

Spring Branch Elementary

Staff Handbook

2018-2019



Teaching Kindness, Perseverance, and Self-Control

Table of Contents

Attendance

- Student Attendance.....4
- Staff Attendance / Leave Requests..... 4
- Leaving the Building during Contract Time.....4
- Substitute Readiness Expectations.....4

Health & Wellness

- Student Health and Safety.....5
- Identifying Safety Concerns.....5
- Healthy Snacks / Food Rewards.....6
- Staff Health (District Wellness Resources).....6
- Staff Injury / Medical Concerns.....6
- Smoking on District Property.....7

Instructional Expectations

- Classroom Environment.....7
- Daily Schedules.....7
- Special Class Schedules.....7
- Preparation / Planning Time.....7
- Lesson Planning.....8
- Field Trips.....8
- Grading.....9
- Homework9
- Recess / Physical Activity.....9
- Use of District Curriculum and Resources.....10
- Classroom Teacher Role in Special Education.....10
- Data-based Instructional Decisions.....10
- Use of Videos10

PBE / Evaluation

- Evaluation Information.....11

Professional Responsibilities

- Professional Learning Community.....11
- Confidentiality.....11

- Communication Expectations.....12
- Building Teams for Shared Decision-making.....12
- Meeting Attendance.....12
- Professional Dress Expectations.....13
- Managing Student Records / Cumulative Files.....13
- Reporting Child Abuse.....13
- Fundraising Expectations.....13
- Handling Money.....13

Safety

- Staff ID’s.....14
- Guests / Visitor Procedures.....14
- Emergency Preparedness (EPT).....14
- Hallway Windows.....14
- Supervision Expectations.....14
- Candles / Open Flames.....15

Technology Use

- Acceptable Use Contract (AUC).....15
- Copyright Information.....15
- Social Media.....15

Attendance

Student Attendance

School attendance is very important and should be monitored and encouraged by all staff members. Students who are absent miss out on important instruction and social opportunities. Parents should communicate with the school when a student is absent. Teachers must maintain records of all communication with families regarding absences and attendance. This information may be needed for legal purposes.

Teachers are responsible for submitting accurate student attendance each day. Attendance must be completed in a timely manner. Official attendance will be maintained in the office. Each teacher should keep a daily attendance record.

Any time there are attendance concerns, the teacher should make contact with the family as soon as possible. Any support that the family may need should be directed to the principal and family school liaison (FSL) in a timely fashion.

Staff Attendance / Leave Requests

There is no substitute for the impact that teachers and staff have on student success and trust with our families. All staff are expected to maintain regular and punctual attendance throughout the school year. The Independence School District has policy regarding staff absences including how excessive absenteeism is defined. Board of Education Policy 4310 defines absences as being “excessive” when an employee has ten (10) or more absences at semester and fifteen (15) or more absences for the year. Refer to your District Handbook for further information or direct questions to the principal.

Any time a staff member is absent, a leave request must be filled out and approved. It is the responsibility of each staff member to file the needed paperwork in a timely manner and to notify the principal either verbally or through e-mail as soon as possible.

Leaving the Building during Contract Time

All staff are expected to remain at school during work hours. If an unusual need arises, notify the principal and the office right away.

Substitute Readiness Expectations

If you are unable to be at work, call the principal (816-799-6144) as quickly as possible. You are welcome to call until 10:00 PM and again at 6:00 AM. If you leave a message with the principal, it is your responsibility to follow-up and make sure your message was received if you

are not called back quickly. Please call before 7:00 am in order to allow time for a sub to be contacted and arrive by 8:40 am. If you need to be gone more than one day, call the school office (816-521-5455) by 2:00 PM to arrange for continued substitute coverage.

Each staff member is responsible for preparing and maintaining a Substitute Notebook for use by a substitute. The District has provided notebooks and required substitute information to schools. It is the responsibility of each staff member to update information as needed during the year. Remember, your school team depends on you even when you are not at school.. Substitute notebooks are to be completed by September 1.

Health & Wellness

Student Health and Safety

It is our responsibility to monitor the health and safety of students so that they can perform at their best. Confidentiality applies to health information. Screening schedules have been established by the district. Please see the nurse for additional information about your grade level.

