

## **Principal's Message**

Dear Parents/Guardians,

I want to take this opportunity to welcome you and your children to Seward Elementary! We have prepared this folder so that you may know a little more about our school and its policies and procedures.(Board Policy 5034) It will help us to establish positive lines of communication, as well as allow us to work together effectively. As the year progresses, additional information will be made available to you through bulletins, newsletters, and the school web site ([www.sewardpublicschools.org](http://www.sewardpublicschools.org)). If you have other questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call or visit the school.

Our goal at Seward Elementary is to provide the best educational opportunities for all students. By working together, as parents and educators, we can do just that!

Sincerely,  
Lana Daws, Principal

## **Arrival Time for Students**

Children may come to school 15 minutes before the bell rings at 8:15 a.m. No adult supervision is provided before 8:00 a.m. For the safety of the children, please follow the procedures for student drop off and/or parking of vehicles. During fair weather days, students will line up according to grade level. When weather conditions are unfavorable, students will be permitted to enter the building. Entry procedures will begin at 8:05 a.m.

## **Absence and Tardiness**

Parents are asked to call the office if their child is going to be absent on a particular day. This call will let the school know that the absence is not a truancy or that the student ran into some sort of trouble on the way to school. Once the call is made, a written note will not be needed when the student returns to school. If the office does not receive a call by 9:00 a.m. the office personnel will call to check on the absence.

Children not present in school are counted absent regardless of the reason for the absence. If they are in attendance for 4 hours, they will be counted as present for the day. Two hours of attendance will be recorded as a 1/2 day. Children late for school are counted tardy, even if the reason is a doctor or dentist appointment. Tardiness and absence for these reasons are perfectly legitimate and often necessary, but they must be counted. Students will be counted tardy after 8:15 a.m. (Board Policy 5008)

## **Closed Campus**

Children must remain on the school premises during the noon hour and at all other times during the day except with prior written parental permission.

## **Birth Certificates**

All new enrolling students are required by state law to provide a certified copy of the student's birth certificate or other reliable proof of the student's identity and age accompanied by an affidavit explaining the inability to produce a copy of the birth certificate. There is a thirty day period in which this may occur. Failure to comply shall cause the school district to notify the parents or guardian in writing. If after ten days, compliance has not occurred, the school is required to report the matter to the local law enforcement agency.

## **Parental Custody Information**

It is the responsibility of the parent with whom a student resides to keep the Elementary Principal informed about which parent has custody of the child and about any visitation restrictions of the noncustodial parent. If the noncustodial parent is restricted from contact with a student, a court order to this effect must be on file at the school. The school will make every effort to ensure that such visitation restrictions are carried out. However, the school cannot accept the responsibility for the child once he/she leaves the school premises.

Reports of student progress and other informational documents will be given to both parents

when requested. (Board Policy 5020)

### **Dismissal**

Children who are not waiting for a ride are to leave the school grounds immediately after dismissal. Children will not be excused from school before dismissal time without a note or phone call from their parents. Instruct your child never to leave school with a stranger.

Parent permission is needed if your child is to leave the school with someone who does not routinely pick up the child. Grade levels dismiss at the following times:

- Kindergarten: 3:15 p.m.
- 1st & 2nd grades: 3:17 p.m.
- 3rd & 4th grades: 3:22 p.m.

Parents should make every attempt to pick up their students in a timely and reasonable manner. Teachers will supervise students until parents arrive. However, teachers do have other responsibilities after school such as curriculum work, team meetings, staff meetings, etc. Therefore, if an emergency occurs or if for another reason children will be picked up late, the school needs to be notified.

### **After-School Safety**

Insist that your child obey traffic signals. Parents who pick students up after school should park single file on the north side of the circle drive or in the visitor's parking. Parents who park in the diagonal spaces are asked to walk to the holding area to get their child. Students will not be permitted to walk between parked cars. Buses pick up children on the west side of the building and all other traffic should avoid that area. Student pick up on the north side of the building is discouraged as supervision is not provided. This area is designated for special education transportation only.

### **School Security**

The Seward School District uses electronic surveillance equipment to monitor the premises for the purposes of: employee and student safety and security; prevention and detection of crime; and the apprehension and prosecution of offenders.

### **Change of Address**

Parents should notify the teacher or office immediately of any changes in address, phone number, or family doctor. All unlisted numbers will be kept confidential.

