



# **STUDENT HANDBOOK 2022-2023**

**School Phone (757) 925-5782**

**School Hours 9:25 am - 3:50 pm**

**Office Hours 8:30 am - 5:00 pm**

September 2022

Hello Southwestern Families,

Welcome to the 2022 – 2023 school year at Southwestern Elementary! I am excited to be welcoming students back into the building this year! I can't wait to hear from our students about their summer adventures and see their smiling faces. For returning families, I look forward to seeing you all and continuing to serve you, your children and the entire Southwestern Community. For families new to Southwestern, I am excited to meet you and your child, please know that we are all here to support your child in transitioning to our amazing school. Our staff and school community are all committed to providing the best educational experience for your child here at Southwestern. Let us know how we can help!

We recognize that in order to be successful in school, our children need support from both the home and school. We know a strong partnership with you will make a great difference in your child's education. We want you to know you are welcome at Southwestern anytime to volunteer or just to get to know us better. If you have any questions about school expectations, please feel free to contact me.

I am proud and honored to be the principal of Southwestern Elementary School and I look forward to working with you and your child this school year. If you have questions concerning school, please feel free to call me or my assistant principal, Dr. Sabrina Lee. We look forward to a great school year!

Thank you for entrusting us with your most precious possessions.

Lori S. Mounie, Principal

[lorimounie@spsk12.net](mailto:lorimounie@spsk12.net)

# SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

Southwestern Elementary School, in partnership with the students, parents, and the community is committed to creating an active and safe learning environment that encourages student growth. Our school is committed to providing high-quality instruction, nurturing student self-esteem, and respecting individual student differences.

## VISION STATEMENT

We are a forward thinking school with a vision to create global minded students with the necessary critical thinking skills. We are leading the way and preparing for the future.

## BELIEF STATEMENTS

We believe that...

- Every child learns best in a safe and caring environment, where high academic expectations, self-esteem, good character, healthy lifestyles, and an appreciation for the arts are promoted.
- A variety of teaching strategies, meaningful materials, and emerging technology should be used to maximize student potential and individual learning styles.
- Every child should be given a variety of opportunities to demonstrate achievement and application of learning.
- A quality education, continuous improvements, and positive communications are the shared responsibility of the school, home, and community.

# SOUTHWESTERN ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

- Principal – Lori Mounie
- Assistant Principal – Sabrina Lee, Ed.D.
- Academic Coach – Jennifer Soriano
- Administrative Assistant –Majel Nowell Jones
- Bookkeeper – Missy Tilton
- School Nurse – Emily Wright
- Guidance Counselor – Sallie Barnes
- Cafeteria Manager – Tomekia Freeman
- Head Custodian –Angela Van Hemel

School Website: <http://swes.spsk12.net/>

School Colors: Purple and Silver

School Mascot: Mustang

# SOUTHWESTERN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

## STUDENT HANDBOOK

### ABSENCES AND TARDINESS

It is important that students be consistent and punctual in attendance. Regular school attendance is necessary for academic achievement. Excessive absences from school hinder such achievement. It is imperative that we also receive written documentation on every absence. Parent documentation for absences must be submitted to the teacher on the day the student returns to school, **or within a period not to exceed five (5) school days, immediately thereafter.**

\*Please note that school board policy states that elementary students who miss in excess of twenty (20) unexcused days a year may be retained in that grade.

### SCHOOL HOURS OF OPERATION

- **Staff Hours:** 8:50 a.m. - 4:20 p.m.
- **Bus Arrivals:** 9:00 a.m.
- **Breakfast Served:** 9:00 a.m. - 9:24 a.m.
- **Student Hours:** 9:25 a.m. - 3:50 p.m.
- **Students should NOT be dropped off before 9:00 a.m.**
- Students arriving after 9:25 a.m. should be signed in at the kiosk by a parent/guardian in order to receive a tardy pass. Parents are urged to pick students up no earlier than 3:40 p.m. (Tag Pick Up Time).
- **Early Dismissal:** 1:15 p.m. (**Lunch served**)
- **Bus Changes:** Without a written request (**no phone requests**) from parents, a child may not be permitted to ride a different bus to or from home.

## ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

**The instructional day begins at 9:25 a.m. Students may not arrive prior to 9:00 a.m.**

If a student arrives after 9:25 a.m., he/she is considered tardy. Parents, it may help to set your clocks by school time here at Southwestern. When bringing a child to school after 9:25 a.m., a parent must accompany the student into the building to sign him/her in. The student will be issued a tardy slip that he/she will need to be admitted to the classroom. Assigned personnel will be present when possible to control traffic in the morning and afternoon. Please do not park in front of the school. We ask that parents follow the directives of the personnel directing traffic in the morning and afternoon.

We will continue the CAR TAG Pickup process that allows parents/guardians to remain in their vehicle while picking up their child. Parents are required to complete the AUTHORIZATION FOR PARENT PICK-UP and provide a picture ID. Once the form is complete, tags will be distributed and should be displayed on the rear-view mirror. The tag will contain a number that will match the student tag that will be attached to the student's book bag. This car tag service is only available for those students who are picked up at the regular dismissal time on a daily basis.

A lost or damaged car tag will be replaced for \$5.00.

Any adult who **does not** have a student's assigned car tag on their rear view mirror will be required to do the following:

### **Student Pick-up Guidelines (emergencies or occasional appointments):**

- Parents who pick up their student(s) early will be required to park then sign out their child on a clipboard in a designated area outside.
- If picking up a student early, please provide a written request to your child's teacher.
- All pick-ups will be required to remain in the car rider line until directed to the designated parking area, including but not limited to all appointments and bus issues.

**\*In order for the afternoon pick-up process to run efficiently, we will be asking parents that have not picked up a child by 3:30 to join the CAR TAG pick up line and your child will be called down as you enter the circle.**

Buses will start departing the building at 3:50 p.m. Children must ride the bus to which they are assigned. **Written notice is required for a student to change his/her bus or if the student will be picked up from school. Bus changes cannot be made over the phone.** If a student is to be picked up, he/she will not be called to the office until parents arrive in the building to pick them up. If someone other than the parent or guardian is to pick your child up from school, a note signed by the parent must be sent that morning to the teacher. The responsible adult must sign the student out in the office, and bring a

valid picture I.D. All students will be put on their assigned buses unless we receive written notification. Parents are not to enter the bus parking lot at any time during the school day. A written note from a parent or guardian must be received before a child can be released, to any adult, whose name is not on the Emergency Card. **It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to keep the school updated on current phone numbers and pertinent information.**

## TRAFFIC SIGNS AND PARKING

We are asking that you please obey all traffic rules and observe all **NO PARKING** directives. When you arrive on the Southwestern campus you are required to park in a parking space. Our first priority is the safety of our students, parents, and visitors. Please watch your speed and be cautious of students who may dart out from behind stationary cars. The Suffolk Police Department will periodically monitor traffic and excessive speeding in the neighborhood. We are sorry for any inconvenience that this may cause; however, this is necessary to maintain a safe and orderly environment in which parents can safely retrieve their children.

## CHILD CUSTODY

If you have legal custody of your child through a court order (or deed of separation), please see that the administration (principal/assistant principal) have a **current** copy of this document. Please do not assume that school employees know about custody issues. Be sure we know if any family member is not to pick-up your child from school. Please make sure that this information is included on the school's Emergency Information Card.

## BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL CARE

AlphaBest provides School-Age Child Care for Southwestern students. Their state-licensed, Before and After-School programs are designed to give parents a piece of mind when students are not in the classroom. Alphabest ensures staff is caring and experienced to aid students in being safe, engaged, and happy. Before-school care is offered starting at 6:30 a.m. until students are taken to classrooms. After-school care is offered from dismissal until 6:00 p.m. **For more information, contact AlphaBest at 866-300-7750 or visit their website [www.alphabest.org/suffolkva/](http://www.alphabest.org/suffolkva/).**

## RIDING THE SCHOOL BUS

**Riding a school bus is a privilege.** This privilege can be suspended or revoked by the principal, assistant principal, supervisor of transportation, or the superintendent for any child who does not conduct himself/herself in an acceptable manner. Because of the

potential for danger involved in this part of the school day, violators will be dealt with severely and quickly (see Regulations for Pupils Riding School Buses in the SPS Handbook). All passengers are under the jurisdiction of the driver while on the bus. The driver is to control student conduct and report behavior problems to the principal or assistant principal. Should any child be reported to the principal or assistant principal, disciplinary action will be taken. Failure to comply with the policy dealing with school bus operations may result in suspension or termination of the privilege to ride a school bus. **Should a student be suspended from a bus, it becomes the responsibility of the parent to provide transportation for the child to and from school.**

**PARENTS ARE PROHIBITED FROM BOARDING A SCHOOL BUS.** Please call school administration for information or to express a concern.

