South River Public Schools
21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC)
Student & Parent Handbook
Grades 3-12 | 2026-2027

"Academics First. Opportunities Beyond the Classroom."

Funded by the New Jersey Department of Education
Title IV, Part B - Every Student Succeeds Act
2026-2027 Student & Parent Handbook |



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Program Goals

The South River Public Schools 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) Program provides students in Grades 3–12 with a safe, engaging, and academically focused environment after school. The program extends opportunities for academic support, enrichment, wellness, leadership development, career exploration, and family engagement beyond the regular school day.

The program supports the South River School District's mission of coordinating the resources of home, school, and community to guide each student's growth toward responsible citizenship, continued learning, and productive employment.

The goals of the 21st Century Program are to:

- Provide academic enrichment and targeted support in core academic areas, including English language arts, mathematics, and science.
- Engage students in project-based learning, STEM, technology, visual and performing arts, recreation, and other enrichment experiences.
- Provide opportunities for community service, service learning, leadership development, and civic engagement.
- Strengthen family and community participation in program planning, implementation, and sustainability.
- Offer family literacy activities, educational workshops, classes, engagement opportunities, and referrals.
- Support improved attendance, classroom behavior, self-confidence, positive peer relationships, healthy choices, and students' sense of future opportunity.
- Prepare students for college, careers, and life through career exploration, workforce readiness, financial literacy, and real-world learning experiences.

Expected program outcomes include improved academic performance and school attendance, reduced disciplinary concerns, improved social behaviors and relationships, and increased student engagement, leadership, and future readiness.

Program Components

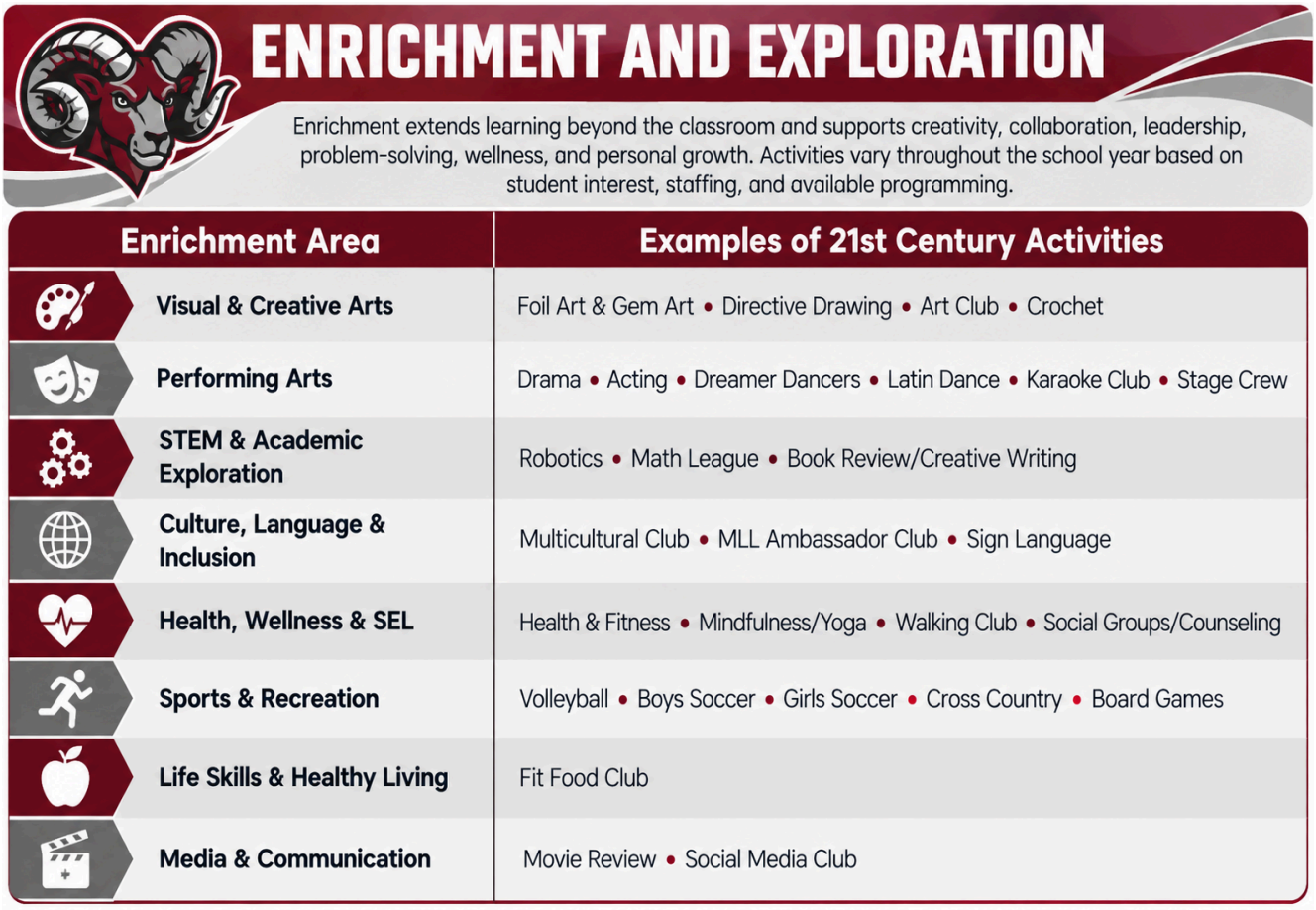
The 21st Century Program is built around three major components: **academic enrichment, positive youth development, and parent/family engagement**.

