

Searsport Elementary School

Parent & Student Handbook

2003-2004

Darlene Paine, Principal
30 Mortland Road
Searsport, Maine 04974
548-2317

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Searsport, Maine 04974
(207) 548-2317
September 2003

Dear Students and Parents,

Welcome to Searsport Elementary School. I am excited about all of us coming back to learn and grow together for another school year!

I want to take this opportunity to let you know that I feel so fortunate to be your principal. I thoroughly enjoy my profession and this terrific community. Coming to work everyday is a pleasure!

This handbook explains our policies and procedures which have been developed so that our school is a happy, productive, and safe place to be. Please take time to read through the book together.

Our policies and procedures have been written to support the MSAD #56 Vision:

Each person in the MSAD #56 communities is respected and valued. Every person, as a life long learner, is encouraged and challenged in an environment that is emotionally and physically safe. School and community work as a team to support the whole person.

The District's goal is to work together with students, parents and community to attain the learning results established by the District and the state. Active involvement of parents and community members in the educational process, along with staff and students, is expected. Our expectation is for every individual to develop a positive self-image, reach his/her full potential and become a responsible and contributing member of society.

Education requires continuous and varied assessment to ensure that the changing needs of the learner are met. We are committed to this process with the understanding that the entire community is accountable for the results.

As I often say in newsletters, please don't hesitate to contact me if you have concerns or questions you would like to discuss. I welcome your feedback and realize that when schools, parents and students work together, great things happen!

Respectfully,

Darlene W. Paine
Principal

M.S.A.D. #56

Motto:

Charting a Course for a Lifetime of Learning!

Mission:

To share with all within our community, the knowledge and skills needed for success in life.

Beliefs:

1. Education is a **collaborative effort** among students, parents, school staff, and community members. It is an interdependent relationship, requiring mutual respect and shared responsibility for success.
2. Education **promotes excellence**, by providing opportunities for individuals to challenge their minds and maximize their skills, so they may be successful, contributing members of society.
3. Education **celebrates life**, its unity and its diversity, by providing a variety of productive learning environments that are relevant, integrated, active, challenging, creative, positive, interesting, flexible, and fun.
4. Education requires individuals **to be responsible** for their own education: All can choose to learn and all can learn to be successful.
5. Education flourishes in an environment that is **physically and mentally safe**, in which all are valued as unique individuals: free to express their individuality, and free to meet their individual needs within the bounds of social responsibility.
6. Education is a **life-long process**, with a focus far beyond the confines of a traditional classroom. Its scope and its impact are global and its greatest value is service.
7. Education needs **continual assessment**, to assure that the changing needs of both individuals and society are successfully met.
8. Education requires **accountability**: Each individual and the community as a whole is responsible for maintaining our educational system in a manner consistent with these common beliefs.

Attendance, Arrival, and Dismissal

Attendance

The Searsport Elementary School staff believes that if students are to be successful at school, regular attendance is very important. We understand that sometimes a child must be absent due to illness or family emergencies. However, please plan family vacations when school is not in session. In order to insure that all children arrive safely at school and to verify that you are aware of your child's absence, we ask that you do the following if your child is absent:

1. Please call the office at 548-2317 between 8:00-9:00 a.m. on the day of the absence.
2. If we do not receive a call, the school will try to call the parents at home or at work by 10:00 a.m.
3. Upon return to school after an absence, a student must bring a note from the parent stating the reason for the absence.
4. Please let us know by 10:00 a.m. if you would like to have homework sent home with another student or picked up at the end of the school day.

According to Maine state law, **excused** absences include illness, medical appointments that cannot be scheduled outside of school hours, family emergencies, family plans that have received prior approval from the school, and religious holidays. **Unexcused** absences include shopping trips and other plans that have not received approval. Please try to make doctor and dental appointments for after-school hours.

Arrival at School

School begins at 8:35 a.m. Supervision for students begins with the arrival of the first bus at 8:25 a.m. **Students who walk or are dropped off at school should arrive no earlier than 8:25 a.m., as there is no adult supervision.**

Tardiness

Students arriving later than 8:35 a.m. will be tardy. If children are to be late for school, a note of explanation is required. Chronic tardiness will be addressed by administration.

Parking and Drop Off

Parking is available in the parking lot in front of the school, behind the school, and along the sidewalk between the elementary school and the middle school. Even if buses are not present, **please do not park in the circle**. After you park, buses may arrive to deliver or pick up students, and it is very dangerous to have cars moving in the area where students are present.

