

STRATTON ACADEMY OF THE ARTS
Student & Family Handbook
2026-2027



Stratton Academy of the Arts
WHERE WE LEARN & USE NEW WORDS EVERY DAY!

Zipporah Gwin, Principal

902 North Randolph
Champaign, Illinois 61820

Phone: 217.373.7330

Fax: 217.373.7337

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STRATTON ACADEMY OF THE ARTS ensures equal educational opportunities for all students and does not discriminate based on students' disabilities, race, color, sex, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation.

VISITATION POLICY

We warmly welcome all parents and families to visit the school to check in or drop items off for your students! Please note that these quick visits are not the time to confer with or ask teachers or staff questions. If you have questions or suggestions to support your child's educational experience, please schedule a meeting with the teacher during non-instructional time. To help us maintain a safe and productive learning environment for all students, please adhere to the guidelines below:
Morning Arrival (8:20–8:40 AM): Parents/Family are welcome to walk students to class during this time.

Visitor Badges After 8:40 AM: Any visitor in the building after 8:40 AM must check in at the main office and receive a RAPTOR visitor badge.

Classroom Observations: Any visit up to 20 minutes is considered a classroom observation. Parents may observe their student up to two times before a formal background check is required. This is the same process used to become an approved volunteer ([Volunteer Application](#)). Please apply today!

Teacher Meetings: All meetings or conferences with teachers must be scheduled in advance and occur during non-instructional times.

Lunch/Recess Visits: Parents/Family are welcome to engage with their student during lunch/recess, after checking in and receiving a RAPTOR badge.

Minimizing Disruptions: Please do your best to avoid disrupting teaching and learning during classroom visits.

End-of-Day Access: To support safe and orderly dismissal, no visitors are allowed in the building after 3:05 PM.

Approved Volunteer Application: [Volunteer Application](#): Approved volunteers will receive a schedule outlining when and where support is needed in the building. Please note that volunteer assignments typically do not take place in your child's classroom.

HOMEWORK

Your child will be given homework assignments regularly. Below are some suggestions on ways you can help your child gain the most from their homework experience.

- ☐ Make homework expectations together with your child
- ☐ Provide a quiet place for your child to complete homework
- ☐ Show an interest in your child's homework
- ☐ Give your child a short break from their work
- ☐ Encourage your child to work independently

Please contact your child's classroom teacher if you have any homework questions.

EMAIL

All students are issued email accounts for educational purposes. K-5 student email accounts are restricted to sending and receiving emails to teachers only. Champaign Unit #4 personnel will monitor and archive all emails. The proper use of email and network accounts is covered in detail in Acceptable Use Policy #651R.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips will be planned throughout the year, and parents/guardians will receive advance notice of all such trips. The School will require signed permission slips to attend all field trips. Although some field trip costs are absorbed by the School and parent organizations, parents are sometimes asked to contribute.

Occasionally, parents are requested to serve as chaperones on class field trips, and while this is not required, parents are encouraged to volunteer if possible. A chaperone's primary responsibility is to ensure appropriate supervision for all students. Parental chaperones are asked to take this responsibility seriously and remain attentive to the student's needs throughout the trip. **Children who are not enrolled in the class may not accompany the chaperones.**

Parents and guardians must complete a mandatory [Volunteer Application](#) before attending school-related field trips.

STUDENT CONDUCT

Students are expected to meet the expectations outlined in the [U4 Student Code of Conduct](#). However, it is also understood that no single set of procedures will be effective in helping every student develop the skills and attitudes necessary for success. Therefore, a series of interventions will be designed for students who are not motivated by the school-wide procedures. As teachers and faculty adopt disciplinary procedures to meet individual needs, the focus will remain positive, and an emphasis will be placed on the need for effective and consistent consequences.

Students will learn that specific actions are unacceptable and misbehavior has consequences. **Students who engage in any type of misbehavior, whether minor or severe, must make amends and/or restore the situation.** Restitution may involve an apology, community or school service, or fixing, replacing, and/or paying for damage caused. In all cases, parents/guardians will be informed of the child's inappropriate behavior and the restitution requirement.