Sick children should be sent to the nurse's office. District health guidelines are followed in relation to illness that requires a student to go home or stay home. Medication guidelines will be followed according to district policy. No prescription or over-the-counter medication should be taken or handled by students outside of the health clinic. If a teacher becomes aware of a student with possible medications in class, please collect the substance of question and notify the office right away.

Teachers should assist in controlling for the spread of head lice. Watch for students who are frequently scratching their heads. Refer any concerns to the nurse.

Identifying Safety Concerns

All staff members have the responsibility to report any physical safety hazards or concerns promptly to the office. This includes, but is not limited to, obstacles, playground equipment, desks, chairs, doors, broken glass, etc. The office can take any reports of unsafe areas.

The custodial team routinely inspects the building, equipment and grounds in order to maintain safety for all.

Healthy Snacks / Food Rewards

Healthy and nutritious snacks or treats should be modeled and encouraged in order to support district wellness initiatives. Food should not be used as a primary reward or incentive. Gum must be sugar-free. As the PTA plans the fall, winter and Valentine's parties, they are encouraged to also support health and wellness guidelines.

If you would like your students to bring a water bottle, you may do so. Please make sure that students either change out water bottles or take containers home for cleaning regularly to support health. Encourage students to stay hydrated and plan for adequate restroom breaks. The use of water bottles should not detract from instructional time.

Staff Health (District Wellness Resources)

Our building Wellness Champion routinely provides staff with information about a variety of wellness programs. A bulletin board dedicated to staff wellness offerings is located in the staff lunchroom. Furthermore, the district offers various screenings and routine shots (flu, pneumonia, etc) at sites conveniently located throughout the district. All staff are encouraged to make use of this information to support their own personal wellness goals.

Staff Injury / Medical Concerns

Any injury that requires first aid at school or further professional treatment should be reported to the office so that the proper procedures can be followed. An injury report must be filled out and turned in to the office. The importance of following through with documenting injuries is very important. The District provides for worker's comp claims and treatment. The nurse or the office can provide you with the specific information you need. Your failure to report an injury or follow district procedures may invalidate any present or future compensation claims that arise as a result of injury while on the job.

Each year, the nurse will ask staff to provide her with any medical information that she should be aware of in the event that a health emergency arises while you are at school. This information is kept completely confidential and is maintained only by the nurse in our building.

All staff should be aware that the building is equipped with an AED defibrillator. Training is available annually on its specific use. Staff who have current CPR certification or are trained community responders (CERT training) should let the nurse know so that the building can keep a current list of staff with specific knowledge / certifications.

Smoking on District Property

All buildings and grounds in the District are designated as smoke-free. Smoking refers to the use of tobacco including cigarettes, pipes, and smokeless tobacco items. This applies to staff as well as parents and patrons.

Instructional Expectations

Classroom Environment

Learning is our primary focus. It is the responsibility of the building principal to work with all staff to ensure that all aspects of the school are conducive to learning.

Classrooms should be neat, colorful, and inviting places to learn. The physical organization of the room should ensure safety and function. Closets and storage areas should be kept neat and clean. Personal materials that have not been used within the last two years should be cleaned out and taken out of the instructional space.

Student work should always be displayed within the classroom and in the halls. A short statement describing the purpose of the displayed learning should be included on all student work displays. Use proper methods of displaying items in order to prevent damage to the walls.

All staff should help to instill a sense of pride and personal best in the learning and work that is done at Spring Branch. Within each learning space, students should have established procedures to assist custodians with their daily cleaning. This includes clearing off all desktops at the end of the day, stacking chairs as directed, and keeping pencils, pencil lead and crayons off the floor.

Daily Schedules

Please provide a copy of your classroom schedule to the principal by the end of the second week of school. As changes are made to your schedule, provide updates.

Special Class Schedules

Special class schedules are established at the beginning of the year. Attempts can be made to reschedule specials on field trip days but this is not guaranteed. Other class schedules cannot be disrupted to make up missed specials. Keeping routines is important for all students.

Preparation / Planning Time

Time is provided each day for preparation and planning in accordance with state and district guidelines. This time is allocated to prepare for student instruction. Using this time for personal reasons is discouraged except in an emergency. If an emergency arises, contact the principal.

