

## SCHOOL HOURS

8:15 a.m.	Doors open
8:20 a.m.	Students must be seated in their first period class for attendance <i>at this time.</i>
3:05 p.m.	Final bell for scheduled classes
3:14 p.m.	End of conference period

## SOMS VISION and MISSION STATEMENTS

### **VISION:**

The stakeholders at South Orange Middle School will work to collectively ensure that we are the top-performing middle school in the nation by focusing on: Academic Excellence, Cultural Competency and Social Equity. We will accomplish this goal by supporting our students' academic and personal pursuits, and by inspiring our scholars to become model citizens.

### **MISSION:**

The mission of the South Orange Maplewood School District is to empower and inspire each student to explore and imagine, to pursue personal passions, and to collectively create a better future by creating a learner-centered environment through multiple pathways; reimagined structures, systems and supports; innovative teaching; partnering with families; and maximizing community expertise and resources.

Lynn A. Irby, Principal  
James Jennings, Assistant Principal  
James Waldron, Assistant Principal

## **STUDENT EXPECTATIONS AT SOMS**

To succeed in middle school, you need to bring a positive attitude and tireless effort. In addition, commit yourself to meeting the following four expectations we have for all students.

1. **Be on time for school.**
2. **Be on time for class.**
3. **Be prepared.** Every day come prepared with the tools for success. These include:
  - a. A Positive attitude.
  - b. Your best effort.
  - c. Your materials (notebooks, pens, homework, etc).
4. **Be respectful.** Be kind, compassionate, and respectful to every member of our community, to yourself, and to our building.

## 12:30 PM DISMISSAL DAYS

A few days shown on the calendar are 12:30 p.m. dismissal days. These are regular attendance days, except that lunch is not served. Class periods are slightly shorter, but all classes meet unless a special schedule is announced. You will report to school at the regular time.

## GOING TO AND FROM SCHOOL

### **EARLY ARRIVAL**

We ask that students do not arrive at the school prior to 8:10. Students who do arrive before 8:15 a.m. will have to wait outside the building because **staff supervision does not begin until 8:15 a.m.** Students may not wait inside the building except in the case of extreme weather. Students who are purchasing and eating breakfast should report to the cafeteria.

### **ENTRANCES and EXITS**

Sixth graders enter the building through the REAR doors (rear parking lot entrance) and seventh and eighth graders enter through the FRONT of the building (North Ridgewood Road). Seventh graders enter the door closest to the driveway entering the parking lot. Eighth graders enter the main door.

### **DISMISSAL**

Students must leave school grounds promptly after dismissal unless requested to stay during the conference period by a teacher. This would include detention, extra help, club or school activity, etc. Parents who need supervision for their children beyond 3:15 PM, should contact the **SOMS YOUTHNET PLUS at (973) 763-6371.** (Unsupervised children are not permitted in the building beyond dismissal.)

## **BICYCLES**

The Board will permit the use of bicycles by pupils in grades six through twelve in accordance with district rules. If you ride your bike to school, you must wear your helmet, as required by law! If you do ride your bike, there is a bike rack on the side of the building. This is the **ONLY** place you may leave your bike during the day. Be sure to lock and chain it to the bike rack. The school is **NOT** responsible for damage or theft of parts of bicycles that are parked at schools. **Students are not to ride their bikes on school property.**

## **BUS**

The transportation department notifies and sends information to students eligible for bus services prior to the beginning of the school year. Bus conduct rules follow the same school behavior policies. Repeated misconduct may result in temporary or permanent removal from the bus.

## **SKATEBOARDS/SCOOTERS**

The Board **prohibits** the operation or possession of scooters, skateboards, and in-line skates on school grounds. If you bring them to school, it will be confiscated.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Regular attendance is an essential part of academic success. Students are required by district policy and state law to attend school on a daily basis. In instances when students begin to demonstrate a pattern of absences, the school will begin progressive interventions to try to establish more consistent attendance. These interventions include:

- Letter to Parents/Meeting between Counselor and Student
- Letter to Parents/Meeting between Counselor and Parents – Development of Attendance Action Plan
- Meeting between Parents and Administration

## **ABSENCES**

Parents are to call (973) 378-2772 between 8:00 and 8:30 a.m. to report if their child is absent. An automated call will be made by the school to the home whenever a child is absent.

When students return to school after an absence, they must bring a note signed by their parents stating the specific reason for your absence.