Fair and equitable discipline is intended to protect the rights and privileges of all persons in all matters relating to the operation of the School. Staff stands in *loco parentis*, that is, in loco parents, supervising students in the absence of parents.

Teaching self-discipline (responsibility for a person's actions) is a goal of the Champaign School District's Code of Conduct. To ensure that students exhibit appropriate behavior and performance, it is the School's responsibility to implement a program for teaching a system of essential rules and to administer just and constructive corrective measures. Corrective measures will reflect the following considerations:

1. Student's age
2. The seriousness of the offense
3. Frequency of inappropriate behavior
4. Circumstances of intent
5. The potential effect of the misconduct on the School environment
6. Relationship of the behavior to any disabling condition

For more details, please review the U4 Student Code of Conduct (<https://www.champaignschools.org/page/code-of-conduct>), which is adhered to at Stratton Academy of the Art.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT & COMMUNICATION

VOLUNTEERING

Parents are encouraged to participate in School-related activities and contribute their time and talents to organizing extracurricular activities and community outreach projects.

All School volunteers must complete the [Volunteer Application](#), which includes a background check. If activities that contradict school policies occur, the Principal may discontinue your services.

Family Engagement Team & Parent / Teacher Association

Stratton has an active PTA that meets monthly. Please [JOIN the PTA](#) and be on the lookout for updates on these meetings.

REPORT CARDS

Parents will receive report cards with cumulative data on their child's performance and progress four times per year, one per quarter. Please be sure to review your child's report cards and student data emailed each quarter.

PARENT CONFERENCE

Formal parent-teacher conferences are held twice a year to facilitate open communication between parents and teachers regarding students' progress. Please refer to the School calendar for specific dates.

COMMUNICATION

At Stratton, we use various methods to inform parents and families of important dates, information, and updates on students, staff, and the community. Please review our means of communication below.

- Class Newsletters
- Class Dojo
- Google Classroom
- Jaguar Journal
- Facebook
- School Marquee Board
- Telephone, emails, and in-person conversations

STUDENT DRESS CODE

Stratton is no longer a uniform school. It is the expectation that all students come to school dressed appropriately, demonstrating respect for themselves and others.

Unacceptable Attire

- Pajamas and bedroom attire (unless communicated via School personnel)
- Torn or ripped clothing where the skin is revealed
- Clothing that is suggestive, revealing, or that endorses illegal or inappropriate substances, messaging, or profanity
- Headscarves, bonnets, do-rags, or sunglasses will not be worn in the building (unless for religious or medical reasons)

Staff will contact parents or guardians to ask them to bring appropriate clothing for students who fail to comply with the dress code policy. Students will remain in the office or be given appropriate clothing before being permitted to return to class.

We appreciate your support in monitoring student attire before they arrive at school.

ATTENDANCE

Instruction at Stratton begins promptly at 8:40 a.m. All students are expected to be in their classrooms by 8:40 a.m.

All students must be prepared to start at that time. A student who is late or picked up early misses valuable academic content.

Illinois law requires that whoever has custody or control of any child between six (by September 1st) and seventeen years of age shall ensure that the child attends school in the district in which he or she resides during the entire time school is in session (unless the child has already graduated from high school). Illinois law also requires that whoever has custody or control of a child enrolled in the school, regardless of age, shall ensure that the child attends school the entire time school is in session.

TARDINESS

Any student who arrives at school after **8:40 am** must report to the front office and obtain a tardy pass before proceeding to the classroom. The student will be considered tardy, and the incident will be recorded. If a student is tardy five times, the problem will be regarded as chronic. Parents/Guardians will be contacted by a member of the attendance improvement team or their delegate to discuss the reasons for excessive tardiness. **All tardies will be factored into the total time missed from school for the year.**

ABSENCES

There are two types of absences: excused and unexcused. Excused absences include illness, observance of a religious holiday, death in the immediate family, family emergency, situations beyond the student's control, circumstances that cause reasonable concern to the parent/guardian for the student's safety or health, or other reasons as approved by the Principal. All other absences are considered unexcused. Pre-arranged excused absences must be approved by the Principal.