### **Health**

A physical inventory is made of every student during the school year by the School Nurse, and the findings recorded on the permanent record. (Board Policy 5010, 5011, 5408) Parents will be mailed a written notice of any concerns or symptoms found, and are urged to correct them as soon as possible. The school DOES NOT diagnose or treat an illness or injury. Our policies are:

1. First-aid is provided for sudden illness or injury.
2. The school's obligation continues until the emergency has been placed in the care of the family or physician of their choice.
3. Treatment of injuries occurring outside school jurisdiction are not the responsibilities of school employees.
4. Exclusion of children: having a fever with a suspicious contagion, symptoms of vomiting, head aches, head lice, etc.
5. Any pupil with a rash must be excluded until the disappearance of the rash and any other symptoms. If the parent has consulted the family physician and he/she recommended readmission with a written notice to this effect, then admittance is acceptable.

Sending medications with your child is discouraged. Generally, if children are sick enough to be taking medicine they should stay home. At the suggestion of the Nebraska School Health Policies, our school system has implemented the use of a "medication permission" sheet. This is simply signed permission from the parent or guardian requesting the school district to comply with a physician's order for a student required to take medication during the regular school day. If your child needs to have medicine at school, please stop in the nurse's office to complete and sign this form. This would be used to administer prescription and nonprescription medication. (Board policy 5023 and 5024)

### **Lice (Pediculosis)**

Children may be examined periodically by the school nurse to determine if lice are present. If the examination indicates the presence of lice or nits, the child will be sent home immediately or as soon as safe and proper conveyance can be found. In the event that arrangements cannot be made for the child to go home, the child will be isolated from the other students. Parents will be required to bring the child to the nurse or nurse aide at the time of reentry. The child must be nit-free before readmission will be granted.

### **Lunches**

A supervised lunch room is maintained for children who eat hot or cold lunch at school. However, those students who are unable to conduct themselves properly during the lunch period will be required to eat lunch elsewhere. Lunch money must be brought to the office by 8:20 a.m. and the lunch count taken by teachers so that the food service will know how many lunches to prepare. Please call in the lunch order if you know your child will be late for lunch count.

Students are not allowed to bring soda (pop) as a part of their cold lunch. The soda will be removed by one of the adult supervisors. Suitable alternatives are: fruit juice box, bottled water, purchase of milk, or drinks from the school's water fountain.

Parents and/or other visitors are welcome to join their children for lunch. However, Seward Elementary requests that the school hot lunch be purchased or a sack lunch be brought in. Lunches from fast food restaurants and soda are not permitted. Sharing the child's hot lunch is discouraged.

At the end of the school year, all lunch and/or milk charges must be paid. Report cards will be held until the charges are paid. A remaining lunch balance will transfer to the next school year and/or building.

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability.

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TTY). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

### **Playground**

Children need to play outside. Parents' cooperation in seeing that children dress according to the weather is requested. In most cases if children are not well enough to play outside, they are not well enough to be in school.

A child who must remain indoors due to a cold or other illness should bring a note daily to that effect. Otherwise, the teacher's judgment will be used.

### **Physical Education**

All students must participate in physical education. If any limitation is to be placed on participation in physical education, a written statement from the parent will be honored for two successive physical education classes. If the student is to be excused further, a doctor's statement must be received stating the reason for and duration of the excused absence. The statements will be made a part of the student's record. Ordinarily students who have any limitation placed on their physical education activity will be excused for the entire period.

### **Tennis Shoes**

For safety reasons and to prevent injury, each child needs to wear tennis shoes during physical education classes. If athletic-type shoes are not worn to school, a pair of tennis shoes needs to be brought along for P.E. and kept at school. Children without tennis shoes or shoes not approved by the physical education teacher will not participate in P.E. class. Socks need to be worn as well.

### **Staying after School**

On occasion a student may be required to stay after school to make up work or for discipline reasons. Parents will be notified in advance.

### **Homework**

Homework is a learning activity related to the experience within the school. Its purposes are to supplement and to enrich work done in the classrooms. Homework should be assigned following the building homework guidelines. (Board Policy 6017)

### **Bicycles, Skateboards, Scooters & Heelys**

Students are to park their bikes in the appropriate racks. Under no circumstances are students to borrow or tamper with bicycles that are not their own. Bicycles are not to be ridden on the playground or on the sidewalks on the school grounds. Skateboards, roller blades, scooters and Heelys are not to be brought to school.

### **Building Discipline**

The *Elementary Discipline Plan* and *Behavior Process/Procedure* are included in this folder. (Board Policy 5303 and 6024)-Student Discipline-available upon request or can be accessed on-line.

