

# SOUTHWEST MIDDLE SCHOOL



1601 West Front Street

Albert Lea, MN 56007

PH: 507-379-5240

FAX: 507-379-5338

Attendance Line: 507-379-5312

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

Twitter: @SWMSAlbertLea

#SOUTHWESTROCKS

## 2022-2023 STUDENT HANDBOOK

**Table of Contents**

Allergies/Deliveries	7
Attendance	10
Bullying Prohibition	10
Bus	13
Cell Phones and Other Electronic Devices	9
Closed Campus	9
Communication	7
Consequences for Inappropriate Behavior	10
District Calendar	5
eLearning Day	13
Equal Opportunity for All	7
Grading System	8
Lockers	8
Lost or Damaged Items	9
Lunch	9
Messages for Students	7
ParentVue	8
Pledge of Allegiance	7
Reading Club S.W.A.G.	7
School District Policies	14
Security System	7
Student Attire	13
Student Code of Conduct/Discipline	9
StudentVue	8
Substance Abuse Policy	14
SWMS Calendar	6
SWMS Tiger Family Contact Information	4
Tardies	11
Theft	8
Truancy	12
Visitors	7
Weapons Policy	14
Welcome Letter	3

## **SWMS Mission**

*Always Expect the Best!*

### **Welcome to Southwest Middle School for the 2022-2023 school year!**

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

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

This handbook has been prepared as a guide in understanding the expectations for SWMS student in regard to school policies and procedures. It is the responsibility of each SWMS student and parent/guardian to become familiar with this handbook and its contents as students and parents are held accountable for knowing the policies. If you need clarity on anything in the handbook, please feel free to contact a teacher or our administrator. It would be impossible to address every situation that arises during the school day or any before/after school activities. The administration will develop and implement additional procedures they see necessary in operating the school. The policies and procedures in this handbook may be amended or changed during the course of the school year. The changes will be noted in the handbook online and may be found on the SWMS website: [alschools.org/domain/33](https://alschools.org/domain/33) At the discretion of administration, any infractions to Albert Lea Area Schools policies and SWMS procedures may be shared with the police liaison officer for review for possible criminal violation.

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

Southwest Rocks!

Sincerely,

Tyler Johnson, Principal  
Kim Larson, Dean of Students

## SWMS Tiger Family



### Administration

Tyler Johnson, Principal  
Kim Larson, Dean of Students

### Main Office

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

### Special Services

Tammy Willis, Secondary Coordinator  
Stephanie Engebretson, Social Worker  
Breanna Rhiner, Social Worker

### Miscellaneous

Travis Preuss, Director of Food Services.....507-379-5301  
Jolene Svendsen, Food Services Secretary.....507-379-5300  
Albert Lea Bus Company.....507-373-1467  
Kari Osheim, Licensed School Nurse  
Greg Olson, Building Head  
Brenda Reeder, Media Specialist  
Mary DeRaad, Media Clerk  
Bway Shee, Success Coach (Karen)  
Yessica Cabrera, Success Coach (Spanish)  
Officer Conn, Police Liaison  
Jacob Stockwell, Freeborn County Truancy Officer

### Activities @ ALHS

Megan LeBrun, Office Manager/Activities Secretary  
Holly Dahl, Activities Clerk  
Paul Durbahn, Activities Director



- Student Days
- District Days (All Staff)
- Holidays & Breaks  
No school PreK-Grade 12
- 8th Grade Orientation
- Elementary Conferences  
No School K-Grade 5
- Evening Conferences

**July 2022**

M	T	W	TH	F
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

**August 2022**

M	T	W	TH	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30	31	Aug 10-16 District Days (All Staff)	

Aug 12 & 15 Elementary Conferences  
 Aug 15 6th/7th Grade Open House  
 Aug 16 8th Grade Orientation  
 Aug 17 Grades K-12 First Day of School

(Aug. 12th 7:30am-3:30pm & Aug. 15th 11am-7pm)

