

Principal's Message

As we begin another school year I would like to personally welcome students and parents of Sweetwater Primary School to our school community and family. It is important to make mention of our school's commitment to high expectations for our students and our commitment to providing a wonderful learning climate for your child. We have many programs and opportunities available to each student hoping each child will reach their greatest potential. We want our students to take pride in themselves, their school, and community. We strive to make learning interesting and motivating. School rules and policies are necessary to insure the student's right to an opportunity for the best education. Your support will be greatly appreciated.

Darrin Nichols, Principal

Mission

SPS students will learn with pleasure while achieving their fullest potential in academic and social skills appropriate to their developmental level. These skills will include language arts, math, science, and social studies.

Vision

SPS is committed to providing a comprehensive education in a secure and nurturing environment in which all students are motivated to achieve their maximum potential and develop as responsible citizens and lifelong learners in an ever-changing world.

Protection of Classroom Instructional Time

Each day we have limited time to make sure your child is progressing toward mastery in all the areas that are deemed necessary and that are tested at the end of each year. It is imperative for your child to be in school each day and for the faculty and staff of SPS to make sure that time we are with your children is protected. SPS is working very hard to limit interruptions and events that create a disruption to the classroom instructional time. Visitors will **NOT** be allowed to see teachers without scheduled conferences. These conferences need to occur during the planning period of the designated teacher.

Emergency Information Card

A legal parent or guardian must complete an Emergency Information Card for each child. List persons and their phone numbers who are allowed to check your child out or pick them up in case of sickness or an emergency. **The student will not be able to leave with anyone whose name is not on the Emergency Information Card. These cards should be updated during the year when addresses, telephone numbers, or custody changes.**

Visitors

Parents, volunteers, or other citizens are welcome to visit our school. We must, however, to the welfare of our students, insist on the following: **All visitors must report to the school office!** Students from other schools may NOT be visitors in the classrooms due to possible disruptions. Parents/Visitors will NOT be allowed to visit the classroom without a scheduled meeting with the teacher during the teacher's planning time.

Admission Requirements

Every student entering SPS for the first time is required to provide:

- Birth Certificate
- Tennessee Certificate of Immunization
- Proof of Physical Examination
- Social Security Card
- Proof of Address

Kindergarten Enrollment

Children entering Kindergarten must be 5 years of age by Aug. 15th of the year enrolled.

Transfer/Moving

Let the office and teacher know when and where you are moving so that your school records will promptly follow you to the new school. You will sign a release at the new school to authorize records transferred.

Attendance

Attendance is key factor in a student's success in school! Students are rewarded every nine weeks for perfect attendance. An absence is recorded whenever a child misses more than ½ day (3 hrs. & 15 min.) of school.

Excused Absences

TN State Law excuses absences caused by sickness, family illness, death in the family, and recognized religious holidays.

- Kindergarten & 1st grade : up to 10 days with a note signed by the parent.
- 2nd grade: up to 5 days with a note signed by the parent.
- All grades: unlimited excuses with a doctor's note.
- 5 days **total** missed for treatment of head-lice/nit removal.

Unexcused Absences

TN State Law requires students who miss at least 3 UNEXCUSED ABSENCES will enter a three tiered series of actions as additional absences happen (especially after the 5th). The tiers include mandatory meetings, attendance plans, warning letters, updated attendance plans, meetings to review attendance plans, petitioning to Truancy Board, assignment of community service to children 12 and over and to parents of children 11 and under, petitioning to Truancy Court (Sessions Court for educational neglect under 12.

Arrival

****THE SCHOOL DAY BEGINS AT 8:00 A.M.****

Students who arrive early will go to the cafeteria. Walkers and car riders should not arrive before 7:00. This is when the first bus arrives and supervision of students begins. Your child's teacher will take the children to the classroom at 7:50. Students are expected to arrive at school on time. If you arrive late to school, report to the office for a late slip. Repeated tardiness will result in lost learning opportunities and may require parent/pupil/principal conference and a summons to truancy board or Juvenile Court.

Dismissal

The regular school day ends as follows:

- 3:00 = Car riders & Walkers
- 3:05 = First bell buses
- 3:10 = 2nd bell buses
- 3:15 = 3rd bell (late) buses

*All Kindergarten students who are not bus riders will be dismissed at 2:30.

*Doctor's appointment card is required for any student checked out between 2:30 PM and 3:00 PM.