Grade levels will meet on Thursday of each week during the common plan period. The focus of grade level collaboration should always be about quality instruction and assessment practices that support student learning and success. Data-driven decisions should always inform instructional planning, delivery and assessment.

Lesson Planning

Each teacher will maintain a lesson plan book. It is the responsibility of the each teacher to prepare lesson plans in advance—preferably one week. Each lesson plan should contain a clear instructional focus and should be located easily by either the principal or a guest teacher. Lessons plans should reflect expectations set forth in the District curriculum map for each content area.

Field Trips / Study Trips

The District provides certain instructional opportunities in the form of study trips. The purpose of study trips is to support curricular goals and objectives. Parent volunteers are not necessary for study trips and expenses and transportation arrangements are taken care of by the District.

Grade levels may plan one additional field trip that also support their curriculum. The PTA allots funds each year for transportation costs for field trips. There are numerous trip opportunities that are free around our area. Prior to deciding on any activity that requires student admission, please visit with the principal. Please do not ask parents to pay student field trips. Teachers are responsible for completing the transportation request online. Field trips should be scheduled at least six weeks in advance and all field trips need to be on the calendar by March 1st. This ensures that all arrangements have been planned for appropriately—particularly for food service and transportation.

Teachers are responsible for sending home parent notification / permission slips prior to the field trip. All parents or adult volunteers must have a background check on file prior to the trip in order to attend. Teachers are expected to carry student information and emergency contact numbers with them while on any school event. Contact the nurse regarding any medication or student health information that might be needed.

Although all field trips will be educationally relevant, they are considered a privilege. Students who do not show the required safety / behavior for any given field trip may stay at school. The decision to deny attendance on a field trip must be made by the principal. This decision would be communicated prior to the day of the field trip and parents will be notified.

Grading

Each teacher is expected to keep a grade book record of student performance. Grade books should be kept until the fall of the next school year in the event that a question about student progress arises. Elementary schools use a rubric system for progress reporting. Teachers are expected to assess student learning in a variety of ways and across a variety of days. If a parent has questions, teachers need to be able to document how that progress mark was determined.

Please remember that grade book scores should not be shown to parents if other students' scores can be viewed.

Students are permitted to grade work in class as part of the learning process. Oral reporting of scores or public posting of "grades" is not permitted.

Homework

Any work that teachers expect students to complete outside of school should be age appropriate and purposeful. Homework should be an extension of the teaching that has already taken place at school. It should be able to be completed without adult assistance.

Each teacher is expected to communicate with families about homework expectations early in the school year. A consistent system should be established where a parent understands what to do if the child struggles to complete the work or doesn't remember what to do.

The amount of homework expected on any given day should be reasonable. Suggested time for elementary students should not exceed 30 minutes. Students should be encouraged to read daily. Homework is never to be given as punishment.

Recess / Physical Activity

Physical activity is a vital part of the overall school day. Elementary children need opportunities for movement, exercise and social development. Recess should occur within the daily instructional schedule. Designated recess times are established at the beginning of the school year.

All students are to go to recess unless specific circumstances arise. These are:

- The child's parent or doctor sends a note that the child is to remain inside
- The student's behavior plan specifies that alternate activities should occur

Students are not to miss recess because of missing / late work or as punishment. If a teacher has ongoing concerns about a child, the parent and principal should be notified so that appropriate interventions can be made.

Use of District Curriculum Resources

As a team member of the Independence School District, understanding of the available curriculum resources and their use within core instruction is expected. Our philosophy at Spring Branch is to continually challenge ourselves to deepen our understanding of the core curriculum. Assessment data should drive instructional decisions and differentiating instruction to meet students where they are is very important.

All curriculum resources are the property of the Independence School District and should remain at Spring Branch.

Classroom Teacher Role in Special Education

Classroom teachers are required by law to be part of the IEP team and the educational decisions for identified students. The IEP document contains legally binding information about services, modifications and accommodations. Special education teachers will provide appropriate staff with IEP information at the start of the school year. All staff that work with a special education student should be familiar with the current IEP document and their respective responsibilities in providing appropriate supports, modifications and accommodations.

All students will participate in the least restrictive environment necessary to meet their individual needs. Special education students should be included in special activities, field trips, and class celebrations as appropriate. It is BOTH the classroom teacher and special education teacher's responsibility to communicate proactively about the educational experience of the child. The family of a special education student should receive regular communication about special activities and have opportunities for input to determine how each special activity might fit the child's abilities and IEP goals. Specific questions about special education process should be referred to the building's process coordinator.

