

**SACOPEE VALLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL
STUDENT HANDBOOK
2018/2019**



This handbook is produced so that you as an SVMS student and your parents/guardians will have a better understanding of your school. It will give you guidelines to help you make appropriate decisions and take responsibility for what you may accomplish during your middle school years.

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2. Introduction:

- a. Sacopee Valley Middle School prides itself in being many small schools inside a larger school. Each grade is separated into their own hallway or “River” reflecting the rich, natural beauty of the MSAD 55 area. Each grade has their own web page on the website which can be accessed by going to the district site at www.sad55.org and selecting the SVMS icon. There is a directory of teachers on our website with your child’s teacher’s email address to help facilitate home to school communication.
- b. Sacopee Valley Middle School offers a variety of academic and extracurricular activities that support every child as an adolescent learner.
- c. School hours: regular school hours are from 7:50 am until 2:30 pm. Students who walk, ride their bikes or are dropped off at school should arrive between 7:20 am to 7:50 am. Students are asked not to arrive before 7:20 am due to the absence of adult supervision. Breakfast will be available to all students beginning at 7:20 am.
- d. After school, at 2:45 pm., students who remain on school grounds, must be involved in a sport, school activity or arranged an appointment to stay with a teacher in advance. Unsupervised students are a potential safety risk. Students are not permitted to, “hang out” after school unless involved in an official after school program or a supervised study session.
- e. Due to traffic safety with the busses, there will be no student pick up between 2:15 pm and 2:30 pm. All walkers and students getting picked up will be released by the main entrance at 2:30 pm, after second bus load. Please use the parking lot to the left of the school to pick up your child.

3. Important Dates

- a. Quarters/Report Cards
 - i. First Quarter End Date: November 2nd, 2018. Report cards distributed following week.
 - ii. Second Quarter End Date: January 18th, 2019. Report cards distributed following week.
 - iii. Third Quarter End Date: March 29th, 2018. Report cards distributed following week.
 - iv. Fourth Quarter End Date: June 7th, 2018. (Will be adjusted depending on the number of snow days used)
- b. Early Release Dates
 - i. September 14, September 28, October 12, October 26 November 9, December 14, January 11, January 25, February 8, March 8, March 22, April 26, May 10, and May 24.
- c. Concerts: Dates to be announced.

d. Student Recognition

- i. Students receiving honors or high honors will be recognized at an academic assembly following each quarter.

4. **Attendance/Absences**

- a. It is very important that each student make every effort to be in school every day. School attendance laws and policies make it absolutely necessary that we have accurate records for all absences or days tardy. For this reason, attendance is taken during the homeroom each morning. Parents/Guardians must notify the school, in the morning, the day a student is absent.
- b. The following are considered excusable absences: A) illness, B) appointments with health professionals, C) observance of religious holidays, D) family emergencies, E) school suspensions, FOR) planned absences for personal reasons approved in advance by the principal. All other absences are considered unexcused and may result in disciplinary consequences and lowered grades.
- c. **Special Absences:** On occasion, due to vacation and special family situations, we receive requests for students to be excused from school for periods ranging from a few days to a few weeks. Naturally, this presents a problem maintaining the continuity of instruction. It is essential that prior to any requests of this sort (except in emergency situations), a parent conference with the teachers be held. At that time, it should be mutually decided as to how disruptive the student's leave would be to his or her school program and to determine if there are appropriate activities and assignments that the student might complete outside the classroom. It should be noted that instruction cannot be repeated in many cases and some curriculum will simply be missed. Please make careful note of vacations listed on the school calendar and plan your travels accordingly.
- d. **Early Dismissal:** If your child needs to leave school early for a doctor's appointment or other reason, please send a note to school that day notifying us the time and reason you will be picking up your child early
- e. **Tardiness:** It is extremely important that all students are in their classes at 8:00 am ready to engage in their learning. Arriving late to a class already in progress is a disruption. Any student arriving late to school must have a note from his/her parent explaining the reason for the tardiness. If the student does not have a note, it will be considered unexcused tardiness. The Principal will contact parents when there is repeated tardiness.