**September 2022**

M	T	W	TH	F
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	30

Sept 2-5 Labor Day Weekend Break (NO SCHOOL)  
 Sept 6 School Back in Session  
 Sept 19 HS/ALC Conferences  
 Sept 29 6/7 Conferences

**October 2022**

M	T	W	TH	F
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28
31	Oct 3 Oct 19 Oct 20 & 21 Oct 24		6/7 Conferences End of Quarter 1 (44 days) Fall Break (NO SCHOOL) District Day (Staff only)	

**November 2022**

M	T	W	TH	F
	1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30	Nov 3 Nov 7 Nov 21-25	

Nov 3 Elementary Evening Conferences  
 Nov 7 Elementary Conferences (NO SCHOOL Prek-5)  
 Nov 21 HS/ALC Conferences  
 Nov 23-25 Thanksgiving Break (NO SCHOOL)

**December 2022**

M	T	W	TH	F
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	30

Dec 21 Dec 22 - Jan 2 End of Quarter 2 (39 Days)  
 Winter Break (NO SCHOOL)

**January 2023**

M	T	W	TH	F
2	3	4	5	6
9	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27
30	31	Jan 3 & 4 Jan 5 Jan 16		District Days (Staff Only) School Resumes District Day (Staff Only)

**February 2023**

M	T	W	TH	F
	1	2	3	
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27	28	Feb 6 Feb 9 & 16 Feb 20 Feb 23 Feb 27		

Feb 6 HS/ALC Conferences  
 Feb 9 & 16 6/7 Conferences  
 Feb 20 Holiday Break (NO SCHOOL)  
 Feb 23 Elementary Conferences  
 Feb 27 Elementary Conferences (NO SCHOOL K-5)

**March 2023**

M	T	W	TH	F
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30	31

Mar 10 Mar 13-17 End of Quarter 3 (45 Days)  
 Spring Break (NO SCHOOL)

**April 2023**

M	T	W	TH	F
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28

Apr 7 Apr 10 Holiday Break (NO SCHOOL)  
 HS/ALC Conferences

**May 2023**

M	T	W	TH	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30	31	May 4 May 8 May 18 May 19 May 23 May 24	

May 4 Prek Evening Conferences  
 May 8 Prek Conferences (No School Prek ONLY)  
 May 18 ALC Commencement  
 May 19 ALHS Commencement  
 May 23 Last Day of School/End of Quarter 4 (46 Days)  
 May 24 District Day