**School-wide expectations extend to the bus and bus stop. Specific bus expectations will be taught to students and shared with students and parents the first week of school.**

**Three suspensions from the school bus in one calendar school year could cause your child to lose the privilege of riding the school bus for 30 days and thereafter for the remainder of the year.**

Permission to Ride a Different Bus:

A note signed by the parent/guardian must be presented to the teacher first thing in the morning or turned in to the office in the morning before 10:00 a.m. Fax and email requests are also accepted before 10:00 a.m.

*Below is an example of the details that are needed in a bus note:*

Please allow my child, **(Student's Name)**, to ride **(Bus Number/Route)** to/from **(Address Where You Want Child Dropped Off and/or picked up)** on **(Days and Dates)**. I may be contacted at the following **(Daytime Phone Number)**.

\_\_\_\_\_ (Parent Signature)

If received by 10:00 a.m., the request will be sent to transportation by 11:00 a.m. in order to receive the bus pass to ride a different bus if space permits by 2:00 p.m.

**\*NO student is to ride a different bus without an approved pass from the school office.**



## CAFETERIA

Suffolk is a Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) district. Due to this, free breakfast and lunch will be offered to all students during the course of the 2022-2023 school year.

## NON-SCHOOL FOOD ITEMS

**The district Wellness Policy prohibits both parents and school staff from bringing snacks and beverages such as cupcakes into the school for student classroom parties.** All snacks offered to students during the school day must be nutritionally sound. For specific nutritional standards, please refer to the SPS District Wellness Policy in the SPS Handbook and SPS Website.

## CLINIC

The school nurse, **Ms. Emily Wright**, will conduct vision, hearing, and dental screenings throughout the year. The clinic is open every day during school hours; however, parents must make arrangements to pick up sick or injured children. Emergency cards are due in the office and must be updated as needed. Parents, or emergency contact persons, will be notified in case of an emergency. All medication must be brought in by a parent, and picked up at the end of the year by a parent. If the student becomes ill during the school day, the school nurse will assess him/her and determine the best course of action. Upon determining the need to go home, the nurse or designee will make the proper arrangements by contacting the student's parents. If the parent cannot be contacted, other person(s) on the student's emergency card will be contacted.

The school does not have the staff or facilities to care for children who are sick. In case of illness or accident, parents will be contacted to arrange transportation home. We need your telephone number at home and at work, and the number of a friend or relative if we are unable to get in touch with either parent.

**1. MEDICAL TREATMENT:** When a student becomes ill or injured, the parent/guardian will be contacted that day by the school nurse. School personnel may not diagnose, give medication, nor administer treatment beyond basic first aid. A note will be given to any child who visits the office with a complaint of injury or illness. The child will be instructed to bring the note home to the parent.

**2. MEDICATION:** School employees may not administer internal medicine to a student. If routine medication must be taken by a child during the school day, it must be given to the school nurse, or designated office personnel. In these cases, a medication form must

be completed by the physician and signed by the parent. Do not send medication to school with your child. Over the counter medication such as aspirin, cough syrups, etc. cannot be given at school. ALL medication must be properly labeled with the student's name on the bottle.

## CONFERENCES

Parent/Teacher Conference days have been scheduled for October 10, 2022 and February 15, 2023; however, parents are encouraged to contact teachers at any time throughout the year, when a conference is necessary.

## DISCIPLINE

Discipline is the positive direction of behavior towards established standards of conduct, fully understood and based upon reason, judgment, and consideration of the rights of others. It is self-directed and self-controlled. Schools, community, and parents share the responsibility for helping students develop self-discipline.

When students are under school jurisdiction, they are expected to conduct themselves in an orderly, courteous, dignified, and respectful manner. In an effort to maintain an orderly atmosphere, the teacher's authority extends to all students, whether or not the teacher has the student in class. When self-control falters and self-discipline fails, disciplinary action must be imposed to protect the rights of others and to ensure uninterrupted instruction by teachers for students.

Disruptive student behavior is subject to disciplinary action by teachers and administrators. The action may take the form of reprimand, conference, notification of parents, discipline referral, in-school suspension, short-term out-of-school suspension (ten days or less), long-term out-of-school suspension (more than ten days), or expulsion. A discipline referral will be sent to the principal or assistant principal when the teacher feels that the student's improper behavior cannot be corrected through teacher classroom management practices. After consultation with the student and the teacher (if necessary), the administrator will determine the course of action required to provide a safe, secure school.

