

# South Fayette Elementary School

*Student - Family Handbook*

*2023-2024*

**Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s):**

**Welcome to the start of a new school year! We hope you and your families had a safe and enjoyable summer. We are very excited to see our students and their families!**

**Once you have enrolled and are added to the email list, you will receive a weekly email from the office with a link to our announcements that are located on the elementary school website. We would encourage you to read the announcements because they contain current information about your child's education. We will also continue to email monthly calendars. Parents can also access the announcements, calendars, and menus at any time by visiting [www.southfayette.org](http://www.southfayette.org), selecting your school on the drop-down menu, and selecting current announcements. The website is updated frequently and provides parents with a wealth of current information, so please remember to visit our website often. We hope the handbook provides you with detailed information regarding your child's school!**

**We would like to thank you for your partnership throughout the year! It is our pleasure to work with you and your child, and we look forward to being a part of their daily lives. If you have any questions or concerns throughout the school year, do not hesitate to email or call us.**

**With SFES Lion Pride,**

**Tyler J. Geist  
Elementary School Principal**

**Pharlan Ives  
Elementary School Assistant Principal**

South Fayette Elementary School  
3620 Old Oakdale Road  
McDonald, PA 15057



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**VISION, BELIEFS AND MISSION OF THE SOUTH FAYETTE SCHOOL DISTRICT  
(developed by the Steering Committee and adopted by the Board of School Directors, 2018)**

**1. Vision Statement**

South Fayette Township School District will radiate excellence through future-focused, innovative, diverse, and high quality learning opportunities.

**2. Mission Statement**

In partnership with the community, the mission of the South Fayette Township School District, a leader in innovation, is to elevate academic, artistic, and athletic excellence of the whole learner by inspiring the strength to be dynamic, ethical, and empathetic citizens who flourish in a global society.

**3. Shared Values**

- ❖ Education is the shared responsibility of the student, home, school, and community.
- ❖ High, clear expectations are fundamental to success.
- ❖ Creativity and critical thinking are the building blocks to develop an entrepreneurial spirit.
- ❖ Problem solving and design thinking are key competencies for lifelong learners.
- ❖ Confidence and self-esteem are critical to academic, social, and emotional growth.
- ❖ Cultural and global competencies are crucial to success.
- ❖ Innovation and advancement in technology, teaching techniques, and operations are essential for successful everyday performance.
- ❖ Multiple pathways and measures must be used to achieve and evaluate success.
- ❖ A safe, caring, positive environment with high levels of courtesy and respect is essential to maximize learning and productivity.
- ❖ Communication, collaboration, and agency are relevant workplace skills every student must develop.

**4. Compliance Statement**

South Fayette Township School District is an equal opportunity education institution and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender and handicap in its activities, programs, or employment practices as required by Title VI, Title IX, and Section 504. For information regarding civil rights or grievance procedure or services, activities, and facilities that are accessible and usable by handicapped persons, please contact Gretchen Tucci, Title IX, Section 504 Coordinator, at 3700 Old Oakdale Road, McDonald, PA 15057, (412) 221-4542, extension 415.

## South Fayette PTA

PTA@southfayette.org

### **PTA Vision**

Every child's potential is a reality.

### **PTA Mission**

To make every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children.

### **PTA Values**

*Collaboration:* We will work in partnership with a wide array of individuals and organizations to broaden and enhance our ability to serve and advocate for all children and families.

*Commitment:* We are dedicated to children's educational success, health, and well-being through strong family and community engagement, while remaining accountable to the principles upon which our association was founded.

*Diversity:* We acknowledge the potential of everyone without regard, including but not limited to: age, culture, economic status, educational background, ethnicity, gender, geographic location, legal status, marital status, mental ability, national origin, organizational position, parental status, physical ability, political philosophy, race, religion, sexual orientation, and work experience.

*Respect:* We value the individual contributions of members, employees, volunteers, and partners as we work collaboratively to achieve our association's goals.

*Accountability:* All members, employees, volunteers and partners have a shared responsibility to align their efforts toward the achievement of our association's strategic initiatives.

# **South Fayette Elementary School**

**SCHOOL COLORS: *GREEN & WHITE***

**MASCOT: *LION***

## **6. ALMA MATER**

**South Fayette may we be,  
Ever faithful to thee,  
May thy children all cherish thy name**

**For the good thou has done,  
For each victory we've won  
Alma Mater to thee all thy fame,  
Dear old high, thou has served us so well,**

**All thy virtues we never can tell  
Other schools we may all soon forget,**

**But we'll always love dear South Fayette.**



7. SCHOOL SONG - "YOU'RE A GRAND OLD SCHOOL"

**YOU'RE A GRAND OLD SCHOOL**

**YOU'RE A HIGH RANKING SCHOOL**

**YOU'RE THE BEST IN THE EAST THEY ALL SAY**

**"SOUTH FAYETTE"**

**WHERE THE KIDS ARE SMART**

**AND DO THEIR PART**

**WE'RE LOYAL TO YOU EVERYDAY**

**EVERY HEART BEATS TRUE FOR OUR OWN**

**COLORS TOO**

**YOU'RE THE BEST SCHOOL IN EVERY WAY**

**SHOULD OLD ACQUAINTANCE BE FORGOT**

**BUT OUR SCHOOL IS HERE TO STAY**

**"SOUTH FAYETTE"**

## 8. Attendance

It is important that all students attend school every day as consistent attendance helps students to excel academically. We will make every effort to assist your child in the attainment of a quality education, but attendance is the responsibility of the parent or guardian. The parent/guardian should contact the school if extenuating circumstances regarding a child's absence exist.

Families are able to view and track their child's attendance records within the PowerSchool parent portal.

If a student does need to miss school, the parent/guardian must provide a written or emailed excuse within five school days of the absence. All emailed excuses should be submitted to the homeroom teacher **and** Diana Maitland, Administrative Assistant (esattendance@southfayette.org).

Written/emailed excuses should include the following information:

- Student's first and last name
- Grade
- Date of absence(s)
- Reason for absence(s)
- Signature of parent/guardian
- Signature from medical provider (when applicable)
- Return to school date as recommended by a medical provider (when applicable)

Parents/guardians will receive a phone call via our automated notification system in regard to their child's absence from school. Please note that all students who are absent will receive an automated call even if the parent notifies the school.

All absences will then be recorded as one of the following attendance codes:

<b>Type of Absence:</b>	<b>Attendance Code:</b>	<b>Absence due to:</b>	<b>Limit:</b>
Parent Excused	<b>PAR</b>	-student physical/emotional/mental health (without a medical note)  -parent/guardian request as approved by building administrator	10 per school year  Each absence beyond the ten cumulative days will require an excuse from a physician or will be marked as unexcused.
Excused	<b>EXC</b>	-student illness/injury (verification from healthcare provider required)  -doctor/dentist appointment (verification from healthcare provider required)  -religious holiday	

		<p>-bereavement</p> <p>-court appearance (verification required)</p> <p>-circumstances relative to homelessness and/or foster care</p> <p>-suspension (SUS)</p> <p>-urgent reason as approved by school administration</p>	
Educational Trip/Tour	<b>EDT</b>	<p><i>Please see additional information below.</i></p> <p><b><i>Educational Tours &amp; Trips</i></b></p>	<p>10 per school year</p> <p>Pre-approval from a building administrator is required.</p> <p>Not permitted within the last two weeks of school</p> <p>A student must be withdrawn from the school system if an Educational Trip/Tour exceeds 10 consecutive days.</p>
Unexcused	<b>UNX</b>	<p>-any reason for which a written/emailed excuse is not submitted within five school days of the absence</p> <p>-reasons not deemed permissible (i.e. shopping, cosmetic appointments, oversleeping, car failure, and other reasons other than those listed above under excused)</p>	

**Half Days**

A student who arrives after 11:30 a.m. will be marked ½ day absent. A student who arrives after 1:25 p.m. will be marked absent for the full day. A student who leaves before 11:30 a.m. will be marked absent for the full day. A student who leaves before 1:25 p.m. will be marked absent for ½ day. Half days are indicated by the code (H) in PowerSchool.

## Attendance Notification Procedures

In order to partner with families to achieve consistent school attendance, the following steps will be taken after a certain number of **cumulative** absences are accrued:

Number of Absences	3rd UNX	4th UNX	6th UNX	10th PAR/UNX absence	15th PAR/UNX absence	20th PAR/UNX absence	10 <u>consecutive</u> absences
Action Steps	Certified letter  Loss of driving privileges for high school students	Certified letter  School Attendance Improvement Conference (scheduled via phone)	Community Based Attendance Program or Children and Youth Agency (CYF) referral  Charges filed with the District Magistrate	Letter from building principal  Doctor's note required for every subsequent absence (lack of documentation will result in a UNX attendance code)	Charges filed with the District Magistrate	Attendance Hearing to consider retention in current grade level	Automatic withdrawal from District

## Homework for Absent Students

If your child is absent for more than one day and you would like his/her homework, please email your child's teacher. **Please do not request homework if your child is only absent one day.** Due to their professional responsibilities, teachers are unable to collect and organize student work in one work day.

A student whose absence is excused will have the opportunity to make up work assigned and tests administered during the period of his/her absence. Please make arrangements with your child's teacher. It is the expectation that students complete homework, tests, and other assigned school work within three days of returning to school after being absent.

## TARDY PROCEDURES

Students are expected to be in class/homeroom by the posted start of the school day. If a student arrives after that time, they must report to the Student Center/Main Office. A written excuse from the parent/guardian or a doctor explaining the reason for the tardiness is required to be submitted. Reasons for excused tardies and protocols for submitting excuses are consistent with the attendance policies. Oversleeping, missing the bus, car trouble and like excuses are not considered acceptable reasons for tardiness and will be considered unexcused.

1. Students who are tardy to school will have five school days to present an excuse to the Student Center/Main Office.
  1. At the Elementary and Intermediate School, students **must** be escorted by a parent and signed into school. This will constitute the parent excuse.
  2. At the Middle and High School, students **may** be escorted in by a parent and signed into school. This will constitute the parent excuse. If the parent does not escort the student into school, a written excuse must be presented within five school days.
2. Failure to turn in a note within the allotted time frame will result in the tardiness being considered unexcused.
3. After the fourth unexcused tardy, the student will receive a written warning from

the Student Center/Main Office

4. After the fifth unexcused tardy, a certified letter will be sent home and a consequence may be assigned by the building principals.

5. Further unexcused tardies will result in additional consequences and loss of privileges and possible referral to the Magistrate.

Any student who is tardy (excused or unexcused) 10 days without proper medical documentation will be required to submit a doctor's note for subsequent excused tardies.

### **EXCESSIVE TARDIES**

<b>9 Weeks</b>	<b>Maximum Cumulative Tardies</b>	<b>Consequence for Exceeding Maximum Tardies</b>
<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>10</b>	<b>Charges filed with the local district magistrate</b>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	<b>15</b>	
<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>	<b>20</b>	
<b>4<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>24</b>	

**Parents will be notified throughout the year as students approach the maximum number of tardies throughout the school year.**

#### **Early Dismissals**

Early dismissals from school are considered partial absence from school and will follow the same guidelines for classification of excused/unexcused. Dismissals before 11:30 a.m. will be marked as a full day absent. Dismissals before 1:25 p.m. are considered a ½ day absent. Anything before 3:23 p.m. is considered an early dismissal.

If a student needs to be dismissed from school, the parent or guardian needs to submit a written note that contains the following:

- Student's first and last name
- Grade
- Teacher's Name
- Dates for dismissal
- Reasons for dismissal
- Signature of parent or guardian

The child's parent or guardian needs to come into the school building and sign the child out. Please note that parents and guardians must have a valid form of photo identification (i.e., driver's license or passport) to sign the child out. Children **will not** be dismissed to a waiting vehicle. If a student is returning from a doctor's appointment, verification should be turned in the next day. **No student is permitted to leave the school building without the knowledge and permission of the appropriate school officials.**

Parents who are visiting the building cannot remove their child from the child's designated place without talking with the adult in charge of supervising their child and signing their child out at the receptionist's desk or the office. This is for the safety of all children. Please remember—we are responsible for the children during the school day.