Pick-up/Drop-off Points

Buses will operate in a separate parking lot (east or back lot) from cars (west or front lot). Car riders will board their car near the front door and gym. You **MUST display the folder**, with your child's name on it that you are given at the beginning of the school year, in the windshield of your vehicle so that car pick-up goes quickly and smoothly. ALL students must be picked up no later than 3:30. Kindergarten students that leave at 2:30 will be the ONLY STUDENTS that may be picked-up in the back parking lot.

Early Dismissal

For the protection of your child, any student leaving school during the day MUST be checked out through the office by a parent or other authorized person. Parents are not allowed to go down the hall without a visitors pass. **Teachers continue class until 3:00 dismissal (reviewing, finishing lessons, giving homework instructions, etc.); therefore, students may NOT be checked out between 2:30 and 3:00 unless you have a doctor's appointment card.**

Emergency Dismissal

In case of severe weather, school may be closed or delayed. Listen to the radio and TV local TV stations for information. You may also register at www.wbir.com/news/mobile/text.aspx for a text alert to your cell phone when a school closing is announced.

Illness & Medications

By law, any child that has a contagious medical problem cannot remain at school. Signs and symptoms include (but are not limited to) pink eye, Fever > 100.5, vomiting/diarrhea, weeping skin lesions, headache with fever, and some rashes. If your child has been sick, please be sure the school can reach you in case of return of symptoms.

No school officer or teacher shall routinely dispense medication to students except when it is required for the child to be in school. Before any prescription OR over the counter medicine is given at school, a medication request form needs to be filled out and signed by a parent/guardian. These can be obtained in the school office. In order for prescription medicine to be given at school, a doctor's order must be on file (this may be a copy of the physician's prescription or a copy of a medication request form completed and signed by the physician.) This must be done each time a new medicine, dose, time (any addition or change) is ordered.

*ALL MEDICINE MUST BE IN THE ORIGINAL CONTAINER with original label. We must follow label directions.

*Morning and afternoon doses should be given at home.

*Children CANNOT take medicine home. A responsible adult must pick it up.

Our system has **NIT-FREE POLICY**. This means that **ALL** eggs, dead or alive, must be removed after lice treatment prior to returning to school.

Student Discipline

We stress to our children that they should learn to make responsible choices and that when they have a problem, they will help work with us to furnish a solution by choosing more appropriate behavior. We EXPECT students to display SELF-CONTROL and to act with respect to others. The general rules we all expect to follow include:

- Follow teacher's first request.
- Keep hands, feet, and other objects to yourself.
- Walk and talk quietly. Use proper language (no put downs or cursing)
- Take care of school property. (NO GUM or damaging books)
- Leave all toys at home.
- No bullying. (Defined as unwanted, aggressive behavior that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated over time.)

Weapons, Drugs/Alcohol, & Tobacco

Weapons: Students or visitors ARE NOT allowed to bring any weapons onto the school campus. A weapon is any device capable of inflicting injury to or disabling another individual. (This includes knives, guns, lighters, incendiary devices, explosives, or poison/gas devices.)

Drugs & Alcohol: TN State Law has established ZERO TOLERANCE for drugs at schools. Any student who sells, possesses, uses, or is under the influence of illicit

drugs, narcotics, or alcohol in or on school property, including buses, shall be suspended from school and reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency.
Tobacco Products: The use and/or possession of tobacco products is prohibited. Any student who breaks this rule will receive disciplinary action. This rule applies in the school building, on the school grounds, on buses, and at any school sponsored activity.

Bus Conduct & Consequences

Riding the bus is a privilege extended to the students by the school district. From the time a student boards a bus until he/she is dropped off in the afternoon, he/she will comply with the bus driver's instructions. A signed bus contract is required for every student that rides the bus. Rules and regulations are listed on the contract you sign. For safety and welfare of ALL STUDENTS, the bus driver will not tolerate any misconduct on the bus. Therefore, the following consequences will apply:

- 1st offense = the child will be warned and parents contacted.
- 2nd offense = the child will be suspended from the bus for 3 days.
- 3rd offense = the child will be suspended from the bus for 5 days.
- After each subsequent offense, the bus suspension will DOUBLE.

SEND A NOTE...if there is a change in the way a child is to go home. A written note or phone call from the parent/guardian is required so that we are aware of the change. This includes taking a different bus, getting off at a different stop than normal, going home with a friend, or riding in a car rather than on the bus.

REMEMBER THAT ANY TIME YOUR CHILD IS TO GO TO A DIFFERENT PLACE OR GO HOME BY DIFFERENT MEANS WE MUST HAVE A NOTE FROM THE PARENTS!

Please work out afternoon plans PRIOR to the start of school. PHONE CALLS changing afternoon plans will be limited to EMERGENCIES ONLY and should RARELY occur.

