

# **Somers Elementary School**



# **Student Handbook**

**2023 - 2024**

**Somers Elementary School  
4 Vision Boulevard**

# **Somers, CT 06071**

Phone 860-749-2270

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www.somers.k12.ct.us

Principal: Melissa Mucci

Assistant Principal: Michael McDonnell

## **School Hours**

Grades K-5 & Early Start Preschool: 8:35 – 3:10

Smart Start Preschool 8:35-3:00

AM Preschool Early Start Arrival 8:35 a.m.

Dismissal 11:30 a.m.

PM Preschool Early Start Arrival 12:30 p.m.

Dismissal 3:10 p.m.

## **Early Release Hours**

Grades K-5 & Smart Start Preschool: 8:40 – 12:00

AM Preschool Arrival 8:40 a.m.

Dismissal 10:00 a.m.

PM Preschool Arrival 10:00 a.m.

Dismissal 12:00 p.m.

## **90-Minute Delay**

Hours for grades K-5 & Smart Start Preschool will be 10:15 a.m. – 3:10 p.m.

AM Preschool – **CANCELLED**

PM Preschool -12:30 – 3:10 p.m.

## **Inclement Weather/Unplanned Early Dismissal**

Hours for grades K-5 & Smart Start Preschool will be 8:35 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

AM Preschool - 8:35 a.m – 10:00 a.m.

PM Preschool - CANCELLED

# Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide a challenging and nurturing learning environment where all children are empowered to develop their unique talents and are prepared to contribute in an increasingly complex world.

Our mission is guided by the following beliefs about teaching and learning:

- All children can learn.
- Parents are an integral part of their child's education - home and school connections improve learning.
- Learning is best facilitated in a positive atmosphere where children are participating, actively engaged, and free to take risks.
- The best learning takes place when children feel safe, happy, and valued.
- Learning requires making connections to prior knowledge and personal experiences.
- Learning is enhanced when different learning styles are addressed.
- Both teaching and learning involve reflection, collaboration, and risk-taking. We believe that true collaboration is essential to developing and sustaining a professional learning community and improving student learning.
- Teaching and learning are lifelong activities.
- Respect for self and others are basic to our community.
- Knowledge of technology is essential for each student to participate in the world of today and tomorrow.

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# **Academic Expectations**

The Somers Elementary School community is committed to helping each child develop effective work habits and academic independence. Daily and long-term assignments provide students with opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills and to take pride in their learning. It is expected that all students at Somers Elementary School will strive to do their best on assignments and projects both within and outside the classroom. Students are responsible for completing assignments neatly and on time.

## **Accidents/School Related Injuries**

If a child is injured while at school, parents will be notified as to the seriousness of the injury sustained. In the event that parents cannot be reached, the emergency contact person(s) indicated on the Student Emergency Information Form will then be notified. If necessary, medical personnel will transport the child to the nearest hospital and a continued effort to reach the parents will be made.

## **Administration of Medication**

If a student needs to receive medication during the school day (over the counter or prescribed by a physician), parents must submit the physician's written order and a written parent authorization to the school health office. Medication to be administered by school health personnel must be delivered by a parent or guardian directly to the school nurse in the container or package provided by the pharmacy. Students are not allowed, at any time, to transport or have on their person prescribed or over the counter medications.

## **After School Activities**

If your child signs up for any after school activity, written permission must be given in order for your child to remain at school. Please send a note granting permission for your child to attend, the dates your child will be staying after school and the name of the activity your child is participating in.

# Arrival & Dismissal

## For those students arriving by car:

- Parents will utilize the right lane only on Vision Blvd. to drop-off students. Once in the parking lot, make your way to the main entrance round circle (front of the school). Click on the link to view the designated route outlined in the [SES Traffic Flow Diagram](#). School staff will greet your student(s) at your vehicle beginning at **8:25am**. to ensure they get to their appropriate destination. **Please remain in your vehicle. All students must exit the vehicle on the passenger side, wearing a mask, when prompted by school staff.** Exceptions will be made for those students who are in booster car seats and need parent assistance. We ask that you adhere to social distancing and traffic safety guidelines.
- Students will be housed in the Auditorium (PreK-2) or the Cafeteria (Gr.3-5) prior to the bell ringing at 8:35 am. As they enter the school building students will proceed to their classrooms as lockers will not be available for use. Teachers and staff will be located throughout the building to help students reach their destination.
- All arrival staff enter the building at 8:45 each day. If teachers are not visible on the sidewalk when you pull up, you need to park and escort your child to the front door. The entrance monitor will buzz your student in.

## For those students dismissing by car:

- Parents will utilize the right lane only on Vision Blvd. to pick-up students. Click on the link to view the designated route outlined in the [SES Traffic Flow Diagram](#). School staff will be in the parking lot to direct traffic flow. **Please remain in your vehicle. All students must enter the vehicle via the passenger side, when prompted by school staff.** Exceptions will be made for those students who are in booster car seats and need parent assistance. We ask that you adhere to social distancing and traffic safety guidelines.
- This school year, SES will continue the use of the **School Dismissal Manager Program** for dismissal. As we approach the beginning of the school year, we will be sending out a Parent Welcome Letter that outlines your role.