Academic Support

Academic achievement is the foundation of the program. Students are expected to participate actively in homework assistance, tutoring, intervention, independent learning, or structured academic enrichment before participating in enrichment activities.

Students should:

- Complete homework and classroom assignments to the best of their ability.
- Participate in tutoring or intervention when directed or recommended.
- Remain focused and respectful during academic activities.
- Demonstrate effort and engagement.
- Ask questions and seek assistance when needed.
- Use available academic resources
- Students without homework will participate in structured academic enrichment, which may include reading, mathematics or literacy practice, project-based learning, educational technology, or study-skills activities.



Participation

With the exception of students who have an **approved early release schedule**, all students participating in the 21st Century Program **must report directly to the program from school at the end of the regular school day**.

Parents/guardians may **not drop students off for the 21st Century Program** if the student:

- Left school early during the regular school day, or
- Did not attend school that day.

Students must be present at school through their regular dismissal time in order to participate in the 21st Century Program that day, unless they have an approved early release schedule.

Priority for admission is given to students identified as academically at risk based on report cards, classroom performance, or teacher referral. Remaining spaces are filled on a first-come, first-served basis. Students are expected to participate appropriately in the program setting with the supports and accommodations available through the district and program.

Required registration information must be completed before a student begins participating each school year. **Enrollment does not automatically carry over from one school year to the next.** Parents/guardians must enroll their child each year through the Parent Portal.

Families are responsible for keeping addresses, telephone numbers, emergency contacts, authorized pick-up information, medical information, and family arrangements current.

Athletics and Extracurricular Activities

21st Century Community Learning Centers and Extracurricular Participation:
The guidance goal for each student shall be a balanced program of appropriate academic studies and activities. All extracurricular activities are eligible for participation under the grant-funded 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) Program. Participation in school-sponsored athletics requires enrollment in the 21st CCLC Program, including completion of all required registration procedures. All student-athletes must report to and attend the 21st CCLC Program on days when they have a scheduled practice or game.

Student-athletes who are failing **one or more classes** must participate in a 30-minute academic tutoring session prior to reporting to their scheduled athletic activity. This academic support is intended to provide students with structured time for tutoring, remediation, assignment completion, and other academic assistance. Student-athletes who are not failing one or more classes are not required to participate in the 30-minute academic tutoring session. During this time, they may participate in approved 21st CCLC activities or use the designated period to complete homework, classroom assignments, or other academic work before reporting to their athletic activity. On practice and game days, all student-athletes must follow established 21st CCLC attendance and sign-in procedures before participating in their extracurricular activity.