Please note that we dismiss elementary students starting at 3:23 p.m. When students are dismissed before the official dismissal time, please note that the early dismissal is recorded in our attendance system, and if the student is dismissed for reasons other than the excused absences, the student will receive an unexcused early dismissal. A pattern of unexcused early dismissals will be referred to the magistrate.

### **Educational Tours**

We realize that families are not always able to schedule educational trips during the summer months or a school vacation. Parents who wish to take their children on an educational trip during the school year need to complete an Educational Tour form and return it to the elementary office for approval *two weeks prior* to the trip. Educational trips will be considered for approval if the trip is of educational significance to the student. The trip may not exceed ten days. **Students are only permitted a total of ten educational trip days per school year. Any days beyond the 10-day limit will be marked as an unexcused absence. However, students will be withdrawn from school if the educational trip exceeds ten consecutive days.** The request should be made at least two weeks prior to the trip. When the student returns from the trip, the student and the parent need to work with the teacher to make up the assignments missed. Parents can print the Education Tour Form from the Elementary Website at [www.southfayette.org/elem](http://www.southfayette.org/elem) or request an Educational Tour form by calling the elementary office at (412) 221-4542, extension 332 or 315.

### **Take Your Child to Work Day**

Students who go to work with a parent on Take Your Child to Work Day will have their absence marked as a parent excused absence. An excuse will need to be submitted within five school days of the absence.

## **9. Academics**

South Fayette Township Elementary School provides students with a strong academic foundation while taking into consideration individual differences. All children have the opportunity to achieve academically, enjoy exposure to the fine arts through visual art, choral music, and music appreciation, improve their physical fitness, and gross motor skills in physical education, and enhance their research and reading skills through the library.

Grade level curriculum booklets are available on the elementary website grade level links at [www.southfayette.org/elem](http://www.southfayette.org/elem) or in the elementary office. These booklets give more detail about the specific curriculum at each grade level.

### **Language Arts**

The Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Into Reading series is used in kindergarten through second grade. Language Arts is taught in a block of time during the school day. The comprehensive Language Arts curriculum emphasizes reading, grammar, writing, spelling, phonics, speaking, and listening skills. Students read high-interest stories on a routine basis. Teachers differentiate instruction so that all students' academic needs are met. Enrichment, as well as remediation activities, are ALSO provided.

Technology is an integral part of the Language Arts instruction. Each student will have a username and password to access the Into Reading digital curriculum. The goal of the Language Arts curriculum is for students to meet the Pennsylvania Common Core Standards. The standards can be assessed online at <https://www.pdesas.org/standard/>

### **Mathematics**

In Grades K - 2, South Fayette will be using a mathematics curriculum based on the EnvisionMath program from Pearson. This core program will develop conceptual understanding through daily Problem-Based Interactive Learning and step-by-step Visual Learning. Abundant digital resources are available for use in the classroom as well as at home. In addition, elementary students will also experience mathematics through our Calendar program. Through this dedicated time each day, students work with a variety of mathematics concepts such as time, money, patterns, counting, etc. South Fayette Elementary places a strong emphasis on math, and it is taught daily. Technology is integrated into the math curriculum, and children learn the math concepts by working with manipulatives, so they understand the concepts presented. There is an expectation that students practice and master the grade-appropriate mathematics facts.

### **Science and Health**

The STC science curriculum is used in the elementary school. This program emphasizes the hands-on inquiry-based approach where the children learn by doing. The Science Curriculum correlates to the Pennsylvania Academic Standards. The children learn about nutrition, exercise and good health practices in their physical education and/or homeroom class.

### **Social Studies**

The elementary social studies program teaches a wide variety of content skills at the various grade levels. Children learn about geography, history, economics, government, citizenship, sociology, anthropology and humanities through a wide variety of activities.

### **Handwriting**

Children are taught formal manuscript (printing) beginning in kindergarten. Slant printing is taught in second grade, and students are taught cursive handwriting in third grade.

### **Special Area Subjects**

Children in first grade through second grade receive instruction daily in one special area subject. Children are exposed to the fine arts through choral music, music appreciation, and visual art instruction. In art classes, the children have the opportunity to express themselves using different art media.

The Arts Alive class provides students with opportunities to experience the connections between art forms including movement, visual arts, music, and to relate the arts to other content areas studied at the elementary level. Arts Alive focuses on history and culture as a humanities component and provides students with additional opportunities for performance to increase confidence and poise, as well as develop a positive self-concept. Students learn to express emotions in a positive, creative and productive way. Through the curriculum, students are provided with a sound foundation to explore the creative process as a way of learning.

The curriculum taught in library class encourages children to borrow books and read independently. The children also learn introductory library and research skills.

In physical education, the children learn the importance of physical fitness through a wide variety of activities and instruction. Students are required to wear tennis shoes on gym days.

The specials are scheduled on a six-day rotating basis. The first day of school is day A. The sixth day of school is day F. The seventh day of school is day A. The six-day schedule will be included on the monthly calendar.

All elementary students take part in our STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and math) program. While in the Learning Lab with Melissa Unger, our Elementary STEAM teacher, students create projects from across the disciplines and participate in activities ranging from team building and design challenges, to an introduction to basic principles of computer coding and robotics using age-appropriate materials. Students rotate through the Learning Lab throughout the year to complete projects that coincide with content from their regular homeroom classes. Additionally, many upcoming activities in the Learning Lab will have an environmental focus, as a grant has enabled us to create an outdoor classroom space where students will learn more about plant growth and development, farming, and energy.

## 10. Arrival at School

The elementary school day will start at 9:00 a.m. Parents may start to drop off their children in the morning at **8:30 a.m.** Any students being transported to school by their parent should be dropped off at the side entrance door. For the safety of the children and the school buses, **automobiles are not permitted in the front of the school from 7:45 a.m. until 9:00 a.m.**

### **Parent Drop-Off Area**

The parent drop-off area is located on the right-hand side of the building. The entrance is open from 8:30 a.m. until 9:00 a.m. only. **This area is for student drop-off ONLY!** If parents need to bring something into the building, please park in the front parking lot and enter the building through the main entrance.

Please help us keep the traffic moving in the parent drop-off area by following the procedures below:

- ✓ This is a student drop-off area only.
- ✓ Children should be dropped off on the sidewalk side of the building.
- ✓ To keep traffic moving, **parents should not get out of the vehicle.**
- ✓ Your vehicle is not to be parked in the parent drop off area. **If you need to talk to one of the paraeducators, or you need to come into the building, please park your vehicle in the front parking lot.**
- ✓ Parents are welcome to walk their child/ren into the building, but to do this, **please park in the front lot and walk your child to the building.**
- ✓ Parents should not be reprimanding other parents who they feel are not “following” the drop off rules. We want to avoid verbal confrontations. Please call the elementary office to report drop off issues.
- ✓ Drop-off starts at 8:30 a.m.
- ✓ The door at parent drop-off is closed and locked at 9:00 a.m.
- ✓ PM kindergarten parents need to walk their children to the front entrance as the parent drop-off door is not operational after 9:00 a.m.
- ✓ Students who arrive after 9:00 a.m. will need to enter through the front door of the building accompanied by a parent. **Do not knock on the door and try to get someone to open the door.**

## 11. Arrival at School on Two Hour Delays

The elementary school day will start at **11:00 a.m.** on a two-hour delay. Parents may start to drop off their children in the morning at **10:30 a.m.** Any student being transported to school by their parent should be dropped off at the side entrance door. For the safety of the children and the school busses, **automobiles are not permitted in the front driveway of the school from 9:45 a.m. until 11:00 a.m.**

### **Kindergarten Schedule on a Two Hour Late Start**

Morning Kindergarten      11:00 a.m. – 12:39 p.m.

Afternoon Kindergarten    1:44 p.m. – 3:23 p.m.

## 12. Backpacks

Often elementary students have a backpack, and we realize that the backpacks make it easy for the students to transport their school work and books to and from school. As you are purchasing a backpack for your child, we are recommending that you do not purchase a backpack on wheels. Even though they are convenient for the children, they are a tripping hazard in the busy hallways. They also require extra room to transport on our buses. All of the children will need to carry their backpacks. They will not be permitted to wheel them in the hallways.



### **13. Birthday Treats**

Students will not be permitted to bring “food” birthday treats to share with their class. However, they can bring a “nonfood” item to share with the class on their actual birthday or a day that is close to their birthday.

### **14. Board Policies**

All [board policies](#) are located on the district website.

### **15. Books**

Students are provided with workbooks and hardback books. If a child loses his/her book, parents will be billed the replacement cost of the book.

### **16. Bullying/Cyberbullying Policy**

Board policy #249 prohibits bullying by district students. This board policy can be located on the district’s website.

### **17. Bus Rules**

- ✓ Always Treat Others with Respect
- ✓ Use Quiet Voices
- ✓ Keep Hands and Feet to Yourself
- ✓ Stay Seated at All Times
- ✓ Follow directions of the adults on the bus
- ✓ No Eating on the Bus

### **18. Bus Transportation and Behavior**

Children are transported to and from school by school bus. Parents who have questions about the bussing should contact the Director of Transportation at (412) 221-4542, extension 452. Please note that the school district does not take responsibility for transporting students outside of the school district boundaries. Buses will pick up and drop off students at a regularly scheduled stop only. ***Please note that children are only permitted to have two bus routines.***

Please note that as our enrollment continues to grow the seats on our buses are often filled. In the event of an emergency, parents may request that their child ride a bus home with a friend. These requests need to be made in writing by the parents of both of the children. Please note that because of increased enrollment, many of the buses are near capacity. The only way these requests will be approved is if there is an available seat on the bus.

If your child has a play date with another child, you need to transport your child to his/her friend’s house at the end of the school day and not use school transportation for this purpose. Again, our buses are near capacity.

There is an expectation that students follow school rules when riding the bus. They are to remain in their assigned seat at all times, keep their hands and feet to themselves and talk quietly. For the safety of the children, eating and drinking are prohibited on the bus. Students are not permitted to put their hands, feet, etc. outside of the bus. Animals cannot be transported via school bus. All items being transported via school bus should fit comfortably on the child’s lap.

When students do not follow the bus rules, the bus driver will submit a discipline slip to the office. The principal may feel it is appropriate to watch the video tape from the bus to observe the student's behavior. The school counselor may talk to the student. The parent will be called, and an appropriate consequence will be given to the student. A parent-principal conference could be necessary. Students who receive a discipline slip from the bus driver could lose their bus privileges for one or more days. When a student is suspended from the bus, the parent needs to transport the child to and from school. We encourage parents to review appropriate bus behavior with their child.

### **Assigned Seats on the Bus**

We consider the bus an extension of the elementary school and all students will have an assigned seat on the bus. We will do our best to assign elementary school students to the front of the bus and intermediate students to the back of the bus. Just as teachers do in the classroom, once seats have been assigned by the bus driver, students are expected to stay in that assigned seat. There are instances where seats may have to be changed, and this will be left to the discretion of the bus driver and/or building principals.

### **Reporting Bus Issues**

We encourage students to discuss bus issues with the bus driver. If the student does not feel the issue has been resolved, the student should then discuss it with the building principal.

Parents should follow these procedures when reporting issues on the bus:

1. Call the bus garage (412-221-4542 x450) and leave a message for the bus driver to call you.
2. If the issue is not resolved, please contact the building principal or Director of Transportation (412-221-4542 x452).

