

Spruce Mountain Primary School
Staff Handbook



Whose Child Is This?

*"Whose child is this?" I asked one day Seeing a little one out at play.
"Mine", said the parent with a tender smile "Mine to keep a little while.
To bathe his/her hands and comb his/her hair, To tell him/her what he/she is to wear,
To prepare him/her that he/she may always be good,
And each day do the things he/she should".*

*"Whose child is this?" I asked again,
As the door opened and someone came in. "Mine", said the teacher with the same tender
smile. "Mine, to keep just for a little while.
To teach him/her how to be gentle and kind,
To train and direct his/her dear little mind,
To help him/her live by every rule,
And get the best he/she can from school".*

*"Whose child is this?" I asked once more,
Just as the little one entered the door. "Ours", said the parent and the teacher as they
smiled. And each took the hand of the little child. "Ours to love and train together.
Ours this blessed task forever."*

Author Unknown

I. PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Student Arrival Time: 7:35 AM (typical teacher work day 7:35 AM - 2:35 PM) Teachers should be on time each day and attend all scheduled meetings prepared and ready to begin at the appointed start time.
- B. Student Arrival/Homeroom: An orderly start to the day helps students transition from the trip to school and prepare for their lessons. Please establish a daily routine for homeroom that includes:
- Greeting the students at the door of the room
 - All chairs taken down
 - Pledge of Allegiance
 - Lunch count
 - Attendance
 - Any announcements
- C. Attendance Procedure: Attendance must be completed accurately on Powerschool by the homeroom/classroom teacher. Attendance slips will be provided for Substitute Teachers. Please assign a student to bring attendance slips for Substitute Teachers to the office and place a note in the substitute teacher packet indicating who may bring the slips to the office by 9:00 AM.
- D. Absences from school: If you are going to be absent from school, please notify the Subst Coordinator as soon as possible or between 6 and 7 AM, but no later than 9 PM the previous evening. If you know that you are going to be out an additional day, please inform the office prior to 3:00 PM. PLEASE NOTE: There should be no need to give directions for the substitute teacher over the phone. There should be adequate plans on your desk for the substitute teacher including a seating plan, daily schedule, textbooks and any other information that will be helpful. Please take some time early in the year to talk to your children about expectations of them when a substitute teacher is in your class. Assigning some job responsibilities can help the children be more successful with a substitute teacher.
- If there is an emergency between 7:00 AM and the start of school, please call the school office at 897-3355 ext 100.
- E. Space Responsibility: Teachers are responsible for their classroom area. Make sure that your class is covered at all times. During passing between classes, please cover the corridor just outside your classroom. Students passing in the corridors should not disrupt students who are in classes. Please remember we all have a responsibility for all students, therefore if you see a student disrupting the school environment or an unsafe situation occurring it is a professional responsibility to address the situation.

F. Duties: Supervisory duties are crucial to the culture and safety of the school. Less structured times (transitions, hallways, stairwells, morning arrivals and dismissals, lunch, and recess) are among the greatest causes of stress and problems for children during the day. Consistent enforcement of expectations helps to maintain a positive and safe learning environment.

- To maximize supervision, duty staff members must be on duty on time, circulate individually, engage in conversations with children and encourage positive interactions.

Presiding Duties:

- Teachers are responsible and have authority wherever they are.
- Teachers assigned to duties are expected to observe student behaviors. Teachers should not use duty time as an opportunity to visit with one another or do other activities that may distract from supervision.
- Students are not to be left unattended.
- Teachers should be in control of a group when going from one location to another. It is expected that teachers sit with their assigned class during school assemblies and functions.
- Teachers and staff should have high expectations for appropriate student behavior, should acknowledge exemplary behavior and should correct inappropriate behavior of any student when witnessed.

Expectations and rules for the Lunch room

Cafeteria rules have been posted in the cafeteria and have been printed in the student handbook. Staff will review and assist students in following them.

G. Staff Meetings: There will be one staff meeting a month. All district staff meetings will be held on the second Thursday of the month @ 2:45 PM. Thank you for being on time for all meetings.

