

SOUTHWEST MIDDLE SCHOOL



1601 West Front Street

Albert Lea, MN 56007

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Web Site: <https://www.alschools.org/>

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#SOUTHWESTROCKS

2025-2026 STUDENT HANDBOOK

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SWMS Mission
Always Expect the Best!

Welcome to Southwest Middle School for the 2025-2026 school year!

Middle school is a time for students to grow, develop lifelong skills/habits and build positive relationships with peers and adults. Students who attend school regularly and are involved in clubs or other activities, combined with school and families partnering together to teach, encourage and support will more likely encounter academic success and have a positive educational experience that will better prepare them for their journey after middle school.

Southwest Middle School is committed to working together with families and the community to ensure a successful educational experience for our students. Our hope is that the time spent here at Southwest will allow our students to become curious learners who are provided diverse opportunities to grow and learn in a safe, respectful and positive environment that will foster them to develop to their fullest potential. Southwest Middle School staff are here to support and guide students to help meet their needs.

This handbook has been prepared as a guide in understanding the expectations for Southwest Middle School students in regard to school policies and procedures. It is the responsibility of each Southwest student and parent/guardian to become familiar with this handbook and its contents as students and parents are held accountable for knowing the policies. If you need clarity on anything in the handbook, please feel free to contact a teacher or our administrator. It would be impossible to address every situation that arises during the school day or any before/after school activities. The administration will develop and implement additional procedures they see necessary in operating the school. The policies and procedures in this handbook may be amended or changed during the course of the school year. The changes will be noted in the handbook online and may be found on the Southwest Middle School website: alschools.org. At the discretion of administration, any infractions to Albert Lea Area Schools policies and Southwest Middle School procedures may be shared with the police liaison officer for review for possible criminal violation.

We wish every student at Southwest Middle School a successful and rewarding year filled with engaging and challenging learning opportunities along with positive and respectful social interactions.

Southwest Rocks!

Sincerely,

Tyler Johnson, Principal



SWMS Tiger Family

Administration

Tyler Johnson, Principal.....507-379-5241
Jackie Cromwell-Olson, Dean of Students.....5047-379-5249

Main Office

Jillann Luoma, Secretary to the Principal.....507-379-5242
Jane Beighley, Attendance/Student Services Secretary.....507-379-5243
Attendance Line.....507-379-5312
Bev Johnson, Health Clerk.....507-379-5315

Special Services

Amy Vogt, Assistant Special Education Director.....507-379-5114
Stephanie Engebretson, Social Worker.....507-379-5287
Carrie Farr, Social Worker.....507-379-5283
Rachel Crosby, Counselor.....507-379-5254

Miscellaneous

Kari Rubitschung, Director of Food Services.....507-379-5301
Jolene Svendsen, Food Services Secretary.....507-379-5300
Albert Lea Bus Company.....507-373-1467
Stefanie Stevens, Licensed School Nurse.....507-379-4828
Greg Olson, Building Head.....507-379-5304
Kristen Seeger, Media Specialist.....507-379-5286
Mary DeRaad, Media Clerk.....507-379-5309
Paw Wah Tamla, Karen Success Coach.....507-379-5244
Bianca Fugon, Spanish Success Coach.....507-379-5314
Jay Escorab, Spanish Success Coach.....507-379-5314
David Huse, Police School Liaison Officer.....507-379-5281
Jenny Hendrickson, Freeborn County Truancy Officer

Activities @ ALHS

Pauline Hallstrom, Office Manager/Activities Secretary.....507-379-5345
Holly Dahl, Activities Clerk.....507-379-4833
Dave Langerud, High School Activities Director.....507-379-5359
Harrison Koetz, Junior High Activities Director.....507-379-5363



ALBERT LEA

SCHOOL DISTRICT 241

July 2025

Student Days	M	T	W	TH	F
District Days (All Staff)		1	2	3	4
Holidays & Breaks	7	8	9	10	11
No school					
PreK-Grade 12	14	15	16	17	18
Conferences					
No School					
PreK-Grade 12	21	22	23	24	25
8th Grade					
Orientation	28	29	30	31	
AL Academy Day					

August 2025

M	T	W	TH	F
				1
4	5	6	7	8
Aug 11-18 District Days (All Staff)				
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29
Aug 14 PreK-12th Meet Your Teacher Aug 18 8th Grade Orientation Aug 19 Grades PreK-12 First Day of School Aug. 29-Sept. 1 Labor Day Weekend Break (NO SCHOOL)				

September 2025

M	T	W	TH	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30			

October 2025

M	T	W	TH	F
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30	31
Oct 16-17 Fall Break (NO SCHOOL) Oct 20 District Day (Staff only)				

November 2025

M	T	W	TH	F
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28
Nov 10 Conferences (NO SCHOOL PreK-12) Nov 26-28 Thanksgiving Break (NO SCHOOL)				

December 2025

M	T	W	TH	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30	31		
Dec 1 AL Academy Day (NO SCHOOL) Dec 24-Jan. 2 Winter Break (NO SCHOOL)				