**Please remember that per Pennsylvania State Law, parents/guardians are not allowed to board a school bus for any reason.**

## **19. Cafeteria**

Our lunch program is based on the guidelines set forth by the National School Lunch Program, the Department of Education and the US Department of Health to assure food safety and a well-balanced, nutritious meal is offered each day for your child.

According to these guidelines:

- ✓ We encourage students to participate in our Lunch Program. The students that bring in bagged lunches from home for individual use can purchase milk or other beverages. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to pack healthy type lunches and discouraged from sending fast foods.
- ✓ You may send in a packed lunch for your child only. Parents/Guardians are not permitted to feed other children (i.e.: allergies)
- ✓ Staff/Faculty/Parents may not offer food in place of the daily scheduled lunch that will interfere with the NSLP.
- ✓ Kitchen arrangements (special events) must be arranged through the Director of Food Services and pre-approved on a facilities request form to utilize the kitchen/equipment or have tables set up.
- ✓ Hoagies, donuts, candy and snacks used as fundraisers may not be sold or distributed near the cafeteria during lunch.
- ✓ All banquets, special events, coffee service and needed snacks should be ordered through the Food Service/Catering Department via "Catering Request Form" posted on our website, pawood@southfayette.org.

### **Student Cafeteria Accounts**

Each student is issued a photo ID card that is linked to the debit system in the cafeteria. The cards for elementary students remain in the classroom with their teacher. Parents may add money to an account that students will use to purchase lunch. Students are not permitted to charge on another student's account. Parents/Guardians are required to keep a positive balance in their child's account at all times. We urge parents to visit [www.myschoolbucks.com](http://www.myschoolbucks.com) to set up an account that will enable them to view their child's balance, purchasing history, and payment history. For an added convenience, Parents can make a credit card payment (on-line) via Café Prepay. There is a small percentage based service fee for each transaction placed on-line using a credit card (fee goes to Heartland/Comalex). Parents can view their child's participation at no cost. Parents can send in monies via check or cash with their student and still have the opportunity to view their child's participation online using the café prepay system.

### **HOW DO I MAKE A PAYMENT?**

- 1) Send in a check, cash or money orders with student (only one check needed per family)
- 2) Drop the payment off at "ANY" school main office
- 3) Send payment to the homeroom teacher
- 4) Mail in payment – US Postal Service
- 5) Parents have the option of utilizing Heartland's "[myschoolbucks](http://www.myschoolbucks.com)" (online) credit card payment

You may mail the payment to:

South Fayette School Cafeteria  
3640 Old Oakdale Road,  
McDonald, PA 15057  
Attn: Cafeteria – Mrs. Aimee Dernosek

Make checks payable to the South Fayette Cafeteria. If sending a payment for more than one child, we only need to receive one check per household. Write student's name and amount to be deposited into their account in the "memo" section of the check.

### **Free and Reduced Lunch Applications**

Look under the "FOOD SERVICE TAB" on our [www.southfayette.org](http://www.southfayette.org) school website.

#### **Food Service Tab Information ([www.southfayette.org](http://www.southfayette.org))**

- National Lunch Program Meal Application Packet (Free and Reduced Meals)
- **COMPASS** (Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Access to Social Services)
- Nutritional Breakdown of Menu Items
- NEW Fluid Milk Regulations- Parental and Doctor Sign off Sheet
- Gluten Free Menu –special arrangements must be made by calling Tricia Wood at (724)693-3019
- School Pricing, Food Court Diagrams and **Tours (View the pictures)**
- Charging Policies – School Board Approved

Please submit your Free and Reduced application as soon as possible. Every student will receive a "Nutritional Services Packet" on the first day of school. Applications are also posted online and can be accepted throughout the school year depending on changes in your family's financial situation. Feel free to fax over a completed application to 724-693-8832. This is a private fax line sent directly to the Director of Food Services. Privacy is our priority.

### **Charging Policy and Delinquent Accounts**

Parents/Guardians are required to keep a positive balance in their child's account at all times. When a student's account has reached a delinquent amount, the student will receive a note to take home (via) their teacher. (Check their backpacks). Payment should be returned immediately. Please provide ALL NEW updated EMAIL addresses – so that we can better serve you. Email addresses should be given to Jen Bryan, Elementary Kitchen Leader, at [jbryan@southfayette.org](mailto:jbryan@southfayette.org) so that you may receive a courtesy email. If the payment is not returned, a "courtesy" email or phone call will be received stating the delinquent amount. All phone calls & emails are logged by the kitchen leader. If no response, a meeting will be arranged to discuss your current situation. We ask that you check your child's balance online at [www.myschoolbucks.com](http://www.myschoolbucks.com) (you will need to set up your child's account using their student ID number or birth date). **You may email Jen Bryan, Elementary Kitchen Leader, at [jbryan@southfayette.org](mailto:jbryan@southfayette.org), or call 412-221-4542 x334 to check your child's balance or retrieve your child's ID number.**

If delinquent balances become excessive, parents/guardians will be requested to meet with the Director of Food Services, Principal, and Business Finance Director. Delinquent accounts could jeopardize your child's participation in the National School Lunch Program. At the elementary school, all students will be provided a lunch daily. The Pennsylvania Department of Education – Food & Nutrition Division requires parents to send in lunch money or a packed lunch daily. The state limits the number of times a family can forget lunch money to 3 times per school year.

### **BOUNCED CHECKS**

A fee of \$30.00 will be added to all returned checks. The amount of the bounced check and the \$30.00 fee will be added to the student's cafeteria account. A letter will be sent home to inform the family and to request reimbursement. All accounts should be kept current throughout the school year, especially prior to reports cards.

### **Who do I call when I have a question about my child's elementary cafeteria account?**

Elementary Kitchen Leader: Jen Bryan (412) 221-4542 x334 or via email at [jbryan@southfayette.org](mailto:jbryan@southfayette.org).

### **Can I see what my child is eating each day or what my child's balance is?**

Yes, simply visit [www.myschoolbucks.com](http://www.myschoolbucks.com) and enroll by setting up an account with your child's ID number or birth date. (You can obtain your child's ID number from the elementary school office.) Feel free to view your child's balance and participation throughout the school year. If you decide to pay online, you can continue to pay throughout the year or you **may also send** payment directly to the school.

### **Can I be notified about my child's cafeteria balance?**

We do send out "courtesy reminders" via emails to parents to notify them that their child needs to replenish their account. As personal contact information may change, this method isn't always accurate. To solve this, we do advise parents/guardians to visit [www.myschoolbucks.com](http://www.myschoolbucks.com) and register for an account so that they can personally check their child's balance, participation history or make a payment from the comfort of their home. Parents are responsible for keeping their child's account current.

We do not always have an updated email address for each family, or your virus scan recognizes our group email as spam mail, we might not be able to successfully email a "courtesy reminder" letting parents know what their child owes the cafeteria. We do encourage you to send an updated email address. Because of this loophole, we recommend that you register with Café Prepay and view your child's account from home. Please provide an updated "email" address to your child's main office or phone (412) 221-4542 x277. You can also email [foodservice@southfayette.org](mailto:foodservice@southfayette.org) to provide your email address.

### **How will I know what my child's balance is?**

We encourage the parents to set up an account with [www.myschoolbucks.com](http://www.myschoolbucks.com) so that you can view your child's participation and balance.

### **What do I do if my child has an allergy?**

Please complete the "**Diet Prescription for Food Allergies and/or New Fluid Liquid Milk Allergy Form for Milk/Dairy Allergies**" attachment on the food service website and have it signed by your child's physician. Drop a copy off to the school nurse or Food Service Department. All students that have a food or beverage allergy/sensitivity must fill out one of these forms complete with a physician's signature. Exception: If you have already submitted a "504" form you do not have to fill out the "Diet Prescription." If your child has a life-threatening allergy, please notify the school nurse as soon as possible. We now offer "Gluten Free" meals by special arrangements. Please call Tricia Wood, Director of Food Service, at 724-693-3019 for more information.

### **Do we offer our elementary students fried and high-fat foods?**

The answer is "NO." We **do not** fry at the elementary or middle school level, nor do we serve high fat food items. Our menu meets the National School Lunch Program guidelines by providing less than 30% of the calories from fat. We purchase from a food co-op with 135 other public schools in conjunction with the Pittsburgh Regional Food Service Directors Association. Our purchased food items are stamped with a "CN" – Child Nutritional label that assures us that these food products are approved and certified to us in our child nutrition program. These CN Food items are certified by the manufacturer and the USDA to assure the nutritional content for children is satisfied. This

means that we do NOT purchase the same food items that you can get at your local grocery store. There are strict guidelines that manufacturers follow for the food items to become CN certified and labeled. At the conclusion of our last audit, our auditor commented that our menu was very lean.

**What lunch patterns do we follow? How does lunch work?**

Elementary students will be presented with a complete, well-balanced nutritional lunch complete with milk. Each lunch contains milk, protein, bread/grain, and vegetables (2) & fruit. Students buying lunch will have access to a small veggie station where they can stop and add a hot veggie to their container. Students get to choose (2) choices of vegetables from our Veggie Garden Cart daily.

**What if I have money left over at the end of the school year?**

Monies left over can be held on the account to be used for the next school year or transferred to a sibling. You may also submit a letter requesting a refund during the last week prior to leaving for summer vacation. Requests should be made directly to Tricia Wood, Director of Food Services, South Fayette High School 3640 Old Oakdale Road, McDonald, PA 15057 or email wood@southfayette.org.

**Equity in School Lunch Pricing**

The new “Equity in School Lunch Pricing” bill (Sec. 205 of the Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010 - Public Law 111-296) passed on July 1, 2011, requires SFA’s to increase lunch prices by using their calculations to ensure that schools are providing the same level of support for lunches served to qualifying free/reduced students and regular paying students. Our School Board approves the prices for meals for the school year, based on the calculations from PDE and reflected on our menu/calendar.

**All accounts must be paid in full each nine weeks (prior to report cards being released) and also MUST be paid in full by the last day of school. Please contact Tricia Wood, Director of Food Services, at 724-693-3019 if you have any additional questions. Thank you for participating in the National Lunch Program.**

<b>Lunch Prices</b>	<b>Regular Meal</b>	<b>Premium Tier</b>
Elementary School Student Lunch	\$2.70	\$3.15

**Cafeteria Non-Discrimination Statement**

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800)877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at:

[http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866)632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) Fax: (202)690-7442; or

(3) E-mail: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

## **20. Cafeteria Behavior**

Students need to follow school rules while in the cafeteria. It is very important that they eat their lunch while using indoor voices to talk to their classmates. After they finish eating, students are to clean up the food scraps and paper before leaving their cafeteria seat. Inappropriate cafeteria behavior could result in a student being assigned a cafeteria seat by himself/herself or another appropriate consequence.

## **21. Campus Driving**

Please be cautious driving to and from campus as well as when on campus. The STOP signs and slow traffic speed limits are in place to enhance safety. If you have a young driver, please discuss the importance of obeying all traffic signs, speed limits, and especially no texting while driving.

## **22. Cell Phones/Smart Watches**

We discourage elementary students from bringing a cell phone/Smart Watch to school. However, we understand some parents want their child to have a cell phone/Smart Watch in case of an emergency. Students are not allowed to use a cell phone/Smart Watch on the bus unless it is an emergency, and they will need to drop the cell phone off in the office when arriving at school and pick it up in the office at the end of the day.

Smart Watches may be worn for the purpose of telling time; however, students may not use the device to text or call during the school day. Students who are not able/willing to follow these guidelines will need to drop the Smart Watch off in the office when arriving at school and pick it up at the end of the day.

## **23. Child Study Team**

The Child Study Team consists of educators and parents who are working together as a team toward the common goal of helping a child meet with success. The team members meet and focus on what resources can be used to increase a student's chance for success. Any elementary student who is experiencing consistent academic or behavioral problems may be referred to determine if they are an appropriate candidate for a Child Study intervention. Parents, as well as professional staff members, may refer a student to the Child Study Team. Parents should contact their child's teacher if they wish to refer their child.

