



School of Expressive Arts and Learning **Handbook**

Putting Children First

Our mission is to provide a therapeutic educational environment that facilitates communication between children, families, and the community through the encouragement of academic achievement and successful life experiences.

Table of Contents

School Hours	2
Attendance	2
Transportation	2
Emergency Procedures	2
Administration of Medication	3
Behavior Management & Conduct.....	3
Behavior System	4
Privileges and Rewards System	4
Student of the Month	5
Safety & Security	5
Belongings & Money	5
Contraband	5
Food/Lunch	6
Dress Code	6
Curriculum	6
Transition Services.....	7
Therapeutic Services	7
Social Work/Counseling	7
Related Services	7
Expressive Therapy	7
Student Activities	8
Athletic League	8
Clubs	8
Performing Arts	8

School Hours

Office Hours	8:00 am - 3:30 pm
Program Hours	8:15 am - 2:30 pm
Wednesday Early Dismissal	8:15 am - 1:45 pm
ESY - Extended School Year (Summer)	8:15 am - 2:30 pm

Attendance

In the event of an absence, parent/guardian must notify S.E.A.L. by 8:30 a.m. When calling the school, guardians should provide the following information:

- The student's name
- The date of absence
- The reason for the absence
- The caller's name and relationship to the student

Daily attendance at school is required by state law. If the student has several excused absences, the parent/guardian may be asked to bring in a doctor's note. If a student has five consecutive unexcused absences, the home school district will be notified. School district officials will initiate contact with a truancy officer if the absences become a concern.

Extended School Year (ESY)

S.E.A.L. schools are year-round programming. The end of the year extends into June and July for 20/21 days over a 6 week period. ESY is not to be confused with summer school as S.E.A.L. contracts for 197 days. The student continues to follow the IEP and work on social emotional goals, as well as academic goals over the 6 week time frame. The time spent in ESY will move the student forward in the program and high school students earn a credit toward graduation.

Transportation

Each student's home school district will determine transportation arrangements to and from school. Students are expected to abide by rules and expectations set forth by the transportation company (i.e., seatbelts, food/drinks on the bus, etc.), but are also aware that what is acceptable at S.E.A.L. is what is expected of them during transport to and from school. Because S.E.A.L. staff are not present during transport, the program relies heavily on documentation from driver and transportation staff if inappropriate behavior occurs. If the behavior on transportation is grotesquely not in alignment with S.E.A.L. rules (i.e., physical aggression) then consequences will be implemented within the S.E.A.L. environment often in tandem with consequences given by the transportation company/home district (i.e., student put on a new bus/route).

Emergency Procedures

In cooperation with local and state authorities, all precautions are taken for the safety and protection of students and staff. Fire and disaster drills are held periodically. It is important for students to move quickly and orderly. Specific exit directions are posted in all the classrooms and hallways. In the event of severe weather, S.E.A.L. will follow the closing announcements of the following school districts:

Elgin	U-46
Lombard	Glenbard High School District 87
Romeoville	365U

Administration of Medication

Students requiring prescription or over-the-counter medication during school hours must adhere to the following guidelines:

- The student's doctor and parent/guardian must complete, in its entirety, the Medication Administration Form (must be signed).
- The parent/guardian must provide the school with a labeled pharmacy container with the student's name on it. The medication in the container must match the description.
- The medication will be administered by the school nurse or other authorized school personnel at the **designated time**.
- School personnel will maintain records on medications administered.

Under no circumstances will S.E.A.L. administer any medication not authorized in writing by a physician (with signature) AND the parent/guardian. If at any time a medication changes or is discontinued, the medication form must be updated and returned to S.E.A.L. in order for S.E.A.L. to administer the change of medication.

Behavior Management Program

The Behavior Management Program consists of an integration of cognitive-behavioral therapy and logical consequences. There is a behavior management point and level system, which provides students with clear, concrete and immediate feedback. Various privileges and rewards are contingent on the student's participation in the behavior management system. The goal is to use the behavior management system as a transitory tool towards internalization of new behaviors and skills. The combination of a concrete behavior management system, a challenging curriculum and the nurturing therapeutic environment enables the student to make educational progress while encouraging positive social and emotional development.

Behavior Intervention

All staff are trained in Crisis Prevention and Intervention (CPI), a system of non-violent crisis intervention and de-escalation. While the School for Expressive Arts and Learning does not accept students who are at imminent risk of harming themselves or others, students may occasionally become disruptive or threatening. At such times, students may be referred to additional resources outside of the classroom. If a student should become a risk to themselves or others threatening the safety of the environment it may become necessary to utilize CPI's nonviolent crisis interventions. A CPI acknowledgement form is signed upon entry into the program. In the case that CPI techniques are utilized, S.E.A.L. staff are trained in completing appropriate documentation, and communicating the event with guardians and the state of Illinois. Data regarding the use of CPI is collected by both S.E.A.L. and the Illinois State Board of Education to best ensure that quality staff training, safety protocols, and best practices are enforced.

Conduct

- Substance abuse, criminal involvement, sexual harassment or discriminatory behavior of any kind will not be tolerated.
- Students are not permitted in off-limits areas or areas which have not been authorized by a staff member.
- Students are expected to refrain from using profanity or displaying inappropriate gestures or expressions.
- Students are expected to respond and comply with staff directives at all times.

Depending on the severity of conduct the following consequences may apply:

- Removal from peer group
- In School Suspension (ISS)
- Out of School Suspension (OSS)
- Police Contact

Expected Behaviors

In order to maintain a safe environment conducive for learning, students are expected to meet the following expectations:

- Remain in designated student areas
- Come to school prepared for classes
- Complete class work and assignments on time
- Actively participate in class and group lessons/activities
- Follow staff directives and instruction
- Be respectful when interacting with staff and students
- Treat school property and the property of others with respect
- Students shall not handle, use, or disturb any materials, telephones or equipment without permission from staff
- Gum chewing is not permitted
- Coats or jackets with double layers of fabric may not be worn in school
- Buying or borrowing items between students is not permitted

All school rules and behavioral expectations are enforced during transportation to and from school including field trips and other school related activities.

Behavior System

S.E.A.L. utilizes school-wide systems (Points/Levels, Thumbs Up/Down, Token Economy, etc.), depending on age and program to reinforce positive behavior, to increase student engagement, teach self-regulation, responsibility, and independence. Students earn privileges and incentives by demonstrating expected behaviors and making progress toward individualized goals.

A daily points sheet is utilized to keep track of progress both behaviorally and academically. Students can earn points for demonstrating positive behavior such as:

- active participation
- positive peer leadership
- class preparedness and homework completion
- appropriate peer interactions
- on-task behavior
- following directives
- respectful behavior
- cooperation
- daily attendance

Privileges/Rewards

- Social Lunch (students can eat in the cafeteria with peers, use vending machines, play games and listen to music)
- Computer Time
- Club Participation
- Field Trips/Outings
- Hall Pass rather than staff escort
- Intramural Competitions
- Free Time Activities, i.e. video games, movies, games, music, etc.

Student of the Month

Each month one student will be recognized and named “Student of the Month”. Students will be nominated based on their progress both academically and behaviorally.

Safety and Security

To ensure a safe school environment, all students are searched daily upon arrival. This may include: the use of a metal detection device, removal of outerwear (including hooded sweatshirts, shoes, etc.), and inspection of personal belongings. Random searches may also be conducted throughout the school day if deemed necessary by the coordinator team or administration.

Belongings

Any belongings which are not required for educational or programmatic purposes will be stored in a secure area and returned at dismissal. Cell phones, smart watches, smart glasses, bluetooth devices, headphones, earbuds, and similar personal electronic devices must also be checked in with staff upon arrival and will be returned at the end of the day. These items are not permitted for safety, privacy, and security reasons. All contraband will be confiscated. See [“SB 2427 regarding Illinois law for distraction-free classrooms.”](#)

Student Learning Devices

S.E.A.L. provides each student the opportunity to use a S.E.A.L. provided Chromebook or Tablet to aid in classroom learning. All non-S.E.A.L. provided devices (i.e., District provided chromebooks) will be left in a secure area with the rest of the student’s belongings and returned at dismissal except if given prior approval.

Students are expected to follow and adhere to the *Student Electronic Device Procedure*. Every student who has been assigned an electronic device by S.E.A.L. is responsible for the appropriate use of their electronic device.

Money Policy

All S.E.A.L. students are permitted to bring no more than ten dollars to school. Students are only able to spend their money on vending machines during their social lunch periods. Only under arranged or special circumstances may students bring more than ten dollars to school (i.e., during Scholastic Book Fairs students can bring more money to spend on the items being sold at the school-sanctioned event). If a student is found to have more than ten dollars on their person, the money could be confiscated and the parent/guardian will be responsible to retrieve the money from the school.

Contraband

- Weapons of any kind including look-alikes
- Illegal substances including look-alikes
- Lighters or matches
- Cigarettes/e-cigarettes
- Vaping devices
- Drug paraphernalia
- Adult rated CDs, games, movies etc.
- Inappropriate written materials
- Any gang-related or otherwise offensive materials
- Combustible substances
- Laser devices

Food/Lunch Policy

Students will be offered a catered lunch along with supplemental food items to accommodate specific dietary needs or religious practices. Students may also bring lunch from home; however, the school cannot guarantee heating elements or refrigeration, so we recommend using ice packs and vacuum flasks (Thermos). Please note that outside food deliveries are not permitted, as they pose safety risks due to food sitting out too long and the unpredictability of delivery timing. This policy also helps limit excessive non-S.E.A.L. vehicles or guests visiting the building. The school is strictly nut-free, and all lunches must adhere to this rule. Students are encouraged to bring their own plastic, non-metal, reusable water bottle to be filled at school.

Dress Code

Students are expected to groom and dress in a manner that does not compromise or interfere with the health, safety and decency of the school environment. The following is prohibited:

- Violent language or images
- Images or language depicting/suggesting drugs, alcohol, vaping or paraphernalia (or any illegal item or activity)
- Hate speech, profanity, pornography
- Association with, or promoting, any gang affiliation
- Clothing that reveals visible undergarments or does not cover one's abdomen, chest, sides, butt/pelvic/upper thigh area at all times
- Clothing that does not allow for safety checks (i.e., closed-foot one piece garments such as footie pajamas)
- Indoor jackets with more than a single lining
- Any item, such as hat, hood, sunglasses, bandanas, and hairnets that obscures the face or ears- exceptions may be made out of medical necessity or religious observance
- Accessories that are a distraction or safety concern
- A lack of footwear as shoes must be worn at all times per County Health Department regulations

If clothing is viewed as unacceptable or inappropriate by staff, the student may be asked to remove accessories, change, or turn clothing inside out. The student may not participate in the school setting without full compliance.

Curriculum

The School for Expressive Arts and Learning offers a primary program (grades k-2), intermediate (grades 3-5), junior high (grades 6-8) and several high school classes (grades 9-12). The primary, intermediate and junior high classes are self-contained classes offering a standard elementary curriculum of Reading, Spelling, Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and Physical Education. The High School Curriculum parallels the basic offerings of surrounding school districts including vocational services. A variety of classes are available to meet individual student needs, as well as graduation requirements. Students participate in a self-contained classroom. All students have the opportunity to participate in enrichment classes such as Art and Music. Upon enrollment, the school staff will assess the student's functioning in academic, personal, and interpersonal skills and provide programming that is developmentally appropriate.

Transition Services

S.E.A.L. Transition helps students develop, integrate, and generalize skills toward mastery. Our goal is to ensure students practice and apply these skills in alignment with their individual IEPs and overall program instruction in the following areas:

- Functional Academics
- Vocational/Career Development
- Independent Living
- Community Integration
- Safety and Wellness
- Self-Advocacy
- Mental Health Support
- Expressive Therapies

Therapeutic Services

S.E.A.L. provides a therapeutic team approach which supports a collaborative effort between Counseling/Social Work and Expressive Therapy. This unique modality optimizes the opportunity for progress relating to behavioral successes and ultimately provides the student with positive school experiences. We believe this approach is imperative to successful transitioning to the least restrictive educational environment.

School Social Work/Counseling

Students meet individually with a Licensed Counselor or Licensed Social Worker for an indicated time period, each week, based on the Individualized Education Plan (IEP). A Licensed Counselor or Licensed Social Worker is assigned to each student to facilitate family involvement and communicate pertinent issues, concerns, and progress. Students will also be given an opportunity to participate in group therapy.

Other Related Services

S.E.A.L. provides Speech and Language, Occupational, and Physical Therapy as indicated on student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP)

Expressive Therapy

S.E.A.L. provides students with the opportunity to participate in Expressive Therapy. As an integral part of the school program, this therapeutic and educational modality utilizes a wide range of activities, including art, music, and recreation therapies.

- **Therapeutic Art Groups**
Art-based therapy utilizes art creation to explore feelings, experiences, and emotional growth. The artwork provides a non-verbal vehicle to increase insight, develop strengths, and integrate feelings that are sometimes difficult to put into words. Art groups are led by both Art and Recreation Therapists, and supervised by a Registered Art Therapist.
- **Music Therapy**
Music Therapy involves using music to elicit desirable responses and changes in behavior. This group provides opportunities for non-verbal and verbal expression through the structured use of music or music activities, i.e. music listening, improvisation, lyric analysis, group singing, relaxation techniques, and song writing. Music therapy groups are led by board-certified MT-BC therapists.
- **Recreation Therapy**

Recreation Therapy is an “action oriented” approach to therapy which provides students with leisure alternatives to build self-esteem, promote positive peer relationships, and improve coping strategies. Recreation Therapy may include; exercise, crafts, trust building activities, leisure education, pet therapy, active games, etc.

Student Activities

Students are offered a wide variety of activities, athletics, and clubs to promote positive social experiences, enhance self-esteem, and parallel the general education experience.

Athletic League

S.T.R.I.D.E. (Sportsmanship, Teamwork, Respect, Integrity, Dedication, and Encouragement) is S.E.A.L.'s intercampus athletic and academic program that provides students with opportunities to participate in competitions among S.E.A.L. campuses. Participation is based on eligibility requirements related to behavior, attendance, and academic achievement. The program promotes sportsmanship, cooperation, teamwork, and positive recreational experiences while encouraging students to build confidence, develop social skills, and demonstrate responsible decision-making. S.T.R.I.D.E. offerings include flag football, volleyball, basketball, softball, bowling, chess, art fairs, and other athletic and academic activities.

Clubs

Club participation provides students with both social and academic experiences. These include but are not limited to:

- Photography Club
- Nature Club
- Pep Club
- Student Government
- Guitar Club
- Drum Club
- Art Club

Performing Arts

Students are offered an opportunity to participate in the performing arts program which includes a winter variety show as part of an open house, and a spring play or musical.

S.E.A.L. maintains a variety of internal policies and procedures to support school operations and student services. Policies directly related to student education, transportation, safety, and welfare may be made available to parents/guardians upon request, at the discretion of the administration. S.E.A.L. reserves the right to withhold documents that contain confidential information, security protocols, personnel matters, or other information not appropriate for public distribution.