Attendance
Regular and consistent attendance is essential for student safety, program accountability, grant reporting, and the academic and enrichment benefits of participation.

Students are expected to attend scheduled program days, arrive on time, remain for the duration of the program unless appropriately dismissed, and participate in assigned program components.

Attendance and sign-in procedures vary by site.

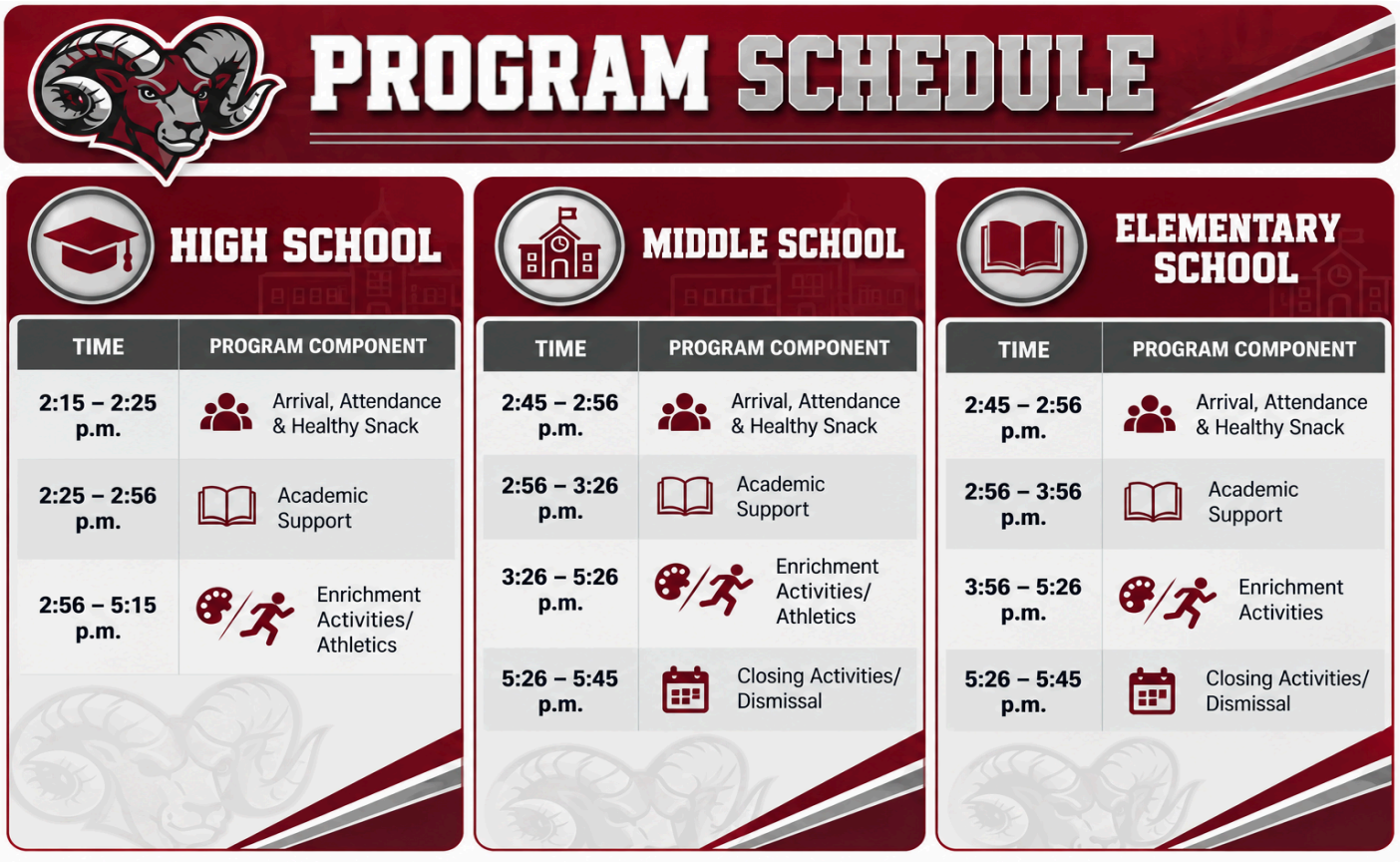
- Middle and High School students must sign in through Turnstile using their name immediately upon arrival. Elementary School students will sign in when they arrive at their designated tutoring session.
- Middle and High School students must sign in again when they arrive at their Academic Support/Tutoring session.
- Never sign in for another student.
- Remain with assigned 21st Century staff and in designated program areas.
- Follow any additional attendance procedures established by program staff.

