

Seward Elementary Student Handbook



2024-2025

Principal's Message

Welcome to Seward Elementary and the 2024/2025 school year! We have prepared this handbook so that you may know a little more about our school and its policies and procedures.(Board Policy 5034) It will help us establish positive lines of communication and work together effectively. Please read this handbook carefully. Students and their parents are responsible for knowing the rules, regulations, and procedures covered in this handbook. The student handbook is an extension of school policies and has the force and effect of board policy when approved by the board of education. Throughout the year, additional information will be made available to you through newsletters, Bluejay Alerts, and the school website (www.sewardpublicschools.org). If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call or visit the school. Our goal at Seward Elementary is to provide the best educational opportunities possible for each child. By partnering with you, this goal can be accomplished!

Jessica Dominy, Principal

Intent of Handbook

This handbook is intended to be used by students, parents, and staff as a guide to the rules, procedures, and general information about this school district. Students and their parents must become familiar with the handbook, and parents should use it as a resource and assist their children in following the rules contained in it. The use of the word “parents” refers to any adult who has the responsibility for making education-related decisions about a child, including, but not limited to biological parents, adoptive parents, legal guardians, and adults acting in loco parentis.

Although the information in this handbook is detailed and specific on many topics, it is not intended to be all-encompassing or to cover every situation and circumstance that may arise during a school day or school year. This handbook does not create a “contract” with parents, students, or staff, and the administration may make decisions and rule revisions at any time to implement the educational program and to assure the well-being of all students. The administration is responsible for interpreting the rules contained in the handbook. If a situation or circumstance arises that is not specifically covered in this handbook, the administration will make a decision based on applicable school district policies, and state and federal statutes and regulations.

Arrival Time for Students

School begins each day at 8:15. No adult supervision is provided before 7:45 a.m. Please do not drop off students before 7:45 a.m. For the safety of the children, please follow the procedures for student drop off and parking of vehicles. Building entry time is at the discretion of the supervising adults. Children will proceed to the commons area for breakfast or to the gym for the walk-a-thon.

Absence and Tardiness

Parents are asked to call the office if their child is going to be absent on a particular day. This call will let the school know that the absence is not a truancy or that the student might have experienced difficulties on the way to school. Once the call is made, a written note will not be needed when the student returns to school. If the office does not receive a call by 9:00 a.m., the office personnel will call to check on the absence.

Children not present in school are counted absent regardless of the reason for the absence. If they are in attendance for 4 hours, they will be counted as present for the day. Two hours of attendance will be recorded as a 1/2 day. Children late for school are counted tardy, even if the reason is a doctor or dentist appointment. Tardiness and absence for these reasons are perfectly legitimate and often necessary, but they must be counted. Students will be counted tardy after 8:15 a.m. (Board Policy 5001)

Closed Campus

Children must remain on the school premises during the noon hour and at all other times during the day except with prior written parental permission.

Birth Certificates

All new enrolling students are required by state law to provide a certified copy of the student's birth certificate or other reliable proof of the student's identity and age accompanied by an affidavit explaining the inability to produce a copy of the birth certificate. There is a thirty day period in which this may occur. Failure to comply shall cause the school district to notify the parents or guardian in writing. If after ten days, compliance has not occurred, the school is required to report the matter to the local law enforcement agency.

Parental Custody Information

It is the responsibility of the parent with whom a student resides to keep the Elementary Principal informed about which parent has custody of the child and about any visitation restrictions of the noncustodial parent. If the noncustodial parent is restricted from contact with a student, a court order to this effect must be on file at the school. The school will make every effort to ensure that such visitation restrictions are carried out. However, the school cannot accept the responsibility for the child once he/she leaves the school premises. Reports of student progress and other informational documents will be given to both parents when requested. (Board Policy 5020)

Dismissal

Children who are not waiting for a ride are to leave the school grounds immediately after dismissal. Children will not be excused from school before dismissal time without a note or phone call from their parents. Please instruct your child never to leave school with a stranger.