January 2026

M	T	W	TH	F
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	30
Jan 5 District Day (Staff Only) Jan 19 District Day (Staff Only)				

February 2026

M	T	W	TH	F
2	3	4	5	6
9	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27
Feb. 13 AL Academy Day (NO SCHOOL) Feb 16 Holiday Break (NO SCHOOL) Feb. 23 Conferences (NO SCHOOL PreK-12)				

March 2026

M	T	W	TH	F
2	3	4	5	6
9	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27
30	31			
Mar 16-20 Spring Break (NO SCHOOL)				

April 2026

M	T	W	TH	F
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30	
Apr 3 Holiday Break (NO SCHOOL) Apr 6 District Day (Staff Only)				

May 2026

M	T	W	TH	F
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29
May 21 ALC Commencement May 22 ALHS Commencement May 25 Holiday Break (NO SCHOOL) May 27 Last Day of School May 28 District Day				

June 2026

M	T	W	TH	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30			

Southwest Middle School Calendar 2025-2026



August 14, 2025	<u>ALL students - Open house & pictures 11am-7pm</u>
August 19, 2025	First Day of school for all SWMS students
August 29 & September 1, 2025	NO SCHOOL - Labor Day Holiday
September 2, 2025	School back in session
September 2-4, 2025	Dental Clinic (for eligible students only)
October, 2025	6th grade field trip to History Museum
October 1, 2025	Strawbridge Picture Retakes - AM only
October 9, 2025	Choir Concert - 6pm SW Gym
October 15, 2025	End of Mid-Semester 1
October 16 & 17, 2025	NO SCHOOL - Fall Break
October 20, 2025	NO SCHOOL - Professional Development Day
November 4-12, 2025	Scholastic Book Fair
November 10, 2025	NO SCHOOL - Conferences - TBD
November 26-28, 2025	NO SCHOOL - Thanksgiving Break
December 1, 2025	NO SCHOOL - Academy Day
December 15, 2025	Band/Choir/Orchestra/Club Pictures - AM only
December 16, 2025	6th Gr. Band/Choir/Orchestra Concert - 6pm SW
December 16, 2025	7th Gr. Band/Choir/Orchestra Concert - 7:30pm SW
December 23, 2025	End of Semester 1
December 24, 2025-January 5, 2026	NO SCHOOL - Winter Break
January 6, 2026	School Resumes
January 19, 2026	NO SCHOOL - Holiday
February 13, 2026	NO SCHOOL - Academy Day for staff
February 16, 2026	NO SCHOOL - Holiday
February 17-25, 2026	Scholastic Book Fair
February 23, 2026	NO SCHOOL - Conferences - TBD
March 3, 2026	Choir Concert - 6pm SW gym
March 5, 2026	6th-12th Orchestra Concert - HS Auditorium 7:00pm
March 6, 2026	Spring Play - 7:00pm Little Theater @ SWMS
March 13, 2026	End of Mid-Semester 2
March 16-20, 2026	NO SCHOOL - Spring Break
March, 2026	Dental Clinic (for eligible students only)
March, 2026	SWMS Fundraiser
April 3, 2026	NO SCHOOL - Holiday
April 6, 2026	NO SCHOOL - District Day for staff
May, 2026	6th grade field trip to Physics Force
May, 2026	Battle of the Books
May, 2026	Social Studies Spectacular
May 18-20, 2026	BOGO Book Fair
May 19, 2026	6th Gr. Band/Choir/Orchestra Concert - 6pm SW
May 19, 2026	7th Gr. Band/Choir/Orchestra Concert - 7:30pm SW
May 22, 2026	Exploratory Day
May 25, 2026	NO SCHOOL - Holiday
May 27, 2026	Last day of school - End of Semester 2

Dates and Activities subject to change. Please see SWMS website for current calendar events.

Updated 7/9/2025

Allergies/Deliveries

We have students at SWMS who have life threatening allergies to latex, peanuts, and tree nuts. Any deliveries containing latex will be prohibited from entering the building. We request individuals to voluntarily refrain from sending/bringing any peanut or tree nut products or by-products into SWMS or to any school-related activities. Deliveries of flowers, plants and/or mylar balloons will be kept in the main office and will receive a note to pick up their items at the end of the school day. Students are not to bring food items to share with others in the cafeteria or in the classroom. Students are not allowed to have food, candy, or gum in the classroom unless given permission by the classroom teacher.

Attendance

The school board believes that regular school attendance is directly related to success in academic work, benefits students socially, provides opportunities for important communications between teachers and students, and establishes regular habits of dependability important to the future of the student. The purpose of this policy is to encourage regular school attendance. It is intended to be positive and not punitive. This policy also recognizes that class attendance is a joint responsibility to be shared by the student, parent or guardian, teacher, and administrators. This policy will assist students in attending class.

According to Minnesota Compulsory Attendance Law, 7-17 year old students are required by law to attend school on a regular basis. All reasonable efforts should be made by families to make school attendance a priority in the home and ensure that students are in school each and every student contact day. Parent/guardian involvement can reduce truancy.

