

St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School

Handbook for Students in Kindergarten through Grade 5

Updated on 9-6-2011

The St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School does not discriminate in providing services to children and their families on the basis of race, sexual orientation, religion, cultural heritage, political beliefs, or marital status.

***St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School
Mission & Philosophy***

The St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School is a child-centered American-Armenian Institution committed to academic excellence. At the Pre-School level, the curriculum nurtures the whole child, developing skills in the Armenian language. At the Elementary level, the core curriculum subjects are taught in English. The Armenian language, religion & history are taught in Armenian, with an emphasis on creating awareness and instilling an appreciation of Armenian culture & traditions.

St. Stephen's creates opportunities to promote student self-esteem and encourage student leadership by developing a sense of responsibility, self-discipline, cooperation, and respect for others.

St. Stephen's works toward creating a climate of learning that encourages risk and exploration. Acknowledging that students acquire knowledge in various learning styles and that rates of maturation differ among students, St. Stephen's provides for these individual differences and learning styles.

These goals are accomplished by:

- 1) Stimulating students' interests in discussions that are challenging and thought-provoking.
- 2) Applying current classroom management techniques to establish a productive learning environment.
- 3) Providing a variety of instructional materials, as well as innovative and enriching programs to enhance learning in the classroom.
- 4) Developing positive interpersonal relationships, teacher to teacher, teacher to student, student to student, as well as teacher to parent.
- 5) Fostering a sense of fairness, respect, responsibility and courtesy.
- 6) Creating a connection between Armenian and American cultures.

The St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School strives to maintain high academic standards for its curriculum and endeavors to educate the whole child in a nurturing and friendly environment where learning is an enjoyable experience.

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I. School Hours

| | |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| Nursery: | 8.30 AM - 2.30 PM |
| Kindergarten: | 8:05 AM - 2:50 PM |
| Elementary: | 8:05 AM - 3:05 PM |
| Early Drop off: | 7:00 AM – 7:45 AM |
| Late Stay: | 3:05 PM – 5:30 PM |
| Early Release Day: | 8:05 AM – 12:00 Noon |
| Weather delay (one hour): | 9:00 AM – 3:05 PM |
| Weather delay (two hours): | 10:00 AM – 3:05 PM |

II. Arrival and Dismissal

Arrival

Students should arrive at school between 7:45 AM and 8:05 AM. Please be aware that **there is no general supervision before 7:45 AM.**

Attendance will be taken before morning prayer and assembly, which begins at 8:05 AM. On the first day of school, as well as on Wednesdays, all students should report to their classrooms. The rest of the year students should proceed to the gym for morning prayer and assembly.

Parents are encouraged to utilize the live drop off lane (see below) in front of the elementary building. Students should will enter the gymnasium where they will be supervised by a teacher before the morning prayer and assembly.

Early Drop Off

Students who arrive before 7:45 AM must be escorted by a parent to the early drop off program--which takes place in the second floor kindergarten classroom--and will be charged accordingly. Early drop off is available beginning at 7:00 AM.

The fee for early drop off is determined at the beginning of each academic year.

Dismissal

Students must be picked up by a parent or parent-designated adult at dismissal. If someone other than a parent is to pick up a child and that person's name is not on the student's consent form, the parent must provide written notification to the school office. Under no circumstances will students be allowed to leave the school premises without adult supervision. Parents assume full responsibility for their children upon pick up. In order to maintain a safe environment, parents should depart the school building immediately upon pick up.

After 3:15 PM students will automatically be escorted to the Late Stay program and will be charged accordingly.

Excused Dismissal

If a child is to be dismissed during the school day, written parental notification is required. Parents are asked to try to schedule doctors and other appointments after school hours so that students do not miss valuable learning time.

Late Stay

SSAES operates a Late Stay program which ends at 5:30 PM Monday – Friday.

Students who are not picked up by 3:15 PM will be escorted to the Late Stay program and will be charged accordingly.

Late Stay is held in the elementary building for students in grades 1-5 and will provide students an environment to complete homework in a quiet, structured, and supervised setting. Late Stay begins with a snack and recess (students should bring a snack from home). Students will then proceed with their homework. This is NOT a tutoring or extra help period, but rather a quiet supervised study hall. Once homework is complete students are free to engage in quiet games or reading within the classroom. Late Stay students should bring a book from home. Kindergarten students will be escorted to the Preschool building for Late Stay.

The fee and hours for late stay are determined at the beginning of each academic year.

Early Release Days

On early release days, students will be dismissed at 12 noon. There will be no late stay program available on early release days. **Please be aware that while there is no lunch period on early release days, there is a snack time.**

Tardiness

Attendance is taken at 8:05 AM before morning prayer and assembly. Students who arrive after attendance has been taken are considered tardy. While some tardiness is unavoidable, being in school on time is an important part of the education process and helps students begin their day on a positive note. Students who are late miss valuable learning.