### **Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment will not be tolerated and will be dealt with as outlined in the District policy. Sexual harassment is defined as any unwanted or unwelcome visual, verbal or physical sexual behavior that is offensive to another person. (Board Policy 4014 and 5027)

### **Anti-Bullying Policy**

One of the missions of the School District of Seward is to provide a physically safe and emotionally secure environment for all students and staff. The administration and staff are to implement strategies and practices to reinforce and encourage positive behaviors by students. Positive behaviors include nonviolence, cooperation, teamwork, understanding, and acceptance of others. The administration and staff are to implement strategies and practices to identify and prevent inappropriate behaviors by all students, including anti-bullying education for all students. Inappropriate behaviors include bullying, intimidation, and harassment. Bullying means any ongoing pattern of physical, verbal, or electronic abuse. The school district shall review the anti-bullying policy annually. (Board Policy 5054)

### **Youth Assistance Program (YAP)**

The Youth Assistance Program (YAP) operates in the Elementary School. The purpose of YAP is as follows: 1) to identify students with high-risk behaviors, 2) to connect students and their families with sources of assistance, and 3) to support students in the school environment. If parents/guardians have any questions, they should contact the elementary office to speak with the principal or the guidance counselor.

### **Alcohol and Illicit Drug Use Prohibited**

The Board of Education expressly prohibits the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol by school employees, volunteers, and students on school property or at any school sponsored event or activity; further, any employee, volunteer, or student found to be under

the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs, while on school property or at a school sponsored event or activity will be subject to disciplinary measures. Moreover, the board authorizes and directs school administrators or their representatives to discipline employees, volunteers or students, consistent with pertinent state and federal law, for any violations of this policy.

Discipline for employees may extend to a recommendation for dismissal. While the board does not sponsor directly rehabilitative services, it reserves the right to require that any disciplined employee undergo rehabilitation as a condition to continued employment. Discipline for any adult volunteers may include removal from the volunteer position. Discipline for students may include suspension, expulsion, and/or a referral to a rehabilitative agency. Information on area agency rehabilitative services may be obtained from any of the school counselors.

The board will implement and support curricular materials and activities that teach about the harmful effects of alcohol and illegal drugs and serve as prevention and intervention programs. (Board Policy 4002)

### **Care of School Property**

The School District provides needed textbooks, workbooks, library books and athletic equipment without charge. This necessitates that all students assume full responsibility for those items issued to them. Fines will be made for the replacement cost of the books and equipment if lost or damaged.

### **Library Books**

Books will be checked out for two weeks. Pupils will be charged for damaged or lost library books. Additional books will not be checked out until the previous overdue books are returned. Books will be considered lost if they are not returned after 4 weeks. At the end of the school year, report cards will be held until restitution is made.

### **Use of District Technology**

All students will have the opportunity to make use of the District's access to Internet. The Internet is provided for students to conduct research and communicate with others. A "*Student Agreement*" and parent permission will be required for all students to have access to the Internet. (Board Policy 5037)

### **Student Fees Policy**

Under the Public Elementary and Secondary Student Fee Authorization Act, the District is required to set forth in a policy its guideline or policies for specific categories of student fees. This policy is subject to further interpretation or guidance by administrative or Board regulations which may be adopted from time to time. The Policy includes specific student fees and/or materials required. Elementary students will be required participants of this policy in two areas: field trip admittance fees and the purchase of a book and recorder for music class instruction. (Board Policy 5045)

### **Conferences and Reports to Parents**

Parent-Teacher conferences are scheduled near the end of the 1st quarter and 3rd quarter. Additional conferences may be initiated by either the parent or the teacher. Conferences help the teacher to understand the child and in many cases establishes a positive working relationship with the school. Parent attendance is very necessary for student success.

Additional reports will be sent as needed to parents of students performing at a substandard level.

### **Classroom Assignments**

Students will be assigned to a particular teacher at the discretion of the building administrator. The administrator will seek input from previous teachers and specialists to ensure the most appropriate placement.

## **Retention**

Students who do not perform to their capabilities may be retained. The following procedures will be utilized:

1. At the end of the first semester, the parent will be notified in writing of possible retention, and a parent conference will be scheduled.
2. Student progress will be reported to the parents at conferences at the end of the third quarter and five weeks before the close of school.
3. A committee made up of the classroom teacher, a principal, and a special area teacher, if appropriate, will be formed. Following their input, a decision will be made by the parents regarding the retention or advancement of the student. Principal input will be seriously considered.

## **Field Trips**

A well planned field trip is considered a worthwhile educational experience that contributes much to the overall school program. A permission form will need to be signed at the beginning of the school year. Teachers and other adults will accompany the students.