H. Professional Meeting Norms: *While it is important to recognize our individual differences in communication and learning styles, it is imperative to maximize our time spent in planning continued efforts toward implementing best practices in education. In order to make the discussions that need to take place at staff meetings, common planning times and other professional meetings worthwhile and productive, please use the norms of effective meetings listed below...*

I. *Respect People's Time:*
Agendas in advance
Start and end on time
Time to do PLC work
Post Meeting Minutes

Respect Each Other
Focus on the person speaking
Remain on topic
Contribute to meetings
Ask questions, voice concerns in a professional manner

- J. Individual Education Plan Meetings: Attendance at Individual Education Plan (IEP) meetings is a professional responsibility. If it is not possible to attend and give input, a written summation of your input is a requirement.
- K. Individual Education Plans (IEP's): It is the classroom teacher's responsibility to have knowledge of a child's IEP and to implement the requirements of such a plan. Each teacher must familiarize themselves with the IEP's of any students in their classroom.
- L. Plan Books: The teacher's plan book is a professional tool. Plan books should be made out one week in advance.
- M. Grade Books: Teachers are expected to provide students with accurate and timely feedback (both summative and formative).
- Assignments must be entered with a due date.
 - Grades must be entered on Powerschool within *five days* of an assignment due date.
 - Grades must be entered by the closing date for each trimester.
- N. Parent communications: Establishing and maintaining regular communication with parents results in improved student achievement. Parents enjoy hearing positive comments regarding his/her child. Please do not wait for difficult news before communicating with the family. If a child is at risk for academic failure or is struggling with behavioral concerns, it is imperative that the parents are notified early by any means necessary (i.e., phone, email, etc...).
- O. Discipline: The responsibility for discipline within the building rests with the entire staff. Children respond consistently when they are held responsible on a consistent basis. If children are behaving in a way that is disruptive to the learning environment, please address it.

As a classroom teacher you have a wide variety of classroom management tools at your disposal. Remember to seek out advice from colleagues, administration, and our Social Worker for those challenging situations. Whenever possible, utilize the lowest level disciplinary action necessary to achieve your goal – warnings; parental contact; in room

discipline; time out; lunch/recess detention; after school detention; referral to administration; team meeting with student, parent, and administration. Use our RTI process.

Obviously there are situations which require immediate referral to the office – including: fighting, threatening/harassment of other students or staff; chronic classroom disruptions; and other forms of extreme disrespect toward students and staff. Remember to contact parents as soon as possible in the disciplinary process. Parents need the opportunity to help their child be successful in school.

Another step to help remind students of classroom rules and expectations is to develop the classroom rules together and to post the rules and expectations in a highly visible place in the classroom. This step also helps ease the transition for Substitute Teachers.

P. Modeling: The environment of the school is heavily influenced by the way in which children regard the adults. It is important for staff members to dress and act in a professional manner at all times. Modeling the language, actions, and behavior we expect of the children is an important instructional component.

When you develop and communicate classroom / team procedures and expectations with children please make sure those expectations are posted and referred to regularly. Remember, it is the process by which we develop and communicate our expectations (core values) on a daily basis which has the greatest impact on children. How we communicate is often as important, if not more so, than what we say.

Posting of positive expectations and ongoing reference to those expectations will serve as a valuable reminder for all members and guests of the Spruce Mountain School District Community.

Q. Cell phones: Please ensure cell phones are turned off/silent during classes and professional meetings. If you need to be contacted in an emergency, the office will notify you.

R. Leaving the building: If you need to leave the building during the work day please notify the office. Please notify the office upon your return. This helps us in the case of emergencies.

S. Communication with Colleagues: The core value of respect extends to all members of the Spruce Mountain Primary School community. It is important to communicate with each other in a professional and courteous manner.

- T. Extra/Co-Curricular events: Attendance at extra-curricular & co-curricular events makes a very positive statement to students and parents. Certain events are required, (i.e., open house, conferences, etc...) however additional student events exist. Please attend when possible.