Students should be in the gym or in their classroom on Wednesdays no later than 8:05 AM.

The school's policy is firm in regards to tardiness.

One-Two-Three Policy

If a student arrives at school after 8:05 AM, the student MUST report to the school office—not the classroom—to obtain a pass to enter his/her classroom. Students will not be permitted to enter the classroom without a late pass. Teachers and students are engaged in classroom learning and logistics and tardiness not only affects the tardy student but also distracts the teacher and students in the classroom.

First time: A notice will be sent home to the parent(s.) The notice must be signed by a parent and returned to school the following day.

Second Time per term: A second notice will be sent home to the parent(s) advising of this second tardiness. The notice must be signed by a parent and returned to school the following day.

Third Time per term: A third note will be sent home and the school will call the parent advising of a detention for the student. A parent is required to return to school the day after receiving the third note to meet with the principal.

An Attendance Award will be given at the end of each month to those students who have not been absent or tardy. In addition, Perfect Attendance Awards will be presented at the end of the year graduation program.

Absence

Notification of absence should be called into the school office by 8:30 AM. If a child is absent for any amount of time due to an infectious or communicable illness or health risk, the school requires a written note from the child's doctor stating the illness and the date the child is able to return to school. It is the student's responsibility to make up any missed work. It is the responsibility of the student / parent to contact the teacher to obtain make up work.

Traffic, Safety, and Live Drop Off

- SSAES has a Live Drop Off lane. This lane runs along Nichols Avenue from Bigelow Avenue to Elton Avenue in front of the school.
- Live drop off means that parents **should not get out of the car** but rather pull up to the live drop off area and stop the car. Students exit the passenger side of the car and proceed directly into the building.
- There is **no parking** in front of the school on Nichols Avenue (from Bigelow Avenue to Elton Avenue) between 7:30 AM and 8:30 AM
- The crosswalk must remain clear of any vehicles so pedestrians may cross safely.
- A member of the staff will be at or near the cross walk to facilitate entry.
- Automobiles must travel down Bigelow Avenue and turn right onto Nichols Avenue in order to enter the Live Drop Off lane.
- **No U-turns will be allowed on Nichols Ave.** Please use the ACEC parking lot to change direction.
- No live drop-off is permitted on Elton Avenue.
- Elton Avenue traffic should consist only of those families who either have children at both school facilities or just the Preschool. If you have children in both schools, please consider using the drop off lane to drop off your elementary child first and then drive to the Preschool or park on Elton Avenue and walk your children to their respective buildings.
- All elementary traffic should use the Bigelow and Nichols Avenue roadways.
- Parents are asked to help facilitate a smooth and safe start to each morning by using the live drop off lane unless there is a need to enter the building (i.e. a teacher conference or meeting).

Parents may park in the following areas: Along the side of the ACEC building on Elton Avenue, Nichols Avenue across the street from the ACEC in the metered spaces, or the parking lot across the street on Nichols Avenue. Parking in the ACEC parking lot is available from 7:45 AM – 8:15 AM.

Parents should observe all traffic and parking codes. Parents are reminded **NOT** to park in the handicap space designated by yellow curbing in front of the ACEC building, or block the crosswalk at any time. Also there is **no double parking** in front of the Preschool or ACEC buildings. Parents should watch children carefully during drop-off and pick-up and be sure to follow all safety rules.

School Cancellation and Delays

St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School will occasionally cancel school due to inclement weather or other emergencies.

School closing or delay will be posted by 6:30 AM under the name St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School (Watertown) on Television News stations 4 (WBZ – TV), 5 (WCVB TV), and 7 (WHDH TV) and also on radio station WRKO AM/680. Some of these television stations have a place on their website to register to receive school closing information.

School closing, delay, and/or early release will also be posted on the school's web site, www.ssaes.org.

For a one hour delay, school will begin at 9:00 AM.
For a two hour delay, school will begin at 10:00 AM.
On delay days, there will be no early arrival program.

The school accounts for five snow days in developing the school calendar. If more than five snow days are taken, the days may be made up either during April vacation week or at the end of the school year.

Detention

Detention is held from 7:30 AM - 8:05 AM or 3:05 PM - 3:35 PM. Detention is used as disciplinary action for grade 1- 5 students who do not follow SSAES policies and rules. Parents will be given written notice at least one day in advance when their child is to attend detention. If students are not picked up after detention they will be escorted to Late Stay and charged accordingly.

III. Parent and Guest Visitation

Unscheduled visits during the school day cause unnecessary disruption to the learning environment. In the event of any visit during the school day, parents and guests must first report to the school office on the second floor.

