



SOUTH BROOK MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENT HANDBOOK 2025-2026

South Brook Middle School

779 Dunster St, Pittsburgh, PA 15226

(P) 412-529-8170 | (F) 412-572-8177

pghschools.org/schools/6-8/southbrook



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For more information regarding accommodations, civil rights grievance procedures, please contact:

Rachel Beers, Office of Employee Relations

rbeers1@pghschools.org | 341 S. Bellefield Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15213 | 412-529-HELP (4357).

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SUPERINTENDENT'S WELCOME

Dear Pittsburgh South Brook Families,

As we embark on the 2025-2026 school year, I am excited to share Pittsburgh South Brook's School Handbook with you. This comprehensive guide is designed to provide essential information about our district's policies, procedures, and expectations, ensuring that we create a safe, supportive, and effective learning environment for all students. The school handbook is a valuable resource for understanding your school's daily operations, including attendance policies, academic standards, code of conduct, and extracurricular activities. We believe that clear communication and mutual understanding between the school and families are crucial for student success, and this handbook is a key tool in fostering that partnership.

We encourage all families, parents, students, and caregivers to review the handbook thoroughly and discuss its contents with one another. Familiarizing yourselves with these guidelines will help reinforce the values and standards we uphold at Pittsburgh South Brook.

An electronic copy of the school handbook is also available on the school's website.

Your involvement and support are vital to our students' success, and we are grateful for your partnership in their education. If you have any questions or need further clarification on any aspect of the handbook, please do not hesitate to contact the main office.

Thank you for your continued support and cooperation. We look forward to a fantastic school year ahead.

Sincerely,



Dr. Wayne N. Walters

Superintendent, Pittsburgh Public Schools



PRINCIPAL'S WELCOME

Hello Pittsburgh South Brook Community,

On behalf of the faculty, we would like to welcome you to Pittsburgh South Brook 6-8 for the coming year. We are looking forward to assisting you in fulfilling your educational goals. South Brook has a history of fine academic and extracurricular accomplishments. We expect you to meet the goals that have been set, to carry on the tradition, and to make our school a better place. You can benefit from everything South Brook has to offer by being actively involved in your classes and the programs offered. This handbook is intended to help provide you with school information, procedures, and expectations for South Book 6-8. If you encounter difficulties, seek out any of our teachers and staff, and we will do the best to help you. We are here to make your middle school experience as successful, yet educationally challenging, as possible. We are proud of our school community and welcome the opportunity to help you as you proceed through your middle school career, making it an academically challenging and a socially positive experience.

Sincerely,

Carlton Watson

Principal, South Brook

SCHOOL INFORMATION



Pittsburgh South Brook 6-8

779 Dunster St, Pittsburgh, PA 15226

Phone: 412-529-8170

Fax: 412-572-8177

Website: pghschools.org/schools/6-8/southbrook

School Colors Blue and White

School Mascot Titans

Mission and Vision

Mission

The mission of Pittsburgh South Brook is to provide all students with world-class educational opportunities in a safe and supportive school environment. Our mission is to prepare all students for life as productive citizens and life-long learners.

Vision

At Pittsburgh South Brook our focus is to RAISE our South Brook Titans in an environment that celebrates diversity and shows mutual respect for students, staff, and the learning community, through positive attitudes, practicing integrity, placing safety first, and putting in the very best effort every day. It is through these focuses that our students will achieve to their highest academic and social potential, providing them with the necessary tools to achieve success in their future college and career goals

COMMUNICATION PROCEDURES

Talking Points has proven to be a valuable tool for communicating with school staff. Parents and guardians can download the app to their mobile devices and search for South Brook to receive messages about school events, classroom updates, and more.

For urgent matters or if you need to reach your child during the school day, please contact the main office at (12)529-8170. We are here to support and relay messages to your students. Since our teachers have full teaching schedules, please allow up to 48 hours for a response to phone call requests. If you do not receive a call back within that timeframe, please contact Mr. Watson, Principal, through the main office for further assistance.

Please contact the main office with any updated information, such as phone numbers, address changes, additional emergency contact information. Mrs. DeRose, SDSS, will ensure that it is up to date in the system.

In addition to Talking Points, we use various communication methods, including the Alert Now phone system, Talking Points app, and South Brook’s Facebook page. Please make sure you are registered for and receiving these important announcements. Thank you for staying connected!