Our goal in implementing this program is to streamline the dismissal process. Stay tuned for more information.

## Early Dismissal

Parents are discouraged from removing students from school during the day. We ask that parents and guardians limit the number of early dismissal requests they make to those needed only for medical appointments. Early dismissal occurs before 3:05. Students are signed out and dismissed from the entrance monitor kiosk located in the main entrance hallway. All other students will be dismissed at the regular dismissal time – 3:10.

## Changes in Routine Dismissal Procedures

- All students are assigned to a school bus, and taking the school bus home is considered to be the routine dismissal procedure.
- If a change in the routine dismissal procedure is known in advance, parents/guardians must submit this change to School Dismissal Manager and in writing to safeguard the change. This will ensure the child's classroom teacher and office are made aware of specific dismissal instructions.
- It is not guaranteed that a teacher is able to frequently check email during the school day.

Therefore, should a change in dismissal be warranted once the student has arrived at school, parents/guardians must change the dismissal in School Dismissal Manager prior to 12:30pm. If a change is needed to be made after 12:30p.m. on full days or after 10:00a.m on early release days, a call must be made to the main office to alert them of any dismissal changes.

## Assessments

A variety of assessments are used to measure the academic progress of Somers Elementary School students and to monitor our educational programs. Classroom teachers administer formative assessments, which are reviewed by the grade level team. District screenings of all students occur periodically to monitor academic progress over time. In addition, students in grades 3 through 5 participate in SBAC testing each Spring. The results of these assessments, when combined with teacher and parent observations, help to ensure the most effective academic program for each child.



# Attendance

The laws of the State of Connecticut require children from age seven to age sixteen to attend school 180 days/year. A student is considered to be “in attendance” if present at his/her assigned school, or activity sponsored by the school (e.g., field trip) for at least half of the regular school day. According to the new State of Connecticut guidelines, a student who has an early dismissal prior to 11:15 am is considered absent for the day. Similarly, a student who arrives after 12:30 pm and attends school for the remainder of the day is also considered absent for that school day. For an absence from school to be considered excused, the principal or teacher may require a satisfactory explanation from the parent or guardian by written note.

All students will be expected to participate in recess. If a child’s illness requires him/her to remain indoors, the child is not to be sent to school.

Board of Education code: 5113 states the following: "If the student's absence has not been verified by the parent via telephone, a written note signed by the parent must be submitted when the student returns to school." If an absence is questionable the administrator will make a determination as to whether or not the absence will be considered an excused absence. Students who have been absent or tardy are required to make up tests, homework or other assignments upon their return to school.

## Documentation for Excused Absences for up to the first nine days of school year:

Written documentation should explain the nature of, reason for and length of the absence. Such documentation may be in the form of a signed note from a parent/guardian, a signed note from a school official who spoke in person with the parent/guardian about the absence, or a note confirming the absence by the school nurse or licensed medical professional. Separate documentation must be submitted for each incidence of absenteeism.

*The tenth absence and all absences thereafter will be considered excused when the school receives appropriate and timely documentation of one of the following reasons:*

- 1. Student illness (Note: all student illness absences must be verified by an appropriate licensed medical professional to be deemed excused, regardless of the length of absence):*
- 2. Student observance of a religious holiday:*

3. *Death in the student's family or other emergency beyond the control of the student's family;*
4. *Mandated court appearances (additional documentation required);*
5. *The lack of transportation that is normally provided by a district other than the one the student attends (no parental documentation required); or*
6. *Extraordinary educational opportunities pre-approved by the district administrators and in accordance with State Department of Education guidance.*

### **Unexcused Absences**

A student's absence from school will be considered unexcused unless the absence meets the criteria for an excused absence (including proper documentation), or the absence is the result of a disciplinary action of the school or district.

### **Reporting Student Absences**

- To report a child's absence please call the school at 749-2270 and select the voicemail option.
- Leave a message in the attendance voice mailbox that includes your name and name of the student along with the student's grade and teacher. Include the date and reason for the absence.
- If no reason is stated, the child will be marked absent unexcused.
- If the school is not notified, the school nurse will contact you at home to verify the absence.

### **Family Vacations**

With the distribution of the school calendar several months before school begins, parents are expected to make every effort to plan family vacations during scheduled school recess periods. Teachers are not required to prepare work in advance of student absences for family vacations. Teachers will, however, provide opportunities for students to make up tests, homework or other assignments missed during family vacations. The obligation is with the student and parent to make necessary arrangements to complete make-up work in a timely manner.

### **Tardiness**

Students are expected to be in their classrooms at 8:45 a.m. Repeated tardiness affects a child's success in school and is a disruption to others. Students arriving after 8:45 a.m. must be signed in by a parent/authorized person at the entrance monitor's station.