Falsifying attendance records is a serious violation and may result in parent/guardian notification, loss of privileges, suspension, or removal from the program.

Regular attendance is defined as consistent participation in the program based on the student's established program schedule.

The program will also monitor progress toward completing a minimum of 90 program hours during the school year. Attendance concerns may result in parent/guardian contact, an attendance improvement plan, or removal from the program when expectations are not met.

Program Schedule
The program operates after the regular school day on scheduled program days. It does **not** operate on early-dismissal days, weekends, school vacation days, holidays, school-closure days, or other dates when after-school programming is canceled.



Schedules may be adjusted based on the school/site, grade level, student needs, special events, field trips, guest presenters, or seasonal programming. Families will be notified of significant changes.

Parent Engagement

Families are essential partners in the success of the 21st Century Program. Parents and guardians are encouraged to participate in family activities, workshops, advisory opportunities, and other events designed to strengthen connections among school, home, and community.

Parents/guardians may expect:

- A safe, nurturing, and respectful environment.
- Communication regarding program activities and significant concerns.
- Opportunities to ask questions and raise concerns with appropriate program staff.
- Notification when behavior, attendance, or other concerns may place continued participation at risk.
- Opportunities to provide feedback through surveys, meetings, workshops, and program events.

Parents/guardians are expected to:

- Encourage regular attendance and punctuality.
- Keep emergency, medical, transportation, and authorized pick-up information current.
- Notify staff of absences, early dismissals, or transportation changes.
- Review program communications and respond to required forms.
- Support academic participation and behavioral expectations.
- Work collaboratively with staff when concerns arise.
- Participate in family engagement opportunities whenever possible.

- Complete program surveys and feedback requests.

Parents/guardians are expected to attend **at least two parent training sessions and special program functions during the school year**.

Parent/Guardian and Student Advisory Groups

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program values family engagement, student voice, and continuous improvement. To ensure that programming reflects the needs and interests of our school community, the program has established Parent/Guardian and Student Advisory Groups.

Parent Advisory
Meets three times per school year, offering both virtual and in-person participation options. The group provides families with opportunities to share feedback, offer recommendations, recognize program strengths, identify areas for improvement, and collaborate on initiatives that support student achievement, enrichment, and family engagement. These meetings foster meaningful communication, strengthen family partnerships, and promote continuous improvement within the 21st Century Program.

Student Advisory
Meets three times per school year and empowers students to actively shape their 21st Century experience. Student representatives from various grade levels share feedback, suggest enrichment activities, identify opportunities for improvement, and ensure that programming reflects student interests, needs, and perspectives.

Community Partners and Collaborators
The 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program actively builds partnerships with local organizations, businesses, and community professionals to provide students with meaningful, hands-on learning opportunities and real-world experiences. Through collaborations with local police officers, fire departments, government officials, librarians, and other community leaders, students gain exposure to diverse careers, develop practical life skills, and strengthen their understanding of the community. These partnerships support engaging workshops, guest presentations, educational field trips, and interactive activities that connect classroom learning to real-life applications. By utilizing community resources and expertise, the program expands enrichment opportunities, promotes career readiness, and encourages students to become active, informed, and responsible members of their community.