**June 2023**

M	T	W	TH	F
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	30

# Southwest Middle School Calendar 2022-2023



August 15, 2022	Parent Sessions - "About SWMS" 12, 2, 4 & 6 in Cafeteria
August 15, 2022	<b>Open house &amp; pictures for All students - 11am-7pm</b>
August 17, 2022	First Day of school for all SWMS students
September 2 & 5, 2022	<b>NO SCHOOL</b> - Labor Day Holiday
September 6, 2022	School back in session
September 6-21, 2022	SPIRIT GEAR FUNDRAISER
September 26 - October 4, 2022	Scholastic Book Fair
September 29, 2022	Parent Session-Sexting & What 2 Watch for 6pm Little Theater
September 29 & October 3, 2022	Evening Conferenoes - 4-8pm
September, 2022	Dental Clinic (for eligible students only)
October, 2022	6th grade field trip to History Museum
October 3, 2022	Parent Session-Sexting & What 2 Watch for 6pm Little Theater
October 4, 2022	Strawbridge Picture Retakes - AM
October 13, 2022	Choir Concert - 6pm SW Gym -
October 19, 2022	End of Mid-Semester 1 (44 days)
October 20 & 21, 2022	<b>NO SCHOOL</b> - Fall Break
October 24, 2022	<b>NO SCHOOL</b> - Professional Development Day
November 11, 2022	Veteran's Day Program - 8:15am
November 23-25, 2022	<b>NO SCHOOL</b> - Thanksgiving Break
December 14, 2022	Band/Choir/Orchestra Pictures
December 15, 2022	6th Gr. Band/Choir/Orchestra Concert - 6pm SW
December 15, 2022	7th Gr. Band/Choir/Orchestra Concert - 7:30pm SW
December 21, 2022	End of Semester 1 (39 days)
December 22, 2022-January 4, 2023	<b>NO SCHOOL</b> - Winter Break
January 16, 2023	<b>NO SCHOOL</b> - Holiday
February 8-17, 2023	Scholastic Book Fair
February 9, 2023	Parent Session - Vaping 6pm - Little Theater
February 9 & 16, 2023	Evening Conferenoes - 4-8pm
February 16, 2023	Parent Session - Vaping 6pm - Little Theater
February 20, 2023	<b>NO SCHOOL</b> - Holiday
February 27, 2023	6th-12th Orchestra Concert - HS Auditorium 7:00pm
March 3, 2023	Spring Play - 7:30pm Little Theater @ SWMS
March 7, 2023	Choir Concert - 6pm SW gym
March 10, 2023	End of Mid-Semester 2 (45 days)
March 13-17, 2023	<b>NO SCHOOL</b> - Spring Break
March, 2023	Dental Clinic (for eligible students only)
April, 2023	Read-A-Thon - SWMS Fundraiser
April 7, 2023	<b>NO SCHOOL</b> - Holiday
May1, 2023	6th grade field trip to Physics Force
May, 2023	Battle of the Books
May 3, 2023	Parent Session - Sport & Activity next year 5pm Little Theater
May 11, 2023	6th Gr. Band/Choir/Orchestra Concert - 6pm SW
May 11, 2023	7th Gr. Band/Choir/Orchestra Concert - 7:30pm SW
May 17, 2023	Orchestra Recital - 4pm Little Theater @ SWMS
May 19, 2023	Exploratory Day
May 23, 2023	<b>Last day of school</b> - End of Semester 2 (46 days)

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

### **Equal Opportunity for All**

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

### **School Hours**

Our school hours will be from 8:30am – 3:15pm, Monday-Friday.

### **Pledge of Allegiance**

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

### **Security System**

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

### **Visitors**

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

### **Allergies/Deliveries**

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

### **Messages for Students**

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

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

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

### **Communication**

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

Website: [www.alschools.org](http://www.alschools.org)

Twitter: @SWMSAlbertLea

Facebook: Albert Lea Area Schools

### **ParentVue**

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

### **StudentVUE**

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

### **Grading System**

Assessments (tests, performances, presentations, etc.) represent 90% of the students' grade. Retakes are permitted and encouraged. Practice (homework) will represent 10% of the grade. Extra credit is not offered. A 4.0 grade system will be used. Pluses and minuses DO count in assessment of grade average. Students' grade point averages will be calculated at the end of second quarter and again at the end of the year. The honor roll lists will be published in the local newspaper.

A Honor Roll: 3.50-4.00

B Honor Roll: 3.00-3.499

### **Lockers**

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

**All backpacks are required to be in the lockers at the start of the academic day. Backpacks are not allowed in classrooms unless there is a circumstance where a student is on crutches and has received permission from the office. Students are allowed to carry small purses (something into which an iPad can fit), a pencil pouch, or a trapper keeper.**

The following suggestions regarding locker use:

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

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

### **Theft, Receiving or Possessing Stolen Property**

The unauthorized taking, using, transferring, hiding or possessing the property of another person without the consent of the owner, or the receiving of such property is prohibited. Restitution, when appropriate, will be required. Felony offenses may result in more severe consequences. Up to a 5-day suspension and police referral possible depending on the severity of the incident.



### **Lost or Damaged Items**

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

### **Cell Phones and other Electronic Devices**

Cell phones, earbuds and electronic devices may be used before school (before 8:30am) and after school (after 3:15pm) or with permission from a teacher or staff member. Any electronic device brought to school must be turned off and kept in your locked locker during the school day. Earbuds and devices used or seen during the school day without staff permission will be confiscated. Texting and internet social sites are not allowed during the school day. Students may check messages at the end of the day. Neither the school nor the school's representatives are liable for electronic equipment that is lost, stolen or confiscated.