IV. School Dress Code

SSAES has a school uniform which promotes pride in our school.

BOYS wear:

The designated blue-plaid vest with the school emblem patch on the left side

Navy tie (for special occasions as announced)

White long or short sleeved collared shirt

Navy blue pants or shorts (No jeans)

White or navy blue socks

Black rubber-soled shoes

Navy blue sweater (not mandatory)

GIRLS wear:

The designated blue-plaid hemmed knee length jumper with the school emblem patch on the left side

White collared blouse

White or navy blue socks or tights

White or navy blue leggings may be worn under the uniform.

Black rubber-soled shoes

Navy blue sweater (not mandatory)

Students should not wear stained or torn uniforms. Nail polish and jewelry (except stud earrings) are prohibited.

Gym Class Dress Code

BOYS AND GIRLS:

White or blue designated school emblem T-shirt

Navy blue designated school emblem shorts or sweat pants

Sneakers (no sneakers with wheels)

Students who do not wear sneakers or the proper gym uniform will not be able to participate in gym class.

Regular school and gym uniforms should be ordered from:

Collegiate House School Uniforms

970 Fellsway

Medford, MA 02155

Phone: 781-219-4952

Each spring SSAES also hosts a uniform fitting and ordering day.

Weather permitting all classes go outside at least once a day. Please be sure your child dresses properly. During winter months students should wear boots, hat, mittens or gloves and wear a heavy jacket or coat to school. In order to

adhere to our dress code and keep our classrooms clean, snow boots cannot be worn in the classrooms. Therefore, when students wear snow boots, please remember to pack school shoes.

Please label all of your child's belongings!

Dress Code – Non Compliance

One-Two-Three Policy

First time: A note will be sent home to the parent(s.) The notice must be signed by a parent and returned to school the following day.

Second Time per term: A second notice will be sent home to the parent(s). The notice must be signed by a parent and returned to school the following day.

Third Time per term: A third note will be sent home and a call will be made to the parent(s) scheduling a detention for the student. The parent is required to return to school the day after receiving the third note to meet with the principal.

V. School Conduct and Regulations

Code of Conduct

- Come to school each day prepared to learn
- Respect all teachers, staff, students and guests
- Respect school rules and policies
- Respect school, ACEC, and personal property
- Use respectful language

Playground and Courtyard Rules

- Use play structure and other equipment properly
- Only soft foam balls are permitted in the courtyard and playground area.
- No climbing on the tree or fence
- No climbing on or beyond the courtyard railings.
- Balls should not be thrown at windows
- Equipment should be put back in its proper place

Gym and Lobby Rules

- No one should be in the gym unsupervised
- Use equipment properly.
- Balls should not be kicked or thrown against walls or the lighting
- No playing on the stage or stairs
- No climbing on or around the stacked chairs

The use of the gym is for students and staff during school hours and school-sponsored after school activities only.

Homework

Homework has an important place in the educational process. It is an extension of the in-school learning experience and is assigned to help students achieve optimal learning.

It is important to set a routine which includes a time and place each evening to do homework. In addition, students should have a quiet space and proper supplies for completing assignments.

Homework is the student's responsibility and not the parent's. Parents are encouraged to oversee that homework is being completed and to support students without actually providing answers or doing the work. An assignment book is provided to grades 3 – 5 students to assist with organization of homework assignments. Parents must sign the assignment book daily upon completion of homework.

Technology

Computer Lab

Our mission at SSAES is to teach our students the skills and behaviors they will need as they move on to middle school and beyond. We have acquired and deployed a full range of computer technology in support of this mission. This technology includes personal computers, file servers, printers, and high speed access to the Internet. We expect that all students and staff members will respect SSAES core values as they use these tools. We use software and hardware tools to block access to inappropriate Web sites and to safeguard our students' privacy. Computer use by students is well supervised; students are not allowed access unless a staff member is present and able to monitor them. Inappropriate use of the computers results in immediate disciplinary consequences. At the beginning of each academic year each student will receive a safe use agreement form to sign and return to the classroom teacher, in order to use the computer lab.

Photo Publication

SSAES provides a photo release form for all students, which gives parental consent for the school to take photos of the students to be used for all school PR, media and website purposes (i.e. yearbook, JRAK and Armenian/local newspapers). This release form is signed each September.

VI. Behavior Management

Our teachers utilize many strategies to encourage good behavior. However, there are times when modification steps may need to be taken to address specific behavior.

One-Two-Three Policy

First time. A Disciplinary Warning Notice will be sent home. The Notice must be signed by a parent and returned to school the following day. This will be followed by a meeting with the parent(s) and teacher to discuss the behavior issue.