Are you a local business or community organization interested in making a difference in the lives of our students? We welcome opportunities to collaborate and provide meaningful, hands-on learning experiences through the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program.

To learn more about partnership opportunities, please contact us at **21stcentury@srivernj.org**.

Pick-Up (MS and ES)
Students must remain in their assigned dismissal location until released by 21st Century staff.

For Middle School and Elementary School pick-up, parents/guardians picking up students from the cafeteria before 5:30 p.m. must first sign in and then enter the building to pick up their child.

Students will not be permitted to leave the cafeteria independently unless they are officially designated as a walker and have been checked out by a 21st Century staff member.

Additional dismissal expectations include:

- Students may only be released to authorized individuals.

- Photo identification may be required.
- Families must keep authorized pick-up, emergency contact, and dismissal information current.
- Transportation or dismissal changes should be provided in writing whenever possible before the program day begins.
- Emergency dismissal changes will be verified by program staff.
- Parents/guardians are expected to arrive on time for pick-up.

Late Pick-Up
After **two late pick-ups of 10 minutes or more**, a parent/guardian meeting will be scheduled to discuss the concern and establish expectations. The meeting and agreed-upon next steps will be documented in writing. If late pick-ups continue, program administration will review the circumstances and determine appropriate next steps. Continued late pick-ups may ultimately result in consideration for removal from the program following administrative review and final review by the superintendent. The program will make reasonable efforts to work collaboratively with families before removal is considered.

Safety
Student safety is a primary responsibility of the 21st Century Program. Students will be appropriately supervised during program activities, transitions, recreation, field trips, and dismissal.

Students must:

- Remain with assigned staff unless given permission to move to another approved location.
- Follow all school-day safety rules during after-school programming.
- Remain in designated program areas.
- Follow staff directions during emergencies and drills.
- Use materials, equipment, and facilities safely and appropriately.

Weapons and look-alike weapons are prohibited. Smoking, tobacco, vaping, alcohol, drugs, and illegal substances are prohibited on school property and during program activities.

Harassment, intimidation, bullying, sexual harassment, and other prohibited conduct will be addressed in accordance with district policy.

Only **one student may use the bathroom at a time** unless an accommodation or emergency requires otherwise. Students may not enter the girls' or boys' locker room unless authorized and appropriately supervised by a staff member of the same gender.

Fire and safety drills will be conducted during after-school program hours each school year. Students and staff must follow all emergency procedures and directions during each drill.

Program staff are mandated reporters and must follow New Jersey law and district procedures regarding suspected child abuse or neglect.

Field Trip Safety
Educational field trips may include colleges, museums, science centers, cultural institutions, businesses, community organizations, parks, and other locations aligned with program goals. Written parent/guardian permission is required. Students must remain with assigned groups, follow all staff and host-site rules, and represent South River Public Schools respectfully. Staff will maintain attendance and conduct student counts as appropriate throughout each trip. Eligibility may consider regular attendance, active participation, positive behavior, compliance with district/program policies, and completed permission forms.

Health
Families must provide current information regarding food allergies, dietary restrictions, chronic or temporary medical conditions, emergency instructions, and other documentation required by the school nurse or district.

Illness
Students who become ill during the program will be supervised, and a parent/guardian or emergency contact will be notified as appropriate. A student who is not well enough to participate must be picked up in accordance with school health procedures. Students may be separated from the group, and a parent/guardian may be contacted if the student exhibits symptoms including fever with other signs of illness, persistent diarrhea, difficulty breathing, jaundice, eye discharge or redness, an untreated rash, a stiff neck with fever, repeated vomiting, a sore throat, or difficulty swallowing.

Emergencies and First Aid
During fire, evacuation, shelter, security, environmental, weather, utility, or other emergencies, staff will follow district emergency procedures and directions from school administration and public-safety authorities.Staff may provide basic first aid within the scope of their training and district procedures. Emergency medical services will be contacted for serious or life-threatening conditions, and parents/guardians will be notified. Staff members will not transport students in personal vehicles.

