office and provide a note why they are late.

### **Public Show of Affection**

There is to be absolutely NO public show of affection in the school, on school grounds, or on school buses! Violators will receive disciplinary action.

### **In School Suspension**

Students who are suspended may, at the discretion of the Administration, be assigned to In-School Suspension. This is a time when supervised schoolwork will be done. Failure to do assigned work will result in further disciplinary action.

Parents will be notified of all suspension(s) and, should it become necessary, a parent conference will be requested. In-School Suspended students will not be permitted to participate in after-school activities. This includes dances, plays, and athletics.

## **Academic Integrity**

Plagiarism is defined as taking or imitating the ideas, thoughts or language of another to represent them as one's original work. It is imperative that all work submitted by the student be representative of his/her own ideas, thoughts and especially language capability. Therefore, plagiarism is strictly prohibited in all work pertaining to school. If the ideas, thoughts or language from another source must be used in academic work, it is the student's responsibility to cite or annotate the information appropriately.

Academic dishonesty is not limited to plagiarism. This includes cheating on tests, quizzes, or homework, as well as the electronic transfer of academic material from one student to another and taking any curriculum or testing materials from a classroom. Teachers will determine the academic consequence. Upon administrative investigation, additional consequences may be enacted.

## **Health Services**

### **Comprehensive Allergy Management Plan**

The Seneca Valley School District has established a Comprehensive Allergy Management Plan to support students who suffer from severe allergies. The plan provides a procedural guide for the management of allergies in our schools and includes educational information, specific guidelines for all stakeholders, and supplemental resources to support administrators, teachers, parents, and students.

The plan establishes clear procedures for food products that can be brought into the classroom for special events. Food for these activities is to be controlled by the classroom teacher. The plan also establishes that classroom celebrations may not include food. However, the plan provides a list of possible activities for celebrations. Please contact your classroom teacher, school nurse or building principal with questions.

### **Health Office**

Students who are not feeling well, or have been injured at school, should report to the health office to be evaluated. Students must ask permission from their teacher before reporting to the health office (only for emergencies will a student be seen without permission).

### **Food Allergies**

Students with food allergies should inform the nurse's office and the cafeteria of such allergies in writing. Due to the severity of peanut allergies, peanut products are not sold in the cafeteria.

## **Students are not permitted to use their cell phones to call parents during the school day!**

All parent calls for illnesses and/or injuries must be made from the health office.

Any student who has a temporary mobility problem (for example: crutches or a knee immobilizer) should report to the health office on arrival. A parent or physician note must accompany the student to explain the injury or condition and specify the expected duration that accommodations will be needed.

## **Communicable Diseases**

Parents frequently have questions concerning students attending school with communicable diseases. The following criteria have been established by the Pennsylvania Department of Health for exclusion of students demonstrating symptoms suggestive of specific communicable diseases and infectious conditions. The exclusion periods are as follows:

- **For Fever and vomiting:** Students with a fever greater than 100.4 should stay home until fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication (such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen). Students with a vomiting illness should be tolerating a regular diet prior to returning to school.
- **Acute Contagious Conjunctivitis (pink eye):** After medically prescribed treatment has begun, following doctor's guidelines.
- **Respiratory Streptococcal Infections (strep throat):** 24 hours after initiation of treatment.
- **Pediculosis (Lice):** May return to school after the first treatment. There should be no live lice and a reduction in the number of nits. The student will be reexamined for infestation by the School Nurse seven (7) days post treatment. Please see additional information regarding the Seneca Valley lice procedure on the district Health Services page <https://www.svsd.net/Page/12781>
- **Chicken Pox:** Six (6) days from the outbreak of the last crop of blisters with all pox marks dried.
- **Impetigo, Scabies, Ringworm:** Until judged noninfectious by the physician.

Parents can assist in the control of communicable disease by recognizing symptoms and seeking medical care as indicated.

