

South Seneca Middle School



Student-Parent Handbook 2011-12

MISSION STATEMENT
SOUTH SENECA CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

The mission of South Seneca is to create and maintain an environment that ensures that every student reaches a high level of academic achievement as determined by state and national standards. We commit to a comprehensive system of social, emotional, and academic support to assure this outcome.

WE BELIEVE

- *That middle school is student focused.*
- *That middle level education is unique. The needs of the middle school student are different from those of elementary or high school students.*
- *That middle school is a team effort involving all students, their homes, the community, and the school.*
- *That communication between home and school is a priority in the middle grades.*
- *That every individual involved in our community has a valuable contribution to offer.*
- *That we must recognize that middle school students are in a process of constant change. We are dedicated to supporting them in their growth.*
- *That is each person's responsibility to work hard to create and foster a positive climate in our middle school.*
- *That we must strive to meet every student's individual needs through flexibility and creativity.*

Dear Students and Parents,

Welcome back!

We are very excited to be starting another September, and as hard as it is to say goodbye to our summer vacations, we are looking forward to a great school year. In the Middle School, we are dedicated to the learning and well-being of each student, and our teams of teachers and support staff are planning for success.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide some very basic information to help you get ready to walk in the doors on September 7 knowing what to expect. It can also be used as a quick reference for important phone numbers and resources to get your questions answered. All the answers aren't here, but it should help point you in the right direction to find the answer.

As always, the most direct way to get answers is to stop in or give us a call. Please don't ever hesitate to contact us: the middle school office is at 869-9636, extension 4120, and we will do everything we can to help.

Best wishes,

Steve Parker Zielinski
Principal

2011 • MIDDLE SCHOOL CALENDAR • 2012

AUGUST 2011						
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
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28	29	30	31			

SEPTEMBER 2011						
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OCTOBER 2011						
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NOVEMBER 2011						
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20	21	22	NO SCHOOL			26
27	28	29	30			

DECEMBER 2011						
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25	NO SCHOOL					31

JANUARY 2012						
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FEBRUARY 2012						
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12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	NO SCHOOL					25
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MARCH 2012						
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APRIL 2012						
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MAY 2012						
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27	□	29	30	31		

JUNE 2012						
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10	11	12	NO SCHOOL			16
17	NO SCHOOL					23
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JANUARY 2012						
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22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

□ NO SCHOOL Sept 5,6; Oct 10; Nov 11, 23-25; Dec 26-31; Jan 2, 16; Feb 20-24; Apr 9-13; May 16, 25 (unless we use more than 3 snow days), 28; June 13-22

△ HALF DAYS (Dismissal 11:15 AM) Sept 20; Oct 18; Nov 15, 29; Jan 10; Feb 14; Mar 13; Apr 24; May 1; June 12

LAST DAY OF CLASSES June 12

Bell Schedule

FORUM	7:45-7:57
BLOCK 1	8:00-9:09
BLOCK 2	9:12-10:21
BLOCK 3	10:25-11:39
BLOCK 4	11:43-12:57
BLOCK 5	1:00-2:15

After School Time

For most students the school day ends at 2:20 when the buses arrive to take everyone home. For those students staying after school, however, a “late bus” arrives at 3:00 to bring them to the Elementary building, where they will transfer to other buses for transportation home on the regular Elementary dismissal run.

Any student staying after school must have a legitimate purpose for remaining in the building, and a school-issued pass for riding the late bus. Modified sports participants will receive a season-long pass from their coaches to get on the bus so they can get to Interlaken practices; these students will be assigned to a study hall at 2:25 that will last for the duration of their season.

Leaving and Coming Back

PLEASE be aware that for middle-school age students, we cannot allow a trip into Ovid on foot after school before practices or other after school activities. It is impossible for us to do a good job of supervision for students if we don't know when they are and are not in the building.

If you, as a parent, wish to give your child permission to leave school on their own at 2:20, you **MUST** have a conversation with the principal to arrange this, and the understanding will be that your child is then in your care when they leave the building. That means they **WILL NOT** be allowed to re-join our After School Study Hall, OR take the 3PM bus to Interlaken.

Our Academic Schedule

Each of our school days is given a letter from A to D. A and C days are mostly alike; the same is true for B and D days. If we have a snow day or other cancellation, the next school day picks up with the next letter.

All of our students take English Language Arts (ELA), Math, Science, and Social Studies. In 7th and 8th grades, all students take Spanish.

We also provide, by state mandate, a full year of Physical Education, and “encore” classes at each grade level. For 2011-12, these classes are:

- Grade 6: Health (13 weeks)
- Grade 6: Band and/or Chorus (40 weeks)
- Grade 6: Reading (40 weeks)
- Grade 7: Technology (20 weeks)
- Grade 7: Computer Applications and Library/Information Systems, as part of our core curriculum (not a separate class)
- Grade 8: Art and Health (10 weeks each)
- Grade 8: Technology (20 weeks)
- Grade 8: Computer Applications and Library/Information Systems (either as a separate class or as part of our core curriculum)
- Grades 6-8 Family and Consumer Science, as part of our core curriculum (not a separate class)

All students have a lunch period (half a block) every day, and most students will be assigned to a study hall about one half-block per ABCD cycle.