- f. **Truancy:** Maine law defines truancy as the equivalent of 10 full days of unexcused absences or 7 consecutive school days of unexcused absences during a school year. The law also provides a procedure that schools must follow when a student is truant. The Superintendent is notified and assists the school with truant students. Any questions about truancy issues should be directed to the Principal.

5. **Bicycles**

- a. Students who ride bicycles to school must secure them to the bicycle rack. Students are required to wear helmets. The school does not assume liability for damage or theft of bicycles on school property. Bicycle riders will be dismissed after 1st load.

6. **Book Bags and Backpacks**

- a. For safety, carrying book bags/backpacks to class is not allowed without special permission. Book bags and backpacks will be kept in their locker for duration of the school day.

7. **Co Curricular Program**

- a. The co curricular program provides a variety of activities to complement the academic offerings. It also fosters a sense of teamwork, enjoyment, cooperation, and competition. Some activities require substantial commitments of time, energy, and talent. Programming will be available for students in all grades.

b. **Three of these activities are listed below:**

- i. **Yearbook:** The Yearbook staff takes photographs of pupils, staff, and events throughout the school year . The staff meets once a month before the school day starts. This program begins during the first week of school and ends during the last week. It is open to all eligible students in grades 5, 6, 7 and 8.
- ii. **Civil Rights Team:** The Civil Rights Team is a group of students from all grades who promote fair treatment and safety in the school. The Civil Rights Team involves students positively with their school’s climate and community. The team’s goal is to promote the acceptance of diversity. Signups are during September and October of each school year. Civil Rights Club meets weekly. Some “Extended Classroom Experiences” (ECE’s) are taken, with parental permission. The only cost is money and food for trips.
- iii. **Student Council:** The purpose of the Student Council is to promote better relations among our school, students, community and other schools. Student Council coordinates and carries out various school social activities while building school citizenship and pride. All teams and grades are represented on the council, which holds its elections in

September. This program begins in September and lasts throughout the school year. Student Council meets weekly.

8. Dances/Socials

- a. Dances are for SVMS 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students and SAD 55 student residents attending other schools. The name of the SAD 55 student resident must be submitted to the office at least two days prior to the dance. Students who are absent during the week of the dance cannot attend. ***Students suspended between dances may not attend.*** Students may leave early only if accompanied by their parents or guardian. If a student has left the designated area, he/she will not be readmitted. Inappropriate conduct or attire will result in a phone call home, removal from the dance, and possible disciplinary action. Backpacks are not necessary at dances and must be left at home. Students ***cannot bring digital cameras or cell phones into school dances.***
- b. The Students in 4th, 5th and 6th grade students will have an opportunity to participate in after school socials, which will include age appropriate activities and games.

9. Electronic Devices

- a. The use of electronic devices on school grounds, (iPods, Game Boy, or other handheld devices), is not allowed from the time the student arrives until student is dismissed unless special permission has been granted by a teacher. If any device is used, they will be confiscated and parents will be asked to retrieve the items from an administrator. SVMS is not responsible for the loss or theft of personal property if your child chooses to bring them into school.
- b. **Cell phones:** Students are allowed to bring a phone to school; however, it must be turned off before student enters the school building. The cell phone must be stored in their backpack, locker, or left with homeroom teacher and be kept off during the school day. Use of the cell phone during the school day will result it in being confiscated, and the parent being notified (***see SVMS Behavior Rubric for further information***). We understand the need for communication between students and parents/ guardians, but it must be done outside the school, and after students are released for the day; during school hours any emergency communication must be done through the school phone in the office or classroom phone with adult supervision.
 - i. **First Offense:** Phone confiscated and returned to the student at the end of the school day, parent notified. (***It is the student's responsibility to come to the office to pick up the phone***)

- ii. **Second Offense:** Phone confiscated and returned to the parent at a time the parent is able to come to school to get the phone.
- iii. **Third Offense:** Phone confiscated and only returned to the parent. Student is not allowed to bring the phone to school for the remainder of the quarter.