## **24. Communication with Parents**

One of our goals is to communicate with parents on a regular basis. Once parents complete the enrollment process, their email address will be added to the list to receive our informational announcements; however, it is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to keep an updated email address on file with the school. The school web page is updated on a weekly basis, and we encourage parents to use this service to keep updated on school news as well. When parents have a question, we encourage them to call the elementary office at (412) 221-4542, extension 332 and/or visit the elementary website by going to [www.southfayette.org](http://www.southfayette.org) and selecting "elementary school" on the drop down menu. The current announcements are located in the middle of the page. We welcome your questions and interest in our school.

## **25. Deliveries to Students**

The elementary school will not accept birthday gifts or other gifts (balloons, cookie bouquets, flowers, etc.) to be delivered to a student. We will continue to accept necessary items (eyeglasses, homework, lunch boxes, tennis shoes, etc.) to be delivered to the student. If a parent drops off an item that is not deemed necessary for the school day, the item will be held in the office and delivered to the student at the end of the day. We must be able to view any item that is being delivered to a student. The parent needs to notify the office if someone other than the parent is dropping off an item.

## **26. Discipline**

Students are expected to follow school rules at all times. They are to keep their hands and feet to themselves, speak respectfully to others and show respect for individual differences. Teachers will handle the minor misbehaviors by verbally warning the student or assigning an appropriate consequence. When students are referred to the office for misbehaving, the elementary principal may contact the parents because we believe that parents make a difference and that by working together we can improve student behavior. The guidance counselor may talk with the student.

Misbehavior that is frequent or that disrupts the learning environment will be referred to the elementary principal. This includes disruptive classroom behavior, disruptive cafeteria behavior, or disruptive playground behavior. The consequences for these behaviors could include temporary removal from class, lunch in the office, loss of recess, modified in-school suspension, after-school detention, Saturday detention or out-of-school suspension.

When a student's misbehavior is directed against persons or property but the behavior does not seriously endanger the health or safety of others, the student will be referred to the elementary principal. Examples of such misbehaviors are fighting, vandalism, leaving school without authorization, or causing a false alarm. The consequences for these behaviors could include temporary removal from class, lunch in the office, loss of recess, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, restitution for damages, or after-school detention. The proper authorities could be contacted if warranted.

If a student's behavior poses a direct threat to the safety of others in the school, the student will be referred to the elementary principal. These acts are clearly criminal and are so serious that they require immediate intervention and could result in the student being immediately removed from school, intervention by law enforcement authorities and action by the Board of School Directors. Examples of such misbehavior are extortion, verbal or written threats, bomb threat, possession/use/transfer of a dangerous weapon, assault, vandalism, theft, possession or sale of stolen property, arson, or possession of an unauthorized substance. These behaviors could result in expulsion, other action by the Board of School Directors, proper authorities being contacted, restitution for damages, and/or a fine imposed by the magistrate or juvenile court.

If a student demonstrates ongoing, persistent behavior difficulties, the professional staff members will work diligently with the parents and the child to help the student improve his/her behavior. However, ongoing, persistent behavior difficulties could result in the student losing privileges such as class field trips, holiday parties, special programs, etc.

### **Detention**

Every effort is made to correct a child's misbehavior through talking with parents and using consequences, such as not having recess. When the misbehavior is frequent and consequences given during the school day are not effective or the misbehavior is more severe, the student may be assigned to after-school detention.

Detention is held after school. The length of detention is determined by the principal. Students are expected to bring academic assignments to detention. When a student is assigned to after-school detention, the parent will be contacted via a phone call. The parent will need to pick up their child after the detention. If a student intentionally misses an assigned after-school detention, he/she may be assigned to Saturday detention or suspended from school for one day.

### **Suspension from School**

Per State Board of Education Regulations, 22 Pa Code 12.6, Exclusion from School, suspension is the exclusion from school for a period of one to ten consecutive school days. Suspensions may be given by the principal or the person in charge of the school. No child shall be suspended from school until the student has been informed of the reasons for the suspension and given an opportunity to respond. Prior notice of the intended suspension need not be given when it is clear that the health, safety or welfare of the school community is threatened.

The parents and the superintendent of the district shall be notified immediately in writing when the student is suspended. When the suspension exceeds three school days, the student and parent shall be given the opportunity for an informal hearing. Students shall have the responsibility to make up exams and work missed while being disciplined by suspension and shall be permitted to complete these assignments within the guidelines established by the Board of School Directors.

Special Education students will follow the regular education code of conduct up to the 10<sup>th</sup> day of suspension (cumulative or given at one single time). However, on the 11<sup>th</sup> day of the suspension, the IEP Team will reconvene to conduct a “Manifestation Determination”.

### **Reconciliation Through Restorative Practices**

#### **RECONCILIATION**

Invariably, students will break rules as stated in the diversity and equity, unlawful harassment, and bullying/cyberbullying policies in the Handbook. When this happens, students will need to re-enter the community for the community to heal. Reconciliation is a collaborative and interpersonal process that may include respectful dialogue as well as active listening about the event or occurrence in order to begin to reestablish healthy interactions and relationships. The District will work towards reconciliation through the use of restorative/transformational justice practices. These practices are defined as a way to hold individuals responsible for their actions, repair harm and hurt to victims, and provide resources and support to individuals who caused harm by reintegrating them back into the community. In other words, justice, according to restorative justice, is not an eye for an eye. Restorative justice centers mutual respect, dialogue, and a commitment to building and maintaining relationships as opposed to focusing solely on the misbehavior (Macready, 2009).

Restorative justice is constituted by a set of questions, which are always more transformative than definitive answers:

- a. Who has been hurt and what are their needs?
- b. Whose obligation is it to meet those needs (and what are their needs?)
- c. Who else has been affected by this event?
- d. What is a participatory process that engages all those impacted to decide what needs to be done?

**Consequences and supports include but are not limited to: forms of mediation (if agreed upon by all parties), teacher-student-parent meetings, interactions with a school counselor/social worker, communication with teachers as needed, referrals to the SAP teams and restorative practices (reflection/improvement statements, courses on topics related to the offense(s) or other restorative practices).** Restorative justice practices follow seven principles:

1. Meeting student needs
2. Providing accountability and support



3. Making things right
4. Viewing conflict as a learning opportunity
5. Building healthy learning communities
6. Restoring relationships
7. Addressing power imbalances.

These practices are consistent with the Association for Middle-Level Education and with Teaching for Tolerance’s ([www.tolerance.org](http://www.tolerance.org)) publication, *A Guide for Administrators, Counselors, and Teachers Responding to Hate and Bias at School*.

For an example on how to Build a More Forgiving Community, see the website below:  
[https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how\\_to\\_build\\_a\\_more\\_forgiving\\_community](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_to_build_a_more_forgiving_community)

Forgiveness is a complex process that involves individuals and the larger community and is positioned within past and present harms. The District will use restorative/transformational justice practices during the reconciliation process to work towards forgiveness. Forgiveness is an individual and internal process where the party/parties seek greater understanding of the event, occurrence or situation. Forgiveness is also a community process, that requires our highest aspirations and ideals to be reflected in our actions when harm is caused. As a learning community, we will create opportunities for students to increase their cultural and global competencies by learning how to make conscious, deliberate decisions to release feelings of resentment or vengeance toward a person or group who has harmed them. The District sees this as instrumental in growing and supporting collaborative and confident community members. (See page 11, South Fayette School District 2019-2022 Strategic Plan).

#### PUNITIVE VS. RESTORATIVE DISCIPLINE

<b>PUNITIVE</b>	<b>RESTORATIVE</b>
“Misbehavior” defined as breaking school rules or letting school down.	“Misbehavior” defined as harm (emotional/mental/physical) done to one person/group by another.
Focus is on what happened and establishing blame or guilt.	Focus on problem-solving by expressing feelings and needs and exploring how to address problems in the future.
Adversarial relationship and process. Includes an authority figure with power to decide on penalty, in conflict with wrongdoer.	Dialogue and negotiation with everyone involved in communication and cooperation with each other.
Imposition of pain or unpleasantness to punish and deter/prevent.	Restitution as a means of restoring both parties, the goal being reconciliation and acknowledging responsibility for choices.
Attention to rules and adherence to due process.	Attention to relationships and achievement of a mutually desired outcome.
Conflict/wrongdoing represented as impersonal and abstract; individual versus school.	Conflict/wrongdoing recognized as interpersonal conflicts with opportunity for learning.
One social injury compounded by another.	Focus on repair of social injury/damage.
School community as spectators, represented by member of staff dealing with situation; those directly affected uninjured and powerless.	School community involved in facilitating restoration; those affected taken into consideration; empowerment.
Accountability defined in terms of receiving punishment.	Accountability defined as understanding impact of actions, taking responsibility for choices, and suggesting ways to repair harm.

<b>PUNITIVE DISCIPLINE ASKS...</b>	<b>RESTORATIVE JUSTICE ASKS...</b>
What rule was broken?	Who was harmed?
Who broke it?	What are their needs?
How should they be punished?	Who will be held accountable for making things right?
<b>PUNITIVE DISCIPLINE PRACTICES...*</b>	<b>RESTORATIVE JUSTICE PRACTICES...*</b>
Lecturing Students	Student-Student Mediations
Self-Directed Detentions	Staff-Student Mediations
In School Suspension	Peace Circles
Out of School Suspension	Reinstatement Conversations
Expulsion	Community Building Circles

\*It should be noted that punitive and restorative discipline can, and will be, used in tandem. However, each discipline infraction will involve a Restorative Justice practice, but not necessarily a Punitive Discipline practice. For example, when a student is returning from suspension they will, at a minimum, they should also engage in a restorative reinstatement conversation.

Macready, T. (2009). Learning social responsibility in schools: A restorative practice. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 25(3), 211-220.

The Denver School-Based Restorative Practices Partnership  
Step by Step Guide to Implementation

Oakland Unified School District Restorative Justice Implementation Guide: Whole School Approach

## **27. Dismissal**

### **AM Kindergarten Dismissal**

AM Kindergarten buses will depart the elementary school at 11:45 a.m. AM kindergarten students on the parent pickup list will be brought to the hallway outside the Greeter’s Station. Parents will need to sign the pickup list with the Greeter before taking their child. Parents who pick up their children on a daily or a regular schedule should complete a Daily Dismissal Form or the Parent Pick Up Google Doc and return it to the office. Parents should park in the front parking lot if picking up their child at the end of AM Kindergarten.

### **PM Kindergarten through Second Grade Dismissal**

Please note elementary students will be dismissed to the buses starting at 3:23 p.m. Elementary students will be dismissed daily to parents at 3:23 p.m. and parents need to arrive in time for dismissal. Parents who pick up their children on a daily or a regular schedule should complete a Daily Dismissal Form or the Parent Pick Up Google Doc and return it to the office. Parents who pick up their children are to enter the school through door B3 located near the Discovery Garden and sign the dismissal sheet at the sign-out table in the main hallway outside the cafeteria and gym (all-purpose room). Children are dismissed to the all-purpose room and parents need to wait in the hallway to pick up their children instead of going to the classroom. (Please note that we do not dismiss children from the elementary office at the end of the day.) Parents should park in the stadium parking lot if picking up their child/children at the end of the school day.

### **Change in a Child’s Dismissal Arrangement for the Day**

A note or a phone call from a parent is necessary if there is a change in your child’s dismissal arrangements for the day. If the office does not have a record of the dismissal change through a phone call or a note from the parent or

guardian, the child will follow his/her normal routine. For the safety of the children, we cannot take verbal dismissal changes from a child. If a child is questioning their routine, please note that we may hold the child in the office after dismissal time until we contact the parents for verification. This is for the safety of the child. Thank you for your cooperation and help with this matter to keep all of our children safe.

