



TO: Dr. Graff, Superintendent
Members of the Board

FROM: Jana Sykora

DATE: 8/11/2025

RE: 25-26 South Student-Parent Handbook

Attached is the 2025–2026 South Elementary Student-Parent Handbook.

The contents of the handbook are reviewed each spring and summer by the South Elementary Building Leadership Team. This year’s review resulted in the following changes:

Updated Principal Welcome Letter

Section 1: Academics

- **Conferences** – Updated conference dates for the current school year.
- **Report Cards, Grades & Assessments** – Added information about our grading scale and universal reading screening per READ Act requirements, along with a paragraph about math and SEL screening.

Section 2:

- **Attendance**
 - Adjusted tardy policy: Students will be marked tardy until 8:15 a.m., after which they will be marked as having a morning absence.
 - All absences are tracked by the minute and reported precisely.
 - Added language encouraging third-party documentation for all medical, therapy, and legal absences.

Leaving School

- Added clarification that a government-issued ID is required when picking up students.

Student Drop-Off and Pick-Up

- Added language stressing the importance of using the drop-off loop instead of the parking lot.

Section 4: Guidelines and Procedures

- **Recess** – Removed the sentence about recess suspension; refined language regarding our 30-minute recess, inclement weather, and priority on student safety.
- **Visiting School** – Clarified that lunch visits do not include recess; added a request that parents avoid bringing food to share with other children due to allergy risks.
- **Bikes, Scooters & Skateboards** – Added scooters to the policy.
- **Flexible Learning Days** – Removed the line about sending iPads home with students, as this has not been done in recent years.
- **Snack Cart** – Removed information due to the availability of free breakfast in Minnesota.
- **Treats** – Added language about notifying teachers in advance, encouraging non-food items, and considering cleanup.
- **Athletic Events** – Updated information about admission costs and athletic passes.

Section 5:

Technology

- Updated per new MSBA recommendations for device policies; added third and fourth bullet points under Responsible Student Use.
 - **Electronic Devices** – No devices in the classroom.
 - **Failure to Meet Electronic Device Expectations.**
- **AI Policy: New**

At South Elementary, our primary focus is on developmentally appropriate, relationship-based instruction. While artificial intelligence (AI) tools may be used by staff to enhance planning or support individual learning needs, their use with Kindergarten and first grade students is limited and always guided by professional judgment.

- *AI is not used as a substitute for hands-on learning or teacher interaction.*
- *Any AI-based tools (such as reading supports or adaptive learning programs) are carefully reviewed to ensure they are safe, age-appropriate, and aligned with district policy.*
- *Student data privacy is a top priority. We do not allow AI tools to collect or share personally identifiable student information without consent.*

Section 6: Health

- Removed redundant information about staying indoors for recess.
- Added language stating that medications will be disposed of if not picked up within one day of withdrawal or the end of the school year.
- Included the “How Sick is Too Sick?” handout from the health office.

Section 7: Policy: Updated to reflect current school board policies.