10. Field Trips

- a. All field trips have educational objectives and receive prior approval from the school administration. Students must have a signed permission form in order to participate in a school sponsored field trip and must meet all other academic and behavioral expectations in order to attend. Some opportunities may necessitate a small fee and the school will make every effort to keep costs minimal. Please alert the building principal if assistance with any fee would be helpful. Your inquiry will be held in strict confidence.

11. Food Service Program

- a. **Free and Reduced Lunch Form.** A free and reduced lunch form is sent home with all students on the first day of school. This form is confidential and only one form per family is necessary. The percentage of free and reduced students in our school and district determines Title One funding and affects many other grants so it is very important that this form is returned to school. If you need any help filling out the form, please contact the Food Service Director at 625-2490 ext 1143.
- b. Meals Breakfast and lunch are served daily. The cost of breakfast is *\$1.00* a day and free for reduced price breakfast. All students are encouraged to either eat breakfast at school or home! Student may purchase a hot lunch, bring their own lunch, or purchase just a white or chocolate milk to go with their lunch. The price of school lunch is \$2.50 and .40 cents for reduced price lunch. *Students who bring their own lunch have the opportunity to purchase milk for 50 cents.*
- c. Lunch money should be turned in on the first day of the week. Parents may purchase meals in advance, as some parents prefer to pay for an entire month or year at a time. Checks are the easiest form of payment, but please put the student's name on the memo line. Online payments available at www.myschoolbucks.com. My School Bucks does charge a transaction fee of \$2.49. If you put \$75 or greater in the positive in your student's account, your student will receive a free bonus lunch meal (\$2.50 value) If a student does not turn in lunch money they will only be allowed to charge six regular school lunch meals. After that time, students will be offered an

alternative lunch meal. If you have any questions regarding this policy, please contact the MSAD 55 Food Service Director at 625-2490 ext. 1143.

- d. **AFDC or Food Stamp Recipients.** If your family qualifies for AFDC or SNAP, you automatically qualify for free lunch.
- e. **Food Allergies.** Any student with any food allergy or food intolerance needs to have a note from their healthcare provider on file in the nurse's office. This information will then be entered into our food management software to assist the student in making appropriate food choices. This information should be provided to the school annually.

f. Meal Prices

Breakfast

- *Full Price - \$1.00*
- *Reduced Price - Free*
- *Entire Year - \$175.00*

Lunch

- *Full Price - \$2.50*
- *Reduced - 40 cents*
- *Entire Year - \$437.50*
- *Entire Year Reduced Price - \$72.00*

12. School Counseling

- a. The goal of the middle school counseling program is to support the developmental needs of ALL students in the areas of academic success, personal/social growth, and career/vocational awareness. The counselor will provide the majority of the guidance services in the classroom setting or in small groups. Age appropriate instruction will be provided in areas including career exploration, college readiness, conflict management, and study skills. The counselor is available to work with students one on one on a short term, as needed basis. The counselor is available to meet with students and parents to discuss individual concerns and to provide information about community resources for families interested in pursuing long term counseling services.

13. Lockers

- a. Student use of school lockers and other storage facilities such as desks are a privilege granted by the school. All lockers and other storage facilities are school property and remain under the control, custody and supervision of the school. Students have no expectation of privacy in school

storage facilities or any items placed in them. School officials have the authority to inspect and search storage facilities and their contents on a random basis, with or without reasonable suspicion, and with or without notice or consent.

- b.** The school is not responsible for loss, theft or damage to personal property stored in lockers. Students should safeguard their possessions and not bring valuable items or large amounts of cash to school.

14. Lost and Found

- a.** It is very important that students take responsibility for their possessions, and those items such as jackets and backpacks are labeled with the child's name. A "*lost and found*" will be located in a bin near the gym and cafeteria. At the end of each quarter, all unclaimed items will be donated locally to a charitable organization.