Absences and tardiness are only excused for religious or legal reasons, student's illness, family illness or death, educational opportunities or necessary and unavoidable medical or dental appointments that cannot be scheduled at a time other than the school day.

## **TARDIES**

You will be considered late if you are not seated in your PERIOD 1 class by 8:20 a.m. If you arrive after 8:20 you **MUST** report to the main office for a pass **BEFORE** going to class to avoid being marked "Absent" from school.

After initial warning, if a student continues to be tardy (excused or unexcused), the teacher may do one or more of the following:

- 4 tardies = teacher detention; parent contact
- 8 tardies = administrative detention; parent contact
- 12 tardies = parent conference with administrator & counselor

**Students who accumulate multiple unexcused tardies in each marking period are subject to disciplinary action.**

## **EARLY DISMISSAL**

If you need to leave school for part of the day for an approved absence, on the morning of the early dismissal, you must: 1) report to your period 1 class, and 2) go to the office with the note from your parents stating the time and reason you must leave and when you may return to school. Your parent or guardian must sign you out in the main office before leaving the building.

## **DRESS CODE**

At all of our District Schools, we expect all students and staff to dress appropriately for the educational and professional community we are.

- Students are not permitted to wear clothing with offensive messages that reference sex, violence, weapons, drugs, alcohol, gang affiliations, race, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, gender, etc., and that have the effect of substantially and materially interfering with the school program purposes or medical reasons
- Underwear must not be visible
- Clothing and undergarments should cover skin as appropriate for a school and professional setting. All tops should have straps.
- See-through clothing is prohibited.
- Shoes that increase the likelihood of accidents and injury should not be worn.

- Sunshades or any dark glasses should not be worn unless they are prescribed for medical reasons and a doctor's note is on file in the medical office.
- Chains or jewelry with sharp projections should not be worn.
- Headgear, including hats, scarves, headbands, etc., are not permitted to be worn except for religious or medical reasons. In instances where students wear headgear for religious reasons, a letter from a parent or guardian requesting exception to policy must be presented to the school administration at the beginning of the school year.

***In all instances the building administration shall make the final determination on the appropriateness of dress and grooming during school hours and/or school functions.***

### **CONSEQUENCES:**

Students who violate this dress code will be asked to change their clothing as needed with parental or school assistance and with every effort to minimize loss of instructional time and any embarrassment to students. In the event of repeated violations, students, parents/guardians and school administration will meet to remedy the situation.

## **PROGRAM OF STUDY**

### **ACADEMIC TEAMS**

Every student is part of an academic team. Teams consist of a Language Arts, Math, SS, Science, and Special Education teacher. Each of the teachers on a team share the same students and common time to plan their lessons and have parent meetings. Essentially, academic teams are small learning communities or schools within the school. Teams activities are planned throughout the year for sharing the learning and the fun of middle school. Each team has a teacher/leader that coordinates the work of the team. The team leaders are as follows:

Team 6A: Ms. Abella	Team 7C: Mr. A. Cicienia
Team 6B: Ms. Grant	Team 8A: Mr. L. Cicienia
Team 6C: Ms. Forero	Team 8B: Ms. Wright
Team 7A: Ms. McGlotten	Team 8C: Ms. Corino
Team 7B: Mr. Gregory	

### **CORE ACADEMIC PROGRAM**

In each grade, all students take the 4 core subjects: language arts, mathematics, science and social studies. Spanish is our World Language. Subjects included in the related arts program are: 2D and 3D

Art, Health and Physical Education, Band, Orchestra, Chorus, Drama, STEM, and SOMS Investigates.

### **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

All students are required by state law to participate in physical education unless certified by a physician as being incapable of such participation. The physical education program in grades 6 through 8 involves strenuous activity. To guarantee freedom of movement, health, safety and protection, **everyone must change for class.** We recommend the following: gym shorts, T-shirts, socks, sneakers, and sweat suits. Gym clothes should be taken home and washed each week. Jewelry is to be removed for class.

Students need a note from parent/guardian, or physician to be excused from physical education. The note should be given to the nurse in the morning before period 1. Excuses for more than a few days must be from the physician. Grades are based on daily participation in class, effort and skills, and written tests.

### **STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT**

#### **HOMEWORK**

Homework is an important part of learning as it provides an opportunity for students to practice and extend skills learned in class. As such, it is included as part of the marking period and final grade averages. Homework = 10% of marking period grade.

At the beginning of the school year, all students will receive an agenda pad. We encourage each student to record all of their homework on a daily basis, and that parents check the agenda each night. For students struggling with homework, we encourage they take advantage of conference period to get support from their teacher(s).