Second Time per month. A Disciplinary Warning Notice will be sent home. The notice must be signed by a parent and returned to school the following day. This will be followed by a meeting with the parent(s), teacher, and the principal to discuss effective ways to help the student improve his/her behavior.

Third Time per month. A Disciplinary Warning Notice will be sent home scheduling a detention for the student. The notice must be signed by a parent and returned to school the following day.

After three detentions in a term a student will receive in-school suspension. During in-school suspension the student will be expected to do all of his/her classroom work in a quiet area away from the classroom under the supervision of the administration.

Apart from the school's one-two-three policy, in the case of a serious matter a student may be sent to the principal's office, given a Disciplinary Warning Notice, and given an immediate detention, or suspended from a school activity, after school program, or field trip (including the fifth grade class field trip to Armenia.)

Student Termination for Behavior and Conduct

In extreme circumstances, St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School reserves the right to terminate a student's enrollment. Some of the reasons a student may be asked to leave the school include:

- Blatant disregard for school's policies
- Extremely violent or aggressive behavior
- Causing injury to others
- Intentional damage to school property

In the event of termination, the following steps *may* be taken:

The parent will be notified of the situation and a meeting will be held with the principal, parents, and other involved persons. If needed, the school will inform parents of the availability of information and resources for other services.

In the event that the behavior continues with no noticeable improvement, a second meeting will be held with the principal, parents, and other involved persons.

If the situation continues again with no improvement the child may be terminated.

In the case of termination, no tuition refund will be given.

When a child is terminated from the school, whether initiated by the school or the parents, the school will prepare the child for termination in a manner consistent with the child's ability to understand.

VII. Referral Services

SSAES strives to provide a bilingual, bicultural education for our students. As a private school with limited resources, the school may not be able to provide every child with the support necessary for his/her individual learning needs.

Procedures for referring students to appropriate academic, social, mental health, and medical services are as follows:

If a teacher has a concern about a student, the concern is brought to the attention of and discussed with the parent.

If concern continues the principal and/or another staff member may be asked to observe the situation for additional assessment.

The principal may then formally assess the concern, and meet with the child's parents and teacher as soon as possible to discuss the situation.

An evaluation may be made. A record of this evaluation will be kept in the child's file. SSAES will support parents throughout the referral process.

Once the evaluation is made, in order for the child to continue at SSAES it is mandatory that the parent(s) follow through with the recommendation and provide the school with the necessary follow up documentation.

The principal and teacher will then review the completed recommendations with the parent(s) and determine the appropriate course of action which SSAES may or may not be able to provide.

In limited cases, SSAES may not be able to provide the support or services recommended, in which case SSAES will support and facilitate a transition to a new learning institution.

Some referral agencies include:

- * Watertown Public School Special Education and Needs Dept. 617-926-7766
- * Waltham Public School Special Ed and Needs Dept. 781-893-8050 x2024
- * Dept. of Social Services-Tri City Area Arlington 1-800-769-4615 and 1-800-432-1824
- * Cambridge Child Care Resource Center 547-1063
- * Children's Hospital (Boston) (617) 355-6000
- * United Ways Parents' Line (617) 624-8020
- * Family Ties For Children With Special Needs 1-800-905-Ties (8437)
- * Counseling Collaborative (781) 861-1818
- * Allied Rehabilitation Associates (781) 891-0452
- * Mass Eye and Ear
 - Eye Department (617) 573-3048
 - Ear-Nose-Throat (617) 573-3954

VIII. Health Care

Procedures for Emergency

SSAES staff are trained in First Aid. In the event of an emergency, a certified staff member will administer first aid if needed.

Every effort will be made to contact parents immediately in the event of an emergency. However, if a parent cannot be contacted, SSAES will transport the child to Mt. Auburn Hospital in Cambridge (or the nearest hospital) and will secure necessary treatment.

Notification of Injury

The school will notify parents if first aid is administered to their child.

Prescription Medications

Dispensing of any prescription medicine requires a signed medication authorization form (which can be obtained from the school office) by the parent. The form must specify both the dosage and the time to be administered. A new form is needed each time a medication is prescribed. The medication must have a current prescription label and be in the original bottle. Prescription label must include child's name, dosage and date as well as the name and telephone number of the pharmacy.

Non-Prescription Medications

Non prescription medication also requires a medical authorization form (which can be obtained from the school office) signed by the parent as well as a current prescription or written order of a physician. A medical authorization form must be renewed every three months. Non-prescription ointments and topical lotions also require a medical authorization form signed by the parent, specifying the time and dosage.

Allergies

During registration parents are required to complete a Developmental History form, which includes information about a child's allergies. In the case of a life-threatening allergy, parents must provide an allergy action plan for their child.