Early Dismissals:

A parent/guardian may need to request an early dismissal from school for their child (such as for a doctor’s appointment or other important business). The procedure for obtaining an early dismissal is as follows:

- The student must present a note, signed by the parent, requesting the early dismissal. The note should contain the reason for the dismissal, the time of the dismissal, and a phone number where the parent can be reached to confirm the request. The note should be brought to the office before homeroom period.
- Students will receive a note that they will show to their teacher so that they can be waiting in the main office for pick up at the designated time.
- The parent is responsible for any transportation needs.

STAFF INFORMATION

Administrative Team

Name	Title/Subject	Email	Ext
Carlton Watson	Principal	Cwatson1@pghschools.org	25173
Lisa Derose	SDSS	Lderose1@pghschools.org	25170
Amanda DeJohn	Secretary	Adejohn1@pghschools.org	25170

Student Services

Name	Title/Subject	Email	Ext
Nena Hisle	Counselor	nhisle1@pghschools.org	25744

Faculty

Name	Title/Subject	Email	Ext
Charnice Oliver	Nurse	Coliver1@pghschools.org	25219
Tina Lippold	Cafateria	Tlippold1@pghschools.org	25157
Shawn Mason	Custodian	Smason1@pghschools.org	50109

Teachers and Additional Staff

Name	Title/Subject	Email	Ext
Annette Banderinko	ELA	Abanderinko1@pghschools.org	25161
Matthew Basinger	Science	Mbasinger1@pghschools.org	[25208
Jaime Blanda	Learning Support	Jblanda1@pghschools.org	25203
Rachelle Dixon	Learning Support	Rdixon1@pghschools.org	25202
Jennifer Dresmich	Math	Jdresmich1@pgshschools.org	25202
Jeremiah Dugan	Social Studies	Jdugan1@pghschools.org	25201
Lori Geche	Science	Lgeche1@pghschools.org	25206
Joel Grimes	ELA	Jgrimes1@pghschools.org	25209
Al Kovacs	Social Studies/Science	Akovacs1@pghschools.org	25162
Lauren Kovacs	ELA	Lkovacs1@pghschools.org	25211
Luigi Lista-Brinza	Learning Support	llistabrinza@pghschools.org	25117
William Majeski	Math	Wmajeski1@pghschools.org	25117
Gino Moio	ESL	Gmoio1@pghschools.org	25862
Luke O'Brien	Math	Lobrien1@pghschools.org	25160
Tony Posa	Math	Aposa1@pghschools.org	25165
Michael Smales	Social Studies	Msmales1@pghschools.org	25207
Kristen Triplett	ELA	Ktriplett1@pghschools.org	25164
Gerald Watkins	Music	Gwatkins1@pghschools.org	25215
William Wolfe	Physical Education/Math	Wwolfe1@pghschools.org	25210
Lynette Yancey	ELA	Lyancey1@pghschools.org	25163
Joseph Yurcho	Learning Support	Jyurcho1@pghschools.org	25160

SCHOOL CALENDAR

The 2025-2026 District Calendar can be found [HERE](#)

Event	Date
First Day of School	08/25/25
No School: Labor Day	09/01/25
Half-Day	09/12/25
No School: Rosh Hashanah	09/23/25
Half-Day	09/26/25
No School: Yom Kippur	10/02/25
Parent Teacher Conferences	10/13/25
Annual Title I Meeting: Family Literacy & Mathematics Night	10/30/25
Half-Day	10/24/25
Half-Day	11/04/25
No School: Veterans Day (Observed)	11/11/25
Half-Day	11/14/25
Thanksgiving Break (11/27/25-12/01/25)	
Half-Day	12/12/25
Winter Break (12/24/25-01/02/26)	
No School: MLK Day	01/19/26
Half-Day	01/23/26
Half-Day	02/06/26
Half-Day	02/20/26
Half-Day	03/13/26
Eid al-Fitr	03/20/26
Spring Break (03/30/26-04/03/26)	
Election Day	05/19/26
Last Day of School	06/12/26

BELL SCHEDULES

Staff Meetings: 7:40 – 8:10 am

Breakfast: 8:20 am

Daily Schedule		Half-Day	2-Hour Delay
HR	8:20 – 8:37	8:20 – 8:35	10:20 – 10:58
Period 1	8:39 – 8:37	8:25 – 9:20	11:00 – 11:45 (Lunch)
Period 2	8:39 – 9:24	9:20 – 10:05	11:47 – 12:32 PM(Lunch)
Period 3	10:13– 10:58	10:05 – 10:35 (Lunch)	12:34 – 1:19 (Lunch)
Period 4 (Lunch)	11:00 – 11:45	10:35 – 11:05 (Lunch)	1:21 – 2:06
Period 5 (Lunch)	11:47 – 12:32	11:05 – 11:35 (Lunch)	2:08 – 2:53 2:53 – 3:05 (Dismissal)
Period 6 (Lunch)	12:24 – 1:19		
Period 7	1:21 – 2:06		
Period 8	2:08 – 2:53		
HR	2:53 – 3:05		