### **Truancy**

Unexcused absences are those, which do not come under any of the definitions of excused absences. Somers Board of Education code 5113.2 identifies a student as "truant" when he/she has four unexcused absences in any one-month or ten unexcused absences from school in any school year. School officials are required by law to submit data to the State of Connecticut concerning children deemed to be truant from school in any school year. A student will be identified as a "habitual truant" when he/she has twenty unexcused absences within a school year. Code 5113.2 further states that the superintendent will be required to file a written complaint with the superior court alleging that the acts or omissions (i.e. failure to attend school) of any child designated as an "habitual truant" are such that his/her is a family with service needs

## Bicycles

Because of the congested traffic flow at arrival and dismissal times, SES students must not ride bicycles to and from school. In addition, there are no bicycle racks available for students.

## Building Security

At Somers Elementary School, exterior doors are closed and secured. The main entrance is the only accessible entry during the school day. In order to enter, the buzzer must be pressed. You will be asked to identify yourself and to state the reason for your visit. THE SCHOOL DAY FOR STUDENTS BEGINS AT 8:45 AM. THEY ARE TO BE IN THEIR CLASSROOMS BY THAT TIME.

All visitors and volunteers (parents, grandparents etc.) are expected to come to the main entrance, sign in at the entrance monitor station, and wear a visitor's badge. If you are found in the hallways without appropriate identification, you will be asked to return to the entrance monitor station.

For safety reasons, it is our policy that students are NOT allowed to be dismissed directly from their classrooms, recess, the bus lines or from the corridors to anyone (including parents, grandparents, family members or friends of the family). Even if the parent is volunteering in a classroom at the end of the day.

If you are volunteering in the classroom, and want to take your child, send a note in the morning with your child indicating that you will be at the school and would like to

take your child with you. We will issue your child a pass and you may take your son or daughter with you after signing him or her out from the entrance monitor station. IF YOU DO NOT SEND IN A NOTE, you must come to the front door, and the monitor will call the classroom teacher to request that your child be released to meet you at the entrance monitor station. At that time, you will be asked to sign your child out of school. This procedure must be followed for siblings you wish to take home at the same time. Please be aware, if you pick your child up prior to 3:10, your child will be marked as an early dismissal.

## Board of Education

### Meetings

The Somers Board of Education meets regularly on the second and fourth Monday of each month (except in July and August) at 7:00 p.m. in the Mabelle Avery Middle School Board Room unless otherwise specified on the meeting agenda. Agendas for each meeting and minutes from the previous meeting will be on the district's website: <http://www.somers.k12.ct.us>. Current members of the Board of Education are:

Marissa Marks, Chairman	Ed Depeau, Vice Chairman	Jan Martin Secretary
Michael Briggs	Christa Cherry	Anne Kirkpatrick
Kim Radziewicz	Carl Stebbins	Chris Thiesing

## Board of Education Policies

The policies listed below are a selected representation of the Somers Public Schools district policies. Some of the policies and regulations have been referenced and abbreviated in the handbook. Access to the complete district policy manual, along with Board of Education meeting agendas and minutes may be obtained through our district website ([www.somers.k12.ct.us/district/](http://www.somers.k12.ct.us/district/)) located in the district menu under Central Office/BOE.

<b>AIDS Instruction - BOE Policy 6144.1</b>	<b>Homework - BOE policy 6154</b>
<b>Asbestos Management Plan</b>	<b>Medication - BOE Policy 5141.21</b>
<b>Attendance and Excuses - BOE Policy 5113</b>	<b>Non-Discrimination - BOE Policy 5141.4</b>
<b>Bullying - BOE Policy 5131.911</b>	<b>Physical Restraint and Seclusion - BOE Policy 5144.1</b>
<b>Child Abuse - BOE policy 5141.4</b>	<b>Promotion/Acceleration/Retention - BOE Policy 5123</b>
<b>Cleaning Program</b> Names of environmentally preferable products used in the schools may be obtained from the district's business manager or director of maintenance	<b>Student Searches - BOE Policy 5145.12</b>
<b>Dietary Needs - BOE Policy 5141.25</b>	<b>Suspension/Expulsion - BOE Policy 5114</b>
<b>Drugs/Alcohol/Tobacco - BOE Policy 5131.6</b>	<b>Sexual Harassment Policy BOE Policy 5145.5</b>
<b>Electronic Devices - Administrative Regulation 5131.81</b>	<b>Technology - BOE Policy 6141.321</b>
<b>Grading System - BOE Policy 6146.1</b>	<b>Title I Parental Involvement - BOE Policy 6172.5</b>
<b>Health/Medical Records - BOE Policy 5125.3</b>	<b>Student Searches - BOE Policy 5145.12</b>
<b>Grievance Procedures (Title IX) - BOE Policy 5145.6</b>	<b>Transportation Complaints/Procedures 3541.36</b>
<b>Lice Policy 5141.221</b>	<b>Use of Physical Force and Seclusion - 5144.1</b>

# Bullying

The Board promotes a secure and happy school climate, conducive to teaching and learning that is free from threat, harassment and any type of bullying behavior. Therefore, it shall be the policy of the Board that bullying of a student by another student is prohibited. See BOE Policy 5131.911 on the district website: <http://www.somers.k12.ct.us> for the complete policy.