Student Responsibilities

- Attend all classes on a daily basis and arrive on time.
- Follow all check-in and check-out procedures. Students must check in at the Attendance Office if they arrive after school has begun.
- If you have a permission slip to leave, bring the permission slip/note to the attendance office before classes start for the day.
- Students may not leave school grounds for any reason without permission. The Attendance Office will grant permission, with parent approval, for a student to leave the building and will provide him/her a pass.
- If you are feeling ill, you need to go to the health office. If you need to call home because you are ill or injured – the call will be made at the health office with the health clerk and student.
- Contact your teacher to arrange make-up work when absent.
- Complete all make-up work for all absence types within two (2) days of return. Previously announced projects and/or assessments must be turned in or taken on the day of the student's return to school. If extenuating circumstances exist, the teacher may grant additional make-up time.

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

- Ensure that their child attends school.
- Be aware of their child's attendance: online access through ParentVue is available for parents.
- Inform the school of absences prior to, the day of, or no later than 9:00 a.m. the day after the absence stating student's first and last name, ID number and reason for the absence. **(Attendance Line: 507-379-5312)**
- Parents are asked to notify the Attendance Office and fill out an *Absence Pre-Approval Request* form for an extended absence 3 days prior to the start of the absence and to make the arrangements for the student to make up work. A maximum of five cumulative vacation days will be allowed in a school year.
- Schedule student appointments outside the school day when possible.
- Contact the Attendance Office, Administration, or teachers if there are concerns about the student's attendance.

Nine Day Absence Rule

There is a cap of 9 total absences (excused and unexcused) per class per semester. This includes excused vacation days. If a student misses more than 9 days, parents/guardians will receive notification of the-ninth (9) absence in a semester. After the 9th absence in the semester, the student will be marked unexcused from classes, unless it falls under an excused absence listed below.

Absences that are ALWAYS excused:

- 504s and IEPs that have attendance clauses in them
- Court appearances
- School-sponsored activities
- Suspension
- Verified meeting with office personnel
- Verified Doctor-ordered absence

- Official religious holidays
- Death of an immediate family member (parent, step-parent, guardian, sibling, grandparent)
- Unique or emergency circumstances which are authorized by a school administrator

Unexcused Absences

All unexcused absences, parent(s) will receive an automatic call notifying them of their student's absence.

- Babysitting
- Missing the bus
- Oversleeping
- Running late
- Transportation problem (car breaking down, no gas)
- Work/job
- Other reasons that are not listed under excused absences

Truancy

Truancy is the action of staying away from school without good reason. Below are the steps taken to help make sure students are in school.

1st & 2nd Unexcused Absence

- Automatic phone call to parent/guardian
- Student may be assigned lunch detention

3rd Unexcused Absence - Continuing Truant

- MN. Stat. 260A.02 provides that a continuing truant is a student who is subject to the compulsory instruction requirements of MN. Stat. 120A.22 and is absent from instruction in a school, as defined in MN. Stat. 120A.05, without a valid excuse within a single school year for: three or more class periods on three days if the child is in middle school, or high school.
- Automatic phone call to parent/guardian.
- The student will meet with a school administrator and an Albert Lea School District truancy informational letter sent home.

When a student is initially classified as a continuing truant, MN. Stat. 260A.03 provides that the school Attendance Office or other designated school official shall notify the student's parent/guardian, by first class mail or other reasonable means, of the following:

- The child is truant;
- The parent/guardian should notify the school if there is a valid excuse for the child's absences;
- The parent/guardian is obligated to compel the attendance of the child at school pursuant to MN. Stat. 120A.22 and parents/guardians who fail to meet this obligation may be subject to prosecution under MN. Stat. 120A.34;
- This notification serves as the notification required by MN. Stat. 120A.34;
- Alternative educational programs and services may be available in the district;
- The parent/guardian has the right to meet with appropriate school personnel to discuss solutions for the child's truancy;
- If the child continues to be truant, the parent and child may be subject to juvenile court proceedings under MN. Stat. Ch. 260C;
- If the child is subject to juvenile court proceedings, the child may be subject to suspension, restriction, or delay of the child's driving privilege pursuant to MN. Stat. 260C.201;
- It is recommended that the parent/guardian accompany the child to school and attend classes with the child for 1 day.

7th Unexcused Absence - Habitual Truant

- MN Statute 260C.007 provides that a habitual truant is a child under the age of 17 years who is absent from attendance at school without lawful excuse for seven school days per school year if the child is in elementary school or for one or more class periods on seven school days if the child is in middle school, junior high, or high school, or a child who is 17 years of age who is absent from attendance at school without lawful excuse for one or more class periods on seven school days per year and who has not lawfully withdrawn from school under section 120A.22, subdivision 8.
- The student will be discussed at weekly attendance meetings (Administration and Freeborn County Truancy Officer) and referred to Freeborn County Truancy Officer.
- The student will meet with a school administrator and parent contact will be made.
- Non-compliance with the Freeborn County Truancy Diversion Program could result in court action and the student could be placed on probation with Freeborn County Probation and Pretrial Services.