#### **MISSED ASSIGNMENTS**

If you miss a class for any reason during the day, see the teacher during the conference period to get any assignment you need to complete before class the next day.

If you are absent from school, you will have time to make up your assignments --- usually two days for each day of absence. See your teacher after school the day you return or use one of the many online tools setup by teachers to get any assignments you missed.

## PROGRESS REPORTS

Progress Reports are sent home at the mid-point of each marking period. All students will receive a minimum of four progress reports.

## REPORT CARDS

Report cards are mailed four times a year. Please refer to the school calendar for those dates. Report card grades represent your progress towards achievement of state and national grade level standards, as determined by various assessments. The letter grade represents a numeric value. Please see the grade scale below.

### Grade Scale

A+ = 100 – 97	C+ = 79 - 77
A = 96 - 94	C = 76 - 74
A- = 93 – 90	C- = 73 - 70
B+ = 89 – 87	D+ = 69 - 67
B = 86 – 84	D = 66 - 64
B- = 83 – 80	D- = 63 - 60
	F = Below 59

## CONCERNS ABOUT PROGRESS

When a parent is concerned about their child's academic progress, it is advised that they meet with the teacher to communicate their concern(s), and to develop a plan to address them. To schedule such a meeting, parents can either email the teacher directly, or schedule a team meeting through our guidance secretary, Ms. Ross by calling (973) 378-2772 ex. 2007.

## POWERSCHOOL PARENT PORTAL INFORMATION

The PowerSchool Parent Portal is an online resource through which parents and students can check on attendance records, progress report comments, report card grades and midterm/final exam grades. Information on this resource and access codes will be mailed to families in the beginning of the school year. Questions about access codes or other concerns should be addressed to Ms. Roseann Voorhees at [rvoorhee@somsd.k12.nj.us](mailto:rvoorhee@somsd.k12.nj.us) or (973) 762-5600 ext. 1142.

## HONOR ROLL

Each marking period, the school recognizes students who demonstrate outstanding achievement and effort in all their courses by placing them on either the HONOR ROLL or the HIGH HONOR ROLL.

To achieve placement on the HONOR ROLL, a student cannot have a grade lower than a B- on his/her report card for that marking period.

To achieve placement on the HIGH HONOR ROLL, a student cannot have a grade lower than an A- on his/her report card for that marking period. Please note that all graded subject areas count towards honor roll. Therefore, it is essential that students put forth their best effort in each and every class.

## EFFORT ROLL

To achieve placement on the EFFORT ROLL, student must receive all positive comments on their report card.

## FIELD TRIPS

Team leaders plan field trips to enhance and extend the curriculum. In the event of academic or behavioral concerns, students may be kept from participating in the event. In these situations, an alternate educational activity will be provided.

While some trips involve costs for transportation and other fees, no child shall be excluded from a trip based on the inability to pay the costs.

## SCHOOL SERVICES

### GUIDANCE

Every student is assigned a guidance counselor that they will stay with through their three years at SOMS. Assignments this year are as follows:

Ms. Paula Bethea: (973) 378-2772, ex. 2009  
[pbethea@somsd.k12.nj.us](mailto:pbethea@somsd.k12.nj.us)  
6<sup>th</sup> grade and 8<sup>th</sup> graders with last names M-Z

Ms. Stephanie Prall: (973) 378-2772, ex. 2008  
[sprall@somsd.k12.nj.us](mailto:sprall@somsd.k12.nj.us)  
7<sup>th</sup> Grade and 8<sup>th</sup> graders with last names A-L

The counseling program at the middle school is organized to service the academic and social/emotional needs of our students and their parents. The services offered by the counselors range from:

- Individual counseling and support for students struggling academically, socially, or emotionally.
- Group counseling to ease transitions to middle school, develop essential organizational or social skills, or promote healthy social/emotional behaviors.

If you need assistance to deal with a problem causing you concern, please see your counselor for assistance.

## MEDICAL

Our nurse's name is Ms. Jacqueline Gilker (973) 378-2772, ex. 2013. Her office is open from 8:15 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. daily. Mrs. Gilker is on hand to respond to emergencies, such as accidents and illness. She also provides health screening and advice to students as needed.

Our medical office also provides yearly screening for hearing, height, weight, blood pressure, vision and scoliosis.