GENERAL PROCEDURES

- A. Child Abuse: Child abuse or neglect is defined by Maine law as “a threat to a child’s health or welfare by physical, mental or emotional injury or impairment, sexual abuse or exploitation, deprivation of essential needs or lack of protection from these.” Any employee of the school unit who has reason to suspect that a child has been or is likely to be abused or neglected must immediately notify a member of the administration or the social worker.
- B. Staff Conduct with Students: The School Board expects all staff members, including teachers, coaches, counselors, administrators, and others (including volunteers), to maintain the highest professional, moral, and ethical standards in their conduct with students. The interactions and relationships between staff members and students should be based upon mutual respect and trust; and understanding of appropriate boundaries between adults and students in an educational setting; and consistent with the educational mission of the schools.
- C. Confidentiality: Maine law and the Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) require us to maintain the confidentiality of all student education records. This is a very important issue and must be adhered to. There should be no discussing students or learning documents and paper work that contain student information in public places around the school or around visitors to the school.

There are often faxes or work being done in the office behind the administrative assistance’s desk and on the counter. If you need something from this area of the office, please wait until an administrative assistant is available.

- D. Fire Drills: We are required to hold ten fire drills per year. For safety reasons we will have several very early in the year. Please be sure you are aware of the escape route from wherever you are stationed in the building. A couple of important reminders:
- a. Post the escape route from your room and explain the evacuation procedure to your class.
 - b. Bring your class list during an evacuation to check attendance.
 - c. When the alarm bell rings, every adult in the building is on duty with the goal of a safe evacuation.

Doorways and windows that are used as escape routes must be kept clear at all times.

Lockdown drills will occur during the school year. Please refer to the Lockdown procedures (a copy is available in the main office) and become familiar with the classroom quick reference chart.

- E. Extreme Weather: In the event that school needs to be cancelled announcements will be made on local radio and television. The first place the notice will go is on the school district website. When school is closed for the day or dismissed early, all after-school and evening school sponsored activities and community uses of school facilities will be cancelled or postponed.
- F. Smoking: Spruce Mountain School District School prohibits smoking and the use of all other tobacco products in school buildings, facilities, on school buses and on school grounds by all persons, including students and employees.
- G. Fundraising: All fundraisers must be approved in advance and any money raised must be delivered to the main office. Funds will be deposited by office personnel.
- H. Copyright Compliance: All employees and students of the Spruce Mountain School District are expected to adhere to the provisions of federal copyright law. Employees and students who willfully disregard the law and the school unit's copyright policy and administrative procedure(s) do so at their own risk.
- I. Employee Computer and internet use: Spruce Mountain Primary School provides computers, networks, and internet access to support the educational mission of the schools and to enhance the curriculum and learning opportunities for students and school staff. Incidental personal use of school computers is permitted so long as such use does not interfere with the employee's job duties and performance, with system operations or other system users.

All Spruce Mountain Primary School's computers remain under the control, custody, and supervision of the school unit. The school unit reserves the right to monitor all computer and internet activity by employees. Employees have no expectation of privacy in their use of school computers or the school network.

Employees are expected to comply with all applicable copyright laws related to software as well as content used from the internet. (FYI: statutory damages for software copyright infringement can cost from \$30,000 (non-willful) per incident to \$150,000 per incident (willful infringement). (School Technology and the Law: Life in the Fast Lane, Drummond, Woodson, & MacMahon, page 1, 2005)

The administration strongly encourages all employees to avoid social networking with any students or the families of any students in the school system and/or the mention of work related events on these sites (even without mentioning any names).

- M. School Policies: Spruce Mountain School District review policies on a monthly basis throughout the school year. The policies due for consideration, review, and or adoption are published in the school board agenda. A copy of the agenda is on line and a copy is also given to the association president. Any comments or questions may be asked at the board meeting.

Any actions taken on policies are noted in the school board meeting minutes. A complete policy document is available on-line.

Staff use of RSU73 computers are covered in Section G of the Policy Manual.