Cafeteria Policies & Rules

Breakfast and lunch are offered daily. A weekly menu is available on the school website: www.sweetwatercityschools.com.

Breakfast = No charge (must be served by 7:50 to eat).

Lunch = \$1.75 (unless reduced or free)

Adult Visitor Lunch = \$3.25

Extra milk, juice, ice cream, chips, and desserts are available for \$.50.

It is preferable for students to pay for a week on Monday. If a student forgets to bring money, lunch may be charged for only 5 days. It is your responsibility to pay lunch for lunch weekly or pay charges ASAP.

Children may bring lunch from home, but CANNED/GLASS-BOTTLED BEVERAGES ARE NOT PERMITTED. You are welcome to come and eat with your child; plan to meet them at the cafeteria door.

Applications are available for free or reduced price meals to students whose families meet federal eligibility requirements. Forms are provided in students' registration

packets --- please return these quickly, so as to avoid building up a bill that may be a subject of argument at the end of school. Those AFDC cases are automatically approved.

Please remind your child of the following rules throughout the year:

- Get everything that you need as you go through the lunch line.
- Raise your hand if you need help.
- Speak with a soft voice.
- Sit appropriately, facing forward with feet under the table.
- Remain seated with your room until dismissed.
- Do NOT throw or flip food, paper, or other items.
- Clean up your space after eating.
- Line up in an orderly fashion to leave.

Playground Rules

- Use equipment properly.
- Do not throw rocks, mulch, or other harmful objects.
- Take turns.
- Play safely, keeping hands and feet to self.

Awards

Students receive a mid-term report and then a report card at the end of a 9 week period. Perfect Attendance, Character, and Honors students will be given a certificate or pencil each 9 week period. An Accelerated Reader recognition or celebration will be scheduled at the end of the year if the student body meets the set goal.

Lost & Found

All found items will be placed in the "lost & found" box in the foyer. Money, eyeglasses, jewelry, or other articles of value are held in the office. After reasonable time, these items may be donated to the community clothes closet. All jackets or coats should have your child's name written inside.

Dress Code

Caring about how we look is part of how we feel about ourselves. Taking pride in a clean, healthy appearance is part of being at SPS. Students should dress in a way that they are **NOT DISRUPTIVE** to learning in the school. All students will observe the following standards:

- Pants, shorts, and skirts must be worn at the natural waistline and securely fastened. No "sagging" is allowed. Skintight clothing such as spandex is not permitted.
- Head apparel and sunglasses, except for religious or medical purposes, must not be worn inside the building. **Students are not to have: hair that is sprayed or dyed in unnatural colors (such as blue, pink, green, orange, etc.)**
- Jewelry must be of appropriate size. Earrings and/or studs may be worn in the ears only. No chains hooked to pants or other garments will be allowed.
- Clothing or accessories may not display offensive or provocative language or images nor make reference to products which students may not legally buy.

- Footwear is required and must be safe and appropriate for indoor or outdoor physical activity. Flip-flops and shower-type shoes are examples of inappropriate footwear for school.
- No clothing, accessories, or other items associated with gang affiliation is allowed.

Telephone Calls

The phone at school is for use of the staff. Students are permitted to use the phone IN CASE OF EMERGENCY AND ILLNESS ONLY.

Field Trips

Field trips are used to help the instruction of our subjects. Students represent SPS when they go on a field trip and are expected to behave in exemplary fashion. Field trips are *extra privileges* for the students. If a student fails to meet the regular academic or behavioral requirements of the classroom, the student will be denied participation on the field trip. A student MUST have a signed permission form to go. **Students who cannot go on the field trip or choose not to go on the field trip will be counted absent if they do not attend school on the day of the trip.**

Make-up Work

Students are expected to complete all make-up work for absences. It is the student's responsibility to see the teacher to get the make-up assignments. If your child is absent and you would like to come by and pick up the work, call the school by 10:00 and the work may be picked up after 2:00.

Payments

When you send cash or a check to school with your child it would be wise to put it in an envelope with your child's name, teacher, and the purpose for sending it, written to Sweetwater Primary School (unless directed otherwise). Please write separate checks for: the cafeteria, pictures, the school, field trips, fund raising, etc.

Instructional supply fees, textbooks, & library books

- Instructional supply fees are furnished by the school board and are used to purchase workbooks as well as for manipulative and instructional materials for your child's use. From time to time, the teacher may ask for a small fee for a special project.
- There will be a list posted at school and at local stores before school begins that lists the materials that each needs to bring for classroom use. Once your child is assigned to a room, individual teachers may require some additional items, as not all teachers teach the same way.
- Textbooks are provided through state and local funds. The student is fully responsible for textbooks and library books issued for their use. All lost or

damaged textbooks and library books will need to be paid for by the parent before the child's records can be transferred or before receiving grade cards.