Some important facts for you and your parents to keep in mind:

- Students who have been sent home or have been sick with a fever, are NOT to return to school until they have been without a fever for 24 hours or more based on the illness.
- Medication to be given in school must be accompanied by a physician's order and a written request from a parent must be kept in the nurse's office.
- Students with diagnosed strep throat or conjunctivitis will not be permitted to reenter school until they have received prescribed treatment. The nurse must be contacted prior to returning to school.
- If you have a medical condition requiring adjustments in the school program, please ask your parents to notify the school nurse.

## SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM

The middle school social work program offers students a chance to reflect on this intense and sometimes confusing stage of development. Students, with parental consent, can participate in individual and group counseling opportunities that provide a warm and supportive atmosphere to address the multitude of challenges they face.

The school social work program is directed by Mrs. Alison Steiner, LCSW (973) 378-2772, ex. 2012 [asteiner@somsd.k12.nj.us](mailto:asteiner@somsd.k12.nj.us) who works with graduate interns from schools of social work in the tri-state area. For more information contact your child's guidance counselor.

## LIBRARY

The South Orange Middle School Library is open Monday through Friday from 8:15 a.m. - 3:15 p.m. It has a large collection of books, magazines, and online material to support your learning, as well as your recreational reading. Our website is the gateway to all your research needs. You can access it at [www.somslibrary.org](http://www.somslibrary.org). You may sign out all

books and materials you wish to borrow from the library, except certain reference works, which do not circulate. Most books may be kept out for two weeks, but some are reserved for overnight use during periods of high demand. **You are responsible for all material you check out and must return books on time so that others may use them.** There is a fine imposed for lost or overdue library materials as well as potential for exclusion from end of year activities until paid or returned.

## FOOD SERVICES

Lunch time is 30 minutes long. The cafeteria serves a complete lunch. Lunches may be purchased at a set price for a complete lunch or individual items may be purchased separately OR you may bring your own lunch.

There are a few special rules about behavior in the cafeteria:

- Students are expected to arrive to the cafeteria on time.
- When lining up for lunch or snack, students are not allowed to save a place in line or cut.
- While eating lunch students must remain seated. There will be no more than twelve students sitting at a table.
- When finished with lunch, each student is responsible for cleaning his or her area.
- Do not take any food or drink out of the cafeteria.
- Assigned seats or lunch detention may be assigned for repeated misconduct in the cafeteria.

## AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

### CONFERENCE PERIOD

The conference period from, 3:05 to 3:14p.m., is considered part of the regular school day. Your teachers will be here for you most afternoons during this time. **On Tuesdays only**, there will be an extended conference period from 3:05 – 3:25 p.m. You don't need an appointment to see them if you need help. Take advantage of this opportunity to gain additional support in your studies or seek advice about questions related to school. Please schedule outside appointments after 3:15 p.m.

## STUDENT DISCIPLINE POLICIES

(See also District Code of Conduct)

### **AFTER-SCHOOL CLUBS/ACTIVITIES**

Becoming involved in an after-school club or activity is an outstanding way to become connected to our school and develop positive relationships with students and teachers who share interests similar to your own. We strongly encourage you to get involved in one of the many school or YouthNet (see below) clubs or activities we have to offer. Clubs generally meet one per month after-school between 3:15-4:15. The school clubs and activities include:

- **Newspaper**
- **Yearbook** (Ms. A. Corino)  
[acorino@sommsd.k12.nj.us](mailto:acorino@sommsd.k12.nj.us)
- **Student Government** (Ms. P. Bethea):  
[pbethea@sommsd.k12.nj.us](mailto:pbethea@sommsd.k12.nj.us)
- **MLK /O Ambassadors Club** (Ms. Wright): [jwright2@sommsd.k12.nj.us](mailto:jwright2@sommsd.k12.nj.us)
- **Band** (Mr. Tighe):  
[dtighe@sommsd.k12.nj.us](mailto:dtighe@sommsd.k12.nj.us)
- **Orchestra** (Mr. Cook):  
[wcook@sommsd.k12.nj.us](mailto:wcook@sommsd.k12.nj.us)
- **Chorus** (Mr. Ezzo):  
[jezzo@sommsd.k12.nj.us](mailto:jezzo@sommsd.k12.nj.us)
- **Intramural Sports** (Mr. Paradiso, Mr. Salguero): [gparadis@sommsd.k12.nj.us](mailto:gparadis@sommsd.k12.nj.us) and [csalguer@sommsd.k12.nj.us](mailto:csalguer@sommsd.k12.nj.us)
- **All-school Musical** (Ms. Harris):  
[msharrisnj@gmail.com](mailto:msharrisnj@gmail.com)

### **SOMS YOUTHNET PLUS**

SOMS YouthNet Plus is a community organization that provides an after school wrap-around program for SOMS students. The Extended Enrichment Program runs from dismissal until 6:00 pm, Monday-Friday. It includes access to SOMS YouthNet Plus clubs, arts and crafts, open gym, academic support.