No School/School Delay Announcements

In the event that school will be closed or delayed due to inclement weather or other emergencies, announcements will be made on the following radio and television stations:

WKSQ-94.5 FM
WQCB-106.5
WBFB-104.7
WQSS-102.5
WLBZ-Channel 2
WABI-Channel 5
WVII-Channel 7

Dismissal During the School Day

Parents are requested to make doctor or dentist appointments outside of school times whenever possible.

To ensure the safety of every child, stop at the office to have your child dismissed. There is a sign out sheet for you to fill out. The office will call your child to come to the lobby. If parents need to have children dismissed during lunch or recess, the secretary will give them a dismissal pass to take to the area and give to an adult on duty. The duty person will release the child to the parents and let the classroom teacher know that child was dismissed. These procedures serve to protect your child from leaving the building with anyone other than you or your designee.

Privately Transported Students and Walkers

Arrival

Students should not arrive at school before 8:25 a.m. When students do arrive by foot or private vehicle, they must enter the school and go directly to their classrooms. For safety reasons, children cannot wait until 8:25 outside the building without an accompanying adult.

Dismissal

Walkers are not dismissed until all buses have left the circle. Any bus students who want to walk after school must have a parent signed permission slip.

Students who are transported privately home after school will meet their driver in the lobby at 3:00 p.m. Please DO NOT go to your child's classroom. Parents are encouraged to arrive at school five to ten minutes prior to dismissal in order to stop at the office and sign out their child.

Parents who park out back may leave through the back door once they have signed out their child and the child has been dismissed. Parents who park out front or between the elementary school and middle school must wait until the buses have left before walking to their cars. This may be an inconvenience, but it is dangerous for students and parents to walk around and in between buses to get to their vehicles. If

you're in a hurry, it's best to park out back. Thanks in advance for your cooperation.

Office Hours

The school office is staffed from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on school days. Student use of the phone is monitored by teachers and office personnel.

Registration of New Students

Parents of new students or students transferring to Searsport Elementary School must register in the office. In order to allow the classroom teacher to prepare for the new student, he/she will not start attending until the following day. Birth certificates and immunization records are required at the time of registration.

Student Health and Safety

Emergency Contact Information

An emergency information sheet is sent home during the first week of school each year. Please complete and return it promptly. Please notify the school secretary of any changes of address, home, or work phone numbers or childcare so that you or your designee may be reached quickly in case of emergency.

Visitation

We welcome you to visit our school! Please follow these steps if you wish to visit your child's classroom or to meet with his/her classroom teacher:

1. Please arrange your visit ahead of time with the classroom teacher so that your visit will not interfere with any activities requiring special concentration such as tests.
2. On the day of your visit or appointment to meet with the teacher, please stop at the office first to sign in and get a visitor's nametag.
3. Please wear your nametag while you are in the building. Wearing the nametag lets the adults and students know that you are a "safe" visitor.
4. While in the building do your best to allow learning to go on as usual. It is preferred that you do not bring younger children or pets with you unless it has been arranged ahead of time with the teacher.
5. Please follow the same rules that we ask our students and staff to follow. Remember that students will look at you as a role model. Good manners are expected from everyone.

We also welcome you to share lunch with your child. If you would like to do so, please contact the office by 9:00 a.m. to reserve a lunch for yourself. The cost is \$3.00. As usual, we ask that you report first to the office to sign in and get a visitor's nametag.

Animals in the Building

For both safety and medical reasons we ask that you do not bring pets to school unless it is for a limited sharing time that has been prearranged with the classroom teacher and principal. Animals brought

into the building must be contained or restrained by a cage, box, or leash at all times. (Please see school board policy IMG)

Bicycles

For safety reasons, all students who ride bikes to school must also wear a helmet.

School Lunch Program

A balanced school breakfast and lunch are available for students. Children should bring breakfast, lunch and milk money for the whole week on Monday morning or on the first day of school for that week. Please send money in an envelope and write the child's name and what you are paying for on the outside of the envelope. The cost per day is as follows:

Breakfast	.50	(.25 reduced)
Lunch	1.50	(.40 reduced)
Milk	.35	
Choc. Milk	.45	

To qualify for free or reduced meals, unless we are notified of predetermined eligibility, parents must complete and return the form which will be sent home with each child. If during the school year, you become eligible, please contact us for a form. If a qualifying family does not return the completed form, the child will be expected to bring in money for the full cost of each meal.