Food and Snacks
A nutritious snack will be provided each program day when available and in accordance with applicable guidelines. Students should remain seated while eating, follow staff directions, clean their eating area, properly dispose of trash, and be mindful of allergies and dietary restrictions. Food and beverages should not be shared unless specifically approved by staff. Students may bring additional snacks or beverages from home, provided they comply with school/site allergy restrictions.

Code of Conduct
All students must follow the **South River Public Schools Student Code of Conduct, Board of Education policies, school rules, and 21st Century Program expectations**.

Core Expectations

Be Respectful: Treat students, staff, visitors, and property with dignity and courtesy.

Be Responsible: Follow directions, complete assigned tasks, and accept accountability.

Be Safe: Protect your physical and emotional well-being and that of others.

Be Ready to Learn: Arrive prepared, remain engaged, and participate appropriately.

Students must also keep hands, feet, and objects to themselves; remain in assigned areas; ask permission before leaving; use appropriate language; resolve disagreements respectfully; care for equipment and school property; and clean up after activities.

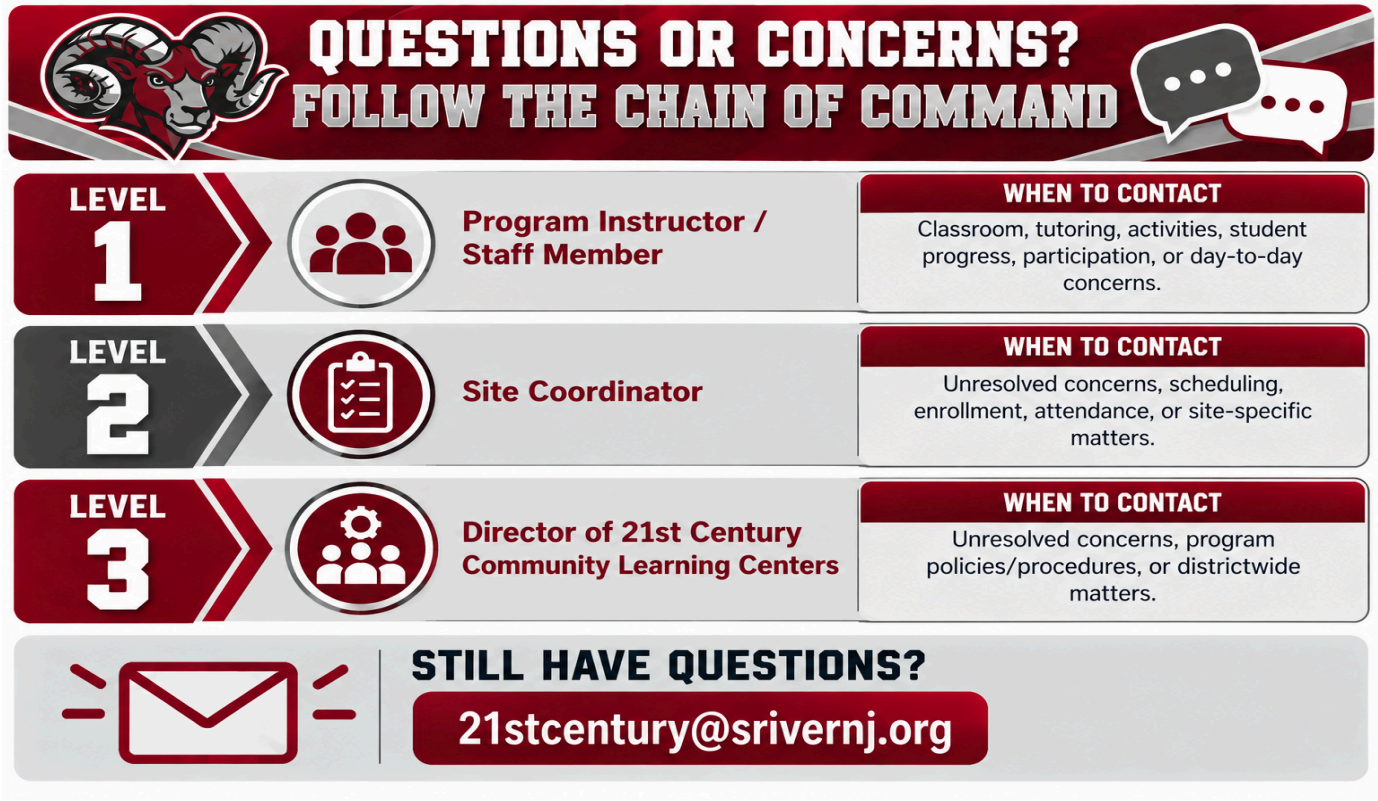
Restorative and Supportive Practices
When appropriate, staff may use reteaching, reflection, restorative conversations, conflict resolution, counseling support, behavior plans, and other interventions to help students understand their actions, repair harm, rebuild relationships, and successfully return to program activities.