The Board believes that a school environment, in which students feel safe, supported, engaged and helpfully challenged is optimal for learning and healthy development. The Board seeks an environment in which students and adults feel socially, emotionally, intellectually and physically safe; an environment that is free of harassment, intimidation and bullying.

## Definitions

**"Bullying"** means the repeated use by one or more students of a written, oral or electronic communication, such as cyberbullying, directed at or referring to another student attending school in the same school district or a physical act or gesture by one or more students repeatedly directed at another student attending school in the same school district that:

- A. causes physical or emotional harm to such student or damage to such student's property,
- B. places such student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself, or of damage to his or her property,
- C. creates a hostile environment at school for such student,
- D. infringes on the rights of such student at school, or
- E. substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Bullying includes, but not be limited to, a written, oral, or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more

of such characteristics. *(The student against whom the activity is directed must be attending school in the same district as the students engaged in the activity.)*

Students who engage in any act of bullying, on school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by the Board of Education, or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the Board of Education, and outside of the school setting if such bullying:

1. creates a hostile environment at school for the victim,
2. infringes on the rights of the victim at school,
3. substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school, are subject to appropriate disciplinary action up to and including suspension, expulsion and/or referral to law enforcement officials.

## **Bus Rules and Regulations**

The First Student Bus Company transports the children of Somers. The supervisor can be reached at 749-7957. The following is an explanation of rules and safety procedures for riding on buses:

- The bus driver is in charge of the bus and the passengers. He/she is responsible for the safety of the pupils and for their conduct on the bus.
- Riding the bus is a privilege that can be denied temporarily or permanently, if a pupil's behavior warrants it.
- The operator reports to the bus company all violations of rules, and a pupil may become ineligible for transportation if his/her behavior creates a problem on the school bus.

**It is necessary for students to observe the following rules:**

1. Be at the stopping places five (5) minutes prior to the designated pick-up time and ready to get into the bus with the least possible delay in order to keep the bus on schedule.
2. Do not stand or play in the roadway while waiting for the bus.
3. After boarding the bus, take a seat as quickly as possible.
4. Animals, firearms or explosives are not permitted on the bus.
5. Obey the bus operator at all times while on the bus.

6. Maintain an acceptable manner of conduct at all times. (NO Smoking, vulgarity, boisterous or other improper conduct will not be permitted.)
7. Remain seated while the bus is in motion.
8. Do not extend arms or head out of the bus windows at any time.
9. Keep the aisles clear of lunch boxes, musical instruments, books, etc.
10. No eating or drinking while on the bus.
11. Do not damage or deface any part of the bus.
12. Do not tamper with the operating mechanism on the emergency door.
13. Do not operate the service door; this is the responsibility of the bus operator.
14. Students loading the bus on a street when the bus passes in both directions are to wait until the bus passes on their side, so that they do not have to cross the road.
15. Students having to cross the road when loading and discharging are to cross in front of the bus, not the rear, upon the driver's signal. All pupils are advised to use extreme caution by looking at traffic both ways before crossing the street.

### **Bus Ticket System at SES**

When a student receives a bus ticket:

1. An administrator will sign the ticket and process the incident with the student(s) involved.
2. Parents/guardians will be notified of the ticket via email/phone call from administration.

When appropriate/necessary, administration will review bus video of the incident.

If deemed necessary by the Superintendent of Schools, the Bus Company and/or administration, riding privileges may be suspended.

### **Bus Drop Off**

An adult must be present and visible in order for the bus driver to let a student off the bus. In order to have your student let off the bus without an adult present/visible, hand written requests MUST be submitted to the SES Main Office. Notes given directly to the driver or verbal communication with the driver will not be accepted.

### **Bus Barn Contact Information**

**Location Manager: Ramon Manning**



Ph: 860-875-6675

**Ramon.Manning@firstgroup.com**

**Somers Dispatcher:**

**Kimberly Gaughan**

Ph: 860-749-7957

**Kimberly.Gaughan@firstgroup.com**

## Care of School Property

Students are responsible for all textbooks, library books and other materials issued during the school year. Parents will be assessed a replacement fee for all lost/damaged books or materials.

## Child Abuse Reporting Policy

Connecticut state statutes mandate all school employees to report suspected cases of neglect or abuse to the Department of Children and Family Services.

## Classroom Parties

Parties are arranged by the classroom coordinator. Please notify your child's teacher if you would prefer that your child not participate in holiday celebrations.

Parties have traditionally been a nice time for children to socialize with one another, and we would like to continue to encourage these enjoyable experiences. We have established the following school wide guidelines for classroom parties. There will be a maximum of four parties per year.

1. Harvest Celebration
2. December (party date to be set at the discretion of the grade level).
3. Valentine's Day.
4. End of Year farewell (party date to be set at the discretion of the grade level).

Teachers will contact classroom coordinators regarding the party details. Due to the individual dietary needs of our students, no unsolicited snacks are to be sent in.