## **Prescription Medicines and Over-The-Counter Medications**

1. With written parental permission, the school nurse may administer ibuprofen (i.e. Advil, Motrin) or Acetaminophen (i.e. Tylenol) from a standing order written by **our** school doctor. This can be satisfied with the completion of the annual emergency health form. An age/weight appropriate dose will be given. Any dose exceeding the recommended dose will need to be ordered by the students' personal physician. These two medications may be administered for the occasional relief of mild pain or discomfort such as mild headaches, orthodontic pain or menstrual cramps. Students will NOT be given these medications to reduce a fever.
2. Students are not permitted to carry or self-administer the above noted or any other medications. Special accommodations may be made for rescue medications (EpiPens and inhalers) with physician and school nurse approval.
3. The school nurse will not administer any prescription or over the counter medications (except acetaminophen and ibuprofen as stated above) without the specific order of a health care professional and written parental permission.



4. All medications are to be delivered to the school by a parent/guardian. **The medication must be in the original container.**
5. Field Trips – The administration of medications and the performance of treatments on field trips should be limited to those students who require such intervention to participate in the program. Medication administration and treatments should be completed prior to departure or upon return from the trip whenever possible. If this is not appropriate for the student, the school nurse will assist with planning for the transport and administration of those medications and/or treatments.

For further details regarding medications, please refer to Seneca Valley District Policy # 210 – Use of Medication.

### **Clubs and Intramurals**

Haine Middle School has a school activity program for interested students. The type of activities offered varies, depending on student interest and availability of sponsors. School activities meet on designated days during activity period.

### **Guidelines for Student Activities**

1. All student activities held in the name of the school must be approved by the administration and chaperoned by faculty members or approved chaperones.
2. All student activities shall be held in the school building or on the school grounds unless otherwise approved by the administration.
3. Students in attendance are liable for the care of the facilities.
4. Guests are not permitted to attend unless approved by the school administration.
5. All school policies including those relating to drugs and alcohol are in effect at all school activities.

### **Behavior of Students**

Students are expected to demonstrate exemplary behavior at all extra-curricular activities. All expectations in effect during school hours apply to students attending extra-curricular activities. Any misbehavior at a school event will result in appropriate consequences at school and students may be removed from the activity without a refund. Any behavior that endangers the health, safety or welfare of others may additionally result in suspension from school and/or extra-curricular activities and may result in police involvement. Suspension from activities includes participation and spectating at athletic events, club participation and attending social events. Students are only permitted to be on school grounds after school hours if they are involved in a supervised activity and the sponsor of the activity is present. At the conclusion of the activity, students are to promptly leave the school grounds. This also applies to weekend activities.

## **Computer/Technology**

### **Electronic Gradebook**

Parents are able to view student's grades by accessing the parent portal found on the district website.

## **Student Lenovo Laptop Rules and Regulations**

The Lenovo devices are a **privilege** provided for the students to enhance the academic curriculum. Games that are not specifically used in the curriculum are not allowed on the system. Individual files are not considered to be personal property. These files may be accessed at any time by teachers, administrators, or the system manager. Students are not permitted access to other students' files. Tampering with files, copying of copyrighted software, downloading, or installing games, password tampering, accessing unauthorized directories or removing equipment or software will be considered theft. Tampering with any hardware or equipment or violating policies and/or guidelines governing the use of networks, internet or software programs are also considered offenses and will be dealt with per Seneca Valley Policy # 218. Violators may also be prosecuted under applicable local, state or federal civil or criminal law. Acceptable use policy is available online.

## **Policies**

### **Bullying**

(as per Policy # 249)

Seneca Valley School Board is committed to providing all students and employees with a safe and civil educational environment, free from threat, harassment, or bullying. Any student that feels as though they have been bullied shall report the incident immediately to their teacher, guidance counselor or principal. Bullying and safety concerns can also be reported using Sprigeo.com. As per Board Policy, bullying is defined as an intentional electronic, written, verbal or physical act or series of acts, directed at another student or students; which occurs in or relates to a school setting; that is severe, persistent, or pervasive; and that has the effect of doing any of the following:

- Substantially interfering with a student's education
- Creating a threatening environment
- Substantially disrupting the orderly operation of school

Roughhousing is among friends, the power between them is equal, and it is not meant to harm. Real fighting should not happen among friends and the power between them is usually equal, and it is meant to harm. Bullying is not among friends, the power between them is imbalanced, and it is meant to harm.