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

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

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

- 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Offense will receive a 1-day suspension
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Offense will receive a 5-day suspension

### **Closed Campus**

SWMS is a closed campus. Students are not allowed to leave the building at any time during the day unless a parent/guardian has called to excuse their student for an appointment or other pre-approved absence. Passes will be issued in e-hallpass which is the student's responsibility to check.

### **Lunch**

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

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

### **Payments**

All cafeteria purchases are sold on a prepaid basis and charged against individual student accounts. Parents are encouraged to use the **K12PaymentCenter** website or **ParentVue** website in order to add funds to their student's lunch account. Students may also bring cash/check to the office to be added to their account.

The Meals Plus program will automatically call parents daily when their student has a balance of three meals or less in their account. Free/reduced priced lunches are available for those students who qualify. Forms are available in the school office or our website at any time. Notification of your approval status for free/reduced meals by the Food Service Director will be by mail. Albert Lea Food Service phone number is **507-379-5300**.

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

### **Unpaid Meal Charge Procedures**

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

### **Student Code of Conduct/Discipline**

It is the responsibility of all school district employees to safeguard the health, safety, and rights of each student. The School Board and District Administrators will support district personnel who, in dealing with students on disciplinary matters, act in accordance with State statute, State Board of Education regulations and School District Policies.

Appropriate staff will be notified of circumstances in which a student has a history of violent behavior in an effort to provide a safe school environment that is conducive to learning and teaching and to ensure maximum educational

opportunities for all of our students. It is the responsibility of all students to follow Southwest Middle School's policies so that all students receive the opportunity to learn in a safe and respectful environment.

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

### **Bullying Prohibition (refer to Policy 514)**

A safe and civil environment is needed for students to learn and attain high academic standards and to promote healthy human relationships. Bullying is conduct that interferes with a student's ability to learn and a teacher's ability to educate students in a safe environment and is expressly prohibited. Bullying could be any written or verbal expression, physical act or gesture or pattern thereof, by a student that is intended to cause or is perceived as causing distress to one or more students.

MN. Stat. 121A.031 provides that "bullying" means intimidating, threatening, abusive, or harming conduct that is objectively offensive and there is an actual or perceived imbalance of power between the student engaging in prohibited conduct and the target of the behavior and the conduct is repeated or forms a pattern; or materially and substantially interferes with a student's educational opportunities or performance or ability to participate in school functions or activities or receive school benefits, services or privileges.

Any person who believes he/she has been the victim of bullying should report the alleged acts immediately to administration. Upon receipt of a complaint or report of bullying, the School District shall undertake or authorize an investigation and may take immediate steps to protect the complainant, reporter, students or other pending completion of an investigation of bullying. Upon completion of the investigation, the School District will take appropriate disciplinary action.

### **Consequences for Inappropriate Behavior**

If a student violates the rules of Southwest Middle School, certain consequences will follow. The specific consequence will be determined by the severity and frequency of the offense. Potential consequences include:

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

### **Attendance**

Regular school attendance is directly related to success in academic work, benefits students socially, provides opportunities for important communications between teachers and students, and establishes regular habits of dependability that are important for life-long success. The purpose of this policy is to partner together to encourage regular school attendance. Attendance is the responsibility of the student, parent/guardian, and the school. It is our hope that this policy will assist students in attending school on a regular basis. According to Minnesota Compulsory Attendance Law, 7-17-year old students are required by law to attend school on a regular basis. All reasonable efforts

should be made by families to make school attendance a priority in the home and ensure that students are in school each and every student contact day. Parent/guardian involvement can reduce truancy. It is school policy that students should not leave the school grounds during the school day without permission from the attendance office. Bring your permission notes to the office before classes start for the day. If you are ill, go to the nurse's office. If you need to call home because you are ill – this call must be made at the nurse's office.

#### **Student Responsibilities**

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

#### **Parent/Guardian Responsibilities**

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

#### **Tardies**

A tardy is defined as a student not in the classroom when the class period bell rings, up to but not to exceed five (5) minutes of the class. Arrival after five (5) minutes is considered an unexcused absence.