Due to room size, only the classroom teacher and up to four parents will be present for a party. **NOTE: Siblings are not allowed to attend classroom parties.**

Here at SES we have non-food based birthday celebrations to meet the needs of those with allergies and special diets. Instead, teachers encourage students to celebrate by reading a favorite story, presenting pencils to classmates, etc.

## Clothing

Children need to dress comfortably and appropriately for each season. Outdoor recess is held each day, weather permitting and students should be dressed appropriately for all weather conditions. Closed toed shoes should be worn at all times. Administration will communicate with parents on an individual basis should a concern arise.

## Confidentiality

Parents of a minor or of a student who is a dependent for tax purposes, the student (if 18 or older), and school officials with legitimate educational interests are the only persons who have general access to a student's records. "School officials with legitimate educational interests" include any employee, agents, or facilities with which the district contracts for the placement of students with disabilities, as well as their attorneys and consultants, who are:

1. Working with the student;
2. Considering disciplinary or academic actions, the student's case, an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) for a student with disabilities under IDEA or an individually designed program for a student with disabilities under Section 504;
3. Compiling statistical data; or
4. Investigating or evaluating programs.

Certain other officials from various governmental agencies may have limited access to the records. Parental consent is required to release the records. When the student reaches 18 years of age, only the student has the right to consent to release of records.

All SES volunteers and substitutes sign the following agreement concerning confidentiality:

As a volunteer/substitute in the Somers Elementary School, I recognize that student confidentiality must be maintained. I understand that children develop at different rates and I respect their individuality. By maintaining the strictest level of confidentiality regarding the children and teachers I work with, I will help to demonstrate the school's respect for the uniqueness of each child. For that reason, please be aware that if you volunteer in a classroom that it is unacceptable to:

- Talk about children other than your own with other parents/people
- Take pictures of other children
- Send electronic communication and/or share on Social Media platforms about children other than your own with other parents/people.

## **Crisis Intervention Team**

A building and district Crisis Intervention Team has been trained and are prepared to handle emergency and/or crisis situations.

## **Discipline**

### **Behavioral Expectations**

A joint effort between home and school is essential to prepare students to become responsible people. The Somers Elementary School Community is committed to fostering respect for all people, places, and things. We have defined expectations to provide a safe learning environment. When an expectation is not met, procedures have been established involving student, parent and school to guide the students to take the responsibility to modify their own behavior. These procedures will be shared regularly with students in every classroom to ensure a cooperative and positive learning environment.

Somers Elementary School is dedicated to this commitment. We, as a school community, have adopted the principles of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS). All students at SES know that we follow **Somers Roots Rising** where “S ” is Safe, “R” is Respectful, and the second “R” is Responsible.

All our school rules are based on these three attributes. Students receive tickets for following the school rules. Periodic drawings are held throughout the year in which students’ tickets may be drawn for incentives.

### **Somers Elementary School/School Wide Expectations**

#### **HALLWAYS**

1. Walk silently at all times on the right side of the hallway and be considerate of others passing
2. Keeps hands, feet and objects to yourself
3. Go directly to where you are going

#### **BATHROOM**

1. Respect others’ privacy.
2. Flush the toilet.
3. Put paper towels in the trash can.
4. Use supplies (soap, paper towels, toilet paper) appropriately.
5. Quietly leave the bathroom as soon as possible.
6. Wash your hands.
7. Tell your teacher if there is a problem in the bathroom.

#### **CAFETERIA**

1. Enter the lunchroom quietly.
2. Talk in a soft tone of voice only with others at your table.
3. Eat only your own lunch.
4. Children are expected to clean tables and floors at this time. Check under the table and clear the table.
5. After cleaning up, return to tables, wait quietly for dismissal by the person(s) in charge.

**Encouragement is our foundation to positive behavior. When a Somers Elementary School expectation has not been met, the following three-step consequence system is used:**

First: A reminder will be given to expected behaviors.

Second: If an expectation continues not to be met, the choice may be for the child to take a few minutes in a time-out area.

Third: If the problem continues, a logical consequence will result. This consequence will be related directly to the misbehavior.

Some behaviors, such as fighting, require the immediate attention of an administrator. Students who fight will be referred to an administrator or his/her designee for an appropriate consequence.

Weapons, drugs, and illegal substance violations are not tolerated and will be handled according to Board of Education policy as well. Refer to Somers Board of Education Policies found at <http://www.somers.k12.ct.us> using the Central Office link.

## **Evacuation & Safe Place Drills**

Evacuation/Safe Place drills will be held periodically throughout the school year. All visitors must participate in the drill.

## **Field Trips**

Field trips, which extend and enrich the grade level curriculum, are planned throughout the year. Written permission forms are sent home prior to any off-campus field trip and must be returned in order for the student to participate.

Depending on the trip, fees may be charged to cover the costs of admission and transportation. Parents should contact the building principal if financial need makes it difficult to cover the fee so that arrangements can be made.

From time to time, classrooms visit the public library or other schools in the district. Permission slips are not needed for these on-campus field trips.

