

SOMERSET
ELEMENTARY
HANDBOOK



2026 - 2027

WELCOME

Dear Parents,

This handbook from Somerset Area Elementary Schools is a means of communication between the school and home. It contains information, policies, and procedures of not only the elementary schools but also of the entire school district.

This reference is a valuable source of information for both students and parents. It should be read carefully and used as a reference guide throughout the school year. It is our hope that it will answer many of the questions that apply to the day-to-day operations in our elementary schools and our school district.

We will do all that we can to help your child be successful. If any questions arise, we strongly encourage you to contact the school. Your cooperation as well as your suggestions for improvement are welcome and appreciated.

Sincerely,

Joshua Spangler
Maple Ridge Principal
814-445-6677

Marc Cacciotti
Eagle View Principal
814-444-8455

TABLE OF CONTENTS

WELCOME	3
SCHOOL HOURS	6
ATTENDANCE	
Registration	7
Arrival to School	7
Tardiness	7
Attendance Policy	8-11
Sign-Out Procedures	11
Pick-Up Procedures	11
Cancellations/Delays/Early Dismissals	11
GENERAL INFORMATION	
Parent Conferences	12
Parent Teacher Association	13
Report Cards	13
School Meals	13-14
Identification Cards	14
Field Trips	14
Fire/Severe Weather Drills	14-15
Student Assistance Program	15
Social Worker	15
Instructional Day	15
MTSS	16
Books	16
Money to School	16
Valuables	17
Cell Phones and Smartwatches	17
Cameras	17
Energy and Caffeinated Drinks and Water Bottles	17
Lockers	17-18
Eyeglasses	18
Classroom Placement	18
Moving to Another District	18
Dress	18-21

TRANSPORTATION	
Conduct on School Buses	21-23
Bus Transportation Policy	23-24
Video/Audio Monitors on School Buses	25-26
HEALTH	
Health/Wellness Statement	26
Heath Requirements	27
Medication Administration Policy	27
Administering Medicine Form	28
Lice/Nit Policy	29-31
Homeless Student Assistance	31
Homebound Instruction	32
HOMework POLICY	33
SCHOOL EMPLOYEE - “Hands-On Policy”	34
TITLE I PARENT COMPACT AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY	35-46
TITLE SCHOOLWIDE PLANS	46
SCHOOLWIDE POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION AND SUPPORT	47-48
DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICY	49-54
BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT POLICY	54-55
REGULATIONS FOR TITLE VI, IX AND SECTION 504	55
PARENT RIGHT TO KNOW REGULATIONS	55-56
SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES REGULATIONS	56-62
GIFTED EDUCATION	62
BULLYING/CYBERBULLYING POLICY	62-65
HOMELESS STUDENT ASSISTANCE	66-71
SCHOOL ISSUED iPADS	73
FLEXIBLE INSTRUCTIONAL DAYS	73

SOMERSET AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

“Success for All”

**Eagle View Elementary School
191 Discovery Lane
Somerset, Pennsylvania 15501
Phone: 444-8455
Fax: 445-3278**

7:30 A.M.....Homeroom Begins
7:55 A.M..... Warning Bell
8:00 A.M..... Tardy Bell
2:35 P.M. Student Dismissal
3:00 P.M. Teacher Dismissal

**Maple Ridge Elementary School
105 New Centerville Road
Somerset, Pennsylvania 15501
Phone: 445-6677
Fax: 445-1821**

7:30 A.M.....Homeroom Begins
7:55 A.M..... Warning Bell
8:00 A.M..... Tardy Bell
2:35 P.M. Student Dismissal
3:00 P.M. Teacher Dismissal

All parents and visitors are required to stop in the office to sign in and receive a visitor’s pass upon entering our schools.

ATTENDANCE

REGISTRATION

We are pleased you have chosen the Somerset Area School District and look forward to meeting and serving your child. All persons residing in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania between the ages of 5 and 21 years are entitled to a free and full education in the Commonwealth's public schools.

Parents or guardians of all children between the ages of 6 and 17 are required by the compulsory attendance law to ensure that their children attend an approved educational institution unless legally excused.

Please bring a copy of your child's state birth certificate, immunization records, and proof of residency with you at the time of registration.

ARRIVAL TO SCHOOL

Students should arrive at school between 7:00 and 7:55 A.M. No one is permitted in his or her homeroom prior to 7:30 A.M.

If you are bringing your children to school, they should be dropped off **only** in the areas designated for automobiles so you do not interfere with the flow of the buses. If it becomes necessary to pick your children up at the end of the school day, you should make arrangements to meet your child in the designated pick-up rooms of each building.

TARDINESS

A student who is tardy to school must check in at the office for attendance purposes before being admitted to class.

Elementary students will be considered tardy until 10:35 A.M. From 10:36 A.M. to 1:25 P.M. late entries will be counted as ½ day absence. Any entry after 1:25 P.M. will be considered a full day's absence.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

I. General Policy

Regular attendance at school is necessary so that students may have every opportunity to progress in their studies to the fullest. Excessive absenteeism not only impedes the student's academic achievement and social growth, but also limits the time a teacher can devote to a student. It has a demoralizing effect on our schools as a whole, as well as, on the academic progress of the specific absentee student.

II. Excused Absences

An absence of three or more consecutive days must be covered by a doctor's excuse.

An absence will be considered as excused only for the following reasons:

1. Personal illness
2. Serious illness or death in the immediate family
3. Emergency medical or dental attention
4. Absences approved in advance with school administration (college days, military tests, or physicals)
5. Authorized religious holidays

PRE-APPROVED EDUCATIONAL TRAVEL: Students may be excused from school for educational travel for a period of up to 5 school days per year. Parents must submit a request to the school prior to the departure date and must make arrangements for the student's work to be completed. Educational days are subject to approval by the school administration and will count towards the maximum of 10 parental excused days.

All other absences will be considered as unexcused and unlawful.

All excuses are required to be submitted within three (3) school days. This includes both those written and signed by the parent or guardian and those provided by the treating medical practitioner. If such an excuse is not submitted within three **(3) school days upon return to school**, the absence will be recorded as unexcused and unlawful.

III. Unexcused Absences

The following are **not excusable** absences in accordance with attendance laws. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of all unexcused absences; rather, it provides examples of unexcused activities:

1. Truancy
2. Missing the school bus
3. Parent/Sibling Appointments
4. Trips not approved in advance
5. Shopping
6. Hunting and fishing
7. Birthday or other celebrations/Weddings
8. Gainful employment
9. Work at home/Babysitting relatives

All absences, other than those defined as excused absences in Section II above, are considered unexcused absences.

Three (3) unexcused tardies will be recorded as one-half (1/2) day of unexcused absence. Unexcused absences may result in a Student Attendance Improvement Plan; referrals to Children and Youth Services, the Youth Advocate Program, or truancy court; and other interventions as determined through administrative discretion.

- 1.If a student is absent, he or she must present an excuse within three (3) days of returning to school after the absence or the absence shall be declared unlawful.
- 2.After a student has accumulated three (3) days or more of unexcused absences, the student's parents or guardians shall be notified by a three (3) day letter.
- 3.After a student has accumulated five (5) days of unexcused absences, the student and parents or guardians must take part in a Student Attendance Improvement Plan and will be contacted by the principal or designee.
- 4.Students who are under the age of seventeen (17) will be referred to Children and Youth Services, Youth Advocate Truancy Program, and referred to the appropriate Student Assistance Program (SAP) team after **5 days** of unexcused absences.
- 5.Students under the age of seventeen (17) will be referred to the magistrate at **7 days** of unexcused absences.

6. A maximum of ten (10) days of cumulative lawful excused absences verified by parental notification and unexcused absences are permitted during a school year. After ten days of excused/unexcused absences all absences must be accompanied by written confirmation from a doctor or the days will be marked unexcused. Ten-day letters will be mailed to parents/guardians at this time.
7. Bereavement days do not count toward ten (10) parent excuses, but they are considered absences.
8. A doctor's note must be provided when a student is absent for three or more consecutive days. Parents/guardians must attempt to ensure that all days missed due to illness are listed on the doctor's note; however, parent notes may run consecutive with physician-excused days up to five combined days of absence due to illness, as long as the parent/guardian has not exhausted his/her allotment of ten days.
9. Educational travel forms must be completed prior to departure. Arrangements must be made for students work to be completed. Five (5) educational travel days are permitted per school year.
10. A student of any age who has accumulated a total of thirty-five (35) days of either excused or unexcused absences may be retained in the same grade level for the succeeding year at the discretion of the principal. However, in exercising this discretion, the principal shall consider any prolonged medically excused absences if all of the academic assignments have been completed.
11. Any student who accumulates 10 or more medical absences will be required to submit a chronic illness verification form signed by his or her family physician. This verification shall be in addition to excuses as required for each absence. After the tenth medical absence, all other medical excuses will be deemed unexcused until this form is submitted.
12. In an effort to encourage school attendance, students may receive a grade of "zero" for all work graded on the unexcused day. Likewise, students may not be given an opportunity to make up tests, quizzes, homework, etc., for days missed that are unexcused.
13. Any students who are deemed chronically absent as defined by the state of PA (missing more than 10% of school year or approximately 17 days regardless of reason – medical/parental/other) may face the loss of privileges including but not limited to:
 1. Loss of electronic device privileges

2. Loss of extracurricular activities such as: athletics, sporting events, clubs, dances (including prom), incentives, etc...
 3. Loss of parking pass privileges
 4. Loss of work permits
 5. Loss of work release privileges
 6. Participation in graduation ceremonies
 7. Other activities at the discretion of administrators
14. Students who are of compulsory attendance age become subject to the provision of Act 29 of the PA School Code.

SIGN-OUT PROCEDURES

Students can only be dismissed through the office of their respective buildings. **Parents must proceed directly to the office and not to the child's classroom.**

Parents are asked to sign out their child in the school office when leaving and to check back in upon return. Students leaving school before 1:45 P.M. will be considered absent for 1/2 day.

PICK-UP PROCEDURES

Parent pick-up at dismissal will occur at each building's designated location. The person picking the student up must **ALWAYS** have their ID with them every time. Students will not be dismissed to a person without ID.

CANCELLATIONS - DELAYS - EARLY DISMISSALS

Parents are encouraged to go to the district website, **www.sasd.us**, to register for the electronic communication system. This system automatically calls those who are registered to inform them of delays and cancellations.

On a day when a delay has been announced, the doors will open at the following times:

1-hour delay—8:00 AM

2-hour delay—9:00 AM

Students may not be dropped off before these times on delayed days.

GENERAL INFORMATION

PARENT CONFERENCES

Parent conferences provide excellent communications and build a better understanding between teacher and parent.

They can be scheduled at your convenience throughout the school year.

Some helpful tips to parents for a successful parent-teacher conference include:

...Be prepared. Make a list of things you want to tell and ask the teacher. Items on the list may include homework policy, test results, and your child's attitude.

...If possible, leave your children at home when you go to a teacher-parent conference. Before meeting with the teacher, ask your child if there is anything that needs to be discussed.

...Be on time for your conference.

...Relay the results of your conference to your spouse so you may both work together to help and encourage your child.

...After the conference, talk with your child and stress the positive strong points brought out by the teacher. Also, discuss some possible suggestions for improvement.

...Remember, teachers love and care about children just as you do. Your children will always benefit if parents and teachers work as a team.

PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION

PTA fundraising projects have enabled the schools to purchase many useful items. Join us now - be active in the organization. For more information on how to join, please contact your local elementary school. Like any other organization the support of all parents is needed for a successful PTA. Your child will be receiving information with the times and dates of the meetings. Financial support is not enough. Direct involvement with activities and meetings will give you an insight into your child's school and the role it plays in his/her health, education, and welfare.

REPORT CARDS

The Somerset Area Elementary Schools use nine-week grading periods for all subjects. Student progress in the areas of academics and attendance will be indicated on the report card.

Distribution of report cards will occur approximately one week after the end of the grading period.

SCHOOL MEALS

Complete hot lunches including milk are served at a nominal price set by the Board of Education. The lunches are planned to provide a child with a balanced diet. Milk is available for purchase to those interested.

Free and reduced lunch forms will be sent home at the beginning of the school year.

Breakfast and Lunch

Regular Breakfast FREE FOR THE 2026-2027 SCHOOL YEAR
Regular Lunch \$ 1.95 Reduced Lunch \$ 0.00

Whole, 2%, Chocolate and Skim Milk \$ 0.50

Grab-and-go breakfasts are available at Eagle View each morning and are to be eaten in students' morning classrooms. The price of a grab-and-go breakfast for 2026-27 is \$0.00, the reduced price is \$.00, and a grab-and-go breakfast is available free for eligible students.

It is not permissible for students to have food items from restaurants or convenience stores delivered for lunch.

IDENTIFICATION CARDS

Every student is issued an identification card upon entering the Somerset Area School District and upon moving from one school building to the next. Identification cards are kept in students' homerooms and are taken to the cafeteria for the purpose of placing charges on lunch accounts and to the library for book check-out. We ask that students be responsible with their cards during the times that they use them to ensure that cards are not lost, defaced, or destroyed.

FIELD TRIPS

Class field trips are permitted throughout the school year. They are based entirely on their educational value for the students involved. A student's excessive misbehavior and/or absences during the school year may lead to the exclusion of that student from field trips.

FIRE, SEVERE WEATHER AND EVACUATION DRILLS

Emergency drills are held periodically for the safety of everyone in the building. Some drills require sheltering-in-place, evacuation, or

lockdown procedures. Actual emergencies will be announced via the District's electronic communication system and/or via social media. Parents/guardians should ensure current contact information is provided on student update forms and should follow the Somerset Area School District on FaceBook to receive related updates.

Room evacuation directions will be displayed in each room. It is imperative that everyone moves quickly and quietly to the appropriate outside exit when the fire alarm rings. Upon reaching the outside, all persons should move to a safe area away from the building and traffic lanes.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SAP)

The Somerset Area School District's Student Assistance Program is a systematic approach to the identification of students who may be at risk due to academic, social, and/or emotional problems.

SAP provides intervention and if appropriate, referral of these students to internal or external support services.

SAP is an intervention, as opposed to treatment, designed to facilitate collaboration between a student's home and school with the goal of meeting students' needs.

SAP is a caring group that strives to develop positive self-worth in Somerset students.

SOCIAL WORKER

A Licensed Clinical Social Worker is available in the District to meet with students when the District identifies a situation as an emergency/crisis and for students who require more extensive counseling. These services are provided through the Guidance Office.

INSTRUCTIONAL DAY

Each student's instructional day is devised to provide him or her with the instruction necessary to make him or her a successful student. In some cases, this may mean that a student will receive instruction or intervention during recess. Students must report to all assigned

instructional activities. Students who fail to do so will be disciplined.

MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORT (MTSS)

Somerset Area School District has designed and implemented a Multi-Tiered System of Support which:

1. Utilizes Acadience as the universal screener for all students kindergarten through fifth grade
2. Analyzes data to align resources including all staff, services, time, and materials
3. Assesses tier 1 effectiveness in meeting 80-85% of students' strengths and weaknesses
4. Delivers tier 2 and tier 3 interventions based on data collected through the universal screening and diagnostic assessments
5. Frequently monitors and records students' response to interventions and adjusts the intervention accordingly

For an overview of the entire program please visit the school's website.

BOOKS

A student is responsible for all books assigned to him/her. Should a book assigned to a student become lost or damaged, the student who was assigned the book will be held responsible.

MONEY TO SCHOOL

The school does not wish to see students experience problems involving loss or theft of money. This problem can be most easily avoided by not bringing large amounts of money to school unless absolutely necessary. When sending money to school, put it in an envelope along with the student's name, the amount of money enclosed and the purpose for which the money is to be used. Have your child give it to the teacher for safekeeping as soon as he/she arrives

at school.

VALUABLES

When valuable personal items are brought to school, the student is urged to bring them to the attention of the homeroom teacher. Attempts will be made to provide secure storage for the items until the student returns home. Students should avoid bringing valuables to school for unnecessary purposes. CD players, electronic games, mp3 players, ipods, radios, tape players, and other similar electronic devices may not be brought to school. We will not assume responsibility for such items when they are lost or stolen. Trading cards should not be brought to school. Skateboards, rollerblades, and wheeled shoes are not permitted on school property.

CELL PHONES AND SMARTWATCHES

Elementary students are permitted to bring cell phones to school. Phones **must** be turned off and remain in book bags and lockers (for Eagle View students) throughout the day. Students who turn their phones on or get their phones out during the day will be subject to discipline, and their phones will be confiscated and returned from the office to parents. Lost or stolen phones will **not** be the responsibility of staff, faculty or administration in any way.

While students can wear smartwatches, they should not be used for calls, messages, or other interactive functions during the school day. If a student needs to reach you for an urgent matter, or if you need to contact your child, please continue to use the main office as the point of contact. Smartwatches will be confiscated if used inappropriately.

CAMERAS

Cameras are permitted only with special permission from a student's teacher.

ENERGY AND CAFFENIATED DRINKS

Students are not permitted to bring energy, caffeinated, or flavored drinks to school. Water bottles are allowed but can be filled **ONLY** with water. Any other drink can be confiscated.

LOCKERS

Lockers are the property of the Somerset Area School District and students should have no expectation of privacy in them. A student may use a lock with his or her locker; however, a key or combination must be provided to the homeroom teacher. Lockers must be kept neat and clean. Damaging lockers or adhering anything to lockers that may damage their paint is not allowed. Failure to follow rules regarding lockers may result in a student's loss of locker privileges.

EYEGLASSES

It is important and necessary for a child's education that his or her vision be corrected if necessary. Please feel free to contact your child's school if we may provide information to help you carry out this important responsibility.

COMMUNICATION WITH PRINCIPALS REGARDING CLASSROOM PLACEMENT

Requests for specific classroom placements will not be accepted. Parents may explain the learning needs of their children in writing to their building principal. The principals, counselors, and other school team members will consider this information as student placements for the next school year are finalized. Requests for a specific teacher or correspondence received after the deadline will not be considered.

MOVING TO ANOTHER DISTRICT

Whenever possible, inform the school office as soon as you know your child will be moving to another school district. Please provide the office personnel with the name, address and phone number of the new school and the last day that your child will be attending our school. When the new school's office staff notifies us of your child's enrollment in the new school, all records will be forwarded.

DRESS

In cases not clearly defined by this policy, administration reserves

the right to determine “what is” and “what is not” school-appropriate attire.

Because they are in a school setting, students' clothing should be conservative and not provocative or revealing in any way.

Clothing cannot have any pictures, words, advertisements, or references of any kind to drugs (including tobacco and alcohol), sex, private body parts, or vulgar language (this includes shirts with “double-meaning” slogans or sayings).

Shirts:

- Must have shoulder straps no less than 3 inches in width
- Must be long enough that they could be tucked in and would remain tucked in when seated (with no bare midriff visible)
- Must not be low cut. The décolletage (chest/breast area) must be completely covered.
- Must cover all undergarments, including bra straps.

Shorts and skirts:

- Must extend to a point half way between the hip and the knee.
- Must not be so low-cut or worn so low that they reveal undergarments, skin, or body parts.
- Must not have tears or holes above the knee that draw unwelcome attention. (Administrative Discretion)

Hair:

Students have the right to govern the length and style of their hair, including facial hair. Any limitation of this right shall include evidence that the length or style of hair causes a disruption of the educational process or constitutes a health or safety hazard. Where length or style of the hair presents a problem, some type of covering should be considered. Hats are not permitted to be worn in school and must be removed upon entering the building.

School officials may impose limitations on dress if the attire causes the disruption of the educational process or constitutes a health or safety hazard.

Bare-midriff tops or tops not capable of being tucked in, shirts that have shoulder straps less than 3 inches in width, bike pants, see-through clothing, or clothing that is too tight or revealing are not permitted.

Leggings or leotards may only be worn with other apparel such as a skirt or shorts.

Clothing with sexually suggestive or derogatory pictures or phrases including the advertising of alcohol, drugs, or tobacco may not be worn.

Hats and sunglasses may not be worn in the school building.

Baggy pants or baggy shorts are not permitted.

Shoes or sandals must be worn. (Shoes with wheels are not permitted!)

Clothing which reveals any part of the undergarments such as lace-up jeans or low-rise jeans are not permitted.

Students may be required to wear certain types of clothing while participating in physical education classes, shops, extra-curricular activities, or other situations where special attire may be required to insure the health or safety of the student.

Students have the responsibility to keep themselves, their clothes, and their hair clean. School officials may impose limitations on student participation in the regular instructional program where there is evidence that the lack of cleanliness constitutes a health hazard or causes a classroom disruption.

Definition of Short Skirts/Shorts/Skorts/Dresses/Etc...

If the article of clothing in question does not meet or extend to a point half way between the hip and the knee, the article of clothing in question will be considered too short and must be changed.

Dress Code Discipline Policy

In each and every offense, the student's parents or guardians will be notified and an appropriate change of clothing must be brought to the school. Changing of clothing will be at the discretion of the principal.

TRANSPORTATION

Student Conduct On School Buses

Parents/guardians of students maintain the responsibility of child supervision until such time as the child boards the bus in the morning and after the child leaves the bus at the end of the school day.

Once a child boards the bus - and only at that time - does he or she become the responsibility of the school district. Such responsibility shall end when the child is delivered to the regular bus stop at the close of the school day.

In view of the fact that a bus is an extension of the classroom, the Somerset School Board shall require children to conduct themselves on the bus in a manner consistent with established standards for classroom behavior.

I. Guidelines

- A. Students are required to be at their bus stop 10 minutes before the scheduled pick-up time.
- B. The law prohibits bus drivers from changing bus stop locations without the approval of the school district administration.

- C. The bus driver is not permitted to make unscheduled stops.
- D. Students are not permitted to change their assigned stops or buses without written permission from the parent and approval from the Student Services office.
- E. Possession and/or use of tobacco on school buses is illegal. Citations will be issued the same as if the student was using on school property.
- F. Drinking soda and eating food or candy are not permitted on the buses. Suspension of riding privileges will result if the student is caught doing either of these two things.
- G. Rules for bus behavior are the same as those for behavior inside the school and classroom.
- H. Bus transportation is a privilege, not a right. Students who fail to conduct themselves respectfully will lose bus privileges and transportation will become the responsibility of the parent/guardian.