A school district attendance officer or other designated school official shall refer a habitual truant child and the child's parent or legal guardian to appropriate services and procedures, under MN. Stat. Ch. 260A.

Tardies

A tardy is defined as a student not in the classroom when the class period bell rings, up to but not to exceed five (5) minutes of the class. Being on time to class is linked to better academic performance and stronger classroom engagement. Research from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) shows that students with fewer tardies tend to have higher grades and test scores. A study published in the Journal of Educational Psychology found that consistent attendance and punctuality positively influence student achievement and classroom participation. Being on time also supports a structured learning environment, which has been shown to enhance focus and reduce disruptions for all students. These findings highlight how punctuality contributes to both individual and group success in school.

Levels of Consequence

When a student receives 5 or more tardies per week in a semester the following consequences will apply:

1st Time - Student loses pass privileges for the week and parents will be contacted.

2nd Time - Student loses pass privileges for the week, an after school detention is assigned, and parents will be contacted.

3rd Time - Student loses pass privileges for the week, an after school detention is assigned, and parents will be contacted.

4th & Any Additional Time - Student will receive ½ day of in school suspension, student loses pass privileges for the week, and after school detention will be assigned.

Student will receive 1 day of in school suspension, student loses pass privileges for the week, and after school detention will be assigned.

Note - At any time steps may be jumped or not advanced depending on the severity of the situation. This is the school district's ultimate decision.

Bus

Riding a School Bus is a privilege – not a right. The policies and guidelines for transporting students are reviewed with all students at the start of the school year. Questions concerning bus transportation should be addressed to the Albert Lea **Bus Company 373-1467**.

Albert Lea Area School Rules for School Bus Passengers

The Albert Lea Public School System provides bus transportation for your child to and from school. It is necessary to have certain rules and regulations in order to protect the welfare of every child. Each person, regardless of age, must take the responsibility of following these rules. They should realize that carelessness, thoughtlessness, or misconduct can cause injury to themselves or their fellow passengers. Please review the safety rules listed below.

1. Only students assigned to the bus by the school board or designated administration office shall be transported at district expense. In no case shall the number assigned result in more than three passengers per seat.
2. On the bus – The school bus ride is part of the school day. Your driver is on the bus to provide a safe and pleasant trip:
 - Please follow the instructions of the driver promptly and courteously.
 - For everyone's safety, materials such as: guns, loaded or unloaded; gasoline cans, empty or full; animals or any other object of dangerous or objectionable nature are not allowed in a school bus.
 - A student may be charged for damage to the bus. Please respect your bus
 - Remember to keep voices quiet so that your driver can hear traffic noises. Be especially quiet at railroad crossings.
 - Fighting, abusive language or profanity, throwing objects, use of chemicals or tobacco, and general "horseplay" will not be tolerated.
 - Windows may be opened only with the permission of the bus driver. Never put your head, arms, feet, or any object out the window.
 - Spitting, littering, lighting matches, and other behavior threatening the safety, well-being, and respect for others will not be tolerated.

Students who do not obey these safety rules and regulations may be denied transportation as outlined in the following "Discipline Procedures." Any action by a student that threatens the safety of the bus driver and/or passengers or violates a school regulation will be dealt with according to the following policy. In all cases, the decision of the bus driver is final and will be reported in writing to the appropriate school administrator.

- Referral #1 - The bus driver will make a written report to the administration. The student will be informed with the reminder of the policy. Parents will be notified of the written report by mail or phone.
- Referral #2 - The bus driver will make a written report to the administration. The student will be suspended from riding the bus for a period of 1 to 5 days. The parents will be contacted informing them of the duration of the suspension.
- Referral #3 - The bus driver will make a written report to the administration. The student will be suspended from further bus service for a period of 3 days or more. Depending on the severity, suspension could be up to the end of the school year. Furthermore, the School District also reserves the right to suspend students from bus service for the entire period of the student's enrollment. The parents may request a conference with administration, Director of Transportation, and/or a representative of the bus company to review the reasons for the suspension or propose alternatives to suspension.

However, Referrals #1 and #2 may be waived by the District if the severity of the violation is such that common sense dictates immediate suspension for any amount of time up to the balance of the school year for the safety of other students and/or a driver.

Cell Phones and other Electronic Devices

Students are prohibited from using cell phones and other electronic communication devices during the instructional day. Students also are prohibited from using a cell phone or other electronic communication device to engage in conduct prohibited by school district policies including, but not limited to, cheating, bullying, harassment, and malicious and sadistic conduct. If the school district has a reasonable suspicion that a student has violated a school rule or law by use of a cell phone or other electronic communication device, the school district may search the device. The search of the device will be reasonably related in scope to the circumstances justifying the search. Students who use an electronic communication device during the school day and/or in violation of school district policies may be subject to disciplinary action pursuant to the school district's discipline policy. In addition, a student's cell phone or electronic communication device may be confiscated by the school district and, if applicable, provided to law enforcement. Cell phones or other electronic communication devices that are confiscated and retained by the school district will be returned in accordance with school building procedures.