## **28. Diversity and Equity**

### **School Board Policy 256 - DIVERSITY AND EQUITY**

#### **Introduction:**

Hate will never be welcome or tolerated in the South Fayette Township School District (SFTSD). Every student and every educator and staff member — regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, citizenship status, mental and physical ability status, and/or religion — is a valued member of our SFTSD community. The District recognizes that we must remain steadfast in our commitment to foster an environment where all members of the community feel welcome, respected and safe in all of our schools, buildings and facilities. In order to nurture a stronger community, the District is also committed to providing an environment and practices for reconciliation that not only include reflection and restoration but also creates the conditions for forgiveness.

#### **Preamble:**

The South Fayette Township School District believes that equity, diversity and inclusion are integral to the District's vision, mission and goals. Addressing the needs of all learners requires recognition of the inherent value of diversity and acknowledgment that educational excellence requires a commitment to equity in the opportunities provided to students and their resulting experiences.

In order to eradicate institutional bias of any kind, including implicit or unintentional biases and prejudices that negatively affect a positive learning community, and to eliminate disparities in educational experiences for students from underserved and underrepresented populations, the District shall proactively endeavor to identify class and cultural biases as well as practices, policies, and institutional barriers that negatively influence student learning, perpetuate opportunity gaps, and impede equal access to all students for full participation in the SFTSD community.

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to support an equitable learning environment that honors and respects the diversity of the students attending our schools and living in our community. Behaviors that create an unsafe, intimidating or hostile learning environment for students will not be tolerated and allegations of such conduct will be investigated.

#### **Definition**

**Intimidation of any group is defined as:** Words and actions directed toward the actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, gender or gender identity of another individual constitute intimidation when such words and actions have the purpose or effect of interfering with a student's educational performance, or creating an unwelcome, intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment.

#### **Diversity and Equity**

The District believes that intimidation of any kind derails our efforts to educate students and enable them to thrive locally and in a global society. Students who commit the offense of intimidation respect to the actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, gender or gender identity of another individual, whether such conduct occurs on school grounds or during school-sponsored trips, events or activities, will be disciplined and mandated to reconcile through restorative practices.

The following consequences relate to intimidation as outlined above:

<b>INFRACTION OF INTIMIDATION</b>	<b>DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCE</b>	<b>RESTORATIVE / RECONCILIATION</b>
<p>Including, but not limited to the use of language (name calling-verbal, social media, offensive gestures or pictures, use of symbols of hate including but not limited to the Confederate Flag and the swastika, wearing ethnic symbols in a manner in which they are unintended and misrepresented, threats, defacing and destroying property, vandalism, graffiti, destruction of symbols, retaliation.</p>	<p>Appropriate discipline will be implemented per the District's discipline policy/procedures.</p>	<p>Support may include but is not limited to: mediation (if agreed upon by all parties), teacher-student-parent meetings, interactions with a school counselor/social worker, meetings with the Director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging, communication with teachers as needed, referrals to the Student Assistance Program, restorative lessons and service- oriented opportunities.</p>

The following categories of severity will be used to inform the progressive discipline model as outlined in the respective school handbooks.

<b>INSENSITIVITY</b>	<b>DISCRIMINATION</b>	<b>INTIMIDATION</b>
<p>Definition: Showing a lack of feeling or concern for others because of actual or perceived difference of race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, gender or gender identity.</p>	<p>Definition: Purposeful unjust or prejudicial treatment of someone due to their actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, gender or gender identity.</p>	<p>Definition: Words and actions directed toward the actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, gender or gender identity of another individual constitute intimidation when such words and actions have the purpose or effect of interfering with a student’s educational performance, or creating an unwelcome, intimidating, hostile or offensive educational environment.</p>

**Authority related to Diversity and Equity Policy**

**Shared responsibilities of community members**

Each student shall be responsible to respect the human dignity and rights of others in order to foster an atmosphere free from insensitivity, discrimination and intimidation.

Each teacher shall be responsible for creating a safe learning environment for all students by fostering a culture that is free from insensitivity, discrimination and intimidation of any kind.

Building administrators shall work to create a community within each building that does not tolerate insensitivity, discrimination and intimidation of any kind.

The Superintendent or designee shall develop administrative regulations to implement this policy.

Such administrative regulations shall be reviewed annually with students, parents, and/or guardians.

The Superintendent or designee in cooperation with other appropriate administrators shall review this policy every three (3) years and recommend necessary revisions to the Board of School Directors.

### **29. Dress**

Although there is not a dress code at South Fayette Elementary School, there is an expectation that students are properly groomed and dressed neatly. Students are not permitted to wear clothing that displays indecent pictures or writing or allusion to drugs or alcohol. Clothing should always fit appropriately, and student's underwear must always be covered. Students are not permitted to wear hats in the school building. **Proper footwear** must be worn at all times. Students who wish to play on the large playground equipment must wear **athletic** footwear. Tops with thin straps and short shorts are not appropriate school dress. Students are not permitted to wear heavy neck chains to school because the child could become entangled while playing, posing the risk of a serious injury.

Students are not permitted to wear shoes with wheels (shoes with wheels tucked into the sole of the shoe) to school or on school grounds because they are not safe in our school environment. Whether the student is in the hallway or outside the building, we cannot take a chance that he or she will fall or cause someone else to fall due to the student "skating" rather than walking. We can never guarantee a child will not slip and fall or have some other kind of accident while in our care. However, when we see the potential for harm, we attempt to take all precautions to prevent it.

### **30. Drug and Alcohol Policy**

[School Board Policy #227](#) prohibits students from possessing, using and selling drugs and/or alcohol or look-alike substances on school property. This policy can be located on the district's webpage.

### **31. Educational Tours**

Upon receipt of an approved "Educational Trip/Tour Request" form from the parent/guardian of the student involved, a student may be excused from school attendance to participate in an educational tour or trip during the school term at the expense of the parent/guardian. When such a tour or trip is so determined by the District Superintendent or his/her designee to serve an educational purpose and student participants therein are subject to direction and supervision by an adult acceptable to the District Superintendent/designee, and to the parents of the student concerned, the trip will be subject to the following conditions:

1. Educational tours or trips will be considered for approval if the District Superintendent or designee determines that such a tour or trip will be of educational significance to the student. In order for the District Superintendent or designee to make such a determination, the parent shall provide a written request for excusal, which shall indicate the days to be missed, the destination of the tour or trip, and the reason why the tour or trip could not be taken on days when school is not in session. **THE TOUR/TRIP MAY NOT EXCEED TEN (10) SCHOOL DAYS. Any days beyond the 10-day limit will be marked as an unexcused absence. Additionally, students will be withdrawn from school if the educational trip exceeds ten consecutive days.**
2. Unless some emergency arises, such requests shall be made at least two (2) weeks prior to the date of the tour or trip.

3. The District makes every attempt to provide families with the school calendar at least a year in advance. As a result, we request that families **do not** take Educational Trips/Tours within the two last weeks of the school year. Such a tour or trip request **will not be approved**.
4. For educational tours or trips taken prior to the last two weeks of the school year but within the last quarter, only the permissible days (up to ten) will be approved and students must return to school prior to the end of the quarter. If this does not occur, the attendance procedures will be strictly followed which may include, but are not be limited to, a student's withdrawal from the district and/or a citation filed with the magistrate.
5. Tours or trips shall not be approved during testing windows including AP exams and state standardized tests.
  - a. High school students who are absent (excused) during final exams will have the opportunity to take their finals upon their return.
6. If more than one (1) child in a family will be taking the tour or trip, the requests for the children shall be made to the principal of the school of each involved child so that their absences may be cleared with the appropriate principal.
7. All school work missed during the approved tour or trip shall be made up on the "initiative of the student and at the reasonable convenience of the teacher." Students may not be excused for more than ten (10) days per year for educational tours. Tours sponsored by the school district are to be included in the 10-day limitation.
8. School-sponsored trips, which are one (1) day or more in length, are included in the 10-day trip/tour limitation. Students and their parents must exercise caution in arranging educational trips or in granting permission for student participation in school-sponsored trips or club-sponsored off-campus activities. The purpose of the limitation is to align the policies of the South Fayette Township School District with the 10-day trip/tour limitation prescribed by the Pennsylvania State Department of Education. Students may find it necessary to choose which tours/trips they are able to attend. Students participating in school-sponsored tours/trips must travel with the school group unless specific permission to do otherwise is granted, both by the activity sponsor and principal.
9. Educational trips will not be approved for students over 15 days absent from school or who are failing two (2) or more courses at the time of the request.

### **32. Electronics (including the iPads), Toys, and Collectables**

Kindergarten, first-grade and second-grade students will be permitted to use their district-issued iPad during the school day. The iPads will always go through the district's security filter when the iPad is at school and connected to the District's network. However, parents will be responsible for monitoring the use of the iPad at home. Personal electronic devices are permitted, but will be used at the teacher's discretion in the classroom. Upon request of any staff member or teacher, students must immediately show their device screen without turning the device over, off, locking it, or activating a screen saver. Students are **discouraged** from bringing their own electronics, toys, games, trading cards, action figures, collectibles, etc. to school. At no time is the use of electronic devices in locker rooms or restrooms permitted. We are **not** responsible for students' personal devices that are lost, broken, or stolen. The district will only repair or replace district-issued devices according to the signed parent contract. Students are not permitted to trade items nor are they permitted to exchange items for cash.

Students(s)':

- Must adhere to the Acceptable Use of the Internet and Bullying/Cyberbullying policies whether accessing the Internet through the school's Wi-Fi or a cellular provider.

- The iPads will always go through the district’s security filter when the iPad is at school. However, parents will be responsible for monitoring the use of the iPad at home.
- Taking pictures, video, or audio of individuals for any reason without permission of a teacher or staff member is prohibited.
- Actions considered inappropriate offline are considered inappropriate online.
- Are prohibited from taking pictures of tests, texting other students their answers, or engaging in conduct that compromises academic integrity in any way.
- Use of devices is prohibited in bathrooms, at recess, and while riding the school bus.
- Devices are prohibited during drills that could compromise safety.

**33. Emergency Cancellation/Delay of School**

School cancellations, delays, and early dismissals will be posted on the South Fayette Township School District website, communicated through School Messenger, and broadcasted via local media.

**Parents should always have an emergency plan and appropriate childcare arrangements in place in the event of an unexpected, emergency dismissal. It is also important to keep your emergency contact information up to date at all times.**

**2 Hour Delay Schedule**

Morning Kindergarten	11:00 a.m. – 12:39 p.m.
Afternoon Kindergarten	1:44 p.m. – 3:23 p.m.
First Grade/Second Grade	11:00 a.m. – 3-23 p.m.

In the event of a two-hour delay, both morning and afternoon kindergarten will be in session and will follow a modified schedule. Morning kindergarten children will be picked up in the morning two hours later than their scheduled time and will arrive home one hour later than scheduled. Afternoon kindergarten will be picked up one hour later than scheduled and will arrive home at their regularly scheduled time.

Kindergarten Express and K-Plus students will follow the delay schedule of students in grades one through four. They will be picked up in the morning two hours later than their scheduled time and will arrive home at their regularly scheduled time.

If you believe the roads in your area are too dangerous for travel, parents/guardians always have the final determination as to whether to send their child to school on a given day. While we make every effort to plan for and make the best decisions possible in the timeframe, we have to make determinations, untimely snow squalls, icy conditions, and winter weather issues may unexpectedly occur.

**34. Emergency Drills**

Monthly fire drills and other periodic emergency preparedness drills will be held throughout the year. Classroom teachers will issue specific instructions that must be followed exactly. For active intruder drills, the District utilizes the ALICE certified training protocol. Staff and students are trained on age-appropriate responses to these emergencies as deemed by ALICE.