Teachers make every effort to protect children from exposure to foods, chemicals or other materials to which the parents have stated that their children are allergic. However, SSAES is not allergen-free but makes every effort to be allergen-safe.

In case of a life threatening allergic reaction, the staff will activate the allergy action plan.

SSAES staff are trained in anaphylactic reactions and treatment (including the use of an EPI pen.) Students who are prescribed an EPI pen must provide a current EPI prescription to the classroom teacher.

Asthma

Most children with asthma will be allowed to exercise as scheduled. Parents must inform the school if their asthmatic child should engage in limited exercise. Asthmatic attacks that occur at school will be controlled by inhalant use as prescribed. The classroom teacher will keep the inhaler unless the child is at least 7 years old AND knows how and when to use it. If the attack does not subside and a parent cannot be immediately contacted the child will be transported to a hospital emergency room.

All medication will be stored out of the reach of children and under proper conditions for sanitation, preservation, security and safety.

Plan for Emergency Evacuation

Evacuation Fire Drills are held at least two times during the school year.

In the case of an actual evacuation, students and teachers will be evacuated to:

Primary evacuation site:

**St. Stephen's Armenian Apostolic Church Hall
Artsakh Street
Watertown MA**

Alternate Evacuation Site (in case the primary evacuation site is unavailable):

**Armenian Memorial Church
32 Bigelow Avenue
Watertown MA**

Evacuation guidelines and routes are posted in each classroom.

In the case of an actual emergency, parents will be notified as soon as possible in accordance with the emergency contact guidelines provided at registration.

Reporting Abuse and Neglect

SSAES staff are mandated reporters, which means they are required by law to report suspected abuse and neglect to the Department of Social Services.

Please note the following definitions:

Abuse: The non-accidental commission of any act by a caretaker which causes or creates a substantial risk of harm or threat of harm to a child's well being.

Neglect: Failure by a caretaker, either deliberately or through negligence to take those actions necessary to provide a child with minimally adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, supervision or other essential care.

Reasonable Cause.: A basis for judgment that rests on specific facts either directly observed or obtained from reliable sources, and that supports a belief that a particular event probably took place or a particular condition probably exists

Reportable Condition: A serious physical or emotional injury resulting from abuse or neglect, or the commission of any act by a caretaker with a child, which constitutes a sexual offense under the criminal laws of the Commonwealth, or the physical dependence of a child upon an addictive drug at birth.

Contagious Diseases and Health Risks

SSAES strives to protect all children from contagious illnesses and health risks.

If a child has any of the following symptoms, contagious illnesses, or health risks s/he is prohibited from attending school until they are symptom-free:

Symptoms:

Vomiting

Diarrhea

Fever

Colored nasal discharge

Contagious Illnesses

Chicken pox

Strep throat

Whooping cough

Measles

Conjunctivitis

Health Risks

Head lice

Any child with the above symptoms, illnesses, or health risks will be sent home.

Any child prescribed an antibiotic must take it for a minimum of 24 hours before returning to school. In addition, a child must be free from fever, vomiting, or diarrhea for 24 hours before returning to school.

In some cases (such as but not limited to chicken pox) a note from the child's doctor stating the illness and the date the child is able to return to school may be required.

A child must be able to participate in all activities (including outdoor recess) upon returning to school.

In the case of head lice, SSAES has a strict "no nit (egg) policy." Students with head lice must be given a nit-free approval by a nurse or doctor before returning to school.

The school will notify parents when there is a case of a contagious illness or health risk at SSAES.

IX. Snacks, Lunches, and Party Guidelines

Students bring their own snack to school every day. Hot lunch is offered everyday at the elementary school. Students bring their own lunch to school every day. Lunch menus are sent home in the middle of each month for the following month. Parents pay only for the days that they have selected. The rest of the time students bring their own lunch from home.

Due to an increase in childhood allergies and the serious health risks to some students, SSAES is a **PEANUT SAFE SCHOOL** which means that peanut and peanut products are prohibited in school. In addition some classrooms may have even additional prohibitions based on the makeup of the class.

Parents are asked to help keep all of our students safe by **reading food labels carefully to make sure items sent to school do not contain peanuts or peanut by-products.**

In addition, SSAES strives to promote nutritious eating habits in order to maintain a healthy learning environment for all of our students. Therefore, students are encouraged to bring a nutritionally balanced lunch and snacks to school which should include foods from the basic four food groups (fruits and vegetables; bread/grains, dairy, and meat/beans.)

Only the following food items may be brought to school for special occasions at classroom parties: fruits and vegetables. Birthday parties are no more celebrated at the school. Birthdays will be mentioned by the teacher and a special birthday song will be sung to the child by the classmates.

Candy, gum, and soda should not be brought to school at any time. In addition, goody bags with candy are not allowed. Non food items are always welcome.