Parent permission is needed if your child is to leave the school with someone who does not routinely pick up the child. Grade levels dismiss at the following times:

Kindergarten: 3:10 p.m.

1st & 2nd grades: 3:12 p.m.

3rd & 4th grades: 3:17 p.m.

Parents should make every attempt to pick up their students in a timely and reasonable manner. Teachers and/or other adults will supervise students until parents arrive. However, teachers do have other responsibilities after school such as curriculum work, team meetings, staff meetings, etc. Therefore, if an emergency occurs or if for another reason children will be picked up late, the school needs to be notified.

After-School Safety

Insist that your child obey traffic signals. Parents who pick students up after school should park single file on the north side of the circle drive or in the visitor's parking. Parents who park in the diagonal spaces are asked to walk to the holding area to get their child. Students will not be permitted to walk between parked cars. Buses pick up children on the west side of the building and all other traffic should avoid that area. Student pick up on the north side of the building is discouraged as supervision is not provided. This area is designated for special education transportation only.

Change of Address

Parents should notify the teacher or office immediately of any changes in address, phone number, or family doctor. All unlisted numbers will be kept confidential.

Health

A physical inventory is made of every student during the school year by the School Nurse, and the findings recorded on the permanent record. (Board Policy 5010, 5011 and 5059) Parents will be mailed a written notice of any concerns or symptoms found, and are urged to correct them as soon as possible. The school DOES NOT diagnose or treat an illness or injury. Our policies are:

1. First-aid is provided for sudden illness or injury.
2. The school's obligation continues until the emergency has been placed in the care of the family or physician of their choice.
3. Treatment of injuries occurring outside school jurisdiction are not the responsibilities of school employees.
4. Exclusion of children: having a fever with a suspected contagion, symptoms of vomiting and/or diarrhea, headaches, head lice, etc. Students need to be fever free, without the use of medication for 24 hours before coming back to school.
5. Any pupil with a rash must be excluded until the disappearance of the rash and any other symptoms. If the parent has consulted the family physician and he/she recommended readmission with a written notice to this effect, then admittance is acceptable.

Sending medications with your child is discouraged. Generally, if children are sick enough to be taking medicine they should stay home. At the suggestion of the Nebraska School Health Policies, our school system has implemented the use of a "medication permission" sheet. This is simply signed permission from the parent or guardian requesting the school district to comply with a physician's order for a student required to take medication during the regular school day. If your child needs to have medicine at school, please stop in the nurse's office to complete and sign this form. This would be used to administer prescription and nonprescription medication. (Board policy 5023 and 5024)

Nebraska schools have a duty under state law to provide a quality health screening program to all students in attendance. The purpose of the health screening is to identify those students needing further evaluation or assistance in the areas screened. A health screening or health inspection is not diagnostic. Screening to be performed includes height/weight, near and distant vision, hearing and dental screening. Health screening takes place in the fall and results that require further follow-up will be communicated with parents.

Please note the 2024-2025 immunization information included in this packet.

Communicable Diseases

Any student who has contracted a contagious disease may be restricted from attendance at school until the student is no longer contagious. The school district uses the Title 173- Nebraska Health and Human Services/Control of Communicable Disease, Chapter 3 of the Nebraska Administrative Code as a "best practice" guideline for contagious and infectious diseases. If there are questions regarding the communicability of your child's health condition or if you know your child has contracted a contagious or communicable disease or condition, please call (402) 643-2968.

Lice (Pediculosis)

Students found to have live head lice or louse eggs will not be permitted at school and will be sent home. Upon discovering the presence of any indication of lice or louse eggs the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) will be notified, and if appropriate will be asked to pick up the student from school immediately. Students will not be permitted to return to school until the district finds that no live lice or eggs can be detected. The parent(s) or guardian(s) will be required to treat the student and accompany the student to school to be examined. The student cannot ride the school bus until the district has cleared the student to return to school.

First-Aid

First-aid items may only be used by school staff. Students who need first aid should ask for assistance from their classroom teacher or the nearest staff member.