In addition to these classes, each student is assigned to a few classes that are designed either for enrichment of our standard curriculum or for Academic Intervention Services. This year, we are offering:

- Band
- Chorus
- Reading
- AIS ELA
- AIS Math
- Literature and Cinema
- Natural Science
- Library Research for Grade 7
- Document Processing for Grade 8
- Current Research in Science
- Distance Learning
- Life Skills and Careers for Grade 6

Each of these classes is designed to supplement the middle school curriculum, and is an important part of our overall middle school experience. Careful attention to this 3-year coursework will completely prepare a student for high school beginning in Grade 9.

Website and E-Mail

Our website at www.southseneca.com/middle_school.htm has been overdue for a while now for a “face lift,” and it is getting one in September. Please visit this site often for up-to-date information and announcements.

To contact any staff member by e-mail, use the first name initial and full last name, followed by @southseneca.k12.ny.us

For example, to contact our secretary Karen Denmark, use the address **kdenmark@southseneca.k12.ny.us**

And to contact the principal Steve (Parker)Zielinski, use the address **szielinski@southseneca.k12.ny.us**

Teachers: Grade Level Teams

Each grade level has a dedicated teaching staff whose job it is to take care of the students in that grade. Some teachers teach only one grade level, and others teach across grade levels, but as a faculty, we pay attention to our students and do everything in our power to provide the highest quality education and a level of social and emotional support that ensures a positive experience for everyone.

We care that each student is safe, learning, and supported. PLEASE do not hesitate to make us aware of concerns that we are not seeing, and the teams of teachers will contact you to keep you informed about what is happening at school. The best school communities work together, students and parents and teachers and all others, to make a productive and happy year.

Support Staff

In addition to teaching staff, we have other adults in our buildings who work to form that rich support system. Our Guidance Counselor Kimberly Bell (extension 4105) is actively engaged in “smoothing out” students’ schedules and interactions with peers and adults. Our bus drivers are trained in safety and supervision; our cafeteria staff is thinking all the time about providing the best food and environment for students; our maintenance staff is ever present to clean rooms and hallways, fix equipment, and just to “help out”; our secretary Karen Denmark can answer a million questions, or find someone with the answer; and the list goes on and on.

You might be seeing a theme here: we care about our students, and we want to hear from parents and community members about concerns.

Our Four Reminders for All Students

LEARN

This is your job at school: do everything you can to “train your brain” to understand and make sense of your course material. Every class you take has a set of learning goals— what you are supposed to know and be able to do. Did you know your brain is actually growing now to add information exactly in the right way to make sense to you? If you take the time and energy to let it happen, you are going to learn every single day in middle school. It’s up to you!

COOPERATE

We have a great school and a great program, with great teachers and support staff to run it. Everything is in place to give you a fantastic experience. If you cooperate with your peers and the adults in the building, nothing will stand in the way of your success. As you make choices each day, strive to make things easier, not harder, for you and for everyone around you. Ask questions if you have them, and talk to the adults in the building if something is bothering you— we are here to help.

BE HEALTHY

We have to take care of ourselves, and at your age, your body is changing fast! In middle school, we grow faster than any other time in our lives except for the ages of 0-2. It is EXTREMELY important to eat healthy food, exercise regularly, and get enough sleep. On top of all that, we have to figure out a regular schedule of staying clean (body and clothes) and taking care of our teeth and hair. A big part of our program is designed to help you make healthy choices.

HAVE FUN

Yes, having fun is important too! You may not know it, but the first three goals above will make it easiest for us all to enjoy our time at school. When we are healthy, learning, and cooperating with each other, the days spent in our middle school with our friends and with caring adults are FUN! Teachers like to design lessons that are engaging, interesting, and enjoyable, and we go out of our way to plan social events and trips that make the three middle school years happy and memorable. Let us know if you can think of ideas to brighten up our school days!

Planners

Every student gets his or her own planner, and must carry it during the day. We always check to see if you have it during our morning Forum, and it is used as both an organizer and a hall pass from 8AM to 3PM. Put your name on it, learn to use it, and take care of it.

A Few General Rules and Advice

In the middle school, we put all our bags and backpacks, along with music players and other electronics, in our lockers at the beginning of the day. We also don't bring food and drink to classes (except for a clear bottle of water in classes where it is not a safety hazard).

Our lockers are all in working order— if you lock them up and don't share your combination with anyone, no one can access your personal items except for school personnel. Use them for this purpose, and keep that combination a secret!

We are going to be trying out a new system for handling cell phones in the middle school this year. Students will be allowed to carry their phones with them during the day, and to use them appropriately between classes. The school DOES NOT take responsibility for these items— it is your child's responsibility to take care of the phone. Additionally, please coach your child about listening to teacher directions about minimizing any distractions created by the phones during classes. Cell phones are a big part of our lives in the 21st century: we all need to learn to use them politely and appropriately. Finally, please also remember that misuse of a phone during the school day is grounds for disciplinary action, which may include the loss of the privilege of carrying it.

As always, we discourage students from bringing expensive electronic devices to school in the first place, and every year we sympathize when a student loses one. Unfortunately, we cannot protect equipment that is not stored in a locker, and although we will help investigate a lost device, we cannot take responsibility for overseeing electronics.

GET READY FOR A GREAT YEAR!