School Pictures & Yearbooks

Individual pictures are made in the FALL and in the SPRING. Group pictures are made in the SPRING. A school yearbook is available using FALL pictures. Notification will be sent prior to picture day. There will be one make-up day for FALL pictures. Please pay for or return pictures promptly and keep a record of payment in order to avoid disputes.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

At no time should you be in doubt of your child's progress. Papers completed in class will be sent home regularly and a report card every nine weeks. Parent/Teacher conferences will be scheduled each fall and spring as needed. You will be notified during these conferences if your child is a possible candidate for retention.

Parent Volunteers

VOLUNTEERS ARE IMPORTANT TO OUR SCHOOL!! They do many jobs that might otherwise be left undone. In addition to gaining a tremendous sense of satisfaction, volunteers do a GREAT job helping children! Please sign in at the office each time you come to school so we can account for your presence.

PTO

SPS is pleased to have a parent-teacher organization that is very active and supportive of our school. We encourage you to participate with community pride.

Guidance & Counseling Services

SPS has a guidance program that is part of the total education process. To speak with the guidance counselor, a parent may call the office. The counselor serves groups, individuals, and consults with parents, teachers, and administrators. Referral forms are available for parents and teachers.

Special Education Services

All students found to be eligible for special education services will be served through the IEP-team process. All requests for testing come through the school support team. Parents requesting testing should put their request in writing or talk to the homeroom teacher.

Discrimination/Harassment of Students

A student subjected to sexual, racial, ethnic, and/or religious discrimination/harassment shall report these incidents immediately to a teacher, counselor, or building administrator. Allegations of discrimination/harassment shall be fully investigated. Additional information can be found in the policy manual of the Board of Education, which is available in the school office.

Student Concerns, Complaints, & Grievances

Decisions made by school personnel that students believe are unfair or in violation of pertinent policies of the Board of Education or individual school rules may be appealed to the principal.

Any student who wishes to file a discrimination/harassment grievance against another student or an employee may file a complaint with a system complaint manager or with a school official. Additional information can be found in the policy manual of the Board of Education, which is available in the school office.

Transfer Option for Students Victimized by Violent Crime at School

Under the Tennessee State Board of Education's Unsafe School Choice Policy, any public school student who is a victim of a violent crime as defined under TN Code Annotated 40-38-111(g), or the attempt to commit one of these offenses as defined under TN Code Annotated 30-12-101, shall be provided an opportunity to transfer to another grade-level appropriate school within the district. Additional information regarding this option may be obtained by contacting Dr. Melanie Miller at 423-337-7051.

Child Advocacy/Student Rights & Services

You are to be informed as to how you may contact child advocacy groups and the state department of education for information on student rights and services. Answers to questions and information may be available from the State Department of Education by calling 1-888-212-3162 or visiting <http://www.state.tn.us/education/speced/index.htm> or at: Legal Services Division, Division of Special Education, TDOE, 710 James Robertson Parkway, Nashville, TN 37243-0380, phone: 615-741-2851. Additionally, the East TN Regional Resource Center, 2763 Island Home Blvd., Knoxville, TN 37290, phone: 865-594-5691.

Child advocacy groups offer support, information, training, and help in advocating for persons with disabilities in TN. These include: The ARC of TN, 44 Vantage Way, Suite 550, Nashville, TN 37228, phone: 615-248-5878, Toll Free 1-800-835-7077. Support and Training for Exceptional Parents (STEP) is on the internet at <http://www.tnstep.org/712> Professional Plaza, Greenville, TN 37745, or East TN at 423-639-2464. Another is Tennessee Protection and Advocacy (TP&A) which is on the internet at <http://www.tpainc.org/> 416 21st Avenue South, Nashville, TN 37212, 1-800-287-9636, and finally, TN Voices for Children on the internet at <http://wwwtnvoices.org/main.htm> East TN, 865-609-2490. These are just a few, for a more extensive list, go to Tennessee Disability Services, Disability Pathfinder Database at <http://mingus.kc.vanderbilt.edu/tdir/dbsearch.asp> select 'county' and the 'service' you desire and click 'submit'.

Publicity

At times we submit pictures to the newspaper of SPS students. Also, pictures of students may be posted on the school website participating in various school activities. If you do NOT want your child's picture or name to appear on our website or in the newspaper, please send a note to your homeroom teacher with child's name, a written statement and your signature.