15. Recess

- a.** Students should be prepared with proper clothing and sneakers so they can enjoy an active and fun recess each day. If weather is severe, every effort will be made for students to still have an opportunity to be active indoors for a period of time. Students must dress appropriately for the weather conditions and staff may determine a student is not appropriately dressed for the elements and ask them to remain indoors.

16. School Telephones

- a.** A phone is available in the main office until 4:00 p.m. for students to use for emergencies and if they need to make arrangements to stay after school for makeup work. Students must have a pass to use the phones during regular school hours.

17. Student Recognition

- a.** Academic achievement, improvement, effort, and citizenship, will be recognized each quarter, and at the end of the school year.

18. Student Records

- a.** Parents are asked to complete a student information/emergency card annually. If any of this information changes during the year, please let us know as soon as possible so that we have current contact information.

19. Student Responsibility for School Issued Items

- a.** Books and materials represent a significant expense. It is imperative that students treat all school property with care. At the end of the year, each student will be charged for any lost or damaged books, uniforms, calculators, lab equipment, or other school issued materials.

20. SVMS Interscholastic Athletic Program

- a.** Middle school is often the first time some of our athletes experience organized athletics and there are often different policies and rules that we must follow as a district and as member of the middle school Triple C Conference . We often view this experience as a learning opportunity to prepare athletes to have a successful and enjoyable experience at the high school level while also understanding that not every middle school athlete will be interested in participating at the high school level. Although winning often is important to parents, athletes and coaches, it is not our emphasis. We feel that skill development; sportsmanship, learning how to be part of a team, and providing an enjoyable experience are our top priorities. If we accomplish these goals, winning will take care of itself.

b. Requirements to Participate in the Athletic Program

- i. Completed parent consent form (permission slip)
 - ii. Insurance
 - iii. Documentation of an Up-To-Date Physical Exam
- c.** The following are our current sports program offerings:

i. FALL SPORTS

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Cheerleading | Grades 7 and Grade 8 |
| 2. Cross Country | Grades 6, 7 and 8 |
| 3. Field Hockey | Grades 6, 7 and 8 |
| 4. Girls' Soccer | Grades 6, 7 and 8 |
| 5. Boys' Soccer | Grades 6, 7 and 8 |
| 6. Football | Grade 7 and Grade 8 |

ii. WINTER SPORTS

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Boys' Basketball | Grade 7 and Grade 8 |
| 2. Girls' Basketball | Grade 7 and Grade 8 |
| 3. Cheerleading | Grade 7 and Grade 8 |

iii. SPRING SPORTS

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Girls' Softball | Grade 7 and Grade 8 |
| 2. Boys' Baseball | Grade 7 and Grade 8 |
| 3. Outdoor Track | Grades 6 ,7, and 8 |

d. Athletic Eligibility

- i. It is expected that all student-athletes will maintain a 2.5 or above in habits of work in order to be eligible.
 - 1. A student will be ineligible at any time a teacher reports that his/her habits of work grade dips below 2.5. Once the student has brought the habits of work grade to 2.5 or better, he/she will once again be eligible to participate.
- ii. Student athletes must arrive to school no later than 8:30 AM in order to participate in practices or games. Exceptions would be for appointments or other circumstances cleared by the principal. Please provide documentation for appointments (dentist, doctor, orthodontist, etc.)

e. Student Athlete Behavior and Expectations

- i. Participation in athletics is a privilege, not a right. It is expected that SVMS student-athletes conduct themselves in an appropriate and respectful manner while representing their school, community and family. Therefore, there are additional rules and policies that student-athletes must follow in order to be eligible. A complete description of these rules and policies can be found on the district athletic webpage (<https://sites.google.com/a/sacopeevalleyschools.org/go-sv-hawks/>) and include the following:
 - 1. Athletic Code of Conduct
 - a. Possession/use of tobacco products
 - b. Possession/use/distribution of alcohol, narcotics or other unauthorized drugs
 - c. Bullying, harassment, and injurious hazing
 - d. Student-athlete conduct

21. Visitors

- a. For the safety of our students and staff, all parents, visitors and volunteers must identify themselves at the main office before entering any other areas of the school. Visitors will be issued a badge for the duration of their stay.