Lunches and snacks should be kept in a lunch box or bag. Napkins and utensils should be included, as the school does not provide these items. Glass bottles or containers are not allowed, due to possible breakage.

X. Prohibited Items

The school provides many educational and fun toys to all classes. Children should not bring toys (including sports equipment) to school, except on days assigned for Show & Tell or as assigned by the teacher.

Video games, cellular telephones, MP3 (ie I-Pod) players, and other electronic devices are prohibited in school at all times. Guns, knives, swords or other weaponry, real or toy, are prohibited at all times.

Any student who is found on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events in possession of a dangerous weapon including ,but not limited to

a gun or a knife or a controlled substance may be subject to expulsion from the school.

XI. Report Cards

Kindergarten students

Progress Reports will be issued twice a year, in January and June.

Elementary students

Report cards will be issues three times a year, in November, March and June.

Conferences

Regular Parent/Teacher Conferences are scheduled twice during the school year when written progress reports or report cards are issued. Additional conferences may be arranged by the classroom teacher as needed.

In addition, parents may schedule additional meetings with the teacher. However, for reasons of confidentiality and to provide parents with the teacher's full attention, parents are asked to schedule these appointments (i.e. email or phone) rather than approaching teachers at arrival or dismissal.

XII. Student Records

Information contained in a child's record is privileged and confidential. The school will not distribute or release record information to anyone except the Administration and teaching staff without the specific written consent of a parent or legal guardian. Parents will be notified if their child's record is subpoenaed.

Access to Student Records

Parents may access their student's record by contacting the principal. In order to duplicate or disseminate their child's record, a written request must be made to the principal. The school may charge a fee for copies of student records.

Amending School Records

Parents have the right to add information, comments, or any other relevant material to their child's record.

Requests to amend a student record must be made in writing to the principal.

XIII. Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)

The Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) is an integral part of our school community. Parents are encouraged to attend monthly meetings and bring their energy and expertise to the PTO's enrichment and fundraising activities.

Updated news and information as well as contact information for the PTO executive is available on the school's website.

XIV. School Service Policy

As part of the vibrant community at SSAES, parents participate in ensuring the success of many of the school's enrichment and fundraising activities by agreeing to volunteer a minimum of 10 hours per family each school year. At St. Stephen's, we are proud that the collective effort of more than 90% of our families has resulted in **over 2500 service hours** during the school year. Some of the exciting ways parents serve include serving on a variety of school committees, helping with the school bazaar, serving pizza lunch, facilitating the student book club, etc.

Through the dedication and commitment of our parents, these service hours help:

1. Raise money through fundraising activities (bazaar, wine tasting, etc) to help offset the costs of operating expenses. This in turn helps to moderate the level of tuition and fees.
2. Compliment the existing educational program by offering enrichment activities for our students and their families.
3. Promote and encourage school and community spirit.

The 10-hour service obligation may be filled by any family adult (parent, grandparent, guardian, etc.). The School Board manages these service hours by using a web-based program. This program was initiated during the 2005/2006 school years, and has been instrumental in tracking the service hours, and helping parents find new ways to support our school.

In order to help the school fulfill its programming and fundraising targets, service hours must be completed by May 15 of the school year. Parents who do not complete their hours by May 15 will be assessed a fee of \$100.00 for each hour not completed, and will only be allowed to register their child/children for the following school year upon payment of outstanding fees.

The goal of the Service Policy is to continue to encourage service, to build community, and to help our school be the best it can possibly be. These service hours are instrumental in both the day to day operation of the school, and in ensuring that our school is strong for generations to come.

XV. Field Trips

Each year SSAES provides a number of enrichment experiences outside of the classroom, including field trips.

At times, parents may be asked to volunteer as chaperones for field trips. While SSAES hopes that many parents will have an opportunity to share this experience with their child and many parents express interest in participating, only a limited number of chaperones can be accommodated per field trip.

SSAES will determine the number of chaperones necessary for each trip and the classroom teacher will finalize the chaperone list.

Chaperones will be assigned a group of students to supervise, engage, and ensure their safety. Chaperones must stay with their assigned group throughout the duration of the field trip.

Fifth Grade Class Field Trip to Armenia



SSAES provides a unique experience for fifth grade graduating students and their parents. A two week fully chaperoned educational field trip to the Republic of Armenia complements our students' learning in May, enjoying an exciting opportunity to celebrate Armenian Independence Day in Armenia.

The school has designed a safe, educational, and fun itinerary which fully compliments our students learning at our school. Students visit several cities and villages, museums, landmarks, monuments, and schools, about which they have studied for many years.