Lunches

A supervised lunch room is maintained for children who eat hot or cold lunch at school. However, those students who are unable to conduct themselves properly during the lunch period will be required to eat lunch elsewhere. Lunch money must be brought to the office by 8:20 a.m. and the lunch count taken by teachers so that the food service will know how many lunches to prepare. Please call in the lunch order if you know your child will be late for lunch count.

- 2024-2025 Food Service Prices: • Lunch: Students PreK-4: \$3.35 • Breakfast: Students PreK-4: \$2.25
Milk: \$0.50

Students are not allowed to bring soda (pop) as a part of their cold lunch. The soda will be removed by one of the adult supervisors. Suitable alternatives are: fruit juice box, bottled water, purchase of milk, or drinks from the school's water fountain. Lunch from fast food restaurants is not permitted.

At the end of the school year, all lunch and/or milk charges must be paid. Report cards will be held until the charges are paid. A remaining lunch balance will transfer to the next school year and/or building.

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

(1) Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights

[1400 Independence Avenue, SW](#)

[Washington, D.C. 20250-9410](#);

(2) Fax: (202) 690-7442; or

(3) Email: program.intake@usda.gov.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Meal Program Charges

The school district will make a school meal program available to students. The cost of the program will be determined by the board of education so as to make the program as nearly self-supporting as possible. With board approval, the district may contract with a private company or corporation for the management and/or provision of the program. The district will notify the families with children attending school of the current guidelines for free or reduced-price school meals. A copy of the complete regulations and procedures regarding reduced-price and free meals shall be available in the office of the superintendent. Meal Charge Policy. The district will notify students and their families of the policy for Charged Meals, meaning meals received by a student when the student does not have money in hand or in his or her food account. This policy applies to students who receive meals at the free, reduced, or full rates. Notice of this policy must be provided in writing to all households at the start of each school year and to households that transfer to the school during the school year. Notice may be provided through the student handbook, student registration materials, online portal used to access student accounts, direct mailing or e-mail, newsletter, the district website, and/or any other appropriate means. Notice of this policy will also be provided to all school staff responsible for the enforcement of it, including food service professionals responsible for collecting payment for meals at the point of service, staff involved in notifying families of low or negative balances, and other staff involved in enforcing any aspect of this policy. The district's policy on charged meals is: If a student has no funds available to pay for a meal, the student will be permitted to charge up to \$20.00. Students will not be allowed to purchase a la carte items if they have a negative balance. If a student repeatedly lacks funds to purchase a meal, has not brought a meal from home, and is not enrolled in a free meal program, the district will use its resources and contacts to protect the health and safety of the student. Failure or refusal of parents or guardians to provide meals for students may require mandatory reporting to child protection agencies as required by law. Collection of Delinquent Meal Charge Debt The school district is required to make reasonable efforts to collect unpaid meal charges. The building principal or his or her designee will contact households about unpaid meal charges and notify them again of the availability of the free and reduced meal program and/or establish payment plans and due dates by telephone, e-mail, or other written or oral communication. If these collection efforts are unsuccessful, the school district may pursue any other methods to collect delinquent debt as allowed by law. Collection efforts may continue into a new school year.

Playground

Children need to play outside. Parents' cooperation in seeing that children dress according to the weather is requested. In most cases if children are not well enough to play outside, they are not well enough to be in school. A child who must remain indoors due to an injury should bring a note daily to that effect. Otherwise, the teacher's judgment will be used.

Physical Education

All students must participate in physical education. If any limitation is to be placed on participation in physical education, a written statement from the parent will be honored for two successive physical education classes. If the student is to be excused further, a doctor's statement must be received stating the reason for and duration of the excused absence. The statements will be made a part of the student's record. Ordinarily students who have any limitation placed on their physical education activity will be excused for the entire period.

Tennis Shoes

For safety reasons and to prevent injury, each child needs to wear tennis shoes during physical education classes. If athletic-type shoes are not worn to school, a pair of tennis shoes needs to be brought along for P.E. and kept at school. Children without tennis shoes or shoes not approved by the physical education teacher will not participate in P.E. class. Socks need to be worn as well.