II. Discipline

In cases when a child does not conduct himself properly on a bus, the following procedures shall be followed:

- A. On the first abuse of privileges, the bus contractor shall:
 - 1. Contact parent and give a verbal explanation of the infraction.
 - 2. Follow the verbal communication with a written confirmation. Copies of the write-up will go to the principal and to the parents.
 - 3. The student will be counseled and receive a written warning.
- B. On the second offense, the bus contractor shall:
 - 1. Contact parent and give a verbal explanation of the infraction.
 - 2. Follow the verbal communication with a written confirmation. Copies of the write-up will go to the principal and to the parents.
 - 3. The student's bus privileges may be suspended for a maximum period of two weeks, depending upon the severity

of the problem.

C. On the third offense, the bus contractor shall:

1. Contact the parent and give a verbal explanation of the infraction.
2. Follow the verbal communication with a written confirmation. Copies of the write-up will go to the principal and to the parents.
3. The student's bus privileges may be suspended for the remainder of the school year, depending upon the severity of the problem.

If property is destroyed, the student is required to make payment within two weeks of notification or his bus privileges will be suspended until payment is received.

Certain, severe bus behavior incidents can result in temporary or permanent suspension from the bus without prior disciplinary measures, at the discretion of the district.

For information on student bus discipline matters, please contact Mr. Adam Rullo at (814) 444-3290. For information on bus routes or other bus-related concerns, please contact Mrs. Emily McMahon at (814) 444-3227. Unresolved transportation concerns can be directed to the Superintendent's office.

III. Bus Transportation Policy

* Each parent/guardian must confirm a Monday through Friday schedule before the start of the school year or at the time of enrollment. Parents/guardians must indicate in writing morning and afternoon bus stops for their children for each day of the week. These assigned stops will **remain in place for the entire school year** with the following exceptions:

1. Residence change
2. Permanent childcare arrangements necessitate a change in bus stops

3. A change in legal custody necessitates a bus stop reassignment

* Bus stop reassignment requests must be submitted in writing to the Supervisor of Transportation/Student Services at least three school days prior to the expected reassignment.

*** No day-to-day “bus passes” will be issued and no day-to-day bus stop reassignments will be approved.**

*** In emergency situations (such as medical emergencies that prevent an adult from being home to receive the student at the bus stop), parents must notify the school prior to 12:00 noon and arrange for the child to be picked up at the school by 2:35 PM.** It is preferable that the parent/guardian prepare for emergency situations in advance by having back-up plans for proper adult supervision at the bus stop.

Transportation Within the District

Any transportation or movement within the district will not require parent permission. With supervision, students may be transported from Maple Ridge to Eagle View, Maple Ridge to the High School auditorium or pool, Eagle View to the Jr. High School or pool, etc. for special activities.

Video/Audio Monitors on School Buses

Purpose:

The Board of School Directors and school officials recognize that undesirable behavior and serious misconduct on a school bus not only

makes it uncomfortable for the driver and fellow passengers but also jeopardizes the safety and well-being of all. Therefore, video/audio-monitoring cameras may be used as an aid in discouraging student misconduct. This policy includes athletic, band, field trips, and any other school-related activity.

Authority:

Once a student boards the school bus, he or she becomes the responsibility of the school district. Such responsibility shall end when the child is delivered to an approved bus stop at the close of the school day. In view of the fact that the school bus is an extension of the classroom, the Somerset School Board shall require students to conduct themselves on the school bus in a manner consistent with established standards for classroom behavior. The school bus driver is responsible for the safety and welfare of each passenger while the bus is in transit. Also, the responsibility for maintaining discipline on the school bus begins with the bus driver. The use of video/audio cameras on a school bus as an aid to monitor student behavior does not replace The School Bus Discipline Policy or the authority and responsibility of the bus driver or school officials to take appropriate action regarding misconduct.

The Board hereby delegates authority to the contractor to monitor the behavior of students riding on school buses and to assist in administering the discipline and video/audio policies.

GUIDELINES:

- 1) The Bus Driver's Report – Student discipline shall remain the primary tool for use by the driver in reporting misconduct that cannot be corrected by less formal means such as assignment of seats or verbal warnings.
- 2) The contractor will install video camera boxes on all regular route buses. Parents of Somerset Area School District students are hereby notified that video/audio surveillance may be utilized on buses.
- 3) The taping on school buses shall be video and audio.
- 4) **To protect student privacy**, parents/guardians will not be given the opportunity to review bus recordings unless criminal charges

are filed as a result of the child's conduct. The recordings become the property of the appropriate law enforcement agency and parents should request to view the recording from that agency.

Conclusion:

It is the continuing goal of the Somerset Area School District to ensure the safest possible student transportation system. Incidents which may seem insignificant or meaningless in other settings can create a serious hazard on the school bus. The driver's response to such an incident, relative to a split second of distraction, can have disastrous results. The use of the video/audio camera system is designed to assist in maintaining a safe environment that also encourages appropriate student conduct.

If you have questions concerning student transportation, please contact the Student Services office at 444-3227.

HEALTH/WELLNESS STATEMENT

The certified school nurses of Somerset Area School District want to ensure a safe and healthy environment for your child. The following routine screenings are performed to help identify any abnormalities that may potentially interfere with the learning process.

1. Vision (near/far/color and depth perception)
2. Hearing (PK-3)
3. Height/Weight (BMI calculation)
4. Parasitic (head lice)

HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

A physical examination is required upon original entry (PK/K/1), grade 6 and grade 11 or for any student entering Somerset Area School District with an incomplete health record.

A dental examination is required upon original entry (PK/K/1), grade 3 and grade 7 or for any student entering Somerset Area School District with an incomplete health record.

The following immunizations are required for all students as per Pennsylvania School Health Code:

1. Diphtheria/Tetanus (4)
2. Polio (3)
3. Measles, Mumps, Rubella/MMR (2)
4. Hepatitis B (3)
5. Varivax (1) or verified history of chickenpox disease

MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION POLICY

All medications, **prescription and/or non-prescription**, will only be dispensed with a **written order** from a medical doctor/dentist. Sending medication for **self-administration** in student lunch boxes or baggies is **prohibited**.

We request that the following form be used to administer medicine to students:

ADMINISTERING MEDICINE TO STUDENTS PARENT'S REQUEST

I/We hereby request that the Somerset Area School District, through its appropriate personnel, administer a physician's prescribed medication to our child, as described below. I/We further hereby release and hold harmless, the Somerset Area School District and its employees, from any liability for injury

or damages as a result of such administration of medicine.

Date: _____
Mother/Legal Guardian

Father/Legal Guardian

Consistent with the above request by the parents of the below identified child, I hereby request that the Somerset Area School District allow its appropriate personnel to administer a medication which I have prescribed, as follows:

- (a) Child’s name _____
- (b) Name of medication: _____
- (c) Purpose of medication: _____
- (d) Time to be administered: _____
- (e) Dosage: _____
- (f) Possible Side Effects: _____
- (g) Termination date for administering the medication: _____

DATE: _____
Licensed Medical Physician’s Signature

LICE/NIT POLICY

The issues surrounding lice and missed school time are highly volatile. Parents/guardians, educators, and students alike have many misconceptions about lice and the spread of lice among students. Parents

faced with lice treatment are understandably upset. There are numerous internet sites dealing with treatment and blame. Schools are often targeted incorrectly as sources of infestation.

A review of several legitimate and respected sources of lice and a no nit policy information reveal the following information:

- Lice do not jump or fly. Lice are acquired by direct head to head contact.

- Lice infestations are rarely spread by inanimate objects. Lice cannot survive more than a day or two off the host. Viable lice will not leave a healthy host.

- Animals do not spread lice.

- Nits or lice eggs do not mean an active infestation; nits more than 1/4 inch from the scalp are not viable.

- By the time a student is diagnosed with lice they probably had the infestation for a month or more.

- Lice shampoos contain toxic chemicals and caregivers must follow the directions carefully.

- Many screeners incorrectly diagnose lice infestation and school nurses remain the best trained screeners.

- Personal hygiene has nothing to do with lice infestation.

School nurses need a rational policy and plan to deal effectively with lice. The best plan includes a strong education program for staff, parents and students. Education is the most effective tool in dealing with lice. A review of the literature reveals several evidence based practices and procedures that may not be aligned with common behavior and beliefs surrounding the screening and treatment of lice.

Head lice while irritating do not pose a health risk.

Lice infestation is not a public health issue.

Treatment of nits alone (more than 1/4 inch from the scalp) is not advised.

Treatment should be considered when active lice or viable eggs (nits) are observed.

Mass screenings are ineffective and not cost effective.

No healthy child should be excluded on the basis of nits alone.

Removal of nits is not necessary to prevent the spread of lice but will aid in the diagnosis of lice.

A no nit policy is not advised or necessary.

The District's reasonable, evidence based lice policy includes the following:

Mass screenings may be conducted for elementary students at the beginning of the school year.

Students will be excluded from school ONLY for active infestation (live bugs and nits within 1/4 inch of the scalp).

Parents/guardians and students are expected to remove nits for both cosmetic reasons and to aid in diagnosis.

Students should miss no more than one day of school for the treatment of active lice infestations (the day the child is sent home, plus one day for treatment). All other missed days will be considered illegal.

Close contacts will be screened rather than conducting massive class

and school screenings.

The nursing department will provide printed educational materials for staff and parents.

The nursing staff will follow up, via telephone call and re-examination upon return to school, with every child sent home for active lice.

Students sent home for active lice infestations must be accompanied by the parent/guardian upon return to school for examination by the school nurse.

School nurses are given the latitude to use their professional judgment for further exclusion following treatment.

In extreme cases, the help and support of the public health system may be necessary to help educate caregivers.

Homeless Student Assistance

Students without health insurance, who have healthcare needs, will be referred to the school nurse and school physician. Please contact your building's school nurse.

HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION

Homebound instruction is offered to any student who for any doctor-documented reason is physically unable to attend school for an extended period of time. This instruction, which is an extension of the classroom, is presented in the student's home.

Homebound instruction is coordinated between the parents/guardians of the student and building principal. Parents/Guardians are responsible for registering the need for homebound instruction and completing the necessary forms to secure it. Forms may be obtained in each office.

The school will provide a certified teacher to instruct the student one hour per solid subject per week. The maximum number of hours per week for homebound instruction is four. Times and days of instruction will be coordinated between the student and the homebound instructor. Homebound instructors will communicate with the regular classroom teacher during the period of homebound instruction and after homebound instruction has terminated. It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians of the student to inform the building principal's office when the student is able to return to the regular classroom.

HOMEWORK POLICY

DEFINITION

Homework is:

Any work planned by the teacher for independent completion outside the classroom for the purpose of preparation, reinforcement or remediation of the educational activities of the student.

PHILOSOPHY

We believe:

Assigning homework is an acceptable practice that is beneficial at all levels and should be an integral part of the total education of the student.

Homework should be based on student needs, capabilities, and/or interests.

Each teacher, student, and parent has a responsibility for ensuring the success of homework assignments.

OBJECTIVES

Homework should:

Reinforce learning through the practice, application, integration, and/or extension of knowledge and skills.

Develop study skills, work habits, and a sense of personal responsibility so the student may become an independent learner.

Be a natural outgrowth of classroom activities.

SCHOOL EMPLOYEE

“HANDS-ON POLICY”

An employee of the Somerset Area School District may place hands on a child, with **No Intent to Harm**, in the following situations:

To separate students who are fighting or in their judgment are about to fight.

To defend themselves.

To come to the aid of a student. Example: student trips, falls, and becomes dizzy. School employees can help them to their feet and steady them with their hand as he or she walks the student to the nurse's office.