The school may require documentation explaining the reason for the student's absence.

In the event of any absence, the student's parent or guardian must call the school at (217) 373-7330 (ex.2) before 8:40 am to explain the reason for the absence. If a call has not been made to the school by 10:00 a.m. on the day of a student's absence, you will be contacted via phone to inquire why the student is not at school. If the parent or guardian cannot be contacted, the student will be asked to submit a signed note from the parent/guardian explaining the reason for the absence. Failure to do so shall result in an unexcused absence. The reason for an absence can be kept confidential upon request of the parent or guardian.

ABSENCES: MAKE-UP WORK

The parent/guardian must inform the School if the child is or plans to be absent for more than three consecutive school days so that the reason for the absence can be explored and a homework plan developed.

EXCESSIVE ABSENCE POLICY

Student attendance is critical to the learning process. Truancy is a serious issue and will be dealt with seriously by the school and district. Students who miss 5% (8.5 days) or more of the 176 regular school days without a valid cause (a recognized excuse) are considered **chronic truants**. Students who are chronic truants will be offered support services and resources to address the truancy issue. If chronic truancy persists after support services and other resources are made available, the school and district will take further action, including but not limited to:

- Referral to the truancy officer
- Reporting to officials under the Juvenile Court Act
- Referral to the State's Attorney
- Appropriate school discipline

A parent or guardian knowingly and willfully permitting a child to be truant is violating State law.

EARLY DISMISSAL

If a student must be dismissed from School before the end of the school day, parents must notify the School office as soon as possible, but no later than 2:30 p.m. on the day of the early dismissal. In such cases, parents must inform the School of the specific time the child will be picked up and who will come for the child.

In these cases, only adults listed in the School's records as authorized may take students from the School. Please be prepared to show your ID.

Students will not be called out of class for early dismissal until the parent/guardian/authorized person is in the office signing the student out. This will allow the student to access as much of the learning objective as possible.

RETENTION POLICY

Students typically progress from grade to grade annually. Exceptions may be invoked at the professional staff's discretion, parents' request, or if they are in the best educational interests of the students involved. Exceptions will always be made after prior notification and explanation are given to each student's parents/guardians, but the decision will rest with the School Administration.

In evaluating students' achievement, each teacher will use all available information, including results of informal tests, formal assessments, other measures of skill and content mastery, standardized test results, and teacher observations of student performance. The Principal will direct and assist teachers in evaluations and grade reviews to ensure uniformity of evaluation standards.

REGISTRATION & IMMUNIZATION

All students entering Champaign Community Unit #4 Schools must provide proof of residency when registering. The parent or guardian of a new student entering Champaign Community Unit #4 Schools for the first time must present a certified copy of the student's birth certificate to the School Office.

The parent or guardian of kindergarten students and all new students entering Champaign Community Unit #4 Schools for the first time must present a complete physical, dental, and vision examination to the School Office. All second-grade students must present a complete dental examination to the office. A doctor must complete the physical examination form with up-to-date immunization information.

Physicals must be turned in at the office no later than September 1, 2026.

Eye Exams must be updated and turned in to the office no later than October 15, 2026.

Dental Exams must be turned in at the office no later than May 15, 2027.

The School must be notified immediately of any changes in a student's name, address, phone number, or any other information provided at registration. Please contact the office to make any necessary changes.

STUDENT RECORDS

Stratton complies with all Federal and State laws concerning student records. Information regarding a student's progress will be shared only with parents/guardians and appropriate members of the School's faculty, staff, and any professional consultants retained to measure and/or improve instructional quality.

The School may not provide name, phone, or address lists to parents wishing to organize with other parents/guardians of students at Stratton Academy of the Arts.

BREAKFAST AND LUNCH

Lunch and breakfast are free for all students attending Stratton. See [MENU](#) here.

Breakfast Program: A full and free breakfast is served in the cafeteria from 8:20 a.m. to 8:40 a.m. Students who arrive after 9:00 a.m. may receive a reduced version of the breakfast, based on availability. The cafeteria staff prepares student lunch around 9 a.m. and must clear select disposable breakfast items. The office will also house and distribute breakfast options to students who arrive after breakfast has been collected and discarded.