St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

I. Introduction

At St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School (SSAES) we expect that all members of our school community will treat each other with civility and respect. The school is committed to providing all students with a positive learning environment that is free from bullying and cyber-bullying.

The SSAES Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan ("Plan"), set forth below, is published in response to the recently enacted Massachusetts law against bullying. It is an integral part of our efforts to promote learning and prevent behavior that can impede the learning process.

It is important that this Plan be well understood by all members of the SSAES community. The Principal is in charge of the implementation and administration of the Plan. Questions and concerns related to this Plan may be referred to her.

II. Policy against Bullying, Cyber-bullying, and Retaliation

The school will not tolerate any form of bullying or cyber-bullying, nor will tolerate retaliation against any person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.

Bullying and cyber-bullying are prohibited on school premises and at school sponsored programs, activities and events. Bullying and cyber-bullying also are prohibited in vehicles used by the school for field trips, and through use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased, or used by the school.

In addition, bullying and cyber-bullying are prohibited at a location, activity, function, or program that is not school-related or through the use of technology or electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by the school, if the bullying creates a hostile environment at school for a targeted student; infringes on the rights of a targeted student at the school; or substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of the school.

Definitions under the Law. The following definitions are drawn from the Massachusetts law against Bullying:

Bullying. *“Bullying” is defined as the repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:*

- *causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim’s property;*
- *places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself or of damage to his or her property*
- *creates a hostile environment at school for the targeted student;*
- *infringes on the rights of the targeted student at school; or*
- *materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.*

Cyber-bullying. *Cyber-bullying is bullying through the use of technology or electronic devices such as telephones, cell phones, computers, fax machines and the internet. It includes, but it is not limited to, e-mail, instant messages, text messages, and internet postings, whether on a webpage, in a blog, or otherwise.*

Hostile Environment. *A hostile environment is a situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule, or insult that is sufficiently severe to alter the conditions of a student’s education.*

Retaliation. *Retaliation is any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a student who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.*

III. Prevention of Bullying and Cyber-bullying

From nursery grades at SSAES, students learn that they have to treat each other with civility and respect. Teachers are clear in their expectations for student behavior. When necessary, parents are notified and asked to reinforce our standards concerning student conduct.

We have an excellent social and emotional learning curriculum (The Open Circle) which we have been using for the past seven years, K through Gr. 5. In every grade, twice a week, 15 minutes are dedicated to the implementation of this curriculum. When a new teacher joins our faculty, the school provides for the Open Circle professional development workshops and ongoing training. We are very proud to call SSAES an Open Circle school.

Morning Assemblies are utilized by the Principal to make sure that students are well informed about what is expected of them and to reinforce positive conduct.

The administration and faculty recognize that it is essential that expectations for student conduct extend to hallways, lunch, recess, school programs, school events and field trips. The school ensures that ample adult supervision is provided on school premises as well as on field trips.

IV. Reports of Bullying, Cyber-Bullying, or Retaliation

Any student who is the target of bullying or cyber-bullying or has witnessed an incident of bullying or cyber-bullying or has relevant information about bullying and cyber-bullying prohibited by this policy is strongly encouraged to promptly report the matter orally or in writing to the Principal or to any faculty or staff member with whom the student is comfortable speaking. Also, any student who is subject to retaliation in violation of this policy or who knows of another student who has been subject to retaliation is urged to report it as soon as possible.

A parent of a student who is the target of bullying or cyber-bullying or of a student who has witnessed or has relevant information about bullying or cyber-bullying is strongly urged to promptly notify the Principal. Furthermore, any parent who has him or herself witnessed bullying and cyber-bullying or has relevant information concerning such an incident is strongly urged to come forward to the Principal. A parent should also report any incident of retaliation in violation of this policy to the Principal in writing.

Any member of the faculty or staff of the School who witnesses or becomes aware of bullying or cyber-bullying in violation of this policy or who becomes aware of retaliation against a student who reported information concerning a violation of this policy is required to report it immediately to the Principal. There are to be no exceptions. A member of the faculty or staff may not make promises of confidentiality to a student or parent who informs him of an allegation of bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation.

Faculty and staff may not, under this policy, make reports anonymously. The school also urges students and their parents not to make reports anonymously. It is far more difficult to determine the facts of what occurred if complaints are made anonymously. Also, while the School cannot promise strict confidentiality, because information must be shared in order to conduct an effective investigation, the School releases information concerning complaints of bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation only on a legitimate need-to know basis.

All reports will be documented in writing, using SSAES Bullying and Intervention Incident Reporting Form. (Attachment)

V. Responding to a Report of Bullying, Cyber-bullying, or Retaliation

A. Preliminary Steps. When a complaint of bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation is brought to the attention of the Principal, an assessment is made as to whether any initial steps should be taken to protect the well being of students and to prevent disruption of their learning environment while the investigation is being conducted. Responses to promote safety may include, but not be limited to pre-determining seating arrangements for the target and aggressor in the classroom and altering the aggressor's access to the target.