The school employee gives a direct order to a student and the student refuses to follow through. If the order is repeated and the student still refuses, then the school employee may place his or her hand between the student's shoulder and elbow and escort them to the office.



Somerset Area School District – Parent Compact

Each school receiving funds under Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) must develop a written school-parent compact jointly with parents for all children participating in Title I, Part A activities, services, and programs. That compact is part of the school's written parental involvement policy developed by the school and parents under section 1118(b) of the ESEA. The compact must outline how parents, the entire school staff, and students will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement and the means by which the school and parents will build and develop a partnership to help children achieve the State's high standards.

The Somerset Area School District and the parents of the students participating in activities, services, and programs funded by Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) (participating children), agree that this compact outlines how the parents, the entire school staff, and the students will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement and the means by which the school and parents will build and develop a partnership that will help children achieve the State's high standards.

This school-parent compact is in effect during the 2026-27 school year.

School Responsibilities

The Somerset Area School District will:

- 1. Provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment that enables the participating children to meet the State's student academic achievement standards as follows:**

The Somerset Area School District will provide for the delivery of a high – quality, standards – based curriculum by ensuring a continuous process of curriculum review and comparison to the most recently – released academic standards. Through the frequent analysis of student achievement data, the District will assess the effectiveness of its curriculum and curriculum delivery. Instructional methods will be reviewed via formative and summative assessments, and teachers and school administrators will engage in research – based professional development in instructional strategies deemed as

“best practices”. The Act 48 Professional Education Plan, in combination with Title IIA efforts and the Teacher Induction Plan are documents that include processes to ensure that the District maintains a highly – qualified staff that is continuously committed to providing effective instruction to the District’s students.

2. Hold parent-teacher conferences (at least annually in elementary schools) during which this compact will be discussed as it relates to the individual child’s achievement.

“Back – to – School Night” will be held annually, towards the beginning of each school year. Additional, individual parent – teacher conferences will be held on an as – needed basis, and can be requested by a teacher, Principal, guidance counselor, or parent/guardian.

3. Provide parents with frequent reports on their children’s progress

The Somerset Area School District will provide real time, 24 – hour access to student academic progress reports through the use of the online parent portal. In addition, parents/guardians will receive report cards every nine weeks. When needed, parents may obtain progress reports at any time, via the appropriate guidance counselor or school Principal. Formative, anecdotal progress reports may be requested from any teacher at any time. This information will be provided within one calendar week of the request.

4. Provide parents reasonable access to staff

Parents/guardians will have access to relevant school staff via telephone, electronic mail, or face – to – face meetings. Telephone numbers and email addresses can be obtained by contacting the building offices or at the District website, www.sasd.us. Meetings must be scheduled in advance via the building office.

5. Provide parents opportunities to volunteer in their child’s class

Parents/guardians in Title I schools may volunteer in their child’s classroom by making proper arrangements through the building office. Parents/guardians wishing to volunteer must have the approval of the teacher and building Principal prior to volunteering. Parents/guardians who volunteer agree to do so for educationally appropriate reasons and unconditionally commit to keeping all classroom events and student names confidential.

Parent Responsibilities

We, as parents, will support our children's learning in the following ways:

- *Monitoring attendance.*
- *Making sure that homework is completed.*
- *Monitoring amount of television their children watch.*
- *Volunteering in my child's classroom.*
- *Participating, as appropriate, in decisions relating to my children's education.*
- *Promoting positive use of my child's extracurricular time.*
- *Staying informed about my child's education and communicating with the school by promptly reading all notices from the school or the school district either received by my child or by mail and responding, as appropriate.*
- *Serving, to the extent possible, on policy advisory groups, such as being the Title I, Part A parent representative on the school's School Improvement Team, the Title I Policy Advisory Committee, the District wide Policy Advisory Council, the State's Committee of Practitioners, the School Support Team or other school advisory or policy groups.*

Title I Parent and Family Engagement Policy

Purpose

The Board recognizes that meaningful parent and family engagement contributes to the achievement of state academic standards by students participating in Title I programs. The Board views the education of students as a cooperative effort among the school, parents and family members, and community.[\[1\]](#)[\[2\]](#)

Definition

Parent and Family (Family Member) - these terms are used interchangeably and shall include caregivers, a legal guardian or other person standing in loco parentis such as a grandparent or stepparent with whom the child lives, a person who is legally responsible for the child's welfare, or a legally appointed Education Decision Maker of a child participating in a Title I program.

Authority

The Board directs the district and each of its schools with a Title I program to:[\[1\]](#)

1. Conduct outreach to all parents and family members.
2. Include parents and family members in development of the district's overall Title I Plan and process for school review and improvement.[\[3\]](#)
3. Include parents and family members in the development of the Title I Parent and Family Engagement Policy. Following adoption of the policy by the Board, the policy shall be:
 - a. Distributed in writing to all parents and family members.
 - b. Incorporated into the district's Title I Plan.[\[3\]](#)
 - c. Posted to the district's publicly accessible website.[\[4\]](#)
 - d. Evaluated annually with parent and family involvement.
4. Provide opportunities and conduct meaningful collaborations with parents and family members in the planning and implementation of Title I programs, activities and procedures.

Accessibility

The district and each of its schools with a Title I program shall provide communications, information and school reports to parents and family members who are migrants or who have limited English proficiency, a disability, limited literacy, or racial and ethnic minority backgrounds, in a language they can understand.[\[1\]](#)[\[5\]](#)

Delegation of Responsibility

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that the district's Title I Parent and Family Engagement Policy, plan and programs comply with the requirements of federal law.[\[1\]](#)[\[3\]](#)

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that the district and its schools with Title I programs provide opportunities for the informed participation of parents and family members by providing resources, information and school reports in an understandable and uniform format or, upon request, in another format. Such efforts shall include:

1. Providing communications in clear and simple language.
2. Posting information for parents and family members on the district's website.
3. Including a telephone number for parents and family members to call with questions.
4. Partnering with community agencies which may include libraries, recreation centers, community-based organizations and faith-based organizations to assist in sharing information.
5. Provide language access services to families with limited English proficiency through on-site or telephonic translation and interpretation services, as appropriate.[5]

The building principal and/or Title I staff shall notify parents and family members of the existence of the Title I programs and provide:

1. An explanation of the reasons supporting their child's selection for the program.
2. A set of goals and expectations to be addressed.
3. A description of the services to be provided.
4. A copy of this policy and the School-Parent and Family Compact.[1]

Parents and family members shall actively carry out their responsibilities in accordance with this policy and the School-Parent and Family Compact. At a minimum, parents and family members shall be expected to:[1]

1. Volunteer in their child's classroom.[6]
2. Support their child's learning.
3. Participate, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their child and positive use of extracurricular time.

Guidelines

Each district school operating a Title I program shall hold an annual meeting of parents and family members at a convenient time, to explain the goals and purposes of Title I programs and to inform them of their right to be involved. Parents and family members shall be given the opportunity to participate in the design, development, operation and evaluation of the program. Parents and family members shall be encouraged to participate in planning activities, to offer suggestions, and to ask questions regarding policies and programs.[\[1\]](#)

The schools with Title I programs shall offer a flexible number of meetings which shall be held at various times of the morning and evening. Title I funds may be used to enable parent and family member attendance at meetings through payment of transportation, child care costs or home visits.[\[1\]](#)

The schools shall involve parents and family members in an organized, ongoing and timely way, in the planning, review and improvement of Title I programs, the Title I Parent and Family Engagement Policy and the joint development of the Title I Plan.[\[1\]](#)[\[3\]](#)

At these meetings, parents and family members shall be provided:[\[1\]](#)

1. Timely information about programs provided under Title I.
2. Description and explanation of the curriculum in use, the forms of academic assessment used to measure student progress, and the achievement levels of the academic standards.
3. Opportunities to formulate suggestions and to participate, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their children.

To ensure the continuous engagement of parents and family members in the joint development of the Title I Plan and with the school support and improvement process, the district shall:

Establish meaningful, ongoing two-way communication between the district, staff and parents and family members.

Communicate with parents and family members about the plan and seek their input and participation through the use of newsletters, the district website, email, telephone, parent and teacher conferences, and home visits if needed.

Train personnel on how to collaborate effectively with parents and family members with diverse backgrounds that may impede their participation, such as limited literacy or language difficulty.

Analyze and share the results of the Title I Parent/Family Survey.

Post school performance data on the district's website.

Distribute and discuss the School-Parent and Family Compact.

Host various parent and family nights at each school building with a Title I program.

Establish and support active and engaged Title I parent and family advisory councils. The council will include a majority of parents and family members of students participating in Title I programs, as well as the building principal, teachers or other appropriate staff, students and community members. The purpose of the council shall be to focus on improved student achievement, effective classroom teaching, parent/family/community engagement in the educational process, and to facilitate communications and support.

Actively recruit parents and family members to participate in school review and improvement planning.

Assign district representatives to be available to work collaboratively with parents and family members, and to conduct school-level trainings to promote understanding of school data, comprehensive plans and the budgeting process.

Invite participation of parents and family members at the regular comprehensive planning committee meetings, Title I budget meetings and school improvement plan meetings to obtain input and propose school improvement initiatives.

If the Title I Plan is not satisfactory to parents and family members, the district shall submit any parent or family member comments with the plan when the school makes the plan available to the Board.[\[1\]\[3\]](#)

Building Capacity for Parent and Family Engagement

The district shall provide the coordination, technical assistance, and other support necessary to assist and build the capacity of all participating schools

in planning and implementing effective parent and family involvement activities to improve academic achievement and school performance through:[1]

1. Providing assistance to parents and family members in understanding such topics as the academic standards, state and local academic assessments, the requirements of parent and family involvement, how to monitor a child's progress and work with teachers to improve the achievement of their children.[2][7]
2. Providing material and training to help parents and family members work with their children to improve academic achievement and to foster parent and family engagement, such as:
 - a. Scheduling trainings in different locations on a variety of topics including how to support their child in school, literacy, school safety, cultural diversity and conflict resolution.
 - b. Using technology, including education about the harms of copyright piracy, as appropriate.[8]
 - c. Providing information, resources and materials in a user friendly format.
 - d. Providing, as requested by a parent or family member, other reasonable support for parent and family engagement activities.
3. Educating teachers, specialized instructional support personnel, principals and other school leaders and staff, with the assistance of parents and family members, on the value and usefulness of contributions of parents and family members and in how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with them as equal partners, implement and coordinate parent and family programs, and build ties between parents and family members and the school.[9]
4. To the extent feasible and appropriate, coordinating and integrating Title I parent and family involvement efforts and activities with other federal, state and local programs, including public preschool programs, and conduct other activities, such as parent resource

centers, that encourage and support parents and family members in more fully participating in the education of their children.[\[1\]](#)[\[5\]](#)[\[10\]](#)[\[11\]](#)[\[12\]](#)[\[13\]](#)[\[14\]](#)[\[15\]](#)

5. Engage the PTA/PTO to actively seek out and involve parents and family members through regular updates, information sessions and assistance with the identification of effective communication strategies.
6. Train parents and family members to enhance the involvement of other parents and family members.
7. Adopt and implement model approaches to improving parent and family engagement.
8. Establish a district-wide parent and family advisory council to provide advice on all matters related to parent and family engagement in Title I programs.
9. Engage community-based organizations and businesses in parent and family engagement activities.