Any electronic device brought to school must be turned off and kept in your locked locker during the school day. Earbuds and devices used or seen during the school day without staff permission will be confiscated. Texting and internet social sites are not allowed during the school day. Students may check messages at the end of the day. Neither the school nor the school's representatives are liable for electronic equipment that is lost, stolen or confiscated.

- 1st Offense: Student will pick up device in the main office at the end of the school day
- 2nd & 3rd Offense: Parent/guardian will need to meet with administration to pick up the device after school hours
- 4th Offense: Student will not be allowed to have phone/device in school

Use of any device to record or take pictures is prohibited on school property without permission from staff or administration. Use of any device to record or take pictures is prohibited in locker rooms and bathrooms. Students may receive up to ten (10) days of suspension. Further discipline could result from a violation of harassment and/or hazing.

Students who refuse to hand over their electronic device to staff:

- 1st & 2nd Offense will receive a 1-day suspension
- 3rd Offense will receive a 5-day suspension

Closed Campus

Southwest Middle School is a closed campus. Students are not allowed to leave the building at any time during the day unless a parent/guardian has called to excuse their student for an appointment or other pre-approved absence. Paper passes will be issued to students who are leaving school early by the attendance office. The student is responsible for showing their teacher the pass before leaving the classroom. Students will be issued e-hall passes throughout the building.

Communication

Southwest Middle School informs students and parents/guardians by updates on the Southwest Middle School web page and/or emails, text messages or phone calls from the school (507-379-5240). Other social media sites for information are Twitter and the Albert Lea Area Schools Facebook page. Announcements are made at the end of the day for students.

Website: www.alschools.org

Facebook: Albert Lea Area School District

YouTube: [Southwest Middle School](#)

Consequences for Inappropriate Behavior

If a student violates the rules of Southwest Middle School, certain consequences will follow using the [Southwest Discipline Guideline](#). The specific consequence will be determined by the severity and frequency of the offense. Potential consequences include:

- **Loss of Privilege**
First-time violations of school rules will typically result in a loss of one or more privileges a student might have.
- **Detention**
You must be on time to your assigned detention. If you are late, you will not receive credit for that detention. There will be three different types of detentions that an administrator may assign:
 - Morning detention (before school)
 - Lunch Circle
 - After school detention
- **In-School Suspension (ISS)**
Students assigned to ISS for discipline consequences. There is no talking allowed. Students will be expected to work on assignments.
- **Out -of-School Suspension (OSS)**
OSS is typically assigned for up to ten (10) days for serious offenses such as fighting and drug, alcohol, and tobacco violations, as well as violations of attendance and behavior contracts. Repeated violations or serious acts of violence against individuals or the school may result in suspensions up to ten (10) days in length. Students are expected to complete class assignments during the time they are suspended. Assignments can be found in Google Classroom. Teachers are available by email or phone during school hours.

Lunch Circles

At our school, a Lunch Circle is a supportive way for us to help students reflect on their behavior when they've made a poor choice or not followed the school's code of conduct. If a student is assigned a Lunch Circle by the principal or dean of students, they will have lunch with one of our social workers instead of eating with their classmates that day. During this time, the social worker and student will talk about what happened, why the behavior was a problem, and work together to come up with a plan to make better choices in the future. It's not meant to be a punishment, but rather a chance to slow down, reflect, and get support in a positive and respectful way.

Levels of Consequence

- 1) *If a student receives 3 lunch circles in a semester, the parent/guardian will be contacted.*
- 2) *If there is a behavior that would result in a 4th lunch circle in a semester the student will be assigned a half day suspension and parent(s)/guardian(s) will be contacted.*
- 3) *If there is a behavior that would result in a 5th lunch circle in a semester window the student will be assigned a full day suspension and parent(s)/guardian(s) will be contacted for a meeting.*

*****Note - At any time steps may be jumped or not advanced depending on the severity of the situation. This is the school district's ultimate decision.*****

eLearning Day

An eLearning Day will be in effect when school has been canceled due to inclement weather or other situations. Students are expected to complete assignments on these days. Students are expected to check Google classroom for each class and their email throughout the day for assignments and directions by teachers. Teachers will post all assignments and activities for E-learning days no later than 8:30 am. Teachers must be available for students during contracted hours via google voice and email. Both email and Google Voice numbers are available on SWMS webpage.

Students are expected to complete their assignments within 5 calendar days (eLearning Day counts as day 1). Attendance will be done by advisory teachers. Advisory teachers will have an attendance question posted on their advisory google classroom no later than 8:30 am and will take attendance at 3:15 pm. Students will need to answer the attendance question between this time to be counted present for the day. If students do not answer the attendance question they will be considered absent for the day an "eL" will be put in for their absence on an e-learning day. Teachers will be available to help students with questions and concerns during regular school hours via email or using a Google Voice number.