ATTENDANCE

POLICY 204

Regular school attendance is crucial for student success. At South Brook, we adhere to the Pittsburgh Public Schools’ attendance policy (see above). For any concerns regarding your child’s attendance, please contact Dr. Hisle, our school counselor. If your child has a morning appointment, we encourage you to have them come to school afterward. For students who arrive late starting at 10:00 am they will have to have a parent sign them into the main office. There, they will be marked as present and directed to their classroom. Thank you for your cooperation in ensuring your child’s consistent attendance.

ACADEMICS

Course Offerings

Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
Communications/ELA	Communications/ELA	Communications/ELA
Math 6	Math 7	Algebra I
Advanced Math 6	Advanced Math 7	Math 8
Science Social Studies/Ancient Cultures/Geography	Science Social Studies/World History	Science Social Studies/US History
Physical Ed./Health	Physical Ed. /Health	Physical Ed./Health
Music	Music	Music
Art	Art	Art
Library/Research	Library/Research	Math Lab
Math Lab	Math Lab	Social Emotional Learning
Social Emotional Learning	Social Emotional Learning	

All Pittsburgh South Brook students who meet the criteria for the gifted program attend the Pittsburgh Gifted Center one day per week.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

POLICY 226

South Brook 6-8 follows the academic integrity policy of the School Board of Pittsburgh. All reports of academic integrity will be investigated through the procedures in the Student Code of Conduct.

ATHLETICS/EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

POLICY 119

Athletics

At South Brook students have the opportunity to participate in Co-ed Cross Country, Co-ed Flag Football, Girls/Boys Volleyball, Girls/Boy Basketball, Co-ed Wrestling, Girls/Boys Soccer, and Unified Bocce. All students have the opportunity to participate based on school district requirements.

Extracurricular Activities

There are activities that will be available to students, both after school and during the school day:

Field Trips and Special Days: Each grade level team plans several activities for students. Some educational field trips are planned that correspond to activities that go on in class. Other trips such as skating parties are meant as an incentive.

In-school Activities: Club day every half day, newspaper, yearbook, intramurals, African American History Challenge Bowl, Student Envoys, GSA, SECTEM, and other opportunities School-wide

Activities: School dances several times a year, Ceder Point trip 8 th grade, overnight trips for all grades: 6th and 7th rotate with Baltimore/Hershey Park and Cincinnati/Kings Island and 8th grade will take a three day trip to New York City (fundraising occurs throughout the year).

DRESS CODE

POLICY 221

Pittsburgh Public Schools has an exclusionary dress code. No student shall wear any apparel or jewelry that by words, signs, pictures or any combination thereof appearing on said clothing or jewelry advocates or promotes sexual activity or violence, or the use of alcohol or drugs, or demeans or degrades another because of race, sex, religious persuasion, national origin, handicap or disability.

Students are expected to wear appropriate clothing at all times while at school. Clothing must not be of any style, length or fit that is of a provocative nature. Revealing attire that permits the exposure of undergarments or private body parts is prohibited. This prohibition shall be in effect during regular school hours and at any school-sponsored event whether on or off school premises. A prescribed dress code or uniform policy is defined as a policy, either in writing or declared verbally by a given school principal, that requires the student to wear a certain mode of dress during school time, or at any school-sponsored event whether on or off school premises.

Individual schools within the District may adopt a prescribed dress code or uniform policy in accordance with the Board's policy.

We take pride in the appearance of our students. All students are expected to dress and groom themselves neatly in clothes that are suitable for school activities. Parents should monitor their children's dress using the following guidelines:

- Shorts/skorts/skirts must be of appropriate length.
- No bare stomach or midriffs.
- Shoes must have a strap in the back behind the heel.

- Pants must be worn at the waist. Underclothing cannot be visible. Pants with excessive rips are not permitted.
- Clothing which promotes drug/alcohol use, weapons, gangs, hate crimes, or profanity is prohibited.
- Hoods on “hoodies” must be down at all times. The hood must not be covering the head.