Coordinating Parent and Family Engagement Strategies

The district shall coordinate and integrate Title I parent and family engagement strategies with other parent and family engagement strategies required by federal, state, and local laws by:[\[1\]](#)[\[5\]](#)[\[10\]](#)[\[11\]](#)[\[12\]](#)[\[13\]](#)[\[14\]](#)[\[15\]](#)

1. Involving district and program representatives to assist in identifying specific parent and family member needs.
2. Sharing data from other programs to assist in developing initiatives to advance academic achievement and school improvement.

Annual Parent and Family Engagement Policy Evaluation

The district shall conduct, with meaningful participation of parents and family members, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of this policy in improving the academic quality of all district schools with a Title I program.[\[1\]](#)

The evaluation shall identify:[\[1\]](#)

1. Barriers to parent and family member participation, with particular attention to those who are migrants, are economically disadvantaged,

have a disability, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy, or are of any racial or ethnic minority.

2. The needs of parents and family members to assist with the learning of their children, including engaging with school personnel and teachers.
3. Strategies to support successful school and parent and family interactions.

The evaluation shall be conducted through:

Establishment of a schedule and process for the policy review and revision by parents and family members.

An evaluation of the effectiveness of the content and communication methods through a variety of methods.

A parent and family member and teacher survey designed to collect data on school level and district-wide parent and family engagement outcomes.

Focus groups. Parents and family members, and community members, unable to attend the focus groups in person shall have an opportunity to participate in an alternate format.

Documentation of parent and family member input regarding Title I programs and activities from throughout the year.

A parent and family advisory council comprised of a sufficient number and representative group of parents and family members to adequately represent the needs of the district's Title I population.

The district shall use the findings of the annual evaluation to design evidence-based strategies for more effective parent and family engagement, and to revise, if necessary, the district's Title I Parent and Family Engagement Policy.[\[1\]](#)

School-Parent and Family Compact

Each school in the district receiving Title I funds shall jointly develop with parents and family members a School-Parent and Family Compact outlining the manner in which parents and family members, the entire school staff and students will share responsibility for improved student academic achievement and the means by which the school and parents and family members will build and develop partnerships to help children achieve the state's academic standards. The compact shall:[\[1\]](#)

1. Describe the school's responsibility to provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment, enabling students in Title I programs to meet the academic standards.
2. Describe the ways in which parents and family members will be responsible for supporting their child's learning; volunteering in the classroom; and participating, as appropriate, in decisions related to their child's education and positive use of extracurricular time.[\[6\]](#)
3. Address the importance of ongoing two-way, meaningful communication between parents/family members and teachers through, at a minimum, annual parent-teacher conferences at the elementary level, frequent reports to parents and family members on their child's progress, reasonable access to staff, opportunities to volunteer and participate in their child's class, and observation of classroom activities.[\[6\]](#)

Title I Funds

Unless exempt by law, the district shall reserve at least one percent (1%) of its Title I funds to assist schools in conducting parent and family engagement activities. Parents and family members shall be involved in the decisions regarding how the Title I reserved funds are used for parent and family engagement activities.[\[1\]](#)

Not less than ninety percent (90%) of the reserved funds shall be distributed to district schools with a Title I program, with priority given to high need schools. The district shall use the Title I reserved funds to conduct activities and strategies consistent with this policy, including:[\[1\]](#)

Supporting schools and nonprofit organizations in providing professional development for the district and school personnel regarding parent and family engagement strategies, which may be provided jointly to teachers, principals, other school leaders, specialized instructional support personnel,

paraprofessionals, early childhood educators, and parents and family members.[9]

Supporting programs that reach parents and family members at home, in the community, and at school.

Disseminating information on best practices focused on parent and family engagement, especially best practices for increasing the engagement of economically disadvantaged parents and family members.

Collaborating or providing subgrants to schools to enable such schools to collaborate with community-based or other organizations or employers with a record of success in improving and increasing parent and family engagement.

Engaging in any other activities and strategies that the district determines are appropriate and consistent with this policy.

Documentation of Parent and Family Engagement Practices

Documentation to track the implementation of this policy is an essential part of compliance and may include, but not be limited to, sign-in sheets at workshops, meetings and conferences; schedules, training and informational materials; communications and brochures; and meeting notes.

TITLE I SCHOOLWIDE PLANS

Title I Schoolwide Plans for Maple Ridge and Eagle View are available for review in each building's office. You can also access the schoolwide plans by visiting Maple Ridge and Eagle View's website.

SCHOOLWIDE POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION AND SUPPORT

PBIS Defined

Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) is rooted in the perspective that behavior is learned, is related to immediate and social environmental factors, and can be changed. PBIS is based on the idea that students learn appropriate behavior in the same way they learn to read—through instruction, practice, feedback, and encouragement. Key features of PBIS include:

1. administrative leadership
2. team-based implementation
3. a clear set of defined positive expectations and behaviors
4. teaching of expected behaviors
5. recognition of meeting expected behaviors
6. monitoring and correcting errors in behaviors
7. using data-based information for decision-making, monitoring, and evaluating building results

Why PBIS?

Research has shown that the implementation of punishment, especially when it is used inconsistently and in the absence of other positive strategies, is ineffective. Introducing, modeling, and reinforcing positive social behavior are important aspects of a students' educational experiences. Teaching behavioral expectations and recognizing students for following them is a much more positive approach than waiting for misbehaviors to occur before responding. The purpose of PBIS is to establish a climate in which appropriate behavior is expected and becomes the norm.

What Does Schoolwide PBIS Emphasize?

In general, SWPBIS emphasizes four integrated elements: (a) data for decision making, (b) measurable outcomes supported and evaluated by data, (c) practices with evidence that these outcomes are achievable, and (d) systems that efficiently and effectively support implementation of these practices. These four elements are guided by six important principles:

1. Develop a continuum of scientifically based behavior and academic interventions and supports
2. Use data to make decisions and solve problems
3. Arrange the environment to prevent the development and occurrence of problem behavior
4. Teach and encourage pro-social skills and behaviors
5. Implement evidence-based behavioral practices with fidelity and accountability
6. Screen universally and monitor student performance and progress continuously

For an overview of the entire program, please visit the school's website.

SOMERSET AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT PK-5 STUDENT DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICY

PREAMBLE

The Somerset Area School District prohibits the use, possession, or distribution of alcohol or other drugs during those hours when the school district administrators and employees have the right to exercise *in loco parentis* powers over the student in accordance with the Public School Code, including but not limited to, school hours, at any school-sponsored event, and during the time required in going a) from their homes to school and b) from school to their homes. The Board further prohibits the use, possession or distribution of alcohol or other drugs on school property at any time. The Board further prohibits students from being present at school events during the times described in this paragraph where they are under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.

Furthermore, it is the intent of the Somerset Area School District that all students demonstrate high personal standards and good citizenship, and especially while participating in school-sponsored activities and athletics. These extra-curricular activities cause the students to interact with the public and thus represent the Somerset Area School District and the community of Somerset. Therefore, it is imperative that Somerset Area School District students conduct themselves in an exemplary manner outside of school and at all times. Participation in extra-curricular activities/athletics is a privilege earned by observing these expected standards.

PURPOSE AND FINDINGS

Drugs pose a real and present danger to the health, safety and well-being of our community and schools. The school district's role as a significant source of knowledge to our community's youth regarding this danger requires that this district include, as a part of their education, a clear and fair policy for the detection and eradication of drugs in our schools. The school district, working with families, government agencies, and church and charitable organizations, should always strive to provide a safe and drug-free environment.

The purpose of any school district policy must be the welfare and well-being of the individual student, staff member, and the school population in general. These regulations direct the handling of situations within the jurisdiction of the Somerset Area School District. It is the goal of this policy to provide a solid foundation that includes procedures that provide a consistent means for addressing drug-and alcohol-related difficulties while recognizing the needs and rights of all parties involved, within the confines of the law and sensible judgment.

The school district's policy outlines expectations to promote an alcohol-and drug-free school setting for all students (PK-12) and district employees on all district property, during the school day and at athletic events, on the school buses and at school-sponsored or sanctioned events. In order to ensure safety and enforce this policy, the school has the right to conduct searches and use drug-trained dogs and other surveillance and investigative tools at all times to conduct searches of lockers and elsewhere on school grounds when individuals are suspected to be in violation of this policy (see Search Policy below).

In development and adoption of this policy, a reasonable effort has been made to establish procedures for students, teachers, parents, and administrators to aid individuals experiencing drug- and alcohol- related difficulty in compliance with Act 63 of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania while ensuring the discipline and safety of the school population.

References in this policy to a “drug” or “drugs”, unless the context clearly requires otherwise, shall mean in addition to the definition provided below (1) controlled substances and alcoholic beverages as defined in the Pennsylvania Drug, Device and Cosmetic Act, the Pennsylvania Crimes Code, and the Pennsylvania Vehicle Code (The “Pennsylvania Criminal Statutes”), (2) commercially available inhalants, over-the-counter preparations and medicines, herbal preparations, prescription drugs, and drug look-a-likes. For purposes of interpretation and implementation of this policy, the definition of any terms used in this policy (for example, “possession” or “delivery”) in the Pennsylvania Criminal Statutes shall be controlling.

DEFINITIONS

Drug (mood-altering substance): as used in the policy shall be defined as any controlled substance, non-controlled substance, or “designer drug”, “look alike” substance or health-endangering substances.

1. Controlled Substance: A controlled substance is any drug or substance listed in schedules 1-5 of the Pennsylvania Drug Device and Cosmetic Act of 1972. Examples include, but are not limited to, alcohol, marijuana, stimulants, depressants, and hallucinogens.
2. Non-controlled Substance: A non-controlled substance is any substance containing phenylpropanolamine, pseudoephedrine, ephedrine, or any depressant effect on humans. In addition to the items stated above, any product that includes chemical solvents or aerosol carcinogens is also considered a non-controlled substance.
3. “Designer Drug”: A controlled substance analog is a non-controlled substance which either produces the pharmacological effect or is represented to produce pharmacological effects similar to a controlled substance in Schedule 1 or 2 of the Pennsylvania Drug Device and Cosmetic Act of 1972.

4. “Look-Alike” Substance: A non-controlled substance whose physical appearance of the finished dosage form containing the non-controlled substance is substantially identical to any controlled substance, taking into account size, shape, color, markings or lack thereof.
5. Health Endangering Substance: Any substance that may be harmful to the individual and that is not covered in the Pennsylvania Drug Device and Cosmetic Act of 1972.

Drug paraphernalia: All equipment, products and material of any kind which are used, intended for use or designed for use in planting, propagating, cultivating, growing, harvesting, manufacturing, compounding, producing, processing, preparing, testing, analyzing, packaging, repackaging, storing, containing, concealing, injection, injecting, ingesting, inhaling, or otherwise introducing to the human body a controlled substance.

Student Assistance Team: A referral mechanism designed to aid school personnel and parents in identifying students with problems that inhibit the educational process, as well as problems referred through violation of the District’s Drug and Alcohol Policy.

School event: A school-sponsored event or a school-sanctioned event.

School-sponsored event: Any event sponsored by the Somerset Area School District on district property in which students (grades PK-12), who are presently enrolled in the Somerset Area School District, are representing the school district as participants or spectators.

School-sanctioned event: Any event conducted on property owned by the district in which students (grades PK-12), who are presently enrolled in the Somerset Area School District, are representing the school district as participants or spectators.

School property: All locations under the jurisdiction of the Somerset Area School District including away events in or out of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Student: Any individual who is currently enrolled in the Somerset Area School District as an active pre-kindergarten (PK) through grade twelve (12) student.