Staying after School

On occasion a student may be required to stay after school to make up work or for discipline reasons. Parents will be notified in advance.

Homework

Homework is a learning activity related to the experience within the school. Its purposes are to supplement and to enrich work done in the classrooms. Homework should be assigned following the building homework guidelines. (Board Policy 6017)

Bicycles, Skateboards, Scooters & Heelys

Students are to park their bikes in the appropriate racks. Under no circumstances are students to borrow or tamper with bicycles that are not their own. Bicycles are not to be ridden on the playground or on the sidewalks on the school grounds (this includes before and after school). Skateboards, roller blades, scooters and Heelys are not to be brought to school.

Building Discipline

(Board Policy 6024)-Student Discipline-available upon request or can be accessed online at <https://www.sewardpublicschools.org/vnews/display.v/SEC/Our%20District%7CSchool%20Board%3E%3EPolicies>

Possession of cell phones and other electronic communication devices, including smart watches, in schools is discouraged. If it is necessary for a student to have a cell phone in school, the following rules apply:

- The cell phone/electronic communication device (including smart watches) will be turned off during the school day.
- The cell phone/electronic communication device (including smart watches) is out of sight during the school day (in a book bag).
- The only time the cell phone/electronic communication device can be used is outside of the school day and the student must be outside the school buildings.
- Students are responsible for their own phone/electronic communication device at all times, even if it is taken from someone to whom they have loaned it.
- By bringing their cell phones and other electronic communication devices to school, students consent to the search of said devices by school staff when the staff determines that such a search is reasonable and necessary.

If any of these rules are violated, the cell phone/electronic communication device will be taken from the student by a school employee and turned into the principal's office. A parent must pick the phone up at the school office.

If a parent needs to be in contact with a student, please call the office at (402) 643-2968 and we will be happy to share the message.

Students who bring, use, possess, sell, share, or distribute any of the items listed below face consequences, suspension and/or possible expulsion:

- Electronic nicotine delivery systems or products, Cigarette, or other tobacco products
- Alcohol
- Prescription medication (must be kept in office)
- Illegal drugs, substances used to simulate drugs or drug paraphernalia
- Over the counter medications except for personal use in office with parent approval.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment will not be tolerated and will be dealt with as outlined in the District policy. Sexual harassment is defined as any unwanted or unwelcome visual, verbal or physical sexual behavior that is offensive to another person. (Board Policy 4014 and 5027)

Anti-Bullying Policy

One of the missions of the School District of Seward is to provide a physically safe and emotionally secure environment for all students and staff. The administration and staff are to implement strategies and practices to reinforce and encourage positive behaviors by students. Positive behaviors include non-violence, cooperation, teamwork, understanding, and acceptance of others. The administration and staff are to implement strategies and practices to identify and prevent inappropriate behaviors by all students, including anti-bullying education for all students. Inappropriate behaviors include bullying, intimidation, and harassment. Bullying means any ongoing pattern of physical, verbal, or electronic abuse. The school district shall review the anti-bullying policy annually. (Board Policy 5054)

Students are prohibited from engaging in any form of bullying. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines bullying as “any unwanted aggressive behavior(s) by another youth or group of youths who are not siblings or current dating partners that involves an observed or perceived power imbalance and is repeated multiple times or is highly likely to be repeated.” Nebraska statute defines bullying as “an ongoing pattern of physical, verbal or electronic abuse.” The District’s administrators will consider these definitions when determining whether any specific situation constitutes bullying. Both of these definitions include both in-person and cyberbullying behaviors.

The disciplinary consequences for bullying will depend on the severity, frequency, duration, and effect of the behavior and may result in sanctions up to and including suspension or expulsion. Students who believe they are being bullied should immediately inform a teacher or the building principal.