#### **Ten Day Absence Rule**

There is a cap of 10 total absences (excused) per class per semester. This includes excused vacation days. If a student misses more than 10 days, parents/guardians will receive notification of the third (3), fifth (5) and tenth (10) absence in a course. **Failure of parent/guardian to contact the Attendance Office the following day will result in an unexcused absence and apply toward both the Ten Day Absence Rule and student's county truancy program.**

**Absences that are ALWAYS excused and do not count toward the cap of 10 Day Absence Rule:**

- 504s and IEPs that have attendance clauses in them
- Court appearances
- School-sponsored activities
- Suspension
- Verified meeting with office personnel
- Doctor-ordered absence
- Official religious holidays
- Death of an immediate family member (parent, step-parent, guardian, sibling, grandparent)
- Unique or emergency circumstances which are authorized by a school administrator

#### **Excused Absences**

A parent/guardian may clear 3 days per month and a total of 12 per school year while school is in session. Subsequent clearance for illnesses will require verification by a healthcare professional or administrative approval. Student attendance will be monitored to detect patterns of excessive excused absences so that appropriate intervention action takes place.

- Absences with proper written verification (written parent note, medical appointments)
- Pre-approved vacation (Paperwork turned in prior to absence)
- Funerals
- Illness with a parent note

#### **Unexcused Absences**

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

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

#### **1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Unexcused Absence**

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

#### **3<sup>rd</sup> Unexcused Absence**

- Automatic phone call to parent/guardian.
- Albert Lea School District truancy informational letter sent home.
- Student will be discussed at weekly attendance meeting (Administration and Freeborn County Truancy Officer).
- Student will meet with school administrator and parent contact will be made.
- Non-compliance with the freeborn County Truancy Diversion Program could result in court action and student could be placed on probation with Freeborn County Probation and Pre-Trial Services.

#### **Truancy**

##### *Continuing Truant*

MN. Stat. 260A.02 provides that a continuing truant is a student who is subject to the compulsory instruction requirements of MN. Stat. 120A.22 and is absent from instruction in a school, as defined in MN. Stat. 120A.05, without a valid excuse within a single school year for: three or more class periods on three days if the child is in middle school, or high school.

##### *Habitual Truant*

MN Statute 260C.007 provides that a habitual truant is a child under the age of 17 years who is absent from attendance at school without lawful excuse for seven school days per school year if the child is in elementary school or for one or more class periods on seven school days if the child is in middle school, junior high, or high school, or a child who is 17 years of age who is absent from attendance at school without lawful excuse for one or more class periods on seven school days per year and who has not lawfully withdrawn from school under section 120A.22, subdivision 8.

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

#### **Reporting Responsibility**

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

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

#### **Absence Pre-Approval Request/ Family Vacation/Medical**

Pick up an absence pre-approval form from the attendance office. This form must be signed by the student's teachers, parent, and student. Return completed form to the attendance office 3 days prior to the first day of vacation. A copy of the form will be given to the student upon administration approval. Family vacations include such activities as church sponsored trips, dance/skating competitions, fishing/hunting activities, non-school related sports

tournaments, etc. A maximum of five cumulative vacation days will be allowed in a school year. All other family leave will be unexcused. Any unexcused absence must be resolved by the parent/guardian the day following the absence, or it will remain unexcused. A note may be brought into the attendance office if contact by telephone is not possible.

### **eLearning Day**

An eLearning Day will be in effect when school has been canceled due to inclement weather or other situations. Students are expected to complete assignments on these days. Teachers have or will provide students' assignments via Google Classroom or student email. Students are expected to complete their assignments within 5 calendar days (eLearning Day counts as day 1). Attendance will be excused for completed work or unexcused absence for work not completed. Teachers will be available to help students with questions and concerns during regular school hours via email or using a Google Voice number. Both email and Google Voice numbers are available on SWMS webpage.

### **Bus**

Riding a School Bus is a privilege – not a right. The policies and guidelines for transporting students are reviewed with all students at the start of the school year. Questions concerning bus transportation should be addressed to the Albert Lea **Bus Company 373-1467** or Steve Anderson, Director of Facilities and Transportation 379-4808.