Emergency Drills

Fire, lock-down, tornado, and active shooter drills are required by law and may help you in the event of an actual emergency. The teacher will give instructions on evacuating the building. It is important that students follow these directions quickly and completely. Please move away from the building, even on cold days. In the event of a tornado, there will be an announcement initiating for students and staff to take cover. Students will be informed of which area of the school they are to go. During a tornado, students should kneel down and cover their head with their hands.

The Albert Lea Area Schools utilizes a Standard Response Protocol (SRP) from The "I Love U Guys" Foundation. This SRP uses levels of responses to assist in a variety of situations. This SRP will be reviewed and drills will be performed throughout the school year.

IN AN EMERGENCY TAKE ACTION



HOLD! In your room or area. Clear the halls.

STUDENTS

Clear the hallways and remain in room or area until the "All Clear" is announced
Do business as usual

ADULTS

Close and lock the door
Account for students and adults
Do business as usual



SECURE! Get inside. Lock outside doors.

STUDENTS

Return to inside of building
Do business as usual

ADULTS

Bring everyone indoors
Lock outside doors
Increase situational awareness
Account for students and adults
Do business as usual



LOCKDOWN! Locks, lights, out of sight.

STUDENTS

Move away from sight
Maintain silence
Do not open the door

ADULTS

Recover students from hallway if possible
Lock the classroom door
Turn out the lights
Move away from sight
Maintain silence
Do not open the door
Prepare to evade or defend



EVACUATE! (A location may be specified)

STUDENTS

Leave stuff behind if required to
If possible, bring your phone
Follow instructions

ADULTS

Lead students to Evacuation location
Account for students and adults
Notify if missing, extra or injured students or adults



SHELTER! Hazard and safety strategy.

STUDENTS

Use appropriate safety strategy for the hazard

Hazard

Tornado
Hazard
Earthquake
Tsunami

Safety Strategy

Evacuate to shelter area
Seal the room
Drop, cover and hold
Get to high ground

ADULTS

Lead safety strategy
Account for students and adults
Notify if missing, extra or injured students or adults

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Equal Opportunity for All

Southwest Middle School is committed to providing equal educational opportunities to all persons and does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, sexual preference, age, marital status, physical and mental disability, status due to receipt of public assistance, or any other group or class against which discrimination is prohibited by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972, and any other applicable state or federal laws. Inquiries regarding compliance should be directed to the Southwest Middle School Principal.

Grading System

Students will receive grades from each class throughout the school year. Final grades will be posted at the end of each semester. The student grading system is Synergy. Parents are encouraged to download ParentVue onto their electronic devices to monitor their student's progress.

- Semester grades will be reported as a letter grade and may include tests, quizzes, presentations, projects, labs, and other performance assessments.
- Summative assessments on course essential outcomes (presentations, performances, tests, etc.) will represent 90% of the student grade. Retakes are permitted and encouraged
- Practice (homework) will represent up to 10% of the grade. Practice will be assigned and completion expected because it is considered essential to learning.
- Students' grade point averages will be calculated at the end of each semester. The honor roll lists will be published in the local newspaper.

A Honor Roll: 3.50-4.00

B Honor Roll: 3.00-3.499

- The [Southwest Grading Policy](#) document will provide more information on grading.

Lockers

School lockers are the property of the school district. Each student will be assigned a locker to provide safekeeping for school materials and personal articles. Locker combinations should be kept confidential since the responsibility for safeguarding personal property lies with the student. Damage to lockers will be considered vandalism and fines will be assessed. Students are NOT to share lockers with other students. Students are provided an approved padlock to use for the school year. The padlock is required to be locked on their locker at all times. If the lock is lost, a school replacement will cost \$10.00.

All backpacks, water bottles, and other containers holding liquids are required to be in the lockers at the start of the academic day. Backpacks, water bottles, and other containers holding liquids are not allowed in classrooms unless there is a circumstance where a student is on crutches and has received permission from the office. Students are allowed to carry a pencil pouch or a trapper keeper.

The following suggestions regarding locker use:

- Keep lockers locked at all times
- Do not reveal your locker combination to any other students. **DO NOT SWITCH OR SHARE LOCKERS**
- Lockers should be cleaned periodically
- Please do not bring money or valuables to school intending to store them in your locker
- Do not kick or mark your locker in any way. If lockers are damaged, a fine will be assessed for the damage.
- Problems with combination locks should be referred to the [Attendance Office](#)
- Theft/vandalism should be reported to administration
- District 241 is not responsible for items lost or stolen from lockers.

In the event that a student officially withdraws from SWMS, lockers will be cleaned out by school officials and all items found within that locker will be held in the Attendance Office. At the end of the school year all remaining items will be disposed of.

Lost/Damaged Items/Theft

A fee will be assessed for lost or damaged textbooks, library books, chromebooks and chromebook accessories or any other item of school owned property.

Theft, Receiving or Possessing Stolen Property - The unauthorized taking, using, transferring, hiding or possessing the property of another person without the consent of the owner, or the receiving of such property is prohibited. Restitution, when appropriate, will be required. School consequences could range from a conference with the dean to up to 5 day suspension and police referral possible depending on the severity of the incident.