Reporting Bullying

Students who experience or observe bullying behavior must immediately report what happened to a teacher or administrator. Students can use the district’s anonymous platform Safe2Help to make this report. Students may always confer with their parents or guardians about bullying they experience or witness, but the students must also ultimately report the situation to a teacher or administrator.

Bullying Investigations

School district staff will investigate allegations of bullying using the same practices and procedures that the district observes for student disciplinary matters. In no circumstance will school district staff be deliberately indifferent to allegations of bullying.

Youth Assistance Program (YAP)

The Youth Assistance Program (YAP) operates in the Elementary School. The purpose of YAP is as follows: 1) to identify students with high-risk behaviors, 2) to connect students and their families with sources of assistance, and 3) to support students in the school environment. If parents/guardians have any questions, they should contact the elementary office to speak with the principal or the guidance counselor.

Alcohol and Illicit Drug Use Prohibited

The Board of Education expressly prohibits the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol by school employees, volunteers, and students on school property or at any school sponsored event or activity; further, any employee, volunteer, or student found to be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs, while on school property or at a school sponsored event or activity will be subject to disciplinary measures.

Moreover, the board authorizes and directs school administrators or their representatives to discipline employees, volunteers or students, consistent with pertinent state and federal law, for any violations of this policy.

Discipline for employees may extend to a recommendation for dismissal. While the board does not sponsor directly rehabilitative services, it reserves the right to require that any disciplined employee undergo rehabilitation as a condition to continued employment. Discipline for any adult volunteers may include removal from the volunteer position. Discipline for students may include suspension, expulsion, and/or a referral to a rehabilitative agency. Information on area agency rehabilitative services may be obtained from any of the school counselors.

The board will implement and support curricular materials and activities that teach about the harmful effects of alcohol and illegal drugs and serve as prevention and intervention programs.

(Board Policy 4002)

District Responsibilities for Communicating with Parents

Parents shall be kept informed of student progress, grades, and attendance through report cards, progress reports, and parent/teacher conferences. The school district will notify parents if their students are failing or close to failing. The school district will endeavor to notify parents of failing students prior to entry of the failing grade on the student's report card. Other pertinent information will be communicated to parents by mail or by personal contact. Official transcripts of student progress, grades, and attendance will be sent to other school systems upon the student's transfer when the district receives a written request signed by the student's parent or guardian or upon being notified that the student has enrolled in another school.

Care of School Property

The School District provides needed textbooks, workbooks, library books and athletic equipment without charge. This necessitates that all students assume full responsibility for those items issued to them. Fines will be made for the replacement cost of the books and equipment if lost or damaged.

Library Books

Books will be checked out for two weeks. Pupils will be charged for damaged or lost library books. Additional books will not be checked out until the previous overdue books are returned. Books will be considered lost if they are not returned after 4 weeks. At the end of the school year, report cards will be held until restitution is made.

Use of District Technology

Students are expected to use computers and the Internet as an educational resource. The following procedures and guidelines govern the use of computers and the Internet at school.

Student Expectations in the Use of the Internet

A. Acceptable Use

1. Students may use the Internet to conduct research assigned by teachers.
2. Students may use the Internet to conduct research for classroom projects.
3. Students may use the Internet to gain access to information about current events.
4. Students may use the Internet to conduct research for school-related activities.
5. Students may use the Internet for appropriate educational purposes.

B. Unacceptable Use

1. Students shall not use school computers to gain access to material that is obscene, pornographic, harmful to minors, or otherwise inappropriate for educational uses.
2. Students shall not engage in any illegal or inappropriate activities on school computers, including the downloading and copying of copyrighted material.