Parents will be notified in advance when field trips and activities requiring a bus ride will take place. However, on occasion the class may go on a tour within walking distance of the school. Parents will not necessarily be advised in advance of such excursions. (Board Policy 6027)

## **Classroom Parties**

Classroom parties will be limited to three per year and will be no longer than one hour in duration. Supervision will be provided for those students whose parents request that they not participate.

## **Birthday Treats/Snacks**

If children bring treats for the room on their birthday, they will be distributed and consumed before dismissal time. Delivered balloon and/or flower bouquets sent to students will remain in the office until the end of the school day. Suckers are discouraged because of safety concerns.

## **Party Invitations**

Although birthday parties, etc., are an "out of school" activity, it is permissible for your child to distribute invitations at school provided all children in the class receive one.

## **Gifts**

The exchanging of gifts between pupil and teacher is discouraged. Gift exchanges among students are prohibited.

## **Toys**

Toy guns, knives, bats, trading cards (baseball, cartoon, etc.), balls, skateboards, roller blades and other toys are not to be brought to school. Key chains and toys hanging from book bags are discouraged as they are a distraction and/or safety concern. Toys confiscated by school personnel will not be returned to the children until the end of the school year.

## **Pets**

Please see that dogs and other pets are kept home and not allowed to follow pupils to school. A call will be made to the parents to come get the pet. If unavailable, the local law enforcement will be contacted. Pets may be brought to school for instructional purposes only. To do so, arrangements must be made with the classroom teachers in advance.

## **School Dress Code**

The school dress of elementary students is the responsibility of the parent. Students are expected to be appropriately dressed and acceptably groomed for school. Appropriate clothing shall be that which does not pose a health or safety hazard, does not disrupt classroom learning and behavior, and complies with reasonable standards for cleanliness. Students must wear shoes at all times. Heelys are not permitted at school. Clothing items with inappropriate statements, pictures, or expressions will not be allowed. Examples—drug or alcohol messages, obscenities, violence, and disrespectful/negative messages. Unacceptable clothing items include the following: very short shorts or skirts; visible sports bras; spaghetti strap tops; oversized "sagging" pants and shorts; oversized tank tops worn alone; mid-drift and halter tops; and chains attached to billfolds or pants. For safety reasons during recess times, 'flip-flops' are discouraged. If a student wears a piece of clothing that promotes or advertises the above mentioned items, they will be asked to do one of the following:

- 1) Call home and request that a parent bring another piece of clothing.
- 2) If possible, turn and wear the garment inside out.
- 3) Proceed to the nurse's office to select and wear a piece of clothing from the school's supply. That piece of clothing should then be washed and returned to school the next day.

Make-up and colored lip gloss are not to be brought or worn to school. Writing on hands, arms, face and clothing is not allowed. Temporary tattoos are not allowed. Hair color is restricted to natural colors and should be kept clean and properly groomed. (Board Policy 5031)

For playing outdoors in wet and snowy weather, your children need to be equipped with overshoes or rubber boots. Be sure both boots are marked as well as mittens, caps, scarves, etc. Except for extreme weather conditions, children will be outside every day. In the spring, shorts can be worn beginning May 1st. The principal may deviate from this date based on weather conditions and temperatures. Students and parents will be notified.

### **Visitors**

Parents are encouraged to visit school anytime after the first month. That first month is important to let children make the adjustment to school life. Children who visit school must be accompanied by an adult. We request that visitors call ahead to inform the office staff and classroom teacher. Upon arrival, please check in at the office. In order to maintain an effective learning environment with limited disruption, classroom visits should not exceed one hour. Requests exceeding one hour must have approval of the principal. (Board Policy 5018)

### **Bus Information**

Students are expected to abide by the rules and regulations as set forth in the Seward Public School Bus Information Pamphlet. Please read and review these rules with your children. Safety is our first consideration, when transporting children to school. If the bus driver is distracted, danger exists. This is why rigid standards of discipline have been established and must be maintained for our children's safety.

Parents are reminded that school buses are operated for the purpose of providing transportation for children to and from school. Once the bus arrives at the school, the students must enter the school and are subject to the discipline and rules. If for some reason you have not received a School Bus Information pamphlet, notify the Elementary Principal's office.

Parents are asked to call the bus driver at his home or the neighbor if their child or children will not be riding the bus on a given day.