Lunch/Recess: Students have a 35-minute lunch/recess period, during which homeroom teachers are completely duty-free. Students spend 20 minutes in the cafeteria before being dismissed for the 15-minute recess. Students who need additional time to eat may have it, though this will intrude their recess. All students will participate in an additional 15-minute recess each day, supervised by the homeroom teacher.

Recess Weather:

All students are expected to go outside for recess when weather restrictions are not in place. Please be sure students have dressed appropriately for cold and hot temperatures.

Indoor recess conditions:

- Too Cold-20 degrees or below (actual, feels like, or windchill)
- Raining or snowing
- Too Hot-94 degrees heat index and above (actual or feels like)

Unless an official doctor's note is on file, ALL STUDENTS will be outside during recess when weather permits.

As we all know, the Illinois climate can range from extreme heat to record-breaking lows. Please track the weather daily to ensure students are dressed accordingly.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Students' health and safety are the School's foremost responsibility. The following information describes the precautions taken to protect the well-being of all students. If your child has any specific health, safety, or security needs, please inform the School so that appropriate accommodations can be made.

MEDICATION

The school nurse, office staff, and/or the student's teacher must be informed of any prescription medication a student must take at School. To dispense prescription medication to students, you must provide the School with a "Permit to Administer/Distribute Medication Form" filled out and signed by the student's doctor and parent/guardian before medication can be administered. All medication should be brought to the School Office in its original prescription container, labeled with the student's name, the medication name, the expiration date, and the proper dosage. Students are not permitted to bring non-prescription medications to School.

No school or district employee is allowed to administer medication to any student or supervise a student's self-administration of any prescription or non-prescription medication until a completed and signed "School Medication Authorization Form" is submitted by the student's parent/guardian. No student is allowed to possess or consume any prescription or non-prescription medication on school grounds or at a school-related function other than as provided for in this procedure.

Parents must inform the School of any allergies that their children might have. In addition, please notify the School Office in writing if your child has a chronic illness that may affect his or her performance at school.

ACCIDENTS

The nurse or a trained staff member will initially treat minor injuries. The student's parent/guardian or emergency contact will be notified by phone whenever medical treatment is administered to a student, and an incident report will be kept in the office. In such cases, the School must have working phone numbers for the student's parents/guardians and alternate emergency contacts if a parent is unavailable. In an emergency, the student will be transported to the hospital.

HEALTH EMERGENCIES:

If a student is seriously injured or ill, the parent /guardian will be notified. If the office cannot reach a parent/guardian or emergency contact within a reasonable time, or if the situation is an emergency, the Principal may decide to have the student transported to the hospital emergency room.

Please be vigilant in keeping the School updated on any changes to contact information.

HEAD LICE

The school will observe the following procedures regarding head lice.

1. Parents are required to notify the school nurse if they suspect their child has head lice.
2. Infested students will be sent home following notification of the parent or guardian.
3. The school will provide written instructions to the parent or guardian regarding appropriate treatment for the infestation.
4. A student excluded because of head lice will be permitted to return to school only when the parent or guardian brings the student to be checked by the school nurse or building principal, and the child is determined to be free of head lice and eggs(nits). Infested children are prohibited from riding the bus to school to be checked for head lice.

SAFETY DRILLS

There will be at least three (3) fire evacuation drills, one (1) severe weather (shelter-in-place) drill, one (1) law enforcement drill, one (1) ALICE drill, and one (1) bus evacuation drill each school year. The administration may direct other drills. Drills may not be preceded by a warning to the students.

Fire Drills are necessary to ensure the safety of students and staff. All students and staff are expected to follow the established fire drill plan posted in each room of the School. When the fire alarm bell sounds, students are expected to evacuate the building through designated exits quickly, quietly, and in an orderly manner. When the all-clear is given, students are expected to re-enter the building quietly and in an orderly manner.