#### **Albert Lea Area School Rules for School Bus Passengers**

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

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

Students who do not obey these safety rules and regulations may be denied transportation as outlined in the following

"Discipline Procedures." Any action by a student that threatens the safety of the bus driver and/or passengers or violates a school regulation will be dealt with according to the following policy. In all cases, the decision of the bus driver is final and will be reported in writing to the appropriate school administrator.

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

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

## **Student Attire**

The purpose of a dress code is for students to be dressed appropriately for school activities. Attention-seeking outfits that are offensive or violate the comfort of others should be avoided. Parents will be contacted about bringing appropriate attire to school for their student. The administration (or appointed delegate) will be the final decision makers of what is appropriate attire.

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

- Students are prohibited from wearing caps, hats, hoods, bandanas or cloth head coverings during the academic school day.
- “Short” shorts or skirts higher than fingertip length, spaghetti straps, tops that expose the midriff and/or cleavage or jeans that have holes above fingertip length will not be allowed.
- Pants and shirts must be worn to cover all undergarments, which include bra straps and underwear.
- Clothing and jewelry that promotes alcohol/tobacco or their use will not be allowed. Clothing with obscenities or sexual connotations are forbidden.
- Any clothing or actions deemed to be gang-related will result in immediate suspension.
- Blankets and coats are not allowed to be brought into classrooms or be worn during school hours.

## **Substance Abuse Policy**

### **Tobacco/electronic cigarettes and accompanying cartridges, liquid nicotine, or inhalants:**

- Referred to School Resource Officer or Albert Lea Police Department and possible charges
- 1<sup>st</sup> offense: 2-day OSS (out-of-school) suspension
- 2<sup>nd</sup> offense and above: 5-day OSS (out-of-school) suspension

### **Alcohol/Drug Use, Possession and/or Sale:**

- Referred to School Resource Officer or Albert Lea Police Department and possible charges
- Up to 10-day OSS (out-of-school) suspension with a recommendation for further action per district policy

## **School District Policies**

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

### **Weapons Policy (refer to Policy 501)**

The Albert Lea School District has a “No Weapons” policy. This policy is in effect during the school day, on school grounds, on the school bus, and during athletic events, or any other school sponsored activity. A weapon is any object used in a threatening manner. This could include, but is not limited to, an object that looks like a gun, a pocket knife, or ammunition. Possession of a weapon in violation of this policy may result in suspension, expulsion, and police involvement.

### **Bullying Prohibition 514**

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

### **Protection and Privacy of Pupil Records 515**

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

### **Harassment & Violence 413**

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

### **Student Discipline 506**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that students are aware of and comply with the school district’s expectations for student conduct. Such compliance will enhance the school district’s ability to maintain discipline and ensure that

there is no interference with the educational process. The school district will take appropriate disciplinary action when students fail to adhere to the Code of Student Conduct established by this policy.

**School Weapons 501**

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

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

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

**Staff Notification of Violent Behavior by Students 529**

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

**Student Attendance 503**

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

**Student Dress and Appearance 504**

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

**Technology-- Acceptable Use 524**

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

**Religion 609**

This purpose of this policy is to identify the status of religion as it pertains to the programs of the school district.

If you do not understand the information presented to you in this notice, please contact the Success Coach through the main office in your school. Interpreter services can be provided.  
(Si usted no entiende la information en ete anuncio, por favor hable con la/el maestro/o de ingles como idioma segundo en la oficina escolar principal de su nina/o. Hay servicios de interprete disponible

အကယ်၍ ဤအချက်အလက်များကို မသိဘဲ ဖတ်ရှုပါက အောက်ဖော်ပြပါအတိုင်း ဆက်သွယ်ပါ။  
ပေးအပ်သော အချက်အလက်များကို သိရှိလိုပါက အောက်ဖော်ပြပါအတိုင်း ဆက်သွယ်ပါ။  
ပေးအပ်သော အချက်အလက်များကို သိရှိလိုပါက အောက်ဖော်ပြပါအတိုင်း ဆက်သွယ်ပါ။