Parents are asked to contact the bus driver and Bus Barn (643-6069) for approval if their child(ren) are to be delivered to a different stop on the established route. (Board Policy 5044)

### **After School Plans**

If a child is planning to go home with a friend, those arrangements must be made between the parents ahead of time. The child must then bring a written note to the classroom teacher informing them about the arrangements. Students will not be allowed to call their parents about plans they

made during the school day. The children will be sent home in the usual manner.

### **District Cell Phone Policy**

Possession of cell phones in school is discouraged. If it is necessary for a student to have a cell phone in school, the following rules apply:

1. The cell phone will be turned off during the school day.
2. The cell phone is out of sight during the school day (preferably in a book bag).
3. The only time the cell phone can be used is outside of the school day and the student must be outside the school buildings.
4. Students are responsible for their own phone at all times, even if it is taken from someone to whom they have loaned it.

If any of these rules are violated, the cell phone will be taken from the student by a school official and turned in to the principal's office.

First offense: The cell phone will be confiscated and held in the principal's office. A phone call will be made for the parents to pick up the cell phone. The principal will inform the parent that a second offense by the students is insubordination.

Second Offense: The cell phone will be confiscated and held in the principal's office. A phone call will be made for the parents to pick up the cell phone. Depending on the circumstances, the principal will determine whether the student receives an in-school or out-of-school suspension for insubordination. (Board Policy 6025)

### **Child Abuse**

School employees shall report to the Principal when they have reasonable cause to believe that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect, or circumstances, which reasonably would result in abuse or neglect. The Principal or an individual designated by the principal will report the matter to the proper law enforcement agency or other agency as required by law. (Board Policy 5021)

### **Complaint Procedure**

In the event of complaints or concerns, parents are advised to initially attempt to resolve the situation with the teacher or school employee involved. If the problem cannot be resolved, please contact the school principal, who will schedule a meeting with all the people involved. The superintendent and school board members are to be involved after the above steps are exhausted. (Board Policy 2006)

### **Bluejay Alerts**

To receive important information about Seward Public Schools sent as a text message or voice message directly to mobile, home or office phones, wireless PDA or pager, sign up for Bluejay Alerts. Information consists of emergency information, school closings, early dismissals and school event reminders. Please contact Craig Williams, District Technology Coordinator at 643-2988 or [craig.williams@connectseward.org](mailto:craig.williams@connectseward.org)

### **Special Education Identification and Placement Procedures**

The Board of Education affirms that all eligible children in the School District of Seward are entitled to a Free Appropriate Public Education and an equal opportunity for education according to the needs of the individual student. All procedural safeguards, policies, and programs implemented in the District are administered in conformity with statutory requirements of NDE Rule 51, NDE Rule 55, Public Law 93-380, Public Law 94-142, and all other applicable state and federal regulations. (Board Policy 6010)

### **Student Data and Information for NDE**

Information for the Nebraska Student and Staff records system is collected by the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) for the purpose of doing state and federal reporting. This data

includes information for the Nebraska State Accountability (NeSA), state aid, special education, and the federal *No Child Left Behind Act*. Student data are protected by state and federal laws and must be maintained in a confidential matter at all times. Parents may review the kinds of data that are collected about our students and the methods that the Nebraska Department of Education uses to manage this data at the Department of Education web site: <http://www.nde.state.ne.us/>

### **Notice of Nondiscrimination**

The School District of Seward does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, marital status, disability, or age in admission or access to, or treatment of employment or educational programs and activities. Any person having inquiries concerning The School District of Seward's compliance with the regulations implementing Title VI, Title IX, or Section 504 is directed to contact Superintendent Greg Barnes, in writing at 410 South St., Seward, Nebraska or by telephone at (402) 643-2941. Any person may also contact the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, in writing at 8930 Ward Parkway, Suite 2037, Kansas City, Missouri, 64114-3302 or by telephone at (816) 268-0550, regarding compliance with the regulations implementing Title VI, Title IX, or Section 504.

### **Additional Information:**

In addition to the foregoing information, a copy of the following policies are enclosed:

1. Elementary Discipline Plan and Behavior Process/Procedures
2. Student Fees Policy 5045
3. 2011-2012 Summary of the School Immunization Rules and Regulations
4. 2011-2012 School Calendar
5. Seward Elementary Homework Guidelines

### **Elementary Administration & Teaching Staff**

If at any time, a parent/guardian would like to contact the administration or a teacher, please consider the following options:

Telephone: School number is 643-2968

E-mail : [firstname.lastname@connectseward.org](mailto:firstname.lastname@connectseward.org)

**Example:** [lane.daws@connectseward.org](mailto:lane.daws@connectseward.org)