**35. Emergency Numbers for the Principals**

Parents may contact Tyler Geist, Elementary School Principal, outside of school hours at 570-590-0058 (cell phone) or Pharlan Ives, Elementary School Assistant Principal, at 561-452-0120 (cell phone). Please make a note of these telephone numbers for future reference.



### **36. ELL(English Language Learners)**

South Fayette Township School District offers a K-12 English as a Second Language (ESL) Program. The ESL program is designed to provide non-native, English-speaking students with the language skills they need to participate successfully in content area classes. To meet this goal, ELL instruction addresses the ELL and Pennsylvania Academic Standards in Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening to enable full participation. The emphasis placed on achieving benchmarks is adjusted to the needs of the individual student. An underlying objective is to provide a source of support as the student seeks to understand and adapt to his or her new cultural and academic setting. The ELL teacher works to develop an appreciation of the students' strengths within the school setting and to ensure full access to the range of educational opportunities available at South Fayette Township School District. If you have any questions regarding the English as a Second Language Program, please call Gretchen Tucci at (412) 221-4542, Extension 415.

### **37. Extended Day Services**

Extended Day Services offers a before and after school program at South Fayette Schools for students. This program includes physical activities, arts and crafts, group games and contests, snacks as well as homework assistance. Parents can use the program on either a full-time, part-time or flextime basis. Parents contract with and pay Extended Day Services directly. For further information or to enroll your child, please call Extended Day Services at (412) 221-1980. This information is provided as a courtesy and for reference purposes relative to Extended Day Services. Inclusion in our handbook does not constitute an endorsement from the district.

### **38. Faculty Room**

Please note that volunteers are not permitted in the faculty room between 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. because this is a time that faculty members are eating lunch. Children should not be in the faculty room at any time.

### **39. Field Trips**

Students in kindergarten through second-grade will have the opportunity to participate in one field trip with their grade level. Written parental permission is required for the student to participate. The grade level team of teachers determines the location of the field trip that correlates with the curriculum. If there is a charge for the field trip, we request that parents write a check to South Fayette School District. Please do not send cash.

Teachers often request that parents volunteer to chaperone a field trip. ***The number of parents asked to chaperone will depend on the destination of the field trip and the needed adult to pupil ratio. The teachers will determine an appropriate adult to pupil ratio so that appropriate supervision is always provided. There are a limited number of seats available for parent chaperones on the school bus.*** For the safety of all students, students are to ride the school bus to and from the field trip. If there is a charge for the activity, parents will need to pay for their admission.

**Siblings are not permitted to attend field trips.** Only ***legal guardians*** may chaperone. Chaperones must pay ahead of time to "confirm" their attendance on the trip. Please note that our campus and our busses are smoke-free zones. We realize that there are designated places to smoke in many of the places that we visit, but we request that parents refrain from smoking when accompanying students on a field trip. Students who do not attend the field trip will stay in a designated classroom or the office for the day and they will be given class work to complete.

Any parent or guardian wishing to act as a chaperone for the field trip must have the following clearances on file with the school district at least one month prior to the field trip date:

Act 114 - FBI Background Clearance

Act 34 - PA Criminal History

Act 151 - Child Abuse Clearance

#### **40. Halloween/Fall Festival Party Rules**

The Board of School Directors approved the option of *elementary* students, employees and parents wearing costumes during the annual October party. We will celebrate Halloween at South Fayette Elementary with a classroom party sponsored by the PTA. The students, employees as well as parents are permitted to wear costumes during the party.

To balance the desire for fun and the necessity of maintaining a respectful, safe school environment, the following costume guidelines ***must*** be adhered to by **students, parents and employees** wearing costumes:

- Students will be permitted to put on their costume before the start of their party.
- Halloween costumes should be carried to school. Students will not be permitted to ride the bus wearing a costume nor will they be permitted to wear the costume for the entire school day. Costumes will be limited to the party.
- Participants need to be able to dress themselves, and the costume needs to fit over school clothing.
- Participants need to wear tennis shoes or other appropriate school footwear.
- Masks or other full face coverings are **not permitted**.
- Costumes depicting monsters, death, or other frightening characters **are not permitted**.
- Items resembling guns, swords or weapons **are not permitted**.
- Staff must wear their ID badges with picture and name visible at all times.
- Parents must wear their visitors' badge in a visible place at all times.
- All students will need to remove their costumes prior to dismissal. Students will not be permitted to exit the classroom or ride the bus while wearing their costume.
- The PTA, faculty, and administration are not responsible for lost or damaged Halloween attire.

#### **41. Harassment Policy**

[School Board Policy #103](#) prohibits harassment of any kind. The South Fayette Township School District is committed to maintaining a learning/working environment free from sexual harassment and harassment based on race, color, religion, national origin/ethnicity, ancestry, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, gender or gender identity of any student or school personnel at school or any school sponsored activity. This board policy can be located on the district's webpage.

#### **42. Health Screening Schedule**

The Department of Health of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania requires the above health screenings.

1. **Physical and Dental Examinations**
  - a. For continuity of care, your *private* doctor and dentist are best suited to complete these examinations. Examinations done by private physicians or dentists can be dated up to one year before that grade level. For example, if your child will be entering kindergarten in September and you choose to have your private doctor perform their kindergarten physical, it can be done after June 30 of the previous year through the end of their kindergarten year. Forms for private physical or dental examinations of a pupil of school age are available at the school nurse's office, or under the pupil services section of the school website.
  - b. Physical and/or dental exam can be performed in school by the school physician or school dentist, during the second semester. Examinations performed at school are at no cost to the student and only with written consent from the parent/guardian. No immunizations are given at school. The parents/guardians are requested at the beginning of the school year to complete a form stating their desire to have a school or private physical or dental examination according to the grade requirements. If desired, parents may attend these examinations.
2. **The school nurse performs Hearing, Vision, Height, Weight Screenings.** Parents/guardians are notified if a student failed or needs a follow-up examine by their private physician

### **43. Homework**

Homework is necessary to reinforce your child's schoolwork. Making homework a family commitment can help children develop lifelong study skills, self-discipline, and independence. The PTA provides every child with a homework folder and students in first-grade and second-grade receive agendas to help students stay organized. Students who have difficulty completing homework assignments will be referred to the Child Study Team to develop a plan to help the child. Philosophically, we believe it is the responsibility of the parents as well as the educational team members to teach the child to be a responsible learner.

Students will not be assigned homework on the following days: PTA family events, long weekends, and holiday breaks.

#### **Effective Homework**

- Homework needs to be completed in order to produce the highest achievement gains. Design it with ease of completion in mind.
- A large amount of homework does not result in better learning.
- Homework should be academically purposeful, not a punishment or a symbol of the seriousness of study.
- Homework should be explicitly tied to the current learning goals of the class.
- Homework should be able to be completed without adult assistance.
- Parents or guardians should not be expected to act as content experts.
- Parents should, however, be provided with clear homework guidelines.
- Assignments that involve using the parents' expertise or personal experiences (such as interviews) are often successful.

### **44. Home Education Policy**

[School Board Policy #137](#), Home Education Policy, outlines the requirements for a home education program and can be located on the district's webpage.

### **45. Illness or Injury**

The school nurse is in the elementary school for the entire day. When children are ill or hurt, they should report to the nurse's office. The nurse will assess the seriousness of the situation and determine whether parents should be called. We cannot treat injuries or provide first aid for accidents that happen outside of the school.

When students exhibit one or more of the following symptoms they may be sent home: fever greater than 100 degrees, chills, vomiting, nausea, diarrhea, inflamed or watery eyes believed to be infectious, continuous coughing or runny nose, lethargy, unusual pallor or any condition that prevents the student from concentrating or participating in regular classroom activities.

Students with evidence of a communicable disease such as chickenpox, measles, mumps, strep throat, influenza, impetigo, etc. will be sent home and should remain at home until they are no longer contagious (refer to your personal physician.) Parents of students with evidence of head lice will be contacted. The district nurses follow the recommendations set forth by the CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics. Additionally, their classmates may be checked for evidence of head lice, and parents will be notified via email that a lice screening was performed on their child. Students with head lice should be treated with a lice treatment and checked by the school nurse prior to returning to school.

Students may return to school if they have been fever free (without the use of medication), nausea free, and/or diarrhea free for 24 hours from the cessation of symptoms, that is, eating, drinking, sleeping and playing normally.

For contagious illnesses such as pink eye, ringworm, or pinworm (enterobiasis) students may return to school once prescribed drops or ointments are given.

#### **46. Immunization Requirements**

**The following immunizations are required as a condition of attendance at school for the entrance of all beginners or initial enrollments, and apply to children in ALL grades (K-12):**

- **Diphtheria** Four or more properly-spaced doses of diphtheria toxoid. One dose should be given on or after the fourth birthday. This is usually given as DTap or DTP.
- **Tetanus** Four or more properly-spaced doses of tetanus toxoid. One dose should be given on or after the fourth birthday. This is usually given as DTap or DTP.
- **Acellular Pertussis** Four or more properly-spaced doses. One dose should be given on or after the fourth birthday. This is usually given as DTap or DTP.
  
- **Poliomyelitis** Fourth dose on or after the fourth birthday and at least 6 months after the previous dose given. Three doses of polio vaccine (oral or inactivated injectable) are acceptable if the third dose is after the fourth birthday and at least 6 months after the previous dose given)
  
- **Measles (Rubeola)** Two properly-spaced doses of live attenuated measles vaccine (usually given as combined measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) vaccine) with the first dose to be administered at 12 months of age or older, or serological proof of immunity.
- **German Measles (Rubella)** Two doses of live attenuated rubella vaccine (usually given as combined measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) vaccine) administered at 12 months of age or older, or serological proof of immunity.
- **Mumps** Two doses of live attenuated mumps vaccine (usually given as combined measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) vaccine) administered with the first dose administered at 12 months of age or older, or a physician's diagnosis of mumps disease indicated by a written record signed by a physician or his/her designee.
  
- **Hepatitis B** Three properly spaced doses of Hepatitis B vaccine.
- **Varicella** Two doses of Varicella (chicken pox) vaccine or written statement from a physician indicating month and year of disease or serologic proof of immunity.

Children in Grades 7-12 need additional immunizations for attendance:

- **MCV** Two doses given. The first dose is given between the ages of 11-15. The second dose is ***required*** at age 16 or entry into 12<sup>th</sup> grade. If the dose was given:
  - At age 16 years or older, only one dose is required.
- One dose of tetanus, diphtheria, acellular pertussis (Tdap) is required

Section 1402 of the Public School Code requires each child of school age be measured for height and weight by the school nurse. This growth screening enables school nurses to:

1. Monitor growth and development patterns of students
2. Identify students who may be undernourished or overweight
3. Notify parents of screening results with a recommendation to share findings with the student's health care provider for further evaluation and intervention, if necessary.

We will be using a CDC computer program to record and monitor each student's growth pattern. A letter will be mailed home annually with each child's BMI. The letter will indicate whether the child is underweight, normal, or overweight. Follow-up with the child's health care provider will be recommended when appropriate.

#### **47. Invitations for Parties**

Invitations may *not* be distributed at school unless there is an invitation for *every child in the class* or *boys have an invitation for every boy in the class* or *girls have an invitation for every girl in the class*. The practice of giving an invitation to a select group of children causes hard feelings and is not something we want to promote in our school. If parents are inviting a select group of students, parents will need to find an alternative way to distribute the invitations. Please note that we have a copy of the Family Directory that was published by the high school. Not all addresses are included in this directory. Parents are welcome to come into the office to use this directory. **Please note that teachers and principals' assistants are not permitted to give out children's addresses.**

#### **48. Kindergarten Schedule**

Morning Kindergarten      9:00 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.

Afternoon Kindergarten    12:38 p.m. – 3:23 p.m.