### **SOUTHWESTERN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL-WIDE EXPECTATIONS**

- **Be Safe**
- **Be Respectful**
- **Be Responsible**

## **All school-wide expectations will be taught to students and shared with students and parents the first week of school.**

Students are not permitted to bring toys, games, gaming devices, mp3 players, cellphones, iPods, sports cards, pets of any kind, Pokémon items, or wear Heelys (shoes with wheels or skates) to school. ***Toy guns and knives will be dealt with as real weapons.*** If items are brought to school, they will be confiscated and kept for parents to pick up. Loss of such items is the sole responsibility of the student. Students are strongly encouraged to leave excess money at home. It is difficult to recover money when it is either lost or stolen.

## CHARACTER TRAITS

Specific character traits are emphasized during the school year. Special school wide activities and projects are held to highlight each character trait. The character traits are listed below by month.

- **September** – Respect
- **October** – Responsibility
- **November** – Self Discipline
- **December** – Kindness
- **January** – Perseverance
- **February** – Honesty
- **March** – Courtesy
- **April** – Cooperation
- **May** – Fairness
- **June** – School Safety

## DRESS CODE

Please refer to the SPS Handbook and SPS Website for the student dress code policy. This policy will be strictly enforced at Southwestern. Students that violate the dress code policy will have an opportunity to change (the office will attempt to contact the parent for a change of clothes). If a parent is unreachable or unable to bring the student a change of clothes, the student will spend the day in ISS.

## HOMEWORK

Homework extends learning activities beyond the classroom. It reinforces learning by giving a child an opportunity to use his or her knowledge. It also provides an opportunity for parents to become involved in the educational development of their child. Southwestern teachers will follow the SPS daily time recommendations for homework

(you can find these in the SPS Handbook and SPS Website). Homework will not be assigned on PTA nights or weekends (with the exception of an occasional project that may need to be completed over a weekend).

## VISITORS/INTERRUPTION – FREE INSTRUCTIONAL TIME

All efforts will be made by the office to ensure that instructional time is uninterrupted. The following procedures will be observed:

- A. Parents and visitors will be required to report to the kiosk/office when entering the building.**
- B. Parents/Visitors must sign-in using the Raptor System and wear a “Visitors” sticker to visit any area in the building. Parents or visitors that are not serving as a volunteer are not permitted to visit classrooms once the school day has started.**
- C. Parents and visitors who are allowed in the building beyond the kiosk/office must wear a Visitor’s Sticker. For security reasons, it is every staff member’s responsibility to ensure that visitors without stickers are directed to the office. **If parents wish to visit the classroom during instructional time, they must make arrangements with the teacher or administration prior to the classroom visit.****
  - Students will not be summoned to the office except in urgent situations.
  - Students will not be withheld from any scheduled class for punishment.
  - Teachers will not be called to receive telephone calls unless it is an emergency. A message will be taken and placed in the teacher’s box.

**B. Morning Drop Off is in the Main Foyer. In order to keep students safe, visitors will not be allowed past the main kiosk during school hours.**

## PARTNERS-IN-EDUCATION

Southwestern Elementary is fortunate to have many business partners (current partners are listed on our school website). These partners work with us to enhance academic, instructional, and community programs. Southwestern is always seeking new business partners. Please contact Mrs. Sallie Barnes, Southwestern guidance counselor, if you or someone you know would like to become a partner.

## PROMOTION POLICY

**Please review carefully Suffolk Public School’s Promotion and Grading Policy (found in the SPS Handbook and SPS Website).** Report Cards are distributed every 9

weeks and Interim Reports are distributed every 4 ½ weeks before the end of each reporting period. Look for these reports on the following dates:

- **Interim Reports**

- October 6, 2022
- December 16, 2022
- March 7, 2023
- May 15, 2023

- **Reports Cards**

- November 18, 2021
- February 8, 2023
- April 4, 2023
- June 15, 2023

## COMMUNICATION FOLDERS

**Communication Folders will come home once a week and are provided for every student in grades K-5.** The Communication Folders will contain samples of your child's work and should give parents some tangible evidence of your child's progress. Parents are asked to review this folder and send it back the following day. The school will send important memos and flyers through the Weekly Communication Folders when possible. Student agendas and communication folders serve as valuable school-home communication tools.