General drug policy: References to the district’s general drug policy shall mean the policy, procedures and sanctions contained in this section.

POLICY AND PROCEDURES

If any student is suspected of (1) possession, (2) being under the influence of or use during or prior to school hours or at a school event or otherwise on school property at

any time, or (3) delivery, sale or distribution of drugs in the school, at a school event, while on school property or on a school bus operated for any school event, purpose or function, including daily transportation of students to and from school, the school official having disciplinary responsibility for the student (the “administrator”) will immediately investigate the situation. If the administrator determines that a violation of this policy has occurred, the administrator shall:

1. Obtain proper medical attention for the student.
2. Notify the student’s parents of the administrator’s determination and the student’s rights under this policy.
3. Inform the police agency having jurisdiction over the possible offense when appropriate (even if the administrator may be of the opinion that no violation of the Pennsylvania Criminal Statutes has occurred).
4. Order a temporary three-day suspension that will be extended to a full ten-day suspension after a hearing is held with the student and the student’s parent or guardian to review the administrator’s initial determination.
5. Refer the student to the Student Assistance Team for a drug and alcohol assessment conducted during the suspension by a qualified drug or alcohol counselor. The student must agree to comply with any recommendations resulting from the assessment before returning to school and must provide the school with documentation of the assessment and recommendation. This documentation must include confirmation in writing from the counselor of the student’s full cooperation with the counselor including consent to the release of all information used in developing the assessment and recommendation to the administrator. If a student fails to complete the drug assessment, the administrator shall consider additional disciplinary measures, including alternative placement or recommendations for expulsion. All disciplinary decisions and recommendations made by an administrator shall be in the form of a written report and entered in the student’s permanent record and a separate discipline file maintained by the superintendent.
6. In appropriate cases, or where required by this policy, the administrator shall recommend expulsion from school under the authority and procedures contained in the School Code of Pennsylvania. In cases where a student is involved in the delivery, sale or distribution of drugs in school, on school property, or at a school event, the administrator shall request that the student

be expelled unless the administrator submits a report to the school board recommending punishment not including expulsion and the school board approves. If the school board does not approve the alternative punishment, the superintendent shall recommend expulsion and an expulsion hearing shall be scheduled.

7. Any student who is a member of an interscholastic, extra-curricular, or co-curricular organization, or is a student driver and who (1) violates this policy, or (2) is adjudicated by a court of law (or agrees to an alternative disposition of an offense in lieu of such determination) to have committed a violation of any criminal statute of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania or any other jurisdiction of which the use, possession or attempted use or possession of any drug or alcoholic beverage is an element will be subject to the disciplinary measures outlined in the District's Interscholastic/Extra-Curricular/Co-Curricular/Student Driver Policy (see below).

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Self-referral information is available from the school's Student Assistance Team. If you need to make a referral or have information to share regarding violations or concerns relevant to the District's Drug Policy, please contact the building administrator at 443-2831.

SOMERSET AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT PK-12 DRUG, ALCOHOL, AND WEAPON SEARCH POLICY

SEARCH POLICY

The Board of Directors of the Somerset Area School District has concluded that this community expects the school district to provide an environment for its students that is safe, alcohol- and drug-free, and conducive to learning.

To provide such an environment the School District must take appropriate steps to see that the schools are free from the intrusion of weapons and alcohol or controlled substances.

This obligation creates a compelling interest upon the School District to adopt and enforce a consistent policy statement, which clearly states that the commitment to provide an environment, that is safe and conducive to learning, by far outweighs any expectation of privacy held by anyone who comes upon school property.

In this regard, the Somerset Area School District hereby states that all school property is public property, and that any person coming upon school property for any purpose must be aware that there is no expectation of privacy for one's personal belongings or

effects, including concealed items, upon school property.

Therefore, it is hereby established that all lockers and all parking areas within the property of the Somerset Area School District are owned by the School District. Students are merely granted permission to use same by the School District. As a condition of the use of the Somerset Area School District's lockers and parking areas each student must acknowledge that the student has no expectation of privacy within them and must consent to searches by school officials having a reasonable basis to suspect a violation of school policy, of each of the school district's lockers and each car parked the district's parking areas.

Further, it is emphasized that the ability of students to carry belongings to school property in such carriers as backpacks, knapsacks, pockets in the student's clothing, book bags, valises, gym bags or any other type of containers is not a right, but is by permission of the School District. As a condition of the use of such carriers and containers upon school property, each student must acknowledge that the student has no expectation of privacy within them and consent to searches by school officials having a reasonable basis to suspect a violation of school policy.

It is also emphasized that non-students have even less of an interest in privacy when coming upon school property. Non-students, whether juveniles or adults, subject themselves to the provision of school policy when coming onto school property. Therefore, any person as a condition of coming onto school property subjects himself, his vehicle and his possessions to searches by school officials having a reasonable basis to suspect a violation of school policy, and his coming upon school property is consent to detention for searches.

The superintendent is authorized to communicate this policy and its applicability to all persons in or upon school property in any appropriate manner, including permanent signs erected on school property.

Finally, it is the policy of the Somerset Area School District that any weapons, alcohol, or other controlled substances found as a result of searches authorized by this policy, in the nature of weapons and alcohol or controlled substances, will be the basis of disciplinary procedures by the school district and will be delivered to law enforcement authorities for appropriate action.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT POLICY

The Pennsylvania Department of Education requires that behavior management plans be written for eligible special education students whose behavior problems interfere with learning. **Positive Behavior**

Support Plans are written programs designed to develop, change, and maintain selected behaviors through the systematic application of behavior change techniques. Behavior management programs include a variety of techniques to develop and maintain skills that will enhance an individual student's opportunity for learning and self-fulfillment. Positive rather than negative measures will form the basis of behavior management programs. The planned behavioral program is part of the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) and is to be based upon the written policy of behavior management techniques adopted by the Somerset Area School District. For additional information, please contact Mr. Erick Fish, Director of Special Programs, Somerset Area School District (444-3225).

The Administration reserves the right to use an alternative school placement to complement behavior management plans and/or when the student's needs are greater than what the District can effectively address.

REGULATIONS FOR TITLE VI, IX AND SECTION 504

Somerset Area School District is an equal opportunity education institution and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex 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 procedures contact Mrs. Krista S. Mathias, Title IX Coordinator (814) 443-2831, ext. 3211. For information regarding services, activities and facilities that are accessible to and usable by handicapped persons, contact Mrs. Mathias.

Parent Right to Know Information as Required by The Elementary and
Secondary Education Assistance (ESEA) [Section 1112(e)(1)(A)] and the
Every Student Succeeds Act [Section 1112(e)(1)(A)]

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

Your child attends Maple Ridge or Eagle View Elementary School, which receives Federal Title I funds to assist students in meeting state achievement standards. Throughout the school year, we will be providing

you with important information about this law and your child's education. This letter lets you know about your right to request information about the qualifications of the classroom staff working with your child.

At Maple Ridge, we are very proud of our teachers and feel they are ready for the coming school year and are prepared to give your child a high-quality education. As a Title I school, we must meet federal regulations related to teacher qualifications as defined in ESEA. These regulations allow you to learn more about your child's teachers' training and credentials. We are happy to provide this information to you. At any time, you may ask:

- Whether the teacher met state qualifications and certification requirements for the grade level and subject he/she is teaching,
- Whether the teacher received an emergency or conditional certificate through which state qualifications were waived, and
- What undergraduate or graduate degrees the teacher holds, including graduate certificates and additional degrees, and major(s) or area(s) of concentration.

You may also ask whether your child receives help from a paraprofessional. If your child receives this assistance, we can provide you with information about the paraprofessional's qualifications.

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) which was signed into law in December 2015 and reauthorizes the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) includes additionally right to know requests. At any time, parents and family members can request:

- Information on policies regarding student participation in assessments and procedures for opting out, and
- Information on required assessments that include
 - subject matter tested,
 - purpose of the test,
 - source of the requirement (if applicable),
 - amount of time it takes students to complete the test, and
 - time and format of disseminating results.

Our staff is committed to helping your child develop the academic knowledge and critical thinking he/she needs to succeed in school and beyond. That commitment includes making sure that all of our teachers and paraprofessionals meet applicable Pennsylvania state requirements.

If you have any questions about your child's assignment to a teacher or paraprofessional, please contact us at Maple Ridge at 445-6677 or at Eagle View at 444-8455.

Sincerely,

Joshua Spangler
Trevor Anderson

SOMERSET AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
Annual Public Notice of Special Education
Services and Programs
Services for School Age Children with Disabilities

It is the responsibility of the Pennsylvania Department of Education to insure that all children with disabilities residing in the Commonwealth (including children with disabilities attending

private schools, regardless of the severity of their disabilities), and who are in need of special education or related services, are identified, located, and evaluated. This responsibility is required by the individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Amendments of 2004 (IDEA 2004).

The Somerset Area School District provides a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) to children with disabilities who need special education and related services. FAPE is provided to students who need specially designed instruction and have one or more of the following physical or mental disabilities:

- Autism
- Deaf-blindness
- Deafness
- Emotional Disturbance
- Hearing Impairment
- Mental Retardation
- Multiple Disabilities
- Orthopedic Impairment
- Other Health Impairment
- Specific Learning Disability
- Speech or Language Impairment
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Visual Impairment including Blindness

Early Intervention

The IDEA 2004 also requires the provision of a Free Appropriate Public Education to children with disabilities between three years of age and the school district's age of beginners who have a developmental delay or one or more of the physical or mental disabilities listed in the first section may be identified as an "eligible young child".

Eligible young children are afforded the rights of school age children with disabilities, including screening, evaluation, individualized education program planning, and provision of appropriate programs and services. The Pennsylvania Department of Education is responsible for providing programs and services to eligible young children under Act 212 of 1990, The Early Intervention Services System Act. Appalachia Intermediate Unit 8 provides programs and services to eligible young children on behalf of the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

Screening

The Somerset Area School District has established and implemented procedures to locate, identify, and evaluate children suspected of having a disability. These procedures involve screening activities which include, but are not limited to: yearly review of group-based data (cumulative records, enrollment records, health records, and report records); hearing screening (at a minimum of kindergarten, special ungraded

classes, first, second, third, seventh, and eleventh grades); vision screening (every grade level); motor screening; and speech and language screening. In addition the Somerset Area School District uses early intervening services to verify that the student was provided appropriate instruction in reading, including the essential components of reading instruction, appropriate instruction in math, and an assessment of the student's performance in relation to State-approved grade level standards. Screening or early intervening services do not serve as a bar to the right of a parent to request evaluation, at any time, including prior to or during the conduct of early intervening activities.

Except as indicated above or otherwise announced publicly screening activities take place in an on-going fashion throughout the school year. Screening is conducted in the child's home school unless other arrangements are necessary.

Evaluation

When screening indicates that a student may be a child with a disability, the Somerset Area School District will seek parental consent to conduct an evaluation. Evaluation means procedures used in the determination of whether a child has a disability and the nature and extent of the special education and related services that the child requires. The term means procedure used selectively with an individual child and does not mean basic tests administered to or procedures used with all children.

In Pennsylvania, this evaluation is conducted by a multidisciplinary team (MDT) that includes the parents and qualified professionals. The evaluation process must be completed no later than sixty calendar days after the district receives informed written parental consent and must include "protection-in-evaluation procedures". For example, tests and procedures used as part of the multidisciplinary evaluation process may not be racially or culturally biased. The evaluation process results in a written evaluation report that specifies a student's eligibility for special education based on the presence of a disability and the need for specially designed instruction.