When field trips conclude prior to dismissal, children are expected to remain at school for the remainder of the day. Only if a field trip concludes at the end of the school day, parents acting as chaperones who wish to drive their child (and/or siblings) home from school at 3:10pm. Please send a note to the classroom teacher(s) outlining that arrangement no later than 9 am on the day of the field trip.

# Free/Reduced Lunch

Somers Public Schools does participate in the Federal Free Lunch Program and receives funding for free milk. Dependent Children (AFDC) are eligible and can receive free milk for lunch and snack. Lunch can be provided for free or at a reduced cost for those children in grades Kindergarten through five who receive AFDC. Parents must send proof of AFDC eligibility to the school social worker. Confidentiality will be maintained.

# Health & Physical Examinations

In compliance with the Somers Board of Education Policy a physical examination is required for students entering kindergarten. The school nurse does a screening of vision, hearing, for all grades and scoliosis for grade 5 children annually. If further evaluation is necessary the parents will be notified.

# Homework

Somers Board of Education Policy 6154 states the following:

## **Philosophy:**

The Somers Board of Education recognizes the need for homework on the part of students as a supplement to the learning activities of the classroom. Homework is an integral part of the instructional process. It represents an extension of the teachers' directed practice activities into the home where the student does independent practice on similar learning activities. Homework should also be used to extend students' cognitive ability by helping them work toward high levels of thinking. These assignments take the form of projects, reports, term papers and research projects.

## **Levels and Time Limits:**

It should be understood that each grade level serves as the foundation for the next. Homework should be introduced in the elementary school years to

encourage responsibility as well as good study habits and study skills. The Board recognizes, however, that the amount of time devoted to homework and its degree of difficulty will vary according to the age and special needs of individual students.

### **Homework Time Guidelines/Homework Plan book**

The following are average times. Parents are encouraged to notify the classroom teacher if a child is consistently taking longer than the recommended time for their grade level to complete homework.

Kindergarten- 30 minutes per month

Grade 1- 15 minutes 2-3 times per week

Grade 2- 20 minutes per day

Grade 3- 30 minutes per day

Grade 4- 45 minutes per day

Grade 5- 60 minutes per day

Students in Grades 2- 5 are required to read for an additional 15 minutes each day.

## **Illness & Absences**

If a child is ill in the morning, he/she should remain at home. Students may not return to school for any portion of the day no matter what activity is scheduled once she/he has been called in sick or sent home by the school nurse. Any child who comes to school with symptoms may be sent home immediately.

Students who are ill should rest while at home and not concern themselves with schoolwork. Packets of work will not be assigned. Any tasks, assignments or lessons missed will be made up upon the student's return. If you choose to have your child continue on with academic tasks, independent activities can include: digital tasks, math fact practice, journal writing, and reading assignments. Please note, independent activities will not be graded. Please let your child's teacher know.

It is essential that you update your daytime phone numbers and any emergency numbers in the event you cannot be reached. Please be sure that arrangements

can be made to transport your child home from school and that childcare is available in case of illness.

If a child is well enough to attend school, he/she will be expected to participate in all activities. Children with physical restrictions or activity restrictions should bring in a note from their physician stating the nature of the problem, type and duration of the restriction.

Our school practice suggests that you should not send your child to school if he/she has:

- If your child has a fever over 100.0, they **MUST** stay home for 24 hours. They can return when they are fever free for 24 hours without Tylenol and/or Ibuprofen.
- If your child has vomited, they **MUST** stay home for 24 hours.
- If your child has diarrhea, they **MUST** stay home for 24 hours. For example, if your child is vomiting and/or is having diarrhea at 9:00 PM, they are not to come to school the next day; they need to remain out for a full 24 hours.
- If your child has strep throat they **MUST** stay home until he/she has been on antibiotics after 24 hours.
- Bad cold, with a very runny nose or bad cough, especially if it has kept the child awake at night.

## Internet Access

Electronic devices (computers, I-pads, I-pods, etc.) owned and operated by the Somers Board of Education comply with the State of Connecticut's mandate requiring the filtering of Internet access.

## iPad (Technology) Acceptable Use

- Technology use at our school is a privilege, not a right, which is earned by making proper use of the technology, and that privilege can be lost if the technology/device is misused in any way. Students using personal devices are under the same obligation to follow the acceptable use guidelines established by the Somers School District
- Technology use is restricted to educational purposes only. Teachers will delineate what apps/programs are required for instructional purposes.

**Activity/Use NOT permitted during school hours:**



- Accessing SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.
- Email (unless authorized by teacher) or Text-Messaging
- Playing non-educational games,
- Sharing Apple IDs
- Pirating apps.
- Using device cameras for non-educational purposes or without teacher permission
- Tampering in any way with another student's device.

## **CONSEQUENCES**

### **1st OFFENSE**

- The device is taken away and sent to the office.
- The student will pick up the device at the end of the day from the office.

### **2nd OFFENSE**

- The device is taken away and sent to the office.
- Parent/Guardian must pick up the device in person - it will not be released to the student otherwise.

### **3rd OFFENSE**

- The device is taken away and sent to the office.
- The student is only allowed to use the device in school (it cannot go home), highly monitored use during school hours.