On gym days, students should wear appropriate clothing and shoes (tennis shoes) for physical activity. The school will not be responsible for clothing that may be soiled, ripped, or damaged as a result of any activity or misbehavior in school. Students are not asked to change for gym class.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

POLICY 216

Students are not permitted to carry cell phones during school hours. Upon arrival, all cell phones must be collected and stored in a designated bin in the homeroom. These bins will be kept in the main office, and students will retrieve their phones at dismissal.

If a student is found with a cell phone during the school day, it will be confiscated and held in the main office. Parents or guardians will be notified in such cases.

Thank you for your cooperation in helping us maintain a focused learning environment.

GRADING

POLICY 209

Report cards are a key tool for communicating student progress and are issued four times a year at approximately nine-week intervals. Academic performance is indicated using letter grades: A, B, C, D, and E. In addition to these grades, students receive a citizenship mark for their behavior in each class. Citizenship is assessed with the following marks: O for Outstanding, S for Satisfactory, and U for Needs Improvement.

To keep parents informed, progress reports are provided halfway through each report period. Parents can also monitor their child’s grades and progress through the Home Access Center.

Grading Scale

Percentage Earned	Grade	GPA
90-100%	A	4.0
80-89%	B	3.0
70-79%	C	2.0
60-69%	D	1.0
50-59%	E	0.0

HOMEWORK PROCEDURES

POLICY 115

Effective homework assignments play a crucial role in enhancing a student's overall educational experience. By extending learning time and providing additional practice, homework reinforces classroom instruction and fosters independence, self-discipline, and strong work habits. As such, it is an integral component of both the evaluation and learning process.

Middle school students may be assigned homework up to four nights per week. To support academic success, students should aim to complete at least 80% of their homework assignments for each subject within a reporting period, as this contributes to their overall grade.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding homework, please do not hesitate to contact your student's teacher for further assistance.

HEALTH SERVICES

POLICY 206

The Office of Health Services is dedicated to providing high-quality care that promotes, maintains, protects, and improves the health of students, employees, and the community. Our services focus on disease prevention, health promotion, and mandated care in collaboration with the Department of Health.

South Brook is fortunate to have Mrs. Oliver as our school nurse. You can reach her at 412-529-8170 or via email at coliver1@pghschools.org.

We are committed to ensuring that all students have equal access to top-notch health services, prevention education, and early intervention. Students benefit from school health physicals, screenings, and related services designed to support their overall health and academic success.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY/ACCEPTABLE USE

POLICY 813.1

Please review the Pittsburgh Public Schools Acceptable Use Policy by following the link above. After reading the policy, kindly complete the form provided. If you have any questions or need further assistance, Mr. Smales, our tech liaison, is available to help.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

At South Brook, Dr. Nena Hisle is our dedicated counselor and the primary point of contact for a wide range of support services. Whether you need assistance with attendance, 504 plans, mental health concerns, work permits, social-emotional learning, or other support needs, Dr. Hisle is here to help. She is committed to supporting all students throughout their middle school journey. If you or your child require any assistance, please do not hesitate to reach out to Dr. Hisle.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS/PROCEDURES

POLICY 212

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is a framework that helps schools create a positive learning environment for students by defining, teaching, and acknowledging appropriate behaviors, while correcting inappropriate ones. PBIS is based on evidence and can be used in many educational settings, including K-12 schools. PBIS motivates students to do their best through incentives. The RAISE matrix—illustrated below—frames South Brook’ PBIS system. RAISE stands for the following:

Respect

Attitude

Integrity

Safety

Effort

See page 18 for the full PBIS chart.

Titan Points

Titan Points will be given to students to encourage positive behavior and responsibility. Students can earn points for a variety of reasons such as being on time to class; bringing books and necessary materials to class; completing homework; class participation; and exemplary behavior in and out of the classroom. Students earn points from staff for many other reasons. Who knows—you could even earn a point for simply being kind!

Titan points are your responsibility. Here is how the program works:

1. Earn a point.
2. The teachers will be able to place a point into the computer system for you.
3. The PBIS rewards system will keep a record of all the points received.
4. The day of the school store students will receive a check with their name, grade, and point total for that period.
5. Students will then purchase their items from the school store using their check that will be collected and the points deducted from the system.

Don’t miss out! Earn Titan Points to win exciting rewards!

Student/Parent/Staff Expectations

Students

1. Recognize that academic, behavior, and attendance success is primarily your responsibility. Parents, teachers, staff, and administrators are here to support your efforts.
2. Promote a positive school climate by following the school rules every day, all the time! Stop and think before making a decision. Always do what you know is the right thing to do.
3. Be a leader and not a follower!
4. Participate in the positive school climate program in order to earn Titan Tickets to win exciting rewards.
5. Respect yourself, your teachers and staff, your classmates, and your parents. Recognize that this is a journey we are taking together!