Progressive Discipline
Responses may include verbal redirection, student conferences, reflection, restorative activities, temporary changes in activities, loss of privileges, parent/guardian contact, behavior plans, administrative referrals, suspension, or removal from the program. Serious behavior or safety concerns may result in immediate administrative action.

District Technology
Students must use Chromebooks and district technology for educational purposes only, access approved resources, protect their credentials, handle equipment carefully, and follow the South River Public Schools Acceptable Use Policy. The program is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged personal electronic devices.

Communication, Questions and Concerns
Open communication among students, families, staff, Site Coordinators, and program administration is essential to a successful 21st Century Program. Families should review program communications, keep contact information current, respond to required forms, and notify staff of absences, dismissal changes, medical concerns, or other information that may affect a student's participation.

Questions and Concerns: Chain of Command



Questions regarding the 21st Century Program may be directed to the appropriate staff member, Site Coordinator, or Director in accordance with the program's chain of command.

Families may also email **21stcentury@srivernj.org** with any questions or concerns.

Student and Parent/Guardian Agreement

The South River Public Schools 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program is committed to providing a safe, supportive, academically focused, and engaging environment for all students. Successful participation requires a partnership among students, families, and program staff.

By signing below, the student and parent/guardian acknowledge that they have reviewed the **21st Century Student & Parent Handbook** and understand the program's expectations, policies, and procedures.

Student Agreement

As a participant in the 21st Century Program, I agree to:

- Attend the program regularly, sign in only for myself, and follow all required attendance and check-in procedures.
- Participate actively in academic support, tutoring, enrichment activities, and other assigned program components.
- Follow the South River Public Schools Student Code of Conduct and all 21st Century Program rules and procedures.
- Treat students, staff, visitors, school facilities, and materials with respect.
- Remain in my assigned location and follow staff directions.
- Make safe, responsible, and respectful choices.
- Follow expectations for cell phones, electronic devices, Chromebooks, and other technology.
- Help maintain a positive, inclusive, and welcoming environment.
- Represent South River Public Schools appropriately during field trips, community activities, athletics, and special events.

Student Name: _____

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Agreement

As the parent/guardian of a student participating in the 21st Century Program, I agree to:

- Support my child's regular attendance, punctuality, and active participation.
- Review and support the policies, procedures, and expectations outlined in this handbook.
- Maintain current emergency contact, medical, transportation, and authorized pick-up information.
- Follow all pick-up and dismissal procedures and make arrangements for timely pick-up.
- Review program communications and respond to required forms and requests.
- Communicate absences, dismissal changes, medical concerns, or other information that may affect my child's participation.
- Work collaboratively with program staff to address academic, attendance, behavioral, or other concerns.
- Support my child's participation in academic support and enrichment opportunities.
- Participate in parent/family engagement opportunities whenever possible.

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have received access to and reviewed the **South River Public Schools 21st Century Student & Parent Handbook** and understand the expectations associated with my child's participation in the program.

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Questions or Concerns email: 21stcentury@srivernj.org