### **4th OFFENSE**

- The device is taken away and sent to the office.
- Parent/student conference held in which consequences will be set by the administration.

## **Lost & Found**

Articles found on school property will be placed in the “Lost and Found”. Parents are requested to clearly mark lunch boxes, coats and other easily lost articles. Parents should check with the child’s teacher or call the main office to pursue lost items. Unclaimed items will be disposed of annually.

# Lunch

Students may purchase lunch or bring lunch from home. A hot lunch is served daily as well as a la carte items. A monthly menu of selections is available on-line at [www.somers.k12.ct.us](http://www.somers.k12.ct.us). Kindergarten students are asked to bring their lunch for the first half of the school year; however, milk may be purchased at any time during the school year.

# Non-Discrimination Statement

The Somers Public Schools is committed to equal opportunity for all students, applicants and employees. The District does not discriminate in any employment practice, education program, or educational activity on the basis of race, color, religious creed, sex, age, national origin, ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability (including, but not limited to, intellectual disability, past or present history of mental disorder, physical disability or learning disability), genetic information, or any other basis prohibited by Connecticut state and/or federal nondiscrimination laws. In addition, it provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. Inquiries regarding the District's nondiscrimination policies should be directed to Dina Senecal, Title IX Coordinator, 1 Vision Boulevard, Somers, CT 06071, (860) 749-2270 x2039 or, Caroline Hargraves, Section 504 Coordinator, 1 Vision Boulevard, Somers, CT 06071, (860) 749-2270 x2055.

# Parking

Visitor/parent parking spaces are marked and located close to the gym entrance and near the kindergarten wing. A few short-term visitor parking spaces are located near the front entrance for parents picking up children from the nurse's office (Please refer to map on page 10).

- Extra spaces are available in the high school student parking lot across the street near the maintenance building after 2:15 PM.
- Parking is not permitted in the designated fire lanes. Handicap parking spaces are clearly labeled and are available only for vehicles with handicap designation.
- It is unlawful to pass school buses when their lights are flashing. The buses load and unload with their lights flashing in the circle in the front of the main entrance of the building.

# Party Invitations

Due to state confidentiality laws, Somers Elementary School staff is unable to give student names, phone numbers or addresses to parents. Additionally, we ask parents to refrain from distributing party invitations during school hours.

## Parent-Teacher Conferences

Conferences are scheduled in December and March to review each student's progress. ONE conference per student per teacher will be scheduled. Parents or teachers may schedule a conference whenever either believes it to be necessary.

## Peanut Free

### **Cafeteria**

The peanut free table area of the cafeteria includes two tables designated for use by allergic students and their peers. The peers electing to sit at the peanut tables do not be in the allergic student's homeroom. In grade levels where there are two allergic students, each allergic student may elect to sit at different tables accompanied by up to seven peers. The certified staff member(s) on lunch duty are responsible for checking that no peanut products are brought to the peanut free table. It is imperative that the students who sit at the peanut free tables have washed their hands just before reporting to the cafeteria and have not brought peanut products to the peanut free tables during the lunch wave.

### **A Peanut-Free Table in Every Classroom**

All instructional areas must designate one table in each classroom as a peanut-free table. No peanut-products are to be consumed or placed on the peanut-free table at any time, including classroom parties or snack time. The teacher assigned to that instructional area should post a sign indicating that the table is peanut-free. When group work causes students to move to different workstations or students from a different classroom visit, students with peanut allergies should be guided to the peanut-free table.

# Personal Electronic Devices

Please be advised that the Somers Public Schools cannot be responsible for loss or damage to personal computing devices while they are on school property and that the use of personal computing devices is governed by BOE policy 5131.81.

BOE Policy 5131.81 states that all cell phones and/or electronic devices not used for instructional purposes must be turned off during class time. The policy also allows for building administration to limit the use of cell phones in the building as deemed appropriate. Accordingly, the following regulations apply at Somers Elementary School:

- Cell phones shall be turned off during school hours and at any school sponsored events where there is a reasonable expectation of quiet attentiveness or where use of the device would cause any disruption unless there is a bona fide health or safety emergency or sanctioned educational purpose.
- Students found using any electronic communication device to in any way send or receive personal messages, data, or information that would contribute to or constitute cheating on tests or examinations shall be subject to discipline and the device shall be confiscated and not returned until a parent conference has been held. Students violating this rule will be disallowed from carrying any personal communication device following the incident unless a bona fide health emergency exists.
- Electronic devices used without authorization will be confiscated by faculty members and given to the principal or assistant principal for return at a later time. Offenders may have the device returned only to their parents or guardians and other consequences may apply.

# Psychotropic Drug Use

School personnel are prohibited from recommending use of psychotropic drugs for any student enrolled within the school system. School nurses, nurse practitioners, district medical advisors, school psychologists, school social workers and school counselors, may recommend that a student be evaluated by an appropriate medical practitioner.

# Report Cards

A report of each child's progress is sent home in December, March and June. These reports are based on the written expectations for the grade. Parents of 3-5th graders may access student grades through the parent portal by using the appropriate confidential passwords issued by the school.