#### **49. Kindergarten Schedule on a Two Hour Late Start**

Morning Kindergarten      11:00 a.m. – 12:39 p.m.

Afternoon Kindergarten    1:44 p.m. – 3:23 p.m.

Morning kindergarten children will be picked up in the morning two hours later than their scheduled time and will arrive home one hour later than scheduled. Afternoon kindergarten will be picked up one hour later than scheduled and will arrive home at their regularly scheduled time.

Extended Day kindergarten students (K-Plus and K-Express) will follow the delay schedule of students in grades one through five. They will be picked up in the morning two hours later than their scheduled time and will arrive home at their regularly scheduled time.

On early release (dismissal) days, bus dismissal will start at 12:00 p.m. On these days, there will be no school scheduled for PM kindergarten students. Please check the district calendar for dates of early dismissal days.

#### **50. K-Express Program**

K-Express is a half-day reading program. Students attend their regular half-day kindergarten class and then attend the K-Express program the other half of the day. This program provides intensive small group reading instruction and addresses the same literacy objectives as the kindergarten classroom. Students receive intensive instruction on letters, sounds, sight words, and phonemic awareness. Instruction is provided by a reading specialist and a paraeducator.

#### **51. Lost and Found**

Sometimes children misplace or lose items that they bring to school. These items are placed in the lost and found which is located inside the parent pick-up doors (door B3). Items that are not claimed by the end of June will be donated to charity. Children are not permitted to take items out of lost and found that are not theirs.

## **52. McKinney Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act**

In compliance with the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, South Fayette Township School District makes every attempt to identify all children within the District that may be experiencing homelessness. Under McKinney-Vento all school districts are responsible for identifying students experiencing homelessness and connecting them with the resources needed to ensure academic success. You may qualify for certain rights and protections under the federal McKinney-Vento Act.

Children who are experiencing homelessness may qualify for assistance with free school lunch, school supplies/materials, tutoring, and transportation so that they can remain in their school of origin throughout the duration of their homeless episode. Additionally, the district partners with local community agencies such as the Bridgeville Community Food Bank, Salvation Army (Chartiers Valley Service Center), Goodwill (Heidelberg Outlet), and South Hills Interfaith Ministry (SHIM).

Who is considered homeless? Children or youth living in a shelter, transitional housing, hotel/motel, vehicle, campground, on the street or doubled up with friends or family due to a lack of alternate resources are considered homeless. An unaccompanied homeless youth is a child or youth that is not in the care of their parent or legal guardian and meets the definition of homeless under McKinney-Vento.

Where can students experiencing homelessness attend school? The law indicates that homeless students have the right to remain in their school origin (the school they attended at the time of the homeless episode or last school attended) through the end of the school year in which they find permanent housing, provided it is in the child/youth's best interest.

If through consultation between the school and the family and/or unaccompanied youth it is determined that remaining in the school of origin is not in the student's best interest, then the student has the right to immediately enroll in the school that non-homeless students living in the attendance area in which the child/youth is actually living are eligible to attend, even if they do not have all of the required documentation. Additionally, unaccompanied homeless youth have the right to immediately enroll in school, even if they do not have a legal guardian present. What support can school districts provide to homeless students? Homeless students are eligible for support and services to remove barriers to educational success. This may include transportation to the school of origin, free meals, referrals to physical/mental health providers, clothing to meet school requirements, access to school supplies and resources, assistance with credit recovery, tutoring supports, expedited evaluations and assistance to participate in school activities including parent engagement opportunities, sports, club, etc.

If you believe you know of families or individual students that may qualify for this service, please contact Dr. Rachel Andler, Director of Student Support Services at [raandler@southfayette.org](mailto:raandler@southfayette.org) or 412.221.4542 x429.

## **51. Medical Insurance**

South Fayette Township School District does not provide medical insurance for injuries occurring to students. Insurance coverage for injuries occurring to students during the school day is the responsibility of the parents. South Fayette Township School District offers a low-cost supplemental insurance policy to parents on an annual basis. Information about the policy is sent home with students at the beginning of the school year and is included in the district calendar. For additional information, parents may contact the Director of Finance at (412) 221-4542, extension 406.

## **52. Medication at School**

Under no circumstances will school personnel diagnose, provide or prescribe any medicine for a student. Medication shall include all pills, drugs, and medicines prescribed by a physician and any over-the-counter medicines. No herbal remedies will be given during the school day.

The South Fayette School District requests that medicine is given at home during non-school hours. However, it recognizes that sometimes it is essential for medication to be administered at school. **Any medication to be administered during school hours must include both physician and parent signature on a written request.**

Parents who send cough drops to school for their child also need to send a note to the nurse. The type of cough drop needs to be verified. If the cough drop contains an over-the-counter medication, a doctor's order will need to be given to the school nurse prior to the student being permitted to take the cough drop at school. Please note that cough drops can be a choking hazard especially in the younger grades where the students are smaller and less adept at handling these types of hard, small lozenges. In order to follow safety precautions, if a student should need to take a cough drop, please note that the lozenge will need to be finished in the nurse's office before the child returns to class. Students are not permitted to give cough drops to other students.

### **Prescription Medication**

- a) A written request must be submitted by the parent/guardian requesting the school nurse administer medication as prescribed by a physician.
- b) Physician's signed request (note or medication form) authorizing the administration of the prescribed medication.
- c) Prescription medication must be in a pharmacy-labeled bottle containing:
  1. Name and telephone number of the pharmacy
  2. Pupil's name
  3. Name of the physician
  4. Name of the drug
  5. Prescribed dose and times of administration
  6. Rx number

### **Non-Prescription (over-the-counter) Medication**

- a) A written request must be submitted by the parent/guardian requesting the school nurse administer over-the-counter medication as prescribed by a physician.
- b) A physician's signed request (note or medication form) authorizing the administration of all over-the-counter medication.
- c) Over-the-counter medication must be in the *original manufacturer's package* and imprinted with the dosage instructions that are typically found on labeled bottles, blister packs, tubes or cans.

### **Storage of Medication**

Medication shall be kept in a secured appropriate storage area in the health office. Students are **not** permitted to keep medication with them.

### **Transportation of Medication to School**

All medication shall be brought to school by the parent and kept in the health office. If this is not possible, the pharmacy-labeled container or original manufacturer's package must be sent to school in a sealed envelope with a note signed by the parent/guardian stating the number of tablets being sent to school. The nurse will verify this information with a phone call to the parent/guardian.

### **Request for Administration of Medication During School Hours Form**

This form is available in the health office and a sample is included in the back of the student handbook. The form is not essential to use as long as all the requested information is included in a written note.

### **Medication Administration**

All medications shall be administered by the school nurse or self-administered by the student upon the physician's written order. Only in an emergency shall a school employee other than the school nurse administer medication to a student. A parent or legal guardian may come to school to administer medication to their child in the nurse's office.

Under **emergency** medical situations such as anaphylactic shock, the school physician has ordered certain medications, such as epinephrine (EpiPen or Epi-Pen Jr.), to be administered. Please refer to the District website to view our District's current standing medication orders signed by our school physician. Parents should notify the school nurse if they have any questions or concerns regarding the District's standing orders for medication. Health office information can be found on the District website under District Services and then under Nursing Services.

\*\* Section 1414.2(g) allows parents/guardians to request an exemption to the administration of an epinephrine auto-injector for their student. In order to request this exemption, contact the School Nurse to make an appointment to discuss this decision, review, and sign the opt-out form.

### **Self-Administration of Inhalers**

Students in the South Fayette Township School District will be allowed to carry and self-administer their metered dose inhaler (MDI) medication in school as needed for asthma and other respiratory conditions. The inhaler may be used to alleviate and/or prevent the onset of asthmatic symptoms. This procedure includes dosages required at school, on school-sponsored transportation, or at any activity, event, or program sponsored by or in which the pupil's school is participating.

To ensure your child's health and safety, you and your child's physician will need to complete a medication order and authorization form, and return it to the school nurse. This authorization shall provide the name of the drug, the dose, the times when the medication is to be taken, and the diagnosis or reason the medicine is needed. It shall also include any serious reaction that may occur in conjunction with the use of the medication. Also, this authorization relieves the school of responsibility for the benefits or consequences of the medication. It also acknowledges that the school bears no responsibility for ensuring that the medication is taken.

The nurse will review proper MDI administration technique with your child and evaluate that self-administration is safe and appropriate. You and your child must then sign the self-administration assessment and contract form.

***All children in grades K - 12 must notify the school nurse immediately following each use of an inhaler, and sign off such self-administration on the medication record.***

The student will be held responsible for keeping their inhaler in a safe place that is not accessible to other students. If any irresponsible behavior is observed in the use of the inhaler, such as sharing medication with another student, the inhaler will immediately be confiscated, and the parent will be notified of the loss of the privilege to self-administer.

**It is highly recommended that you keep an additional inhaler in the health office should your child forget his/her inhaler.**

### **53. Money**

Students should not bring large sums of money to school because sometimes the money gets misplaced or lost. We encourage parents to write personal checks when the children need money to pay for different things. Students are not permitted to sell items in school in exchange for money.

### **54. Non-Resident**

[School Board Policy #202](#) permits students to enroll in the South Fayette School District tuition-free for 45 school days immediately preceding occupancy of a newly constructed or purchased residency. Prior to enrolling children in



our schools, parents need to complete and submit a non-resident application with documentation to the Office of the Superintendent for approval prior to their child/ren starting school. The forms and further information in regard to this is available in the elementary office.

If occupancy is not acquired by the end of the 45 school days and the student and his/her parents desire to continue enrollment in South Fayette School District, then applicable tuition must be paid to the South Fayette School District as per the annual approved rate. Failure to provide documentation as noted in the policy will result in tuition being charged from the first day of the student(s) entering the South Fayette School District. Tuition rates shall be determined in accordance with the statute of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

We will not transport a student to and from new construction or a purchased home until the family has an occupancy permit and becomes a resident of the new home. Also, please note that the school district does not take responsibility for transporting to or from school any student residing outside of the school district boundaries.

#### **55. Opening Exercises**

Teachers will develop an opening exercise routine in their classroom to be utilized daily. This routine should include the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, the Alma Mater, and Our School Song. The children may stand during the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, the Alma Mater, and Our School Song. Students may decline to recite the Pledge of Allegiance and may refrain from saluting the flag on the basis of personal belief or religious convictions. Students who choose to refrain from such participation shall respect the rights and interests of classmates who do wish to participate. Students who wish to refrain from such participation shall remain respectfully silent through the flag salute and Pledge of Allegiance. Students whose manners or actions are disruptive during the Pledge of Allegiance or the flag salute will be subject to disciplinary action as deemed appropriate by school officials.

#### **56. Open House**

Parents, students, family members, community members and those interested in our school are cordially invited to attend our **Celebration of Excellence** in the spring. This is an excellent opportunity to visit our school and enjoy the accomplishments of our children.

#### **57. Orientation**

Parents and students in the elementary school are invited to attend **Meet the Teacher** on the Thursday before the first day of school. Students and parents will attend between 1:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. The purpose of the visit is to allow the children to meet their new teacher, visit their new classroom, and gather information regarding grade level curriculum.

#### **58. Outside Counseling**

In the event of a serious situation impacting our school or community, the South Fayette Township School District may enlist the assistance of outside counseling agencies and resources to help students and faculty. Outside counseling will be provided by professional counseling agencies that have experience in helping students and faculty members cope with the situation. If you have further questions regarding this or do not want your child to participate, please contact the Elementary Guidance Counselors at 412-221-4542 ext. 335 or ext. 355.

#### **59. Parent-Teacher Conferences**

We encourage parents to arrange for conferences on an as-needed throughout the year by contacting the teacher directly. Parents need to schedule an appointment to meet with the teacher. We regret that we cannot accommodate unscheduled requests for a conference because of the teachers' schedules. Parent-teacher conferences will be scheduled one time during the school year. The conference will be scheduled at the end of the first grading period.