Lunch

Students are assigned to one of four 25-minute lunch periods during the day. Restaurant or fast food may NOT be brought into the school for lunch for a student.

Visitors may request permission from the Principal three days in advance to have lunch with a student. Students are not to bring food items to share with others either in the classroom or in the cafeteria. Milk is available for those bringing a sack lunch.

Payments

All cafeteria purchases are sold on a prepaid basis and charged against individual student accounts. Parents are encouraged to use the **PaySchoolsCentral** website in order to add funds to their student's lunch account. Students may also bring cash/check to the office to be added to their account.

The Meals Plus program will automatically call parents daily when their student has a balance of three meals or less in their account. Free/reduced priced lunches are available for those students who qualify. Forms are available in the school office or our

website at any time. Notification of your approval status for free/reduced meals by the Food Service Director will be by mail. Albert Lea Food Service phone number is **507-379-5300**.

Lunch prices are set each year. Students and parents are notified of price changes before school starts.

Unpaid Meal Charge Procedures

A meal is made available to the student regardless of the balance on their meal account. When a student has a negative account balance, the student will not be allowed to charge a la carte items.

Messages for Students

In an emergency, parents may call the school office to leave a message for a student. Classes will not be interrupted for messages. Students are encouraged to discuss appointment plans, after school plans and meeting times/places at home before they leave for school. We cannot guarantee that messages received within the last 1/2 of the day or on an early-out day will be delivered. Students who are expecting forgotten items from home must check for them in the office.

ParentVue

Parents will be given activation keys to access their ParentVue accounts. Each parent is assigned their own account to use which will include all of the children that belong to that parent. Once in your account you can keep track of your student(s) grades, attendance, health office visits, lunch accounts and other information. If passwords are tried incorrectly 3 times the account will be locked and you will need to contact the SWMS office at 507-379-5240 to have your account enabled. All other questions or issues with ParentVue will also need to be directed to the SWMS office.

Plagiarism

Any assessment that has been found to be plagiarized will be given a zero for the assessment. Students will be given an opportunity to retake the assessment based on the retake policy found in the [Southwest Grading Policy](#). Practice work that has been plagiarized will be given a zero without the ability to redo the assignment. Students who have been found to have plagiarized will also be given the following consequences:

- 1st Offense - Incident Referral made in Synergy and a phone call home by the classroom teacher.
- After 1st Offense - Incident Referral made in Synergy, parent/guardian contacted and up to 1 day of in school suspension.

Pledge of Allegiance

State law requires that all students shall recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America one or more times each week. Anyone who does not wish to participate in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance for any personal reason may elect not to do so. Students must respect another person's right to make that choice.

Reading Club S.W.A.G. (Southwest's Astute Generation)

All students are encouraged to participate in Southwest's reading group. Each student will be given a punch card of their own. Each age appropriate book they finish they can go to the Media Center to get their card punched. After the card is completed (10 books read are the requirements) the student will be allowed to pick out a new book as their prize from the office. The book club will continue the entire school year so there is plenty of time to complete more than one punch card. 6th grade students may carry over their punch cards into the following year.

School Hours

Our school hours will be from 8:35am – 3:15pm, Monday-Friday. Office Hours are from 7:30am - 3:45pm, Monday-Friday.

Security System

Please be aware that Southwest Middle School is protected by a video security system for safety. All visitors must enter SWMS through the new main entrance doors and be let in by office staff. Students are not to open doors for visitors. Any attempt to damage/disconnect the system itself may result in suspension from school and charged with the cost of repairing the equipment.

Student Appearance

The purpose of [school policy 504](#) is to enhance the education of students by establishing expectations of dress and appearance that are related to educational settings. Attention-seeking outfits that are offensive or violate the comfort of others should be avoided. Parents will be contacted about bringing appropriate attire to school for their student. The administration (or appointed delegate) will be the final decision makers of what is appropriate attire.

Inappropriate clothing includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Clothing causing a disruption to the learning environment
- Clothing bearing a message that is lewd, vulgar, or obscene, or disruptive.
- Apparel promoting products or activities that are illegal for use by minors.
- Objectionable emblems, badges, symbols, signs, words, objects or pictures on clothing or jewelry communicating a message that is racist, sexist, or otherwise derogatory to a protected minority group, evidences gang membership or affiliation, or approves, advances or provokes any form of religious, racial or sexual harassment and/or violence against other individuals as defined in [school policy 413 Harassment and Violence](#).
- Students are prohibited from wearing caps, hats, hoods, bandanas or cloth head coverings during the academic school day, except with the approval of the building principal.
- Blankets and coats are not allowed to be brought into classrooms or be worn during school hours.

Student Code of Conduct/Discipline

It is the responsibility of all school district employees to safeguard the health, safety, and rights of each student. The School Board and District Administrators will support district personnel who, in dealing with students on disciplinary matters, act in accordance with State statute, State Board of Education regulations and School District Policies. Appropriate staff will be notified of circumstances in which a student has a history of violent behavior in an effort to provide a safe school environment that is conducive to learning & teaching & to ensure maximum educational opportunities for all of our students. It is the responsibility of all students to follow Southwest's policies so that all students receive the opportunity to learn in a safe & respectful environment.