Data-based Instructional Decisions

As a professional learning community, team members will routinely collect and analyze targeted sources of data in order to assess student learning and the quality of instruction. It is expected that team members use collaborative problem-solving and questioning in order to continuously improve performance.

Videos during instructional time:

All videos shown during the school day should be for instructional purposes and tied to the district curriculum. Teachers should always be able to justify the use of a video showing during the school day. Full length movies should be cleared with the building principal prior to use. All movies are required to be G Rated. It is not appropriate to use videos for rewards or incentives. Showing movies that were purchased personally do not come with public performance rights and are an infringement on the law leaving the teacher and school open to legal liability. Board Policy 6243 deals with copyright.

PBE / Evaluation

Evaluation Information

The Independence School District uses evaluation tools to inform job performance and encourage continual job growth. It is the responsibility of each employee to be familiar with the specific evaluation tool for their job and to fulfill the expectations of the evaluation process in a timely manner. The PBE handbook can be found on the Employee Portal. All team members should approach evaluation with a collaborative mindset. As members of an educational team, regular self-reflection and assessment of individual strengths and needed growth areas is an expected and healthy process.

Professional Responsibilities

Professional Learning Community

The Spring Branch educational team commits to working as a professional learning community focused on continual improvement. Core expectations include goal setting, job-embedded professional development, effective collaboration, responsible follow-through and eliminating barriers to success. It is equally important to understand that team goals supersede individual agendas in a professional learning community.

Confidentiality

Any information concerning students is confidential and should not be shared outside of the educational setting or with those who do not have a “need to know.” No student problem or concern should be discussed in the teacher workroom or other places where confidentiality could be compromised. Likewise, staff relationships rely on trust and professionalism and the health of our school culture is built on treating others the way that we wish to be treated.

No personal student information should ever be given out to other students or families. Refer any questions to the principal. No student may be interviewed or observed while at school by non-district individuals without permission of the principal.

Communication Expectations

Staff members are expected to communicate the positive things that are happening in classrooms and programs regularly to families. Each year, it is important to establish two-way communication with the families served. This proactive contact will help increase parent support if you must call home later regarding a concern. If you think a potential problem may occur, please inform the principal promptly so that he can be prepared. Teachers should keep copies of all written communication sent to families. It is expected that written communications are

proofread prior to sending out. Please put a copy of newsletters sent home in the principal's mailbox and "cc" the principal on e-mail newsletters.

If you are thinking about asking families for donations or contributions, please speak to the principal prior to contacting parents or students. It is a priority to be sensitive to the community we serve and to be wise stewards of the resources already provided through local taxes.

Announcements and items of interest may be posted in the teacher work room or mailbox area. Please be sure that these announcements are of general interest to the team and support our expectations for professionalism. Email is an important communication tool. Please check your district email regularly during plan times, breaks or when at home. It is expected that when students are under your supervision, you are actively engaged in instruction.

Building Teams for Shared Decision-making

Spring Branch has the following designated teams for shared decision-making:

- Instructional Leadership Team
 - Comprised of representatives responsible analyzing building academic data, for planning building professional development, data days, approving use of PD funds, etc
 - This committee meets monthly
- Principal Advisory Council
 - Comprised of school representatives for analyzing attendance data and implementing an attendance plan, planning assemblies, scheduling, building activities, etc.
- PBIS Committee
 - Comprised of school representatives charged with being trained in School Wide – Positive Behavior Support, training the staff in PBIS, and making decisions related to building expectations and procedures
 -

Meeting Attendance

Punctual attendance is expected to all staff meetings and professional development opportunities. As a team member, attendance is expected at professional development meetings, staff meetings, conferences and cross-district meetings. Anytime your students are performing or being honored, your attendance is also expected.

Support of our PTA is vital to the culture of a strong school-home connection. The PTA plans specific events during the year. Please mark them on your calendar. Teachers are expected to attend at least one PTA event each semester.