### HOME ACCESS CENTER (HAC)

Suffolk Public Schools is offering a unique service to parents. Home Access Center allows parents to view their student(s) grades and attendance on-line. Grades that appear in HAC are drawn directly from the teacher's grade book and will provide an electronic progress report, available anytime. Parents who wish to sign up for Home Access should contact Mrs. Majel Nowell Jones, Administrative Assistant. It may take up to 72 hours to activate.

## VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Volunteers are greatly needed and much appreciated. Volunteers are required to sign into the building at the kiosk/office. If you are interested in serving as a parent/community volunteer, please contact Mrs. Melissa Tilton, at [melissatilton@spsk12.net](mailto:melissatilton@spsk12.net), or Mrs. Elizabeth Alston at [elizabethalston@spsk12.net](mailto:elizabethalston@spsk12.net). You may sign up for the Volunteer Program online at Volunteer Connect on the Suffolk Public Schools webpage. The process has been made as simple as possible. Each volunteer will be required to complete an application and be screened for inclusion in the Sex Offenders and Crimes Against Minors Registry. The results of the background checks will be held confidential. Volunteers will need to complete a new application each school year. All new volunteers must be approved and must receive a clear background check prior to beginning volunteer work.

## BOOK FAIR

A book fair will be held twice during the school year. Parents and students have the opportunity to purchase books, posters, and other items during this event. Profits from the Book Fair are used to purchase books and/or other school items that benefit the students of Southwestern.

## TEXTBOOKS

Textbooks are provided free to all students to be used during the school year. If a student has books checked out to them, they will receive a Textbook Distribution Letter explaining what books are checked out to the student as well as the price for each book. When books are distributed, they are scanned out to students based on their student ID number. At the end of the year, books are to be returned in reasonably good condition. If any books are damaged, a fine will be assessed according to the age of the book and the type of damage. Replacement costs will be charged for lost books.

## PICTURES

School pictures are taken in the fall and spring of each year. Every student will get their picture taken in the Fall for the school yearbook. In the Spring, only students that are purchasing pictures will get their individual pictures taken. However, everyone will be photographed for the group photo. PICTURE DATES WILL BE ANNOUNCED IN ADVANCE.

## CIVILITY

We encourage positive communication and discourage disruptive, hostile, or aggressive communications or actions. We expect our staff to be treated with courtesy and respect by parents and other adults. Any behavior which disrupts the orderly operation of the school will result in removal from the premises, contacting law enforcement, and/or termination of a meeting, conference, or telephone conversation.

## SPECIAL RECOGNITION ACTIVITIES

Recognizing students' achievement is an important aspect of motivating students. Each student is given the opportunity to be recognized for his/her success and or achievement. Some of our special recognition awards for students are listed below.

- **Principal's List-** Students receive this award if they earn all A's (grades 1-5).
- **Honor Roll-** Students receive this award if they earn all A's and B's (grades 1-5).

- **Perfect Attendance-** Students receive this award if they have not missed any school days for the entire nine-weeks grading period.
- **Ruritan Award-** This award goes to the 5<sup>th</sup> Grade student with the highest academic average for the year.
- **President's Award for Outstanding Academic Excellence (5<sup>th</sup> Only)** - Awarded to students who maintain A's all year and score a 500 or above on the reading or math SOL.
- **President's Award for Outstanding Educational Achievement (5<sup>th</sup> Only)** - Awarded to students who maintain A's and B's all year and score a 450 or above on the reading or math SOL.
- **B.U.G. Award** - After the first nine weeks students in grades 1-5 may earn the B.U.G. Award by Bringing Up their Grades. To qualify for the B.U.G. Award, students must raise one letter grade in at least one subject area without the other subject areas dropping.
- **Mustang Award (Student of the Month)** - Awarded to students that demonstrate outstanding character consistently. These students are role models of school and community civility.
- **The Golden Horseshoe-** Awarded to students that consistently demonstrate being safe, respectful, and responsible.

## AWARDS CEREMONIES

When time in the schedule permits, students will receive the above awards at an awards ceremony. Dates for the ceremonies will be posted on the school website and published in the Parent Newsletter. **Balloons are prohibited in the school building.**

**\*The information in this handbook should be reviewed by parents and discussed with their children. Students will be held accountable for all rules and regulations in this handbook.**