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Dear SAHS students and families,

I hope you and your family have had a wonderful summer and are looking forward to the start of another exciting school year at Skowhegan Area High School. Each new school year brings new opportunities for learning and growth. As we prepare to welcome our students back, I would like to share several important updates and reminders that will help ensure a successful year for every student and family.

As we prepare for the new school year, a list of school supplies is available on the SAHS homepage under the "Live Feed." For your convenience, supplies are organized by course or teacher. In addition, the SAHS Student Handbook has been updated for the 2026–2027 school year. The handbook can be found under both the Student Resources and Parent Resources tabs on the SAHS website. Our handbook is updated every summer and outlines SAHS's school rules, procedures, and policies. We encourage all students, parents, and guardians to review the handbook carefully.

One of the most significant changes for this school year is the implementation of a new Maine state law requiring all public schools to prohibit student use of personal electronic devices (PEDs) such as but not limited to cell phones, smart watches, and tablets during the school day. After hosting a public forum, and considering parent, staff, and student feedback, the MSAD#54 School Board will adopt a new policy that applies to all students in Pre-K through Grade 12. Board draft policy which will be adopted at the next meeting states, "*students are not permitted to carry on their person/wear, or access personal cell phones, smart watches, or other personal electronic devices during the school day.*" Policy goes on to state that PED's "*must be silenced and put away in a locker, bookbag, car, or "locked pouch" so that it is not seen or a disruption.*" Please be advised that headphones or earbuds connected to PEDs between 8:15 and 2:15 will be considered accessing a PED. Student headphones should be utilized with teacher permission and connected to a student's school issued laptop during the school day. This statewide change, and supporting policy, is intended to create a more focused learning environment, reduce distractions, and support students' social and emotional well-being through expectations regarding the use of student personal electronic devices.

Should a student need to contact a parent or guardian during the school day, they may do so with permission through the SAHS main office, and use dedicated student phones. If a student does not feel well, they should report to the nurses office for assistance. If a dismissal is deemed necessary, the nurse will then contact guardians to communicate and create a dismissal plan, per SAHS student handbook. If a parent or guardian needs to get a message to their child during the day, they may contact the SAHS main office, and our office team will ensure the message is delivered as promptly as possible. Coaches and advisors will continue to communicate schedule changes, cancellations, and other important updates through the district's approved communication platforms, like Team Reach or school-based email, ensuring that families receive timely information without relying on personal devices during the school day. We truly appreciate your cooperation and support as we adapt to this new state mandate. By working together, we can build a school climate that reduces distractions, fosters student engagement, and allows students to remain fully present in their learning while ensuring families receive important information directly from the school.

At SAHS, we are here to support our students. We recognize that every school year brings challenges, and that learning often includes mistakes, setbacks, and moments when extra support is needed. As a staff, we believe these experiences are a natural part of learning. We encourage our students to communicate with their teachers whenever they need help or have questions. In addition to being fully engaged in the learning process, students are poised for success when they attend school regularly and arrive on time. The administration is making a commitment to reduce the number of tardy/dismissed students and will be utilizing a grant funded attendance secretary to help identify and track trends that take students away from their learning.

Please familiarize yourself with the list of approved absences in the student handbook and avoid missing school for reasons that do not appear on that list. In addition, students should actively participate in class, manage their time effectively—including making good use of study halls—monitor their grades in PowerSchool, submit assignments on time, check email regularly, and get involved in extracurricular activities.

In closing, please be reminded if you plan on playing a sport, make sure you have a current and up to date physical submitted to the SAHS main office. The first day of practice for fall sports is August 17. Enjoy the remaining time left of summer break and know that we look forward to having our students return to school. Thank you for your continued support and partnership. Together, we can ensure every student has the opportunity to learn, grow, and succeed. We look forward to another great year at SAHS!

Sincerely,



Jason Bellerose
Principal
Skowhegan Area High School