Your child may bring a cold lunch and purchase milk or bring his/her own beverage. Carbonated beverages and glass containers are not allowed.

Cafeteria rules:

Polite manners and quiet voices will be used at all times.

Trading or sharing food is discouraged.

Children will remain seated until dismissed.

Crisis Response Plan

Each school in the district has developed comprehensive plans for most emergencies.

Integrated Pest Management

For information related to pest control, please see the letter from the superintendent at the end of the handbook.

Student Appearance/ Appropriate Dress

In an effort to maintain a positive, wholesome, educational environment, we have the following expectations regarding appropriate student dress:

- Students are expected to be neat and clean at all times.
- Clothing that advertises cigarettes, beer, etc. is not allowed.
- Muscle shirts, halters, spaghetti straps are not allowed. Sleeveless shirts are allowed. Shoulders need to be covered, but arms do not.
- Shirts may not be low cut or have slits in the front.
- Skirts and shorts must come down as far as the mid-thigh or to the tip of the child's fingertips when arms are down at sides.
- Any type of attire/accessories, which in the judgment of the administration is unsafe, promotes illegal activity, is offensive or is in opposition to generally accepted school norms, is unacceptable.

If it is determined that a student is wearing something inappropriate, he/she will be asked either to remove it or cover it, depending on the situation. If necessary, parents will be called to provide an article of clothing that is more appropriate.

Dressing for the Weather

All children are expected to go outside for school recess except in rainy or very cold weather (10 degree wind chill or colder). Appropriate clothing for the changing seasons is recommended. We have some coats available for children who need them. Please ask in the office about a coat. There are also hats and mittens knit by community volunteers or provided by Union Trust.

Please label all outerwear.

Health Guidelines

When children are well, they belong in school; when they are sick, they belong at home. A child should not be sent to school if there are any symptoms of illness present. This is to ensure the quick recovery of the sick child and to protect other children. A child may be sent home if there is any suspicion of a contagious disease.

The district nurse visits all MSAD #56 schools on a regular basis, maintains all health records, and conducts routine screenings. In case of a child's illness or accident at school, the school will contact **the parent** to care for the child.

After an illness, please do not request that your child remain indoors during recess periods. When a child is well enough to come to school, he/she will participate in all regular school activities, unless a physician's note restricts activity.

Medications

The MSAD #56 Board of Directors has a very specific medication policy. We would prefer not to administer medication to children. However, if your child absolutely must have medication during school:

1. A completed "Request for School Personnel to Administer Medication" form is received and signed by the physician and parent.

2. The medication is in the original container appropriately labeled with the student's name, name of medication, and directions for dispensing to include dosage and frequency.

School Counseling

Counseling in schools encompasses a wide variety of services. At Frankfort, Searsport, and Stockton Springs Elementary Schools, the school counselor works with individual students, small groups and classrooms; consults with teachers and parents; and serves as a resource. Referrals for services may be made by students, parents, teachers and other school personnel. Confidentiality is respected and emphasized in all counseling relationships.

Individual counseling is a one-to-one interaction between a counselor and student to work on a problem or concern. School counselors are not intended to do regular long-term counseling with an individual student due to student/counselor ratios, time limits, and specifically stated job descriptions.

School counselors serve as referral agents to help students and their families receive assistance from other programs and services in the school system and from agencies and private therapists outside the school. Contact your school counselor if you are seeking more information concerning long-term services available in our area.

We consider parents a vital part of a child's education so please contact your counselor to discuss concerns about your child.

Academic Programs, Supports, and Expectations

Conferences and Appointments with Teachers

Parents are encouraged to come to school to talk with teachers. However, discussions with teachers need to coincide with preparation and planning schedules. This time is typically one half hour before and after school. Please call the school to schedule a mutually convenient time to meet with your child's teacher.

Scheduled parent-teacher conferences are held in October and March for elementary students. You are encouraged to make every effort to attend. While progress reports give valuable information in summary form, they can never take the place of the personal contact with your child's teacher. Only in a conference situation can the many aspects of your child's educational development and growth be fully explained and discussed between the people who know the child best...the parents and the teacher. Conferences at other times during the school year may be scheduled individually with your child's teacher.