Severe Weather Drills are also a necessary routine to ensure the safety of students and staff in the event of a tornado. A severe weather drill procedure has been established for the School and is posted in each room. When an alarm is sounded, students and staff are expected to report quickly and quietly to their assigned safety area.

In imminent danger, staff will implement the safety-crisis plan to ensure safety for all.

WEATHER AND EMERGENCY (School Closure) PLAN INFORMATION

In the event of severe weather conditions and it is determined that it is unsafe for children to travel to School, an announcement of the closing of the Schools will be sent to the local radio and TV stations. You may also receive an email or robocall from the school or district with this information. Schools will be open unless otherwise announced.

VISITOR IDENTIFICATION

To help ensure a safe and secure learning environment for children, all Stratton visitors must sign in at the School's Main Office, show I.D., and wear a visitor's pass. Please do not be offended if the staff directs anyone without a visitor's badge to the office for identification.

AFTER SCHOOL

The **Kids Plus Program** provides before- and after-school care and enrichment for students on M-F, from 3:30-6 pm. Families can register online. Throughout the school year, eligible students will be communicated with additional after-school opportunities.

The **Extended Excellence Program** is designed to enrich students' academic, artistic, and athletic abilities on T/W/TH from 3:35 to 4:55 p.m. Permission slips will be shared so that select students can sign up.

SOLICITATION

Solicitation of or by any student, parent, or staff member on school property for any cause except those authorized by the Principal is strictly prohibited.

MONEY AND OTHER VALUABLE PROPERTY

Students are encouraged to leave all money, cell phones, and other valuable property at home.

The school assumes no responsibility for the loss or theft of such articles.

PROHIBITED ITEMS

Students may not bring trading cards, candy, gum, toys, or other non-school-related items to School unless the teacher approves. The parent and student assume responsibility for any items brought from home. Toy weapons are strictly prohibited; no electronics, radios, games, etc., are allowed.

Cell Phones: [U4 Cell Phone Policy](#)

We strongly encourage students to keep phones and other electronic devices at home. Parents/guardians can always call the school to communicate with students in an emergency. Parents/guardians or emergency contacts will never be denied access to their children.

Remember: The school assumes no responsibility for the loss or theft of such articles.

SCHOOL RULES AND REGULATIONS

The Stratton faculty and staff are dedicated to teaching our students the skills necessary to compete and succeed in college and career endeavors.

Our Vision: Empowering learners to thrive in a diverse and changing world.

Our Mission: Positively transform learning and life outcomes for students through educational justice, equity, and excellence. Central to this mission is creating a school community characterized by caring, discipline, order, and respect.

Our Targeted Learning Focus: Stratton students will learn and use new words daily!

Mandated Reporters

All school personnel, including teachers and administrators, are required by law to immediately report any suspected child abuse or neglect cases to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services.

TEACHERS

Teachers will continually foster an educational environment conducive to learning and aligned with school objectives, standards, and expectations. Three basic principles of classroom management will be implemented in each classroom. Students will be expected to behave responsibly in all school-related activities and will be reinforced throughout the year.

- Respect Myself
- Respect Others
- Respect Property

Teachers will work to foster meaningful relationships with students and praise students for meeting expectations.

PRINCIPAL

The Principal will serve as the instructional leader and work with teaching staff to create effective educational outcomes.

RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION TEAM

Children may struggle with academics or social-emotional abilities outside Tier 1 instruction and management support. In such cases, your child's teacher may wish to explore additional academic or behavioral interventions by developing creative approaches to assist your child at school. The RtI Team will collaborate with the parent/guardian to recommend and implement strategies within a timeframe that supports the student's success at school.

PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Parents and Guardians, you are our educational partners. The support and cooperation of parents/guardians are vital to helping each student reach their full potential. Parents/guardians are encouraged and expected to participate fully in their children's education. Teachers will inform parents/guardians of students' efforts through conferences, feedback forms, report cards, phone calls, ClassDojo, notes, email, and other communication channels.

Parents and staff can help students acquire the skills to increase their opportunities for success throughout life by working together. Thank you for your presence, support, and cooperation.

WE ARE STRATTON STRONG!!