B. Obligation to Notify Parents. It is the policy of the School to notify the parents of any student who is an alleged target of bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation and the parents of an alleged aggressor promptly after a complaint has been made.

C. Investigation. An impartial investigation is conducted by the Principal. That investigation may include interviews with the person who made the complaint and with any students, faculty, staff or other persons who witnessed or have relevant information about the alleged incident. Depending on the circumstances, the Principal may choose to consult with other teachers.

D. Resolution, Notification, and Follow-Up. Following interviews and any other investigation, the Principal will determine whether and to what extent the allegation of bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation has been substantiated. If it is determined that the policy set forth in this plan has been violated, the Principal will determine what disciplinary action and/or other remedial action is appropriate and how it will be implemented.

The goal of an investigation and the following disciplinary or remedial process is to correct the situation to the extent that is reasonably possible and to take steps to prevent a repetition of the incident and to prevent the target and others who participated in the investigation from being subject to retaliation.

In appropriate circumstances, such as when a crime may have been committed or a child may have been subject to abuse or neglect of the type that is reportable under Chapter 119, Section 51A of the Massachusetts General Laws, law enforcement or another appropriate government agency may be notified.

Upon completion of the investigation, the Principal will meet individually with the student or students who were the target of the alleged incident and the student or students against whom the complaint was made and their parents to report the results of the investigation and to inform the parties of the steps that will be taken to correct the situation. The amount of information provided in these meetings may be limited by confidentiality laws protecting student records.

Follow-up contacts will be made with any student found to have been targeted in violation of this policy and his/her parents to inquire if there have been further incidents.

All the above actions will be documented without delay by using SSAES Investigation and Conclusions from the Investigation Form (Attachment).

VI. Conclusion

This Plan is intended:

- To protect all students and ensure that they feel safe by preventing bullying and cyber-bullying
- To encourage students and their parents to have confidence in the School's procedures and to come forward promptly whenever a student is subject to conduct that is prohibited by this or any other School policy
- To prevent retaliation against any student or parent who reports bullying or cyber-bullying
- To implement appropriate discipline and other corrective measures when they are found to be needed.

St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION INCIDENT REPORTING FORM

1. Name of Reporter/Person Filing the Report: _____
 2. Check whether you are the: Target of the behavior... Reporter (not the target).....
 3. Check whether you are a: Student..... Staff member (specify role).....
Parent... Administrator..... Other... (specify)_____
- _____
Your contact information/telephone number:_____
4. Information about the Incident:
Name of Target: _____
Name of Aggressor: _____
Date(s) of Incident(s): _____
Time When Incident(s) Occurred: _____
Location of Incident(s) (Be as specific as possible): _____
 5. Witnesses (list people who saw the incident or have information about it):
Name: _____ Student.... Staff.... Other
 - Name: _____ Student.... Staff.... Other.....
 - Name: _____ Student.... Staff.... Other.....
 6. Describe the details of the incident (Including names of people involved, what occurred, and what each person did and said, including specific words used). Please use additional space on back if necessary.

For Administrative Use Only

7. Signature of Person Filing this Report: _____ Date: _____
8. Form Given to: _____ Position: _____ Date: _____
Signature: _____ Date Received: _____

II. INVESTIGATION

1. Investigator(s): _____ Position(s): _____
2. Interviews:

| | | |
|----------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| ...Interviewed aggressor | Name: _____ | Date: _____ |
| Interviewed target | Name: _____ | Date: _____ |
|Interviewed witnesses | Name: _____ | Date: _____ |
| | Name: _____ | Date: _____ |
3. Any prior documented Incidents by the aggressor? Yes.... No....
 If yes, have incidents involved target or target group previously? Yes... No....
 Any previous incidents with findings of BULLYING, RETALIATION? Yes... No...

Summary of Investigation:

(Please use additional paper and attach to this document as needed)

III. CONCLUSIONS FROM THE INVESTIGATION

1. Finding of bullying or retaliation:

YES NO.....
Bullying..... Incident documented as _____
Retaliation Discipline referral only _____

2. Contacts:

Target's parent/guardian Date: _____
Aggressor's parent/guardian.... Date: _____

3. Action Taken:

Loss of Privileges..... Detention..... Suspension..... Expulsion..... Education.....
Other.....

4. Describe Safety Planning: _____

- Follow-up with Target: scheduled for _____
Initial and date when completed: _____
- Follow-up with Aggressor: scheduled for _____
Initial and date when completed: _____

Principal's Signature _____ Date: _____