Identification Activities

Parents who think their child is exceptional may request, at any time, that the school district conduct a multidisciplinary evaluation. This request should be made in writing to the Building Principal or Director of Special Education. If a parent makes an oral request for a multidisciplinary evaluation, the school district shall provide the parent with a form for that written request.

Parents also have the right to obtain an independent educational evaluation. The Somerset Area School District will provide parents, on request, information about where an independent educational evaluation may be obtained. Under certain circumstances, such an independent educational evaluation may be obtained at public expense.

Educational Placement

The IEP team develops an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). This team includes at least one regular education teacher of the child (if the child is, or may be, participating in the regular education environment), at least one special education teacher, a representative of the local education agency, the student whenever appropriate, or beginning at age 14, and the parents. The IEP describes the child's present levels of educational performance, goals, objectives (when

required), and the individualized programs and services the child will receive. For each child with a disability, beginning at age fourteen or younger when deemed appropriate, a statement of transition service needs will be included. In determining student placement, consideration will be given to ensure that to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities are educated with children who are non-disabled. Classes and services that involve removal of children with disabilities from the regular environment will occur only if the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes, with the use of supplementary aids and services, cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

Services for Handicapped Students

Students who are not eligible to receive special education programs and services may qualify as protected handicapped students and, therefore, be protected by other federal and state laws intended to prevent discrimination. The school district must insure that protected handicapped students have an equal opportunity to participate in the school program and extracurricular activities to the maximum extent appropriate for each individual student.

In compliance with state and federal law, the school district will provide to each protected handicapped student, without discrimination or cost to the student or family, those related aids, services or accommodations which are needed to provide equal opportunity to participate in and obtain the benefits of the school program and extracurricular activities, to the maximum extent appropriate to the student's abilities. In order to qualify as a protected handicapped student, the child must be of school-age with a physical or mental disability which substantially limits or prohibits participation in, or access to, an aspect of the school program.

These services and protections for "protected handicapped students" may be distinct from those applicable to exceptional or thought-to-be exceptional students. The school district or the parent may initiate an evaluation if it is believed a student is a protected handicapped student.

For further information on the evaluation procedures and provision of services for protected handicapped student, parents should call your child's Building Principal. (Please note that this is a regular education service and not one required by IDEA or Chapter 14.)

Confidentiality

Each school district protects the confidentiality of personally identifiable information regarding children with disabilities, children thought to have disabilities, protected handicapped students (if not protected by IDEA 2004 or Pennsylvania's Special Education Regulations) and children who are identified as gifted, in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) and other applicable federal and state laws, policies, and regulations.

"Education records" means those records that are directly related to the student, including computer media and videotape, which are maintained by an educational agency or a party acting for the agency. "Educational Agency", for purposes of this notice means the local school district, and/or the Appalachia Intermediate Unit. For all students, the educational agency maintains education records which include but are not limited to:

Personally Identifiable Information—Confidential information that includes, but is not limited to the student's name, name of parents and other family members, the address of the student or student's family, and personal information or personal characteristics which would make the student's identity easily traceable.

Directory Information—Information contained in an education record of a student which would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy, if disclosed. It includes, but is not limited to, the student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, major field of study (secondary students), participation in officially-recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, degrees and award received, and the name of the most previous educational agency or institution attended.

The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords to parents and to students over 18 years of age, certain rights with respect to the students' education records. They are:

Parents or students over 18 years of age have the right to inspect and review that student's education record. The school district will comply with the request to inspect and review education records without unnecessary delay and before any meeting regarding an IEP or due process hearing, but in no case more than 45 days after the request has been made. Requests should be submitted in writing, indicating the records the parents wish to inspect, to the school principal or other appropriate school official. Parents have the right to a response from the school district to a reasonable request for explanations and interpretations of the records. Parents have the right to request copies of the records. While the district cannot charge a fee to search for or to retrieve information, it may charge a copying fee, as long as it does not effectively prevent the parents from exercising their right to inspect and review the records. Parents have the right to appoint a representative to inspect and review their child's records. If any education record contains information on more than one child, parents (or students over 18 years of age) have the right only to inspect and review the information relating to their specific child.

If parent (student over 18 years of age) thinks information in an education record is inaccurate, misleading, or violates the privacy or other rights of the child, an amendment of the record may be requested. Requests should be made in writing and clearly identify the part of the record to be changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. The school district will decide whether or not to amend the record and will notify the parents (student over 18 years of age), in writing, of its decision. If the school district refuses to amend a record, it will notify the parents (student over 18 years of age) of their right to a hearing to challenge the disputed information. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parents (student over 18 years of age) when notified of the right to a hearing.

The school district will inform parents (student over 18 years of age) when personally identifiable information is no longer needed to provide educational services to a child. Such information must be destroyed at the request of the parents (student over 18 years of age). Parents (student over 18 years of age) have a right to receive a copy of the material to be destroyed; however, a permanent record of the student's name, address, and telephone number, his or her grades, attendance record, classes attended, grade level completed, and year completed may be maintained without time limitation. "Destruction" of records means physical destruction or removal of personal identifiers from information, so that the information is no longer personally identifiable. The school district will provide, upon request, a listing of the types and locations of education records maintained, the school officials responsible for these records, and the school personnel authorized to see personally identifiable information. Such personnel receive training and instruction regarding

confidentiality. The school district keeps a record of parties obtaining access to education records, including the name of the party, the date access was given, and the purpose for which the party is authorized to use the records.

Parents (or student over 18 years of age) have the right to consent to disclosure of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorized disclosure without consent. "Consent" means: the parent(s) (or student over 18 years of age) have/has been fully informed regarding the activity requiring consent, in the native language or other mode of communication; they understand and agree in writing to the activities, and, they understand that the consent is voluntary and may be revoked at any time. Information may be disclosed without consent to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the district as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); person or company with whom the district has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his/her professional responsibility. Directory information, as defined above, may be released without parent consent. Parents have the right to refuse to let an agency designate any or all of the above information as directory information. Upon request, the district discloses education records to officials of another school district, in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.

Parent(s) (or student over 18 years of age) have a right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the district to comply with the requirements of FERPA.

Complaints may be filed with:
Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D. C. 20202-4605

Notice to Exiting Students Regarding Destruction of Special Education Records

Special Education records, which have been collected by the Somerset Area School District related to the identification, evaluation, educational placement, or the provision of the Special Education in the district, must be maintained under state and federal law for a period of seven years after Special Education services have ended for the student. Special education services end when the student no longer is eligible for services, graduates, completes his or her educational program at age 21, or moves from the district. Student files will be destroyed ten years after the student exits the Somerset Area School District

After ten (10) years, the records are no longer useful to the district, but they may be useful to the parent/guardian or former student in applying for Social Security benefits, rehabilitation services, college entrance, etc. The parent/guardian or eligible (adult)

student, who reached 18 years of age, may request a copy of the records in writing or in person at the following address:

C/O Supervisor of Special Education
Somerset Area School District
645 S. Columbia Ave. Suite 130
Somerset, PA 15501

GIFTED EDUCATION

The Somerset Area School District offers gifted support services in all of its buildings. This program focuses on enrichment and acceleration activities that supplement the regular education program. Instructional services are provided through direct instruction, consultation and classroom enrichment.

The District conducts a screening process to identify students who might qualify for gifted support services. When the results of the screening indicate the need for a full evaluation, the District first seeks parental consent. The evaluation includes observations from school personnel, performance on standardized assessments, review of the student's academic and health records, as well as family and teacher input. If the results of this multidisciplinary evaluation indicate that the student meets the Chapter 16 criteria as an individual who is in need of gifted support services, the gifted support team meets and develops an individualized educational plan. Parents who feel that their child might be in need of gifted support services should send a written request for evaluation to the building principal.

Copies of parent rights and confidentiality issues are routinely provided to parents with the permission to evaluate and are also available to parents upon request.

Parents who need more information about gifted educational programs and services or parental due process rights are encouraged to contact the principal of their child's school or call Mrs. Christy Poorbaugh, Director of Gifted Special Education, at (814) 444-3258.

SOMERSET AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT BULLYING/CYBERBULLYING POLICY

The Board is committed to providing a safe, positive learning environment for district students. The Board recognizes that bullying creates an atmosphere of fear and intimidation, detracts from the safe environment necessary for student learning, and may lead to more serious violence. Therefore, the Board prohibits bullying by district students.

Definition of Bullying: A person is bullied when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons, and he or she has difficulty defending him or herself.

1. Bullying is aggressive behavior that involves unwanted, negative actions.
2. Bullying involves a pattern of behavior repeated over time.
3. Bullying involves an imbalance of power or strength.

Bullying, as defined in this policy, includes cyberbullying.

School setting means in the school, on school grounds, in school buses and other vehicles, or at any activity sponsored, supervised or sanctioned by the school.

The Board prohibits all forms of bullying by district students.

The Board encourages students who believe that they have been bullied to promptly report such incidents to the building principal or designee.

The Board directs that complaints of bullying shall be investigated promptly, and corrective action shall be taken when allegations are verified.

Confidentiality of all parties shall be maintained, consistent with the district's legal and investigative obligations. No reprisals or retaliation shall occur as a result of good faith reports of bullying.

Each student shall be responsible to respect the rights of others and to ensure an atmosphere free from bullying.

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

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that this policy and administrative regulations are reviewed annually with students.

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. In the absence of such review and recommendations, this policy shall remain in effect.

District administration shall annually provide the following information with the Safe School Report:

1. Board's Bullying Policy.
2. Report of bullying incidents.
3. Information on the development and implementation of any bullying prevention, intervention or education programs.

The Code of Student Conduct, which shall contain this policy, shall be disseminated annually to students.

This policy shall be accessible in every classroom. The policy shall be posted in a prominent location within each school building and on the district web site, if available.

Education

The district may develop and implement bullying prevention and intervention programs. Such programs shall provide district staff and students with appropriate training for effectively responding to, intervening in and reporting incidents of bullying.

Consequences For Violations

A student who violates this policy shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action consistent with the Code of Student Conduct, which may include:

- { } Counseling within the school
- { } Parental conference
- { } Loss of school privileges
- { } Transfer to another school building, classroom or school bus
- { } Exclusion from school-sponsored activities
- { } Detention
- { } Suspension
- { } Expulsion
- { } Counseling/Therapy outside of school
- { } Referral to law enforcement officials

References:

School Code – 24 P.S. Sec. 1302-A, 1303.1-A

State Board of Education Regulations – 22 PA Code Sec. 12.3

Bullying and Cyberbullying Policy (24 P.S. § 13-1303.1-A)

Bullying is intentional conduct that is severe, persistent, or pervasive and has the effect of:

- Interfering with a student's education;
- Creating a threatening or intimidating educational environment; or
- Substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

Cyberbullying is bullying that occurs through the use of electronic technology or communication. This includes, but is not limited to, email, text messages, social media, websites, online platforms, artificial intelligence (AI) generated or modified content, digital images, videos, or other electronic means.

Cyberbullying may occur on or off school property when it substantially

impacts the school environment or interferes with a student's educational opportunities.