Professional Dress Expectations

We let two key beliefs guide our dress expectations:

1. We act as important role models for the students and families we serve. There are many diverse roles within the school and as such our dress should match our respective job requirements.
2. We believe that a culture of professionalism helps our students strive to conduct themselves with similarly high expectations.

Staff members have the opportunity to donate \$5.00 per month to the Independence School District Foundation, Spring Branch benevolence fund. Jeans should be worn with appropriate and professional looking tops. Jeans should be in good condition without holes. Staff should consider events going on at school (i.e. parent meetings, classroom parties, etc.) and dress appropriately.

Managing Student Records / Cumulative Files

Student files are an important source of information. Teachers are responsible for providing accurate information to the cumulative record for each of their students. This record should be kept up-to-date and complete at all times. Wording and comments on all cumulative record entries must be objective and factual. All student cumulative records should be kept in the office. If a teacher needs to update or review a student's file, please use the workroom area and mark the file as "out" with your name in the vault.

Only employees of the school may view a student's cum file and, in doing so, must have a legitimate need for the information it contains. A sheet logging who has accessed the file, date and reason must be filled out. Paraprofessionals or parent volunteers are not to have access to student records.

Reporting Child Abuse

Teachers are mandated reporters of suspected child abuse or neglect. Teachers should follow the guidelines of the yearly Safe Schools Training for Child Abuse and Mandatory Reporting.

Fundraising

All fundraising will be done in accordance with District guidelines established in 2009. Fundraising requests must be submitted and approved by the district prior to the activity. See the principal if you have specific questions.

Handling Money

Never leave collected money in the classroom. Teachers should send all collected money to the office for storage. Club sponsors are responsible for all money accounting and deposits must be prepared within 24 hours of collection. The office staff needs club deposits to be already accounted for and ready to deposit. All staff should keep their personal belongings and money locked during the day.

Safety

Staff ID's

All staff should wear their District photo ID when at school. If you see an adult that is unfamiliar to you and has no District ID, please ask how you can assist and walk with him/her to the office.

Guests / Visitor Procedures

All school guests will be buzzed into the building and should check in at the office. A visitor sticker will be issued. Please be observant of guests in the building. If someone strikes you as unusual or is in a place that seems unusual, act on your gut instinct and notify the office.

On days when many guests are expected, the office still uses a sign-in sheet to help document all visitors to the school.

Emergency Preparedness (EPT)

Staff members will have annual training in the procedures used in emergency situations. Drills are conducted regularly throughout the year to ensure proper preparedness. The building has an Emergency Preparedness Team (EPT) that meets monthly and leads all drills. This same team activates their assigned roles in an actual emergency.

Each room will maintain a map explaining routes for fire exits, severe weather safety areas, and earthquake procedures. A flip chart of all emergency procedures is maintained by each doorway along with a current class roster, color-coded communication cards with blank sticky notes and a pencil / pen. Emergency materials are periodically checked.

Hallway Windows

Any windows into classrooms or offices from the hallway need to have direct line of sight. Do not cover these window areas. This ensures that the principal, building emergency team and/or community responders can assess the status of all classrooms quickly.

Supervision Expectations

Students must be properly supervised at all times. Teachers walk students to special classes, recess, lunch, and at arrival/dismissal. Spring Branch has established common area expectations and procedures that are posted and practiced regularly to assist in supervision and safety. If a student is unaccounted for at any time, notify the office immediately. If you need to leave your supervision area, you must ask another staff member to supervise students while you are gone (e.g., to the restroom). All teachers supervise their students at recess.

Candles / Open Flames

Candles or any open flames are not permitted in elementary schools.

Technology Use

Acceptable Use Contract (AUC)

The District has established policy regarding the purpose and use of technology within the educational setting. All staff must comply with the acceptable use contract. Training for use of various technologies is offered by the District. All staff are encouraged to be knowledgeable about technologies that can improve job efficiency and effectiveness.

When students are in the instructional setting, staff are expected to be actively teaching. Technology should integrate into well-prepared lesson objectives and support rigorous learning.

Copyright Information

Fair Use Guidelines for copyrighted information are posted by each copier in the office complex. All staff are expected to comply with those guidelines. Specific questions can be directed to the Library Media Specialist or the Principal.

Social Media

Technology is dynamic. Staff members are cautioned to be aware of the distinction between their personal and professional life. Staff are expected to know and follow Board Policy.