Homework

Children in SAD #56's elementary schools, especially in the upper grades, are expected to do homework as part of their total educational experience. Homework assignments supplement, complement, and reinforce classroom teaching and learning. It is our belief that homework:

- Develops responsibility
- Extends formal learning to the home

- Gives parents the opportunity to participate in their child's learning
- Provides an opportunity for the reinforcement of basic skills
- Gives children experience in working on long-term projects

The parent's role is to provide a quiet, well-lit place for his/her child to study and to encourage a regular study schedule by helping his/her child set aside a certain part of each day for homework and reading. Parents of children in the primary grades are strongly encouraged to read to, and with, their child daily.

Library

Children may borrow books from our school library and return them in the same condition as when borrowed.

Parent-Teacher Organization

Each of the elementary schools in our district has an active and important Parent-Teacher group that works to provide educational opportunities for students that aren't provided through traditional school funding. We need more parents, grandparents, and community members to help us in our endeavors and welcome you to join us!

Special Services

MSAD #56 employs a Director of Services to Exceptional Children who is responsible for supervising and coordinating special services for all exceptional children in the district, ages five to 20.

Each of the elementary schools has a resource program. Children in the elementary resource programs receive one-to-one or small group instruction or tutoring in a variety of areas, such as, math, oral and written expression, reading, listening, fine and gross motor skills, visual and auditory perceptual skills, and behavior improvement and social skills. The elementary resource teachers also consult with regular teachers to provide modified classroom activities and monitor students as necessary.

MSAD #56's speech and language program provides itinerant speech and language services Early Kindergarten – grade 12. The therapists carry out speech and language evaluations, do speech and language therapy, and work with classroom teachers to provide language programs in their classrooms.

Psychological consultation, counseling, and occupational therapy are other supportive services provided. If you have serious concerns

about your child's educational progress, you may refer your child to determine if s/he is eligible for special education services by contacting your building principal or the Director of Special Services. (548-2312)

Student Assistance Team

The Student Assistance Team (SAT) is a group of school professional whose function is to identify, refer, and intervene with students at risk academically or behaviorally. The SAT team receives referrals of identified students and assists concerned individual, including parents, in finding effective means of intervention which would enable students to function more successfully in school. It provides students with a prevention/intervention process that insures a free, appropriate education. A referral to the SAT may also serve as a pre-referral for special education evaluation.

Title I

Title I, a federally funded program, provides supplemental help in reading and math for those students in Kindergarten through grade 5 who are in need of academic assistance. If you would like to recommend your child for this program, please contact the building principal.

Reading Recovery

Reading Recovery, an early intervention literacy program, is offered to six year olds who are most at risk of falling behind their peers. The program is designed to accelerate those first graders so they will be at or above the average of the class in reading within a 12-20 week period.

Migrant Program

The migrant program, a federally funded program, provides continuous education for migrant children whose schooling is disrupted because of family moves. The Kindergarten through grade 5 program concentrates on reading and math, but areas of need are taken into consideration. If you feel your child may be eligible for this program, please contact the building principal.

Student Behavior and Discipline

One of the most important goals for our community is the direct teaching and development of self-discipline. Searsport Elementary School community members are expected to show respect for themselves, each other, and property. They are expected to accept responsibility for their action, reflect on the problem, and do whatever is needed to make amends.

The recommended logical consequences for inappropriate behavior are based on the responsive classroom model and may include:

1. have student "fix it", make amends
2. keep student after school
3. loss of privileges
4. time outs in classroom (teacher imposed)
5. call parent (teacher or administrator)
6. bus slips
7. loss of bus privilege
8. in-school suspension
9. meet with parents
10. talk with counselor
11. clean up/repair damage
12. behavior plans
13. daily report home
14. go back and do over
15. time out with another teacher (teacher's buddy teacher)
16. stop and think chair
17. talk it out
18. change program
19. time out in resource room for students with an IEP
20. reflection sheet

Staff will address behavior conflicts when they occur. When children break the rules of their school community, least restrictive logical consequences will follow. Logical consequences are those that are directly related to the inappropriate behavior. Some inappropriate behaviors are addressed by district policies which are printed in the student handbook.

Following are examples of inappropriate behaviors addressed by school rules:

1. Fighting, physical aggression or threatening to hurt someone
2. disrespect
3. swearing, offensive or vulgar language
4. name calling, gestures and put downs
5. bullying

6. destruction of property
7. disruption of instruction or learning

As always, we encourage you to talk with your child's teacher when a question or concern arises.