Examples of bullying or cyberbullying include:

- Threatening, harassing, or intimidating another student;
- Spreading rumors or intentionally excluding others;
- Posting or sharing embarrassing, harmful, or false information online;
- Creating or distributing AI-generated or digitally altered text, images, audio, or video intended to harm, embarrass, threaten, or harass another student;
- Any electronic communication that creates a threatening environment or substantially disrupts school activities.

Students who believe they have been subjected to bullying or cyberbullying, or who witness such behavior, are encouraged to report the incident promptly to a teacher, counselor, administrator, or other school employee.

All reports of alleged bullying or cyberbullying will be promptly investigated according to district procedures. If an investigation determines that bullying or cyberbullying has occurred, the parents or guardians of students involved will be notified as soon as practicable. Appropriate disciplinary action and/or corrective measures may be taken in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct and Board policy.

Retaliation against any person who reports bullying or cyberbullying, participates in an investigation, or provides information regarding an incident is prohibited and may result in disciplinary action.

Homeless Student Assistance

Homeless Student Assistance

The McKinney-Vento Education of Homeless Children and Youth Assistance Act is a federal law that ensures immediate enrollment, timely and accurate identification and educational stability for homeless children and youth. McKinney-Vento provides federal funding to states for the purpose of supporting district programs that serve homeless students. When meeting the definition of homeless or unaccompanied youth, the student may qualify for services to support the student's educational placement. These services are provided through the school's homeless liaison/school social worker in the High School Guidance Office. Services/rights include free and appropriate education, immediate enrollment or continuation of schooling in their school of origin (if in the student's best interest), transportation possibilities, free lunches, health/medical referrals, graduation/retention assistance, and linking to extra-curricular and family engagement opportunities.

The McKinney-Vento Definition of Homeless

Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (per Title IX, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act) defines homeless as follows:

The term "homeless children and youths"—

(A) means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence (within the meaning of section 103(a)(1)); and (B) includes—

(i) children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; or are abandoned in hospitals;*

(ii) children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings (within the meaning of section 103(a)(2)(C));

(iii) children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and

(iv) migratory children (as such term is defined in section 1309 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965) who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii).

*Per Title IX, Part A of Every Student Succeeds Act, "awaiting foster care placement" was removed from the definition of homeless on December 10, 2016.

Unaccompanied youth means a homeless child or youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian. This includes youth who have run away from home; been abandoned or forced out of the home by a parent, guardian or other caretaker; or separated from a parent or guardian for any other reason.

Dispute Resolution and procedural safeguards, as well as additional information, can be found at: <https://www.education.pa.gov/K-12/Homeless%20Education/Pages/default.aspx>

Our district policy can be referenced at

<https://go.boarddocs.com/pa/some/Board.nsf/Public#>

Community Resources

Next Step Center is a homeless shelter, located in Somerset. The shelter is a fully operational emergency shelter, suitable for children and special needs guests. Next Step is a referral shelter, therefore please contact the Tableland Services/Community Action Partnership mentioned below. www.nextstepcenter.org

The Salvation Army, located at 334 W. Main St., Suite 100, Somerset, provides support to area families through clothing assistance, fuel counseling/utility assistance, rental assistance, personal growth workshops, emergency food/holiday programs and employment assistance. 814-445-9232

Somerset County Assistance Office, located at 164 Staybrook St., Somerset, is the county office of DPW offering assistance in applications for nutrition, medical coverage, cash and assistance, family planning and child care services, and school meals. Contact 1-800-248-1607.

<http://www.dhs.pa.gov/citizens/findfacilsandloes/countyassistanceofficecontactinformation/index.htm>

Somerset County Mobile Food Bank is a free food distribution intended to bring fresh produce and other items to those in Somerset County who have a limited income and a lack of or limited transportation. Distribution is limited to one site and one produce Saturday per household per month. Contact 814-443-6574 (extension 3) to find distribution days. www.scmfb.org

Somerset Food Pantry is operated within the Trinity Lutheran Church, located at 918 Tayman Ave., Somerset. It is open 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. every Wednesday. Please bring financial/income information.

Tableland Services, INC./Community Action Partnership for Somerset County provides homeless and housing services to low income families currently homeless or facing eviction/mortgage foreclosure. Additionally, Tableland Services provides emergency food and shelter assistance, weatherization support to help reduce heating/cooling and utility costs, utility assistance, LIHEAP, employment/work ready programs, transportation services and early childhood education. Located at 535 East main St., Somerset, PA. 814-445-9628 www.capfsc.org

Women's Help Center, located at 809 Napoleon Street, Johnstown, PA., provides emergency shelter and services for women and children who are fleeing violence in their home. 24 Hour Hotline: (814) 536-5361 www.womenshelpcenter.org/services

School Board Policy Homeless Students

<https://go.boarddocs.com/pa/some/Board.nsf/Public#>

Code 251

Status Active

Adopted February 10, 2014

Last Revised April 8, 2019

Authority

The Board recognizes its obligation to ensure that homeless students have access to the same educational programs and services provided to other district students. The Board shall make reasonable efforts to identify homeless children within the district, encourage their enrollment, and eliminate existing barriers to their attendance and education, in compliance with federal and state law and regulations.[\[1\]](#)[\[2\]](#)[\[3\]](#)

The Board may waive policies, procedures and administrative regulations that create barriers for enrollment, attendance, transportation and success in school of homeless students, based on the recommendation of the Superintendent.[\[3\]](#)

It is the policy of the Board that no student shall be discriminated against, segregated or stigmatized based on his/her homeless status.[\[4\]](#)[\[5\]](#)

Definitions

Enroll or **Enrollment** is defined as attending classes and participating fully in school activities.[\[6\]](#)

Homeless students are defined as individuals lacking a fixed, regular and nighttime residence, which include the following conditions:[\[6\]](#)

1. Children and youth who are:
 - a. Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason;
 - b. Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations;

- c. Living in emergency, transitional or domestic violence shelters;
or
 - d. Abandoned in hospitals.
- 2. Children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings;
 - 3. Children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, transportation stations or similar settings;
 - 4. Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above;

School of origin is defined as the school the student attended when permanently housed or the school in which the student was last enrolled, including preschool. When the child or youth completes the final grade level served by the school of origin, the school of origin shall include the designated receiving school at the next grade level for all feeder school.[\[5\]](#)

Unaccompanied youth means a homeless child or youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian. This includes youth who have run away from home; been abandoned or forced out of the home by a parent, guardian or other caretaker; or separated from a parent or guardian for any other reason.[\[6\]](#)

Delegation of Responsibility

The Board designates the Home and School Visitor/School Social Worker to serve as the district's liaison for homeless children and youths.[\[5\]](#)

The district's liaison shall ensure outreach and coordinate with:[\[5\]](#)

- 1. Local service agencies and other entities that provide services to homeless children and youth and families.
- 2. Other school districts on issues of prompt identification, records transfer, transportation and other inter-district activities.
- 3. District staff responsible for the provision under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education

Act.[7][8]

4. State and local housing agencies responsible for comprehensive housing affordability strategies.

The district's liaison shall ensure that public notice of the educational rights of homeless children and youths is disseminated in locations frequented by parents/guardians of homeless children and youths, and unaccompanied youths, including schools, shelters, public libraries, and food pantries. Such notice shall be provided in a manner and form understandable to the parents/guardians of homeless children and youths, and unaccompanied youths.[5]

The district's liaison shall provide reliable, valid and comprehensive data to the Coordinator of Pennsylvania's Education of Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness (ECYEH) Program in accordance with federal and state laws and regulations.[5]

Guidelines

Enrollment/Placement

In determining the best interest of a child or youth, the district shall:

1. To the extent feasible, and in accordance with the student's best interest, a homeless student shall continue to be enrolled in his/her school of origin while s/he remains homeless or until the end of the academic year in which s/he obtains permanent housing. Parents/Guardians of a homeless student may request enrollment in the school in the attendance area where the student is actually living or other schools. If a student is unaccompanied by a parent/guardian, the district liaison will consider the views of the student in determining where s/he will be enrolled.[5]
2. Liaison will consider student-centered factors related to impact of mobility on achievement, education, health and safety, giving priority to the request of the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth.
3. The selected school shall immediately enroll the student and begin instruction, even if the student is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment pursuant to district policies. However, the district may require a parent/guardian to submit contact information. The district liaison may contact the school last attended by the child or youth to obtain relevant academic or other records.[3][9][10][11][12][13][14][15]

If the district is unable to determine the student's grade level due to missing or incomplete records, the district shall administer tests or utilize appropriate means to determine the student's placement.[5][16]

Dispute Resolution

If a dispute arises over eligibility, school selection or enrollment, the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth shall be referred to the district's liaison, who shall assist in the dispute resolution process. The student shall be immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute, including all available appeals. The parents/guardians shall be provided with a written explanation of the district's decision, their right to appeal and the procedures for the appeal through the Coordinator of Pennsylvania's Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program.[5]

Educational Records

Information about a homeless child's or youth's living situation shall be treated as a student education record subject to the protections of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and shall not be deemed to be directory information.[9][15]

Services

Homeless students shall be provided services comparable to those offered to other district students including, but not limited to:[2][5][17]

1. Transportation services.[18]
2. School nutrition programs.[19]
3. Career and technical education.[20]
4. Preschool programs.
5. Educational programs for which the homeless student meets eligibility criteria, such as:
 - a. Services provided under Title I or similar state or local programs.[21]

- b. Programs for students with limited English proficiency.[22]
- c. Programs for students with disabilities.[8]
- d. Programs for gifted and talented students.[23]

Transportation

The district shall provide transportation for homeless students to their school of origin or the school they choose to attend within the school district.[\[2\]](#)[\[5\]](#)[\[18\]](#)

If the school of origin is outside district boundaries or homeless students live in another district but will attend their school of origin in this district, the school districts shall agree upon a method to apportion the responsibility and costs of the transportation.[\[5\]](#)

Training

The district's liaison shall participate in professional development programs and other technical assistance activities offered by the Coordinator of Pennsylvania's Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program.[\[5\]](#)

The district's liaison shall arrange professional development programs for school staff, including office staff and Student Assistance Programs.[\[5\]](#)

School personnel providing services to homeless children and youths, including school enrollment staff, shall receive professional development and support to:[\[5\]](#)

1. Improve identification of homeless children and youths and unaccompanied youths;
2. Understand the rights of such children, including requirements for immediate enrollment and transportation; and
3. Heighten the awareness of, and capacity to respond to, the educational needs of such children.

For additional information, please contact the district homeless liaison, Heather Stankan, at 814-444-3236 or hstank@sasd.us

SCHOOL ISSUED iPADS

Students and families are held liable for all damaged iPads.

Please examine student iPads regularly for damage. This should include, but not limited to, inspecting the screen for cracks and removing the case to check for signs of bending.

FLEXIBLE INSTRUCTIONAL DAYS

School districts in Pennsylvania may use Flexible Instructional Days (FID) when there is inclement weather or for other types of school closures. If we were to use a FID, all our instruction will be over Zoom and through Schoology. Below is the Zoom schedule for a flexible instructional day. If inclement weather is predicted, we will send home student iPads as a precaution. Since iPads are not going home each day, there is a chance inclement weather might cause a cancellation and students would not have their iPad at home. If students do not have their iPads, they can still attend live Zoom sessions on another device. If you do not have another device at home, that is ok! Students can complete the appropriate work in the Flexible Instructional Day packet sent home by your child's teacher. Students have 3 school days after the FID to submit the packet from that day of instruction. If your child completes the packet without attending Zoom, work must be submitted within three school days or the day will be marked as unexcused.