# Search and Seizure

Lockers and contents, students and their bags can be searched by school administrators based on reasonable suspicion that contraband, stolen property, or dangerous objects are present. (Somers Board of Education code: 5145.12).

# Sexual Harassment

The Board of Education is committed to safeguarding the right of all students with the school district to a learning environment that is free from all forms of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment does not only depend upon the offender's intention but also upon how the target perceives the behavior or is affected by it. The Board recognizes that sexual harassment can originate from a person of either sex against a person of the opposite or same sex, and from peers as well as school personnel. Refer to BOE Policy #5145.5 on the district's website: <http://www.somers.k12.ct.us>

# School Insurance

School insurance is available for a fee to all students through a private company. Further information regarding the policy will be provided to parents at the beginning of the school year. Entering into a contract with the insurance carrier is optional. The Somers Public Schools assume no liability from disputes arising from such a contract.

# School Schedule

Somers Elementary School will operate on a five-day schedule. Each grade-level has a 30-minute lunch and a 30-minute recess block daily. Students will attend one specials class (Art, Music, Library Media, Music, Spanish-except kindergarten) daily.

The duration of specials is 45 minutes. While students at a particular grade level are at specials, teachers are collaborating (planning instructional content or assessing student work.) A calendar of school events may be found at [www.somers.K12.ct.us](http://www.somers.K12.ct.us).

## **Special Education (Pupil Services)**

Education and services are provided to children with a range of exceptionalities: intellectual disability, hearing impairment, speech or language impairment, visual impairment, emotional disturbance, orthopedic impairment, other health impairment, specific learning disability, deaf-blindness, multiple disabilities, autism, traumatic brain injury, or developmental delay (ages 3-5).

In order to receive special education services, students must meet criteria defined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004. In compliance with state regulations, Somers uses the Planning and Placement Team (PPT) process in order to determine eligibility. This team includes parents, teachers, special education and pupil services staff and an administrator (or designee) and is responsible for reviewing referrals, planning, conducting, and reviewing the results of evaluations, determining eligibility based on specific criteria, and discussing programming needs, as appropriate.

At Somers Elementary School we have the services of a social worker, school psychologist, speech and language pathologists, occupational and physical therapists and special education teachers to promote and maintain service delivery in the least restrictive environment. The Resource Room provides support for children whose needs cannot be met entirely within the regular classroom setting. A parent with concerns about a child's learning may talk to the child's teacher about the PPT process.

## **Student Support Team (SST)**

The Student Support Team consists of teachers, pupil service personnel, and administrators who meet to address any academic or behavioral concerns of students. Parents are notified when children are referred to this team. A plan is developed and implemented by the team members. Progress is monitored and strategies are added or changed, as needed. The goal is to improve the students' performance and to provide

support for teachers as they work to provide for all children's needs. Parents concerned about a child's school performance can make a referral to the Student Support Team by contacting the child's teacher.

## **Teacher Assignment**

Each spring, the SES staff determines student placement for the upcoming school year. Students and parents will be informed of this placement via digital communication in August prior to the start of school.

## **Telephone Use**

Students are to request the use of the classroom phones when a call home is necessary. This privilege is for school related needs. In order to foster student responsibility, calls home for forgotten items (instruments, homework, etc.) are not permitted.

Parents should not call or text their children during the school day as it disrupts the learning process. Students are not to call or text parents from their cell phones when feeling ill. They are to report to the school nurse who will notify parents if it is necessary.

## **Use of Physical Force & Seclusion**

Public Act 07-147 requires the district to inform parents/guardians of its policy specific to the use of physical force and seclusion, which may be used by staff to protect a student from harming him/herself or to protect others from harm. For further details see Somers BOE Policy # 5144.1 on the district's website: <http://www.somers.k12.ct.us>.

# Vacations

We understand that family vacations can sometimes occur during scheduled school days. Students that are absent while on vacation are not assigned academic tasks. Teachers will work with students upon their return to school to ensure that they are caught up with skills they may have missed.

If you choose to have your child continue on with academic tasks, please check in with their teacher(s) no later than five days prior to the scheduled vacation to make them aware of your intent. Packets of work will not be assigned. Independent activities can include: digital tasks, math fact practice, journal writing, and reading assignments. Please note, independent activities will not be graded.

# Video Surveillance

The Board authorizes the use of video cameras on District property to ensure the health, welfare, security, and safety of all staff, students and visitors to District property, and to safeguard District facilities and equipment. Video cameras may be used in locations as deemed appropriate by the Superintendent.

# Volunteers & Visitors

Parents and community members are encouraged to visit Somers Elementary School. Classroom teachers and the main office use the services of parent and community volunteers throughout the school year. For security reasons, all visitors/volunteers are asked to report to the entrance monitor station to sign in and get an identifying badge. Volunteers working in the school are asked to sign a Confidentiality Policy, which requires that all information about students be kept confidential. **Due to privacy concerns, volunteers may not take photographs of any child other than their own.**