Bus Rules

Bus safety is of the utmost importance. Parents are requested to instruct their children in the proper ways of riding on a bus.

1. Remain seated when the bus is in motion.
2. Talk quietly to student sitting nearby.
3. Keep all articles out of the aisles.
4. Eating and drinking are not allowed.
5. Keep hands and feet to yourself.

It is impossible for a bus driver to discipline and, at the same time, drive the bus. We are all interested in your child's safety and the safety of all children. To further assure the safety of the children, parents are requested to observe the following:

1. A note must be sent by the parents if the child is NOT going home on the regular bus. Otherwise, the child will board the bus as usual. Blanket permission for a certain afternoon each week is allowable, but written instructions from the parents must be complete and specific. Please send a note rather than making a telephone call. This note will be checked by the office staff and the bus driver notified.
2. Children are to be unloaded from the bus at their regular stop only unless other arrangements have been made by the parent, and the school and bus driver have been notified. Due to the crowding and assigned seating on some buses, please check with you child's bus driver before inviting another child (or children) to ride the bus to your home.
3. Children riding the bus to school are to be ready at the proper stop in the morning.
4. No child is to be released from the bus into the custody of anyone, without the parent's and driver's consent. If you wish to meet your child at school, please go to the school office and sign your child out at dismissal time.
5. Bus drivers are responsible for discipline on the bus. Misconduct on the bus may lead to loss of bus riding

privileges. Parents will be notified in writing and/or by phone about warnings and loss of riding privileges.

Radio communication between the superintendent's office and all buses ensures that children are on the right bus and helps correct mix-ups. For further information regarding bus rules, please refer to school board policy EEAEC at the end of the handbook.

Hazing/Harassment/ Bullying

MSAD #56 recognizes the right of each student to perform in a comfortable and safe atmosphere which is free of intimidation, ridicule, hostility, and disrespect. Hazing, harassment or bullying of any type will not be tolerated. Bullying is most commonly defined as intentionally and repeatedly causing emotional or physical discomfort or harm. This may include physical contact, verbal assault, making obscene gestures or facial expressions, and intentionally excluding a student from a group or activity. Bullying implies an imbalance in power or strength in which one child is victimized by others. If your child feels he/she is being hazed, harassed, or bullied, he/she needs to report such harassment to a teacher or administrator immediately. For more details, please refer to school board policies ACA and JFCF at the end of the handbook.

Manners

Students shall conduct themselves in an orderly manner at all times. Each child shall respect the rights and property of others. We ask that through their words and actions students respect themselves, others, and their environment.

Physical Aggression

Any student in grade 5 who fights and is physically aggressive will automatically receive an in-school suspension. While every incident of aggression is investigated regardless of grade level, children in grades K-4 may receive a less severe consequence.

Playground Rules

The purpose of an outdoor recess is to provide children with an opportunity to play games that require gross motor skills while having a fun outlet for energy. To ensure this happens in a safe environment, the following rules will be observed:

1. Children are to play safely in the designated area at all times.
2. Rough play such as swearing, hitting, pushing, shoving, wrestling, tripping, and throwing objects (other than balls) will not be allowed.
3. Proper use of the playground equipment will be discussed by each child's teacher.

Suspensions

There are situations when a student must be suspended from the classroom. A suspension will be determined by the principal and may constitute an in-school suspension in which the student would spend the day in another classroom with work provided by the regular teacher or an out-of-school suspension in which the student may not attend school for one or more days. A meeting with the parent, student, teacher and principal is mandatory before the student reenters the classroom.

Nuisance Items

Children are asked to leave toys at home. Radio, tape and CD players, electronic “pets”, and other “non-school gear” are not allowed to be used at school. Any item that interrupts learning will be held by the teacher until the end of the day. Laser pointers are not allowed on school property for safety reasons.

Miscellaneous

Birthday Invitations

Birthday party invitations are not to be distributed in school. Due to food allergies, parents wishing to send a special snack for a child’s birthday should make arrangements with the classroom teacher.

Lost and Found

The lost and found bins are located near the office. Prior to the winter break and at the end of the school year, all unclaimed items are given to charity.

Final Note

Our school handbook explains how we do things at our school. We hope you will find the information helpful. Please let us know if we have omitted something important. Suggestions are always welcome!