Parents

1. Become familiar with the school rules and the positive school climate program in order to be participating partners in establishing the best possible learning environment for all students.
2. Review the Student Code of Conduct and the Parent/Student Handbook with your child periodically.
3. Encourage your child to maintain academic, attendance, and behavior standards that will keep him/her eligible to participate in the school's reward program and extracurricular activities.
4. Support school-based efforts, rules, and policies to increase achievement, attendance, and learning opportunities for all students.

Teachers and Staff

1. Recognize and understand that effective behavior and student achievement is the responsibility of the entire school staff.
2. Recognize that every staff member must consistently apply the rules and procedures to all students.
3. Use Titan Points every day and in a consistent manner. Promote school activities, which are part of our positive school climate program.
4. Encourage student participation in the positive school climate program. Compliment and recognize when students are reaching behavior, attendance, and academic goals.

Administrators

1. Recognize that you are key to establishing and maintaining school-wide positive and effective behavior.
2. Work in tandem with staff, parents, and students in making sure that all students are reaching academic, behavior, and attendance standards.
3. Provide the necessary supports staff needs in order to guarantee the success of our school-wide positive climate program.
4. Recognize that positive school climate is a process that must be monitored and evaluated periodically. Changes in our program should be made based on data and not be made just for the sake of making changes.

VISITORS

POLICY 1004

Parents and guardians are welcome at Pittsburgh South Brook. All visitors must report to the main office, identify themselves, and sign the visitor register. All visitors will be issued and must display a visitor's pass while in the school building.

Parents wishing to observe their child's class must first obtain the permission of the principal. Parents should not expect to confer with teachers during class time. All parent-teacher conferences should be scheduled in advance.

South Brook 6-8 Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

RAISE THE BAR

	Hallway Cafeteria	Classroom	Restrooms	Bus	Recess	
R Respect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Be a positive role model -Always stop when directed -Walk on the right side 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Listen when other speak. -Quiet voice when talking - Use kind words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Allow others their privacy -Take care of school property (soap dispensers, sinks, toilets, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Use a quiet voice and kind words -Keep hands, feet, and objects to myself - Listen to and respect the driver 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Use a quiet voice - Respect others and use kind words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Eat with good table manners - Follow adult directions - Use quiet voice
A Attitude	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Accept the redirection without giving feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Always do your best - follow directions the first time given - Take responsibility for your actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Use kind words - Get in and get out – not a place to socialize 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Follow redirection -Ignore negative behaviors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Include others to play -Share and take turns - Avoid confrontation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Eat only your own food -Say please and thank you
I Integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Keep hands off walls -Keep your hands to yourself -Keep your feet on the ground (no jumping) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Be truthful and honest -Respect all members of the learning community - Practice academic honesty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Keep area clean -Respect 10:10 rule 8th period closed - Report issues to staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Respect others property -Report suspicious behavior -Wait your turn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Take responsibility for your actions -Be honest -Be helpful - Play fair 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Avoid confrontation -Respect others property -Report suspicious behavior
S Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Go directly to your destination -Walk at all times -Keep hands to yourself -Listen and watch for teacher's directions - Keep your eyes forward 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Stay in assigned area/seat -Sit properly -Keep hands, feet, and objects to myself. -Follow classroom procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Flush toilet -Wash hands with soap -Dry hands after washing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Stay in seat -Keep items out of aisle -Keep body and objects inside of the bus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Follow recess rules -Tell an adult if you have a concern -Keep hands, feet, and objects to myself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Be patient in the lunch line -Respect people's space -Touch your food only
E Effort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Keep area clean - Pick up your garbage if you drop it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Always do my best work – Effort creates ability -Ask for help when needed. - Get make-up work when you miss class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Use bathroom only when necessary - Clean up after yourself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Be on time - Keep the bus clean 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Get involved - Keep the gym clean 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Pick up your own garbage -Respond to teacher signals immediately - Consume all food and beverages in the cafeteria

The background of the page is a solid blue color. Scattered across the upper and middle portions of the page are several large, semi-transparent geometric shapes. These include circles, squares, and triangles, all in a slightly darker shade of blue than the background. The shapes are arranged in a non-repeating, abstract pattern.

PITTSBURGH SOUTH BROOK 6-8