- Students will be in class, prepared and on time.
- Students will commit to honesty and integrity in all they do.
- Students will keep the building clean and orderly.
- Students will use the furniture and equipment properly.
- Students will understand that loud, abusive, profane or obscene language is disrespectful and will not be tolerated.
- Students will follow the school dress code at all times.
- Students will understand that public display of affection is not acceptable and makes others feel uncomfortable.

StudentVUE

Students will be given their StudentVue activation keys after the school year begins. Each student is assigned their own account to use where they can keep track of their grades, attendance and other information. Students are encouraged to frequently view their account to keep track of their progress. If passwords are tried incorrectly 3 times the account will be locked, the student will need to contact the SWMS office to have your account enabled. All other questions or issues with StudentVue will also need to be directed to the SWMS office.

Suicide Prevention Information

If you're thinking about suicide, are worried about a friend or loved one, or would like emotional support, the Lifeline network is available 24/7 across the United States. If you're in crisis, there are options available to help you cope. You can also call the Lifeline at any time to speak to someone and get support. For confidential support available 24/7 for everyone in the United States, call 988. If someone you know is struggling emotionally or having a hard time, you can be the difference in getting them the help they need. It's important to take care of yourself when you are supporting someone through a difficult time, as this may stir up difficult emotions. If it does, please reach out to support yourself.

National Suicide Prevention Hotline
1-800-273-TALK (8255) -or- 988

Crisis Text Line
Text HOPELINE to 741741

Freeborn County Crisis Services
1-877-399-3040

Visitors

Visitors must report to the New Main Office to receive a visitor badge. ID will be required. Only pre-approved, pre-arranged guest speakers or presenters will be accepted as school guests. The school does not allow student visitors.

School District Policies

Southwest Middle School student behavior policies are directed by School Board adopted policies. This document can be found at: www.alschools.org. Go to tab School Board / School District Policies. The policies with short summary descriptions below will be covered in their entirety with Southwest students within the first 2 weeks of the school year.

Bullying Prohibition 514

An act of bullying, by either an individual student or a group of students, is expressly prohibited on school premises, on school district property, at school functions or activities, or on school transportation.

Harassment & Violence 413

This policy is to maintain a learning & working environment that is free from harassment and violence on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, family status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, or disability.

Protection and Privacy of Pupil Records 515

The school district recognizes its responsibility in regard to the collection, maintenance, and dissemination of pupil records and the protection of the privacy rights of students as provided in federal law and state statutes.

School Weapons 501

This policy is to assure a safe school environment for students, staff, and the public. It defines a weapon, exceptions, and consequences for students and non-students.

Search of Student Lockers, Desks, Personal Possessions and Student's Person 502

The purpose of this policy is to provide for a safe and healthful educational environment by enforcing the school district's policies against contraband.

Staff Notification of Violent Behavior by Students 529

The purpose of this policy is to address the circumstances in which data should be provided to classroom teachers and other school staff members about students with a history of violent behavior and to establish a procedure for notifying staff regarding the placement of students with a history of violent behavior in an effort to provide a safe school environment.

Student Attendance 503

The school board believes that regular school attendance is directly related to success in academic work, benefits students socially, provides opportunities for important communications between teachers and students, and establishes regular habits of dependability important to the future of the student. The purpose of this policy is to encourage regular school attendance. It is intended to be positive and not punitive.

Student Discipline 506

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that students are aware of and comply with the school district's expectations for student conduct. Such compliance will enhance the school district's ability to maintain discipline and ensure that there is no interference with the educational process. The school district will take appropriate disciplinary action when students fail to adhere to the Code of Student Conduct established by this policy.

Student Dress and Appearance 504

The purpose of this policy is to enhance the education of students by establishing expectations of dress and grooming that are related to educational goals and community standards. The policy of the school district is to encourage students to be dressed appropriately for school activities and in keeping with community standards. This is a joint responsibility of the student and the student's parent(s) or guardian(s).

Technology-- Acceptable Use 524

This policy sets forth guidelines for access to the school district computer system and acceptable and safe use of the internet, including electronic communications. This policy applies to any personal computing devices (iPads, iPods, cell phones or other personal devices) that access the internet at school.

Weapons Policy (refer to Policy 501)

The Albert Lea School District has a "No Weapons" policy. This policy is in effect during the school day, on school grounds, on the school bus, and during athletic events, or any other school sponsored activity. A weapon is any object used in a

threatening manner. This could include, but is not limited to, an object that looks like a gun, a pocket knife, or ammunition. Possession of a weapon in violation of this policy may result in suspension, expulsion, and police involvement.

If you do not understand the information presented to you in this notice, please contact the Success Coach through the main office in your school. Interpreter services can be provided.

(Si usted no entiende la información en este anuncio, por favor hable con la/el maestro/a de inglés como idioma segundo en la oficina escolar principal de su niño/a. Hay servicios de intérprete disponible)

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