In addition to the Extended Enrichment Program, SOMS YouthNet Plus sponsors after-school clubs for SOMS students. These clubs range from Cooking to Chess to Step and are open to all SOMS students.

For more information about the Extended Enrichment Program or the after school clubs, please contact Ms. Diane Malloy at [youthnetplus@gmail.com](mailto:youthnetplus@gmail.com).

At SOMS, we understand that part of our job is to foster sound decision-making skills, and to support students in their efforts to regulate and manage their own behavior, emotions, and impulses. Especially during young adolescence, these are skills that must be explicitly taught and reinforced. This is a responsibility we embrace at SOMS.

The SOMSD Code of Conduct establishes rules and expectations for student behavior in school. These rules also establish consequences for when students violate these rules. We approach these violations with the students as opportunities to learn, and develop in the areas of self-regulation and decision-making. We use a number of interventions that increase in intensity to correct student misbehavior.

If the conduct is repeated, or if the learning process cannot continue, the student will be referred to an administrator. The Administrator may assign one or more of the following:

1. Detention with the teacher
2. Administrative detention from 3:15-4:00pm
3. Extended detention from 3:05-5:00
4. Parent/ guardian conference
5. Suspension

### EXTREME MISBEHAVIOR

(See also District Code of Conduct)

Per the district code of conduct, an administrator may assign severe consequences for certain violations, including suspension or expulsion from school. These violations include:

- Smoking on school grounds or at any school-sponsored activity
- Using, possessing, or selling drugs or alcohol in school or on school grounds
- Fighting, roughhousing, or any activity which would likely result in injury to others
- Refusing to follow a staff directive; offensive language toward a staff member
- Threatening or assaulting another student or staff member (physically or verbally)
- Misusing safety equipment such as fire extinguishers and alarms
- Defacing, vandalizing, or stealing any property --- school or personal

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### **FIRE/EMERGENCY DRILLS**

One fire and one emergency drill are conducted each month. Emergency drills include building evacuations, bomb threats, and lock-down drills. It is critical that students remain quiet and follow the directions of the teacher throughout the course of every drill.

### **LOCKERS**

Lockers are school property. You will have the exclusive use of a hall locker near your period 1 class to keep your books and personal property during the school day. Students must have a combination lock to be given access to a locker. Your combination must be kept on file with your period 1 teacher.

The following are times students are permitted to go to their hall locker without a pass:

1. Before and after school
2. Before and after lunch

You will also have the use of a locker in the gym locker room for which you will need to buy a lock. This locker will hold your personal items while you are taking physical education.

Be sure to lock ALL personal belongings in your locker. SOMS is not responsible for any lost, misplaced, damaged or stolen items.

### **BACKPACKS**

Students are not allowed to carry backpacks during the school day unless students have a medical or otherwise legally documented reason to have one.

All backpacks must be put and kept in the student's locker at the start of each day. This includes string bags, tote bags, and any other type of bag.

## **CELL PHONE USE**

Cell phones must be off and out of sight during the school day. They should be kept in the student's personal locker. If a cell phone is seen or rings while in the building, it will be confiscated and sent to the main office. Parents will be notified about consequences. SOMS is not responsible for lost or stolen cell phones.

## **VISITORS**

All visitors must enter through the front entrance of SOMS on North Ridgewood Road. Upon being buzzed in, visitors are to stop and sign in with the security guard to receive a pass. Student visitors are not permitted as a matter of safety and that they typically detract from the educational process.

## **NOTICE**

The School District of South Orange and Maplewood does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender, socio-economic status, or disability in its programs and activities. The following person has been designated to handle inquires with regards to discriminatory concerns and non-discrimination policies:

Mr. Kevin Walston  
Assistant Superintendent  
525 Academy Street  
Maplewood, New Jersey 07040  
973 378-5600 ext. 1825

For further information, call the Office of Civil Rights at 800 421-3481.

***\*\*This Student Handbook has been designed to provide everyone with a base of information. From time to time events may take place that require administrative action beyond that which is found in the Handbook. When and as appropriate, building administrators will take those actions that are prudent and consistent with Board policy.***