#### **60. Parking**

All vehicles are to be parked in a designated parking area. Vehicles are not to be parked in the driveway in front of the school or on the road around the school because they block traffic. Do not park in the cafeteria entrance driveway as this is reserved for school service vehicles only. Please note the handicapped parking spots are to be used by visitors with a handicapped license plate or a handicapped parking tag visually displayed in the vehicle. Vehicles that are illegally parked may be ticketed.

#### **61. Pets**

Pets are **not** permitted in the school building at any time or outside the building during the school day. We appreciate your understanding.

#### **62. Playground**

Please note that the playground is not available for public use from 8:00 a.m. until 3:45 p.m. while school is in session.

#### **63. PTA**

South Fayette has a very active and productive PTA that serves both the Elementary School and Intermediate School. Members of the PTA are involved in fundraising throughout the year which allows them to sponsor many programs during the school day as well as evening programs. Members of the PTA also volunteer in the school on a regular basis. The PTA meets on a regular basis, and all parents are invited and encouraged to attend. It is a great opportunity to get to know other parents and learn more about the elementary school. PTA meetings are scheduled at flexible times throughout the school year in an effort to accommodate parents' schedules. Please consult the school calendar or monthly building calendar for the date of the meetings. Additional information can be found on the PTA website located at [www.southfayettepta.org](http://www.southfayettepta.org). If you have further questions about the PTA, please email them at [pta@southfayette.org](mailto:pta@southfayette.org).

#### **64. Recess**

Students in first grade and second grade have a twenty-five minute recess daily. Kindergarten students have a twenty-five minute recess or "Explore" time daily. Teachers may schedule educational breaks in the classroom as needed so that the children can use the restroom and/or get a drink. Children are expected to follow the school rules during recess.

Children will go outside for recess if the temperature is 32 degrees Fahrenheit or higher. The combination of fresh air and moving around helps the children to return to the classroom refreshed and ready to learn.

If your child has a medical condition that necessitates them staying inside for recess or explore, please follow the procedures as listed below:

If your child cannot play outside for one day, the parent/guardian must write a note to the school nurse stating the medical reason why your child needs to remain indoors. Only send a note when it is medically necessary. The school nurse will verify the request and give the information to the office. Additionally, the child may be permitted to have inside recess for one day at the nurse's discretion while the parent/guardian obtains a doctor's note for subsequent occurrences.

For recurring medical concerns that necessitate a child remaining indoors for two or more days, parents/guardians must provide the school nurse with a doctor's note which includes a timeline for return to outdoor recess.

When your child cannot play outside due to medical reasons, he/she will sit in an assigned area and work quietly on schoolwork.

### **65. Recess Behavior**

Students are to follow school rules during indoor as well as outdoor recess. They are to keep their hands and feet to themselves, and they are to treat others with dignity and respect. Students are to interact with the student monitors in a respectful, appropriate manner. Students who do not follow playground rules could be removed from the playground activity by the student monitor for a short period of time. When the misbehavior is serious or persistent, the student monitor will submit a discipline slip to the principal. Please refer to the discipline portion of the handbook for possible consequences.

Students are walked to recess by the student monitors. After providing directions for the day, the children are dismissed to play on the playground. The student monitors use the whistle to cue the students to stop what they are doing and listen to the student monitors. At the end of recess, the student monitors blow the whistle and students line up to return to the building. The children are expected to put away the equipment they are playing with, quietly line up and listen to directions. These procedures are necessary to ensure the safety of all children in the playing area as well as to ensure some order when returning to their classroom.

### **67. Report Cards**

Report cards are issued every nine weeks to all students. Final elementary report cards will be mailed to parents.

Students in kindergarten are evaluated on specific grade level objectives. They earn an **M** (met) or **X** (not met), or **I** (inconsistent) on individual standards listed on the report card. Each student's level of mastery is assessed on a regular basis.

The first and second-grade report cards are standards-based and correlate directly to the Pennsylvania Common Core Academic Standards as well as the district curriculum. Each student's level of mastery is assessed on a regular basis. Students earn an **M** (met), **I** (inconsistent) or **X** (not met) on individual standards listed on the report card.

**First and second-grade** students receive instruction in social studies, science, health, and special subject areas. Although the students are being assessed in these subjects throughout the school year, the curriculum in first and second grades include formal evaluations as well as informal, ongoing assessments.

### **68. School Counseling**

The purpose of school counseling services is to help students in social, emotional, educational, vocational, and personal development. The school counselors are in the counseling office in the middle school daily during school hours. Conferences with students receive first consideration of the counselors' time and are scheduled whenever necessary. The school counselors will assist students by recommending materials to improve study habits, helping

students make curriculum selections as they move to the high school, and by listening to students and discussing issues. Parents are also encouraged to contact the school counselors when issues arise with their student.

**Crisis Counseling**

In the event of a serious or tragic event impacting the school or the South Fayette community, the South Fayette Township School District may enlist the assistance of outside counseling agencies and resources to help students and faculty cope with such events as they unfold. Outside counseling will be provided by professional counseling agencies that have experience in helping schools cope with tragic events.

The names of these agencies will also be made available to facilitate outside consultation for those who so desire.

If you do not wish for your child to have access to the aforementioned resources in times of crisis, please complete the form below and return it to the middle school office. All information will be kept confidential.

.....

I, \_\_\_\_\_, parent/guardian of \_\_\_\_\_ would hereby like to inform the South Fayette Middle School that I do not grant my child permission to meet with outside counselors or counseling agencies in the instance of a serious or tragic event impacting the South Fayette township or school. Furthermore, I realize that should I desire to arrange outside counseling to assist my child in dealing with such an event, I can obtain the phone numbers or addresses for such agencies, by contacting the school guidance department.

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**69. Search and Seizure**

An administrator may seize any evidence indicating that a student is violating or has violated the law or a school rule that the administrator may find as a result of a search of a student's property, clothed body, or areas designated for a student's use if the search is proper and reasonable.

A student who refuses the request for a search by an administrator that is proper and reasonable may be disciplined under the district's discipline policy. Action may include suspension or referral to the board for an expulsion hearing.

**70. Siblings**

Siblings are not allowed to participate in school functions during the school day that do not include their classroom. Classrooms often have special programs where parents are invited to attend. Siblings are not allowed to attend these

special programs as this disrupts the educational day. We want to ensure that those students involved in the program and the invited guests have an enjoyable experience. Siblings are also not allowed to attend holiday parties.

### **71. Student Records**

The school district maintains the following student records:

- A permanent record folder for each student is stored in the main office and contains grades, attendance, standardized test scores, etc.
- A medical record for each student is stored in the nurse's office and contains medical records for the student. The information is shared with faculty and staff on a need to know basis. This allows us to best service the medical needs of our students.
- Some students may have a special education file which is stored in the Pupil Personnel Office. These records include IEPs, GIEPs, or 504 Service Plans.

### **72. Telephones**

Students may use the telephone in the classroom when the classroom teacher deems necessary. Students will not be permitted to take telephone calls. If parents need to contact their child, we will take a message and relay it to the child.

### **73. Title I**

South Fayette Elementary School receives Title I funds annually. The funding is used to provide the Title I Reading Services to first-grade and second-grade students who are basic or below basic in their reading skills.

All of the South Fayette Elementary Faculty is considered highly qualified according to the No Child Left Behind standards for highly qualified teachers. A highly qualified teacher, according to the United States Department of Education, is fully certified, has a bachelor's degree, a content area major and has passed a content area test. Also, fully certified teachers in Pennsylvania have completed pedagogical coursework in education, including student teaching. We take pride in the tremendous skill and dedication of our faculty and staff.

Please note that, as parents, you have a right to request and receive timely information regarding the professional qualifications of your child's classroom teacher. If you have any questions about our Title I Program or about your child's teacher, please feel free to contact Tyler Geist, Elementary School Principal, at 412 221-4542, extension 337.

### **74. Tobacco Use Policy**

School Board Policy #222 prohibits students from possessing and using tobacco products and smokeless tobacco devices while in the school building, on school grounds, on school buses, and at all school events. It also prohibits the use of tobacco by all visitors and employees in the school buildings as well as on the school grounds. Our campus is a smoke and tobacco free environment. This board policy can be located on the district's website.

### **75. Visitors**

All visitors to South Fayette Township School District will be required to produce photo ID which will be scanned using visitor management software upon entering any South Fayette Township District building. Visitors will be issued a photographic visitor ID badge which must be clearly displayed for the duration of their visit.

Children should walk to their classrooms in the morning unaccompanied by an adult. Parents need to either call the classroom teacher or schedule a meeting if they need to discuss something with their child's teacher. We appreciate your cooperation in helping to make our school day run smoothly.

Periodically, elementary children forget necessary items at home and parents will need to bring these items to school. Parents are to drop these items off at the front desk, and the receptionist will make sure these items make it to the child's classroom.

Parents may eat lunch with their child. As with all visitors, parents are to check in at the receptionist's desk. Parents should make their presences known to a student monitor when entering the cafeteria. Siblings are not permitted in the cafeteria during lunchtime. Parents, siblings, and visitors are not permitted on the playground during recess/school hours.

Children who are not registered students in our school cannot visit the school during the instructional day. Only future students with an appointment will be permitted to tour the school during the instructional day.

#### **76. Weapons Policy**

According to [School Board Policy #218.1](#), students, visitors and employees are not permitted to bring any weapons or look-alike weapons to school. This board policy can be located on the district's webpage.

#### **77. Web Page**

Please visit the South Fayette School District at [www.southfayette.org](http://www.southfayette.org) for the latest news. Information for the Elementary School can be located by clicking on the school tab. The web page is updated weekly.

#### **78. Wellness and Classroom Parties**

The Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 (Public Law 108-265) requires all public school districts to develop local wellness policies that address nutrition, physical activity, and health education. Nutrition guidelines must be developed for all foods available on each school campus during the school day with the objectives of promoting student health and reducing childhood obesity.

The district formed a committee of students, parents, school board member, administration, and the food service department to review current practices and develop guidelines for the future. Some procedures are implemented districtwide while others are unique to an individual building.

The following are district-wide "actions":

1. No soda (carbonated soft drinks) will be served to students at any time, in any building, during the school day.
2. Vending machines that are located on the campus will only contain water, juice and sports drinks.
3. Food (candy, gum, etc.) will not be used as a reward for classroom or school activities unless the reward is an activity that promotes a positive nutrition message i.e. guest chef, a field trip to a farm, etc.
4. All groups associated with the school district will be encouraged to promote wellness that leads to good choices being made about nutrition, physical activity, and health.

#### **Important Information related to Student Wellness in the Elementary School**

1. Classroom Birthday Celebrations

- a. Students will not be permitted to bring “food” birthday treats to share with their class. However, they can bring a “nonfood” item to share with the class on their actual birthday or a day that is close to their birthday.
  
2. Holiday Celebrations
  - a. The Elementary PTA sponsors three holiday parties: Halloween (October), Holiday (December), and Valentine’s Day (February). Additional food and/or drink items will not be distributed to students. Students will only be allowed to pass out nonfood items to students if they wish to bring a treat for the other students (pencils, erasers, etc.). Classroom games make excellent treats for the students as well. Please remember that holiday celebrations are limited to children in the homeroom only; **siblings are not permitted to attend holiday parties.**
  
3. Lunch
  - a. A nutritious lunch that meets the guidelines of the student wellness policy is available for purchase each day. If you choose to have your child bring lunch from home, you are encouraged that the lunch is nutritious.

**Required Annual Notices**

**South Fayette Township School District Required Annual Notices for this school year can be located on the District website. Paper copies of these documents are also available in the Main Office of the Elementary School.**