3. Students shall not use email, chat rooms, instant messaging, or other forms of direct electronic communications on school computers for any unauthorized or unlawful purpose or in violation of any school policy or directive.
4. Students shall not use school computers to participate in on-line auctions, on-line gaming or mp3 sharing systems including, but not limited to Aimster or Freenet and the like.
5. Students shall not disclose personal information, such as their names, school, addresses, or telephone numbers outside the school network.
6. Students shall not use school computers for commercial advertising or political advocacy of any kind without the express written permission of the system administrator.
7. Students shall not publish web pages that purport to represent the school district or the work of students at the school district without the express written permission of the system administrator.
8. Students shall not erase, rename, or make unusable anyone else's computer files, programs or disks.
9. Students shall not share their passwords with fellow students, school volunteers or any other individuals, and shall not use, or try to discover, another user's password.
10. Students shall not copy, change or transfer any software or documentation provided by the school district, teachers or another student without permission from the system administrator.
11. Students shall not write, produce, generate, copy, propagate, or attempt to introduce any computer code designed to self-replicate, damage, or otherwise hinder the performance of any computer's memory, file system, or software. Such software is often called, but is not limited to, a bug, virus, worm, or Trojan Horse.
12. Students shall not configure or troubleshoot computers, networks, printers or other associated equipment, except as directed by a teacher or the system administrator.
13. Students shall not take home technology equipment (hardware or software) without permission of the system administrator.
14. Students shall not falsify electronic mail messages or web pages.

(Board Policy 5037)

Emergency Contact Information

Parents must complete an emergency information card for each child enrolled in the district. The card should list the family physician's name, where parents or a responsible adult can be located, and any necessary emergency instructions. Parents must promptly inform the school if this contact information changes during the school year.

Discrimination and Harassment

The school district prohibits discrimination and harassment based upon or related to race, color, national origin, sex, religion, marital status, disability, age or any other unlawful basis that (1) has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive school environment, (2) has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with a student's school performance, or (3) otherwise adversely affects a student's school opportunities. Students who believe that they have been the subject of unlawful discrimination or harassment due to their disability should contact the following Section 504 Coordinator: Dr. Shannon Hall-Schmeckpeper at 402-643-2968 (phone number), shannon.hallschmeckpeper@sewardschools.org (e-mail address) or in person at school. Students who believe that they have been the subject of unlawful discrimination or harassment due to their sex should contact the following Title IX Coordinator: Dr. Matt Dominy at 402-643-2986 (phone number), matt.dominy@sewardschools.org (e-mail address), or in person at school. Students who believe that they have been the subject of any other unlawful discrimination or harassment should contact the Superintendent at 402-643-2941 (phone number), josh.fields@sewardschools.org (e-mail address) or in person at school. Students may report discrimination or

harassment to any staff member who will then forward it on to the appropriate coordinator or administrator. The staff member will follow school district policies to respond to the report.

Student Fees Policy

Under the Public Elementary and Secondary Student Fee Authorization Act, the District is required to set forth in a policy its guidelines or policies for specific categories of student fees. This policy is subject to further interpretation or guidance by administrative or Board regulations which may be adopted from time to time. The Policy includes specific student fees and/or materials required. Elementary students might be required participants of this policy in one area: field trip fees. (Board Policy 5045)

Conferences and Reports to Parents

Students' academic success has been closely linked to parental involvement in school. The school district has formal parent-teacher conferences at the end of the first quarter and during the third quarter. In addition to formal conferences, classroom teachers will communicate with parents as necessary. Parents are encouraged to communicate with their student's teacher or the building principal to discuss parental concerns, student needs or any other issue.

Classroom Assignments

Students will be assigned to a particular teacher at the discretion of the building administrator. The administrator will seek input from previous teachers and specialists to ensure the most appropriate placement.

Retention

Students who do not perform to their capabilities may be retained. The following procedures will be utilized:

1. At the end of the first semester, the parent will be notified in writing of possible retention, and a parent conference will be scheduled.
2. Student progress will be reported to the parents at conferences at the end of the third quarter and five weeks before the close of school.
3. A committee made up of the classroom teacher, a principal, and a special area teacher, if appropriate, will be formed. Following their input, a decision will be made by the parents regarding the retention or advancement of the student. Principal input will be seriously considered.

Lost and Found

All lost and found articles are to be taken to the commons area. Students may claim lost articles there. Unclaimed articles will be donated to a local charity or otherwise disposed of at the conclusion of each semester.

Police Questioning