- b. Parents who wish to visit classrooms or meet with teachers or other staff members are required to schedule such visits in advance so as not to disrupt the educational program.

22. Sacopee Valley Middle School Behavior Expectations

- a. SVMS will be a safe and nurturing environment that supports student learning and achievement through positive behavior. Our goal is to build a community of students that embody the qualities of empathy, respect, and responsible behavior. We will treat every behavior issue as an opportunity to teach our students and help create a sense of citizenship among our students.
- b. All students are expected to conduct themselves with respect for others and in accordance with Board policies, school rules, and applicable state and federal laws.
- c. Teachers and teaching teams at SVMS may incorporate various behavior management techniques within their classrooms or “rivers”, but will have the full support of administration when dealing with issues that are more impactful to individual students and the school-wide community.
- d. The administration will enlist the assistance of any staff and service at their disposal including social work services, special education services, SRO services, mentor's, guidance services, parents and even other students to help ensure the appropriate level of responsibility and accountability for any student involved with behavior issues.
- e. ***PROHIBITED BEHAVIORS***
 - i. **Classroom, Hallway Behaviors**
 - 1. Cell phone use, gum, tardy to class, skipping class, class disruptions, refusal to work, insubordination, disrespectful/defiant behavior, dress code violations, profanity
 - ii. **Verbal Behaviors**
 - 1. Name calling, gossiping, teasing, taunting, benign threats, exclusion, “silent treatment” inappropriate language, loud and disruptive, rude or disrespectful to staff or students, lying about others, insulting, (any inappropriate verbal behaviors that do not rise to the severe level of harassment or bullying).
 - iii. **Physical Behaviors**
 - 1. Any hands on behavior or physical contact not considered severe, throwing items, running in school, invading others’ personal space, posturing, skipping class, (any inappropriate physical behaviors that do not rise to the severe level of bullying).

iv. Severe Behaviors

1. Bullying, harassment, assault/aggressive behavior (fighting, pushing, kicking, slapping, grabbing, etc.), destruction of property, threatening, retaliation, possession of illegal substances (any substances not allowed on school grounds), possession of weapons, swearing at others, theft, serious computer related issues.

f. CONSEQUENCES

- i. We want to help educate our students about the harm they may have caused to others while at the same time holding them accountable for their actions. Each issue will be dealt with consistently, fairly and with an appropriate measure of consequence. Whenever possible the consequence will involve some sort of reparation or an attempt to “make things right” with those involved.

1. Consequences will include some or all of the following:

- a. A meeting with all parties involved including teacher, other students (when appropriate), administration and other staff as needed.
 - i. Parental notification.
 - ii. The completion of a “reflection form” by the student.
 - iii. Possible meetings with school and district resource staff (social worker, SRO, guidance counselor, mentors, etc.)

2. Other Consequences may include :

- a. Warning
- b. Recess or lunch detention
- c. After school detention
- d. Suspension (in-school, out of school)
- e. Community service
- f. Financial reparation
- g. Discussion with those involved
- h. All information surrounding the event will be documented in Infinite Campus.

- ii. ***Bus Incidents***

1. Bus slip #1

- a. Meet with Administration, Warning (unless event requires further discipline), Parent signed slip, call home

2. Bus slip #2
 - a. Meet with Administration, time off bus depending on incident severity, call home, parent signed slip. Bus slip #3, Extended time off bus depending on severity, call home parent signed slip, possible meeting with parents, bus driver, SRO etc.
 3. 3+ Bus Slips
 - a. Meeting with parents, bus driver, administration, SRO, off bus until meeting.
- iii.** (The SVMS administration reserves the right to modify any and all consequences as they see benefiting the overall peacefulness and usefulness of the school.)