*For more detailed information about Seneca Valley's Anti-Bullying Policies, please see school board policy #249.*

### **Cafeteria**

(as per Policy # 246, # 808, # 809)

Seneca Valley School District recognizes that student wellness and proper nutrition are related to students' physical well-being, growth, development and readiness to learn. The Board is committed to providing a school environment that promotes student wellness, proper nutrition, nutrition education and regular physical activity as part of the total learning experience. In a healthy school environment, students will learn about and participate in positive dietary and lifestyle practices that can improve student achievement. The district's Wellness Policy complies with the Pennsylvania School Nutritional and Food Standards. You may find this policy in its entirety on our website under School Board Policies.

### **Dangerous Items / Weapons**

(as per Policy # 218.1)

NO student is permitted to have in his/her locker, on his/her person, on school property, or on school buses any item which may endanger his/her or other students' safety; i.e., knives, blasting caps, live ammo, firearms, contraband, or exploding devices of any kind (firecrackers, smoke bombs, and other similar objects). Possession or use of these items, including 'look alike', will result in severe disciplinary action including possible expulsion, and/or referral to the appropriate law enforcement agencies in accordance with School District Policy 218 and Act 26, the Gun Free School Act.

### **Discrimination/Title IX Sexual Harassment Affecting Students**

(as per Policy # 103)

The Board declares it to be the policy of this district to provide an equal opportunity for all students to achieve their maximum potential through the programs and activities offered in the schools regardless of race, color, age, creed, religion, sex, gender, sexual orientation, genetic information, ancestry, national origin, marital status, pregnancy, or handicap/disability.

The Board also declares it to be the policy of this district to comply with federal law and regulations under Title IX prohibiting sexual harassment, which is a form of unlawful discrimination on the basis of sex. Such discrimination shall be referred to throughout this policy as Title IX sexual harassment. Inquiries regarding the application of Title IX to the district may be referred to the Title IX Coordinator, to the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education, or both.

The district is committed to the maintenance of a safe, positive learning environment for all students that is free from discrimination by providing all students course offerings, counseling, assistance, employment, athletics and extracurricular activities without any form of discrimination, including Title IX sexual harassment. Discrimination is inconsistent with the rights of students and the educational and programmatic goals of the district and is prohibited at or, in the course of, district-sponsored programs or activities, including transportation to or from school or school-sponsored activities.

Violations of this policy, including acts of retaliation as described in this policy, or knowingly providing false information, may result in disciplinary consequences under applicable Board policy and procedures.

For more information please contact our Title IX Coordinator Mr. Ashley Porter, Supervisor of Equity by mail: 124 Seneca School Road, Harmony, PA 16037, by phone: 724-452-6040, or by email: [porterad@svsd.net](mailto:porterad@svsd.net)

### **Dress Code**

(as per Policy # 221)

We recognize that each student's mode of dress and grooming is a manifestation of personal style and individual preference, however there are guidelines students must adhere to while at school.

Inappropriate items for the school day include but are not exclusive of the following:

1. Clothing, apparel, or jewelry that by words, signs, pictures, or any other combinations thereof, advocates or promotes sexual activity, violence, death, suicide or the use of alcohol or drugs, or demeans, degrades, or intimidates another because of race, sexual orientation, sex, gender identity, religious persuasions, national origin or disability.
2. Students are required to avoid clothing that excessively exposes chest or buttocks when standing, sitting, or moving. Undergarments may not be exposed. Items of clothing cannot mimic the appearance, style or coverage of undergarments.
3. Any clothing that is of transparent material, see through material or has sexually suggestive signs, symbols or phrases.

Below is a partial listing – middle school level appropriate – of items that are **NOT PERMITTED:**

- Shirts/tops that expose undergarments or mimic the coverage of undergarments
- Low-cut tops/shirts
- Low riding pants that expose undergarments
- Chains or studded belts & jewelry
- Garments with slashes, rips or any holes above the knee
- Pajama/lounge pants
- Sleeveless shirts with large arm holes
- Tank tops with thin straps
- Hats/bandana
- T-shirts depicting obscenities, drugs, alcohol, tobacco or weapons
- Shorts & skirts that are not fingertip length
- Face painting
- We request that students do NOT wear flip flops on PE days
- Hoods on jackets and sweatshirts are not to be worn while in school

If a student refuses to, or cannot change clothing, a parent/guardian will be contacted to take the student home.

It is recognized that not all situations and conditions can possibly be covered by a dress code. Parents/guardians and students must be aware that trends and fashions of the day may not be appropriate for the classroom. Therefore, the administration reserves the right to evaluate all items relative to school dress.

### **Responsible Use of Technology Resources – Update to SV Policy #237**

Seneca Valley welcomes and encourages students and staff to utilize technology as a supplemental resource for learning (*when appropriate and in a positive manner*). However, it has become evident that use of cell phones and other personal electronic communication devices have become more of a deterrent to the overall successful engagement of academics while in school.

The natural next step is to act on student use of cell phone/personal electronic device during the school day. Therefore, the School Board approved a policy (Policy #237) update earlier this month that includes changes to the procedures and consequences regarding device use while in school, starting with the 2023-24 school year.

Student smartphones or other personal electronic communication devices (“devices”) may come to school but must be stowed on their person and out of sight or stored in a locker or backpack. The use of any electronic device is strictly prohibited in bathrooms and locker rooms. The following are building-level rules:

- For grades K-6, devices or smart watches may not be used in the cafeteria during lunch, in the hallways or other non-instructional areas.
- For extracurricular activities, device use is discouraged but will be left to the discretion of the coach or sponsor.

Consequences for violating the above expectations:

- First offense – Devices will be sent to the main office for student to pick up at the end of the school day. The parent/guardian will be notified.
- Second offense - Devices will be sent to the main office for student to pick up at the end of the school day. The parent/guardian will be notified. Additionally, students will be seen in the main office to review the policy and will lose their device for one school day.
- Third offense – Parent/Guardian will be required to pick up the device from the main office. Additional discipline may be assigned and can result in consequences which range from detention to in-school suspension at the secondary (grades 7-12) level, and lunch detention to in-school suspension at the elementary (grades K-6) level.
- Each subsequent offense or refusal to surrender personal device – This will result in parent pick up of the device and a review of the policy with the student. Progressive discipline will take place at this level and depend on the scope and number of policy violations.

### **Lockers and Personal Property**

(as per Policy # 224 and # 226)

A locker will be assigned to you at the beginning of the school year for your personal items and books. Please use only the locker assigned to you. The school will not assume responsibility for articles that are taken from any lockers.

Please be aware that the lockers are the property of the Seneca Valley School District and are provided to you for storing school related items and clothing. The school has an obligation to ensure that all lockers are properly used and that no item placed in the lockers jeopardizes the health, safety and welfare of our students, faculty, school property or the educational process. To fulfill this obligation, school officials are empowered to conduct reasonable searches of a particular student and their personal property (including backpacks, purses, gym bags, etc.) and school property where reasonable suspicion exists that the student may be in possession of drugs, weapons alcohol or other materials in violation of school policy or state law or any materials that pose a threat to the health, safety and welfare of that student or other students. In case of emergency, blanket searches may be made. The district reserves the right to conduct periodic searches employing drug or bomb sniffing dogs.

### **Amendments to the handbook**

It is possible that after the printing of this handbook, corrections or changes may be made. Students will be advised of additions or deletions. The most current version is available on our website.