

SWEETWATER POLICIES and PROCEDURES

ACCIDENTS/ILLNESS AT SCHOOL

If a student is hurt on the bus, on the playground, or anywhere else at school, he/she should report the accident immediately to the supervising adult. First aid for minor accidents will be handled at school. Parents or guardians will be contacted in the event of serious accidents.

AFTERNOON DISMISSAL OF STUDENTS

- Students are dismissed from class at 2:45pm.
- Students riding buses will be dismissed first. Once all buses are loaded, car riders are dismissed.
- Car riders will be picked up at the front of the school in the order of the car in line. No student may leave to get in a car until his/her name is called by the person on duty. All car riders should be picked up by 3:00pm. All cars that regularly pick-up riders should have a yellow car rider sign displayed in the front window of the vehicle. Any driver without a yellow car rider sign will need to report to the office to sign-out the student(s).
- Parents or authorized persons who walk to the building to pick-up children must report to the office to sign out the child(ren). Child(ren) will be called to the office to meet the person signing them out. Please wait in the office for the child(ren).
- Students will be sent home their usual way (as established on the first day of school) unless the parent/guardian has sent a written note to the teacher, indicating there is a change.
- Verbal messages brought by the child(ren) will not be accepted. Without a written note for the parent/guardian, we will follow the last written instructions we have received for the child.
- NO telephone requests by parents/guardians will be accepted. All transportation changes must be made in writing before 2:00pm.
- Parents needing students for early check-out must make requests in person before 2:15.
- There is no provision for supervision of students by regular staff after 3:15pm. After 3:00 pm, if a student is registered in the after-school program the student will be moved to ASP and parents will be charged according to ASP charges.

AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

Parents may join the After School Program which allows students to stay at school between 3:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Students must be registered for the program in order to stay. Registration fees are \$10.00 per family and tuition is \$8.00 per day, per child. There is a \$1.00 per minute late charge assessed after 6:00 p.m. The After School Program is a prepaid program and all payments are expected by 6:00 pm on Fridays prior to the child staying the following week. A \$10.00 per week late fee will be assessed on unpaid balances.

Students are dismissed from school at 2:45 p.m. each day. **Students registered in the After School Program not picked up by 3:00 p.m. will be sent directly to the After School Program.**

ARRIVAL AT SCHOOL

Buses begin their routes at 7 o'clock and begin to arrive at school at 7:15 a.m.; beginning at that time teachers will be on duty each morning to supervise students. **No student should be brought to school by a parent and left before 7:15 a.m.**

When students get to school, they should go directly to the bus room where they are to remain seated and quiet until dismissed. Students should not go to a classroom or restroom prior to 7:45 a.m.

Parents should not make a practice of entering the school building with their student(s) on arrival at school.

Breakfast is served daily at school for all students from 7:15 - 7:45.

ATTENDANCE/TARDIES

Although attendance at school is very important, students with a contagious illness or fever should be kept at home. Upon returning to school after an absence, a written excuse should be given to the teacher. Students who are absent miss instruction that cannot always be made up. It is up to the student to obtain and return any make-up work within a reasonable length of time.

Students should be on time each day. Students who are tardy miss valuable instruction and disrupt the class upon arrival. If a student is tardy, he/she must be accompanied by their parent/guardian to be checked in at the office. Late arrivals will receive a "tardy pass" to enter their classroom. **Students are tardy after 8:00 a.m.**

Students with excessive unexcused absences/tardies will be referred to the school social worker.

Perfect attendance trophies will be awarded to students who attend school 180 days and have three (3) or fewer tardies and/or early check-outs. Early-check out is prior to 2:15 pm.

CHECK-OUT PROCEDURES

If a student must leave the school during the school day, his parent or guardian must come to the school office and sign the check-out card. A parent or guardian who suspects that some unauthorized person may try to check out his child should notify the office. However, unless the school has legal custody papers on file, a child would automatically be released to either one of his natural parents. Parents and authorized persons should be prepared to present identification before being allowed to check out a student.

If anyone other than the parent is to be sent to check out a student, a note signed by the parent or a signed fax should be sent to the school to verify who is being authorized to check out the student. (Fax No.: 770-651-4603) All transportation changes should be made in writing prior to 2:00 pm each school day. Early check-outs will not be permitted from 2:15 - 2:45 daily.

Accidents, illness, and emergencies are usually unavoidable; however, parents should make every effort to see that the student's schooling is not interrupted by frequent checkouts.

COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE SCHOOL

From time to time notices (report cards, student work samples, and other notes) will be sent home with your student. Please encourage your child to bring them home and/or return them carefully, perhaps with your signature. Your interest in reading the notices will encourage your child to bring them home.

CONDUCT AND COURTESY

Courtesy and good manners are the keys to a students' conduct at school. A good attitude toward teachers and fellow students is expected and will make school enjoyable for all. Students are expected to have respect for school property and to take care of books, desks, and other furniture/equipment. Students are expected to follow all classroom and school rules to ensure the safety and a better learning climate. The same rules of conduct and courtesy are expected at all school events and when in the building after hours during extracurricular activities as well as attending parent conferences.

BUS CONDUCT

School bus transportation is a privilege afforded by the Board of Education. It is not a right. To protect the safety and well-being of all involved, pupils must adhere to established bus conduct rules. Bus transportation privilege may be revoked if the pupil does not observe bus conduct expectations.

ELEMENTARY DRESS CODE

The Douglas County School District dress code requires students to dress “in a manner that is conducive to a good learning environment.”

In the selection of school dress, parents and students should exercise good taste and good judgement. Many “fads” in dress are not appropriate for school. Therefore, student dress should reflect neatness, cleanliness and should not distract or cause disruption in the educational process of school.

The school administration reserves the right to determine if a student’s dress and personal appearance are too casual, too revealing, or too distracting from the learning environment to be considered appropriate for school. The health and safety of all students will be taken into consideration when making decisions regarding appropriate /inappropriate attire.

Every student enrolled in Douglas County Schools is expected to observe a standard of grooming and dress consistent with the level of formality of the school setting. Certain items of dress are not considered appropriate and therefore, are not acceptable, and could result in a child having to call parents at home or work to bring more appropriate clothing. Examples include (but are not limited to) the following:

- a. Hats, visors, hoods pulled up, sweat bands, skull caps, bandanas or other head garments including non-prescription sunglasses worn inside the building;
- b. Beach or shower shoes, bare feet, flip flops or rubber and/or metal cleats are not allowed in school or on buses;
- c. Shoes with any type of wheels or other rolling apparatus.
- d. Clothing that shows the bare midriff, bare back or the bare shoulders.
- e. Tank tops; (Shoulders must be covered; arm holes tight fitting) are permitted only for students in K, 1st, 2nd grades. Tank tops are not permitted in 3rd, 4th and 5th grades.
- f. See-through or mesh clothing unless worn over other apparel;
- g. Any clothing or articles advertising or displaying the insignia of drugs, tobacco, or alcoholic beverages shall be prohibited;
- h. Any clothing with profane or obscene language or symbols displayed, any clothing which promotes violence; or does/may cause a disturbance.
- i. Gang related appearance, clothing or objects are prohibited.
- j. All pants which are not worn at the waist;
- k. Heavy coats or raincoats inside buildings and classrooms;
- l. Heavy chains or dog collars around the waist or neck, or attached to a wallet. Purses (including cross-strap) must be kept in book bag.
- m. Shorts, dresses and skirts that are too tight, too short, (must be at least five inches from the top of the kneecap) or not worn at the waist are not permitted;
- n. Pajamas, bedroom shoes or other sleepwear;
- o. Holes or patches, on clothing, above the knee; girl’s leggings or tights (unless under a dress or covering buttock area by a top).

Good taste and good judgement should be used by parents and students alike in the selection of school dress. Many “fads” in dress are not appropriate.

The school administration reserves the right to determine if certain other items are too casual, too revealing or too distracting from the learning environment to be considered appropriate for school. Health and safety of all students will be taken into consideration when making decisions regarding appropriate/inappropriate attire, including the tucking of shirts.

Some exceptions to these guidelines may be made for special activity days such as field days and character costume days as determined by the school principal. Special accommodations may also be made for health reasons. Total days for exceptional dress must be limited to no more than 5% of the student calendar (9 days) due to impact on the learning environment. Exceptions should be announced to students and parents well ahead of the date. Clear explanations of what will and will not be allowed must be included in the announcements.

DISCIPLINE PROGRAM

The students and staff at Sweetwater Elementary follow a school wide discipline plan. At the beginning of each school year, a contract outlining the school plan will be sent home with students. Parents and students are asked to review, sign, and return the contract.

Each teacher will maintain a "TIME OUT" area in the classroom. Guidelines/rules for appropriate behavior and consequences for misconduct will be posted and will be thoroughly explained to all students. Students not following guidelines/rules will utilize the time-out areas for quiet reflection and/or completion of assignments.

DRIVEWAYS AND PARKING LOT

The driveway by the CAFETERIA (Lee Road entrance) **is for buses only.** **Violations will be reported to the Douglas County Sheriff's Department.**

The driveway by the front entrance is to be used by parents who furnish transportation for their child(ren). Parents are strongly encouraged to allow their students to ride the buses to and from school in order to minimize parking lot problems and maximize safety for students.

For our students' safety, please keep your child in the car and proceed to the front door. No parking and walking across.

Parents who bring their children to school can help keep traffic flowing smoothly by avoiding long good-byes or last minute instructions

EMERGENCY DRILLS

State law requires that schools conduct drills for emergencies such as fire and severe weather. Fire drills are held each month on "good" weather days. Some months are not cooperative and students must go out in the cold. Students will return to the building as quickly as possible.

EMERGENCY STUDENT INFORMATION

Every student will have an emergency information sheet. It is the parent's responsibility to keep the emergency information sheet current. At least one local phone contact, in addition to the parent/guardian's daytime number, must be listed to ensure the safety of your child.

FIELD TRIPS

At various times during the year, students may take educational field trips. Trips will be made according to Douglas County policy and guidelines. Parents will be notified before any field trip so that permission will be on file. Students may be excluded from a field trip for inappropriate behavior at school. Preschoolers are not allowed on school system buses. Refunds will not be given.

FOOD SERVICE INFORMATION

Students are encouraged to participate in the school nutrition programs. Nutritionally balanced breakfasts and lunches are available to all students. A registered dietitian plans menus. Breakfasts are designed to meet one-fourth of the recommended daily allowance of nutrients for Americans. Lunches meet one-third RDA. Several choices in menu offerings are available. Prices are \$1.25 for breakfast and \$2.10 for lunch. However, free meals or reduced price meals (\$.30 breakfast and \$.40 lunch) are available to students who qualify. A student who brings his/her lunch from home may purchase milk for 60 cents. Students may purchase extra milk to go along with their lunch, which includes milk. Milk may not be charged. An adult lunch is \$3.50 and an adult breakfast is \$1.65. **Fast food, soft drinks, candy, chips, and snack foods are not permitted in the cafeteria.**

Students permitted to have frozen treats purchased through the cafeteria, must have a note on file with the cafeteria manager. Bottled water and extra entrees are available for purchase at an additional cost.

Students are encouraged to pay in advance for meals to eliminate the necessity of bringing money daily. Any amount can be paid. The school cafeteria manager can provide information about student account balances at any time. An online service is available to prepay student's breakfast and lunch at www.parentonline.net. You will need to know your student's identification number.

A policy has been established throughout the school system that restricts the amount of meal charges a student or adult can accumulate. No one will be allowed to accumulate more than \$5.00 in charges. Once that amount has been reached, students who are unable to pay will be offered a sandwich and beverage.

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING SERVICES

In Douglas County, the elementary school guidance program is designed to help students by assisting them in making decisions and changing behavior. The purpose of guidance and counseling is to impact specific skills and learning opportunities in a productive and preventive manner which ensures that all students can achieve school success through academic, career, and personal/social development.

Guidance is defined as the help all students receive to assist them in making appropriate educational and career choices. Counseling is defined as the help some students receive from a professionally trained counselor to help them overcome personal and social problems, which may interfere with learning.

The lessons taught in classroom or small group guidance provides a link to define student competencies. These standards are included in the guidance curriculum. Counselors coordinate and implement delivery of guidance lessons in the areas of academic, personal/social and career development. Lessons can incorporate study skills, test taking skills, problem solving, decision-making, self-knowledge, life skills, personal safety, and career planning. All of which will help facilitate your child's academic achievement.

Small group counseling may address specific needs such as understanding-self and interpersonal skills or help students dealing in crisis situations, such as divorce or death in a child's life. Students may participate in these small groups as a result of referrals from parents, teachers or themselves. This counseling relationship with students will be treated as confidential except when a student poses an imminent danger to themselves or others; or when the student reveals matters that by state law must be reported. The Douglas County Board of Education provides all students the opportunity for counseling services.

The elementary school counselor consults and collaborates with parents, guardians, teachers, and significant others such as school psychologist, special education personnel, school social workers, and medical professionals in the community. They are also involved with classroom performance and behavior, childhood growth and development, a positive school climate, identification of exceptional children, interpretations of test results, psychological reports and other relevant data and communication between home and school.

Students in First and Third grades will be taught the *GOOD-TOUCH/BAD-TOUCH* program. *GOOD-TOUCH/BAD-TOUCH* is a body safety program, which teaches children in a very comfortable way to talk about a very sensitive problem. Unfortunately, every year more than 100,000 children are sexually abused in our country. Informing children of the following concepts helps to lessen their vulnerability to abuse.

1. Touch can be good, and/or confusing.
2. Children are special and they have the right to know all the safety rules.
3. Children can say no to inappropriate touches.
4. Children should tell a trusted adult if they ever have a problem with bad or confusing touches.
5. Sexual Abuse is never the child's fault.

Professionals from the University of Georgia have validated this program as being effective. The Douglas County Board of Education has approved this program and is very pleased and excited to be involved. Mr. Cedric Slay, our school counselor will be teaching this program. He has received special training from *The Prevention and Motivation Programs, Inc.*

You may contact him at 770-651-4600, if you would like to preview this program. If you have any questions or concerns about your child's involvement in any guidance or counseling group activity, please call your school counselor.

HOMework

Homework is defined as any required study to be done outside the regular class time or as the completion of required class work. Research in this area indicates a positive correlation between homework and student achievement. Proper employment of this method of instruction is essential to quality education and is both endorsed and encouraged.

Effective use of homework reinforces, extends and enriches classroom learning. It helps students synthesize and integrate material, provides opportunities for learning from a variety of sources, encourages self-discipline and responsibility, promotes organizational and time management skills, and establishes a window through which parents can view their children's learning activities and progress. Homework is intended to foster positive attitudes toward school, improve academic-related behaviors, generate interest in subject matter, improve communication between the home and the school, and encourage parental involvement in their children's education.

Homework expectations increase in proportion to a child's age, grade level, and experience in school.

Kindergarten, First and Second Grades:

Most students can expect 15 to 30 minutes of required homework each night.

Third Grade:

Most students can expect 30 to 45 minutes of required homework each night.

Fourth and Fifth Grades:

Most students can expect 30 to 60 minutes of required homework each night.

In the event of illness or family emergency, students will be given an opportunity to make up missed work. For short-term absences (5 or fewer days), full credit will be given for work made up and turned in within a number of days equal to those missed. Special arrangements should be made with the classroom teacher when illnesses or family emergencies extend absences beyond five days. The following guidelines govern the availability of makeup work:

1. If a student is absent for one day, makeup work will be given when the student returns to class. Any assignments requested on the day of a student's one-day absence are due on the day the student returns to school.
2. If a student is absent two or more days, parents may request makeup work by calling the school office before 8:30 a.m. Work will be ready in the office between 3 p.m. and 4 p.m. The number of days allowed for makeup work begins on the first day makeup work is requested.
3. In case of long-term illness, parents should communicate with teachers regarding further makeup work.

ILLNESS AT SCHOOL

If a student becomes ill at school, his temperature will be checked. If your child's temperature is over 100°F an attempt will be made to contact the parent or guardian, or a person authorized by the parent to be contacted in such a circumstance. Students are not permitted to return to school until they are fever free for 24 hours. Students sent home for vomiting should not return to school until 24 hours after the last vomit occurrence.

Parents must complete a "Medical Assistance Form" for all over-the-counter medications (eye drops, cough drops, cough syrup, throat spray, etc.) as prescribed by a physician. All prescribed medications, inhalers, antibiotics, daily medications) must be in the original container with student's name and dosage. A "Medical Assistance Form" is required before school personnel can administer medication. If your child needs to carry a personal inhaler a document must be completed by the physician and on file in the clinic. Forms are available at the school. The school clinic does not have any medications on hand for student use.

A student who seems to be ill before leaving home should not be sent to school unless the parent is reasonably sure that he will be able to stay at school and do his work.

Parents or guardians should send a note to school if a student has medical problems that need attention or if the student is frequently ill.

Sometimes a student uses feeling bad as a reason to ask to call a parent, to go home, or otherwise to be excused from doing his work. This frequently happens on Mondays, test days, the first day back from a holiday, a day when a parent is ill at home or accompanying an ill brother or sister to the doctor, or on a parent's day off. Please communicate with the school if you suspect any of these types of situations and we will do our best to make the student comfortable at school.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

Radio station WSB (750 AM) and other major Atlanta radio and T. V. stations will be contacted concerning school closings. Closings will be announced as close to 6:00 a.m. as possible. Please listen to these stations for information; calling the Board of Education or the school ties up emergency phone lines.

LOST AND FOUND

Most articles that are found are turned in to the office and/or placed in a designated area. Please label all articles of clothing with your child's name so lost articles may be returned. If items are not claimed within a reasonable length of time, they will be donated to a charitable organization.

MEDIA CENTER

The following guidelines apply to Media Center use:

1. A computer is used to check out materials to students; each student is assigned a computer number that will be his/her number for the entire time s/he is a student here.
2. Students check out books for ten (10) school days; if desired, books may then be checked out for an additional ten (10) school days. Magazines and encyclopedias may be checked out for one (1) night at a time.
3. A student with books that are overdue may have his/her checkout privileges restricted. No overdue fines are charged.
4. Please report lost books to the media specialist, who will allow the student time to look for the book. If the book is not found, the student is expected to pay the replacement cost of the book.
5. Damaged books must be paid for in proportion to the extent of damage incurred. If books are damaged beyond repair, full replacement price is charged.
6. **Failure to pay for damaged or lost library books will result in holding report cards.**

PARENT CONFERENCES

Parents are welcome and encouraged to come to school to talk with their child's teacher(s). Appointments may be scheduled during the teacher's planning period, before school, or after school. Conference days are also scheduled during the year. A minimum of two conferences per child will be scheduled during the year. Parents will be notified if additional conferences are needed. Preschool children should not accompany parents during a conference.

PARENTS IN THE CLASSROOM

We value parent involvement at Sweetwater. To protect instructional time and keep our children safe, please follow these guidelines:

1. To observe in the classroom, we ask that you make arrangements with your child's teacher at least 24 hours in advance.
2. When in the classroom, please do not interact with the students unless invited by the teacher.
3. Please understand that the teacher cannot have a conference with you while you are here observing. If you wish to have a conference, please schedule a time with the teacher.
4. If you would like to volunteer at Sweetwater, please see Ms. Boggs, Parent Outreach Facilitator, for a brief training.

PARTIES AND CELEBRATIONS

CLASS PARTIES: There are two class parties scheduled each year. Room mothers contact parents to assist with donations and plans for the parties. Parties celebrating other events are not permitted. Parents of children wishing to celebrate birthdays may bring a store bought treat to be enjoyed during the children's lunch time.

PARTY INVITATIONS: Teachers will distribute party invitations at school only if every student in the class receives one. Should the guest list be restricted to less than the entire class, arrangements will have to be made to distribute the invitations outside the school. School personnel are not permitted to distribute names/addresses of students.

BIRTHDAY TREATS: When bringing store bought cupcakes, cookies or other treats for lunch for a birthday celebration or any other special day, please distribute them to every student in your child's class. Friends in other classes who may also be sitting in the lunchroom may not receive the special treat. This procedure attempts to prevent hurt feelings on the part of those who would not receive the treat.

FLOWER AND BALLOON BOUQUETS: Parents are asked not to have bouquets of balloons or flower sent to the school or brought to school for students. Such deliveries disrupt the instructional day. Students will not be called out of class to receive deliveries. Such items cannot be transported home on the bus.

SCHOOL PROPERTY/TEXTBOOKS

The people of Douglas County provide the building and the equipment it contains at great expense. Students should refrain from defacing school property. A conscious effort should be made to encourage good citizenship and the development of pride in keeping the building clean and the furniture in good repair.

Students will pay for damage to building and equipment when it is determined that such was caused by carelessness or neglect.

Students are furnished free textbooks. The classroom teacher who keeps a record of the condition of each book issues the books. Students are responsible for the care of their issued textbooks. The student will pay for lost or damaged books, textbooks, or library books.

STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM

All schools in Georgia use Student Support Teams to identify and offer alternative strategies for students having academic or social problems. The team may consist of the teachers who work with the student, along with the principal, instructional lead teacher, counselor, other teachers, and/or special education teachers. Every effort is made to provide for academic and social success in school. The referral of a student for special education is initiated through the Student Support Team process.

USE OF SCHOOL TELEPHONE

The school phone should be used only for emergencies. No student should use the telephone without his teacher's permission. Arrangements for transportation for all after school activities should be made before coming to school. Transportation changes must be in writing and not accepted by telephone.

Students will not be called to the phone to speak with parent/guardian. Items left at home can be brought to school, and arrangement will be made to make sure that the student gets what is brought.

Please make every effort to see that the school has your correct home and work telephone numbers, as well as the numbers of baby-sitters, day care centers, neighbors, or relatives whom you would want us to call in an emergency involving your student.

VISITORS

For the protection of all students, it is important for us to know who is in the building at all times. Therefore, ALL visitors must use the front entrance. Visitors are required to sign in at the office and receive a pass. Individuals who have not signed in or are not wearing a visitor pass will be asked to report to the office. In no case should any visitor go to a classroom during school hours without proper authorization. Visits to the classroom during instructional time are not intended nor are appropriate for parent/teacher conferences.

WITHDRAWALS

Please notify the school at least one day prior to withdrawing a student so as to prevent a delay while forms are being processed. With prior notice, the teacher can have grades ready.

When a student withdraws, all textbooks, library books, and other materials checked out to the student must be returned or paid for; all lunch charges must also be paid.

If it is not possible to come to the school in person to withdraw the student, a parent or guardian should send a written note verifying such a request. In no case will a student be withdrawn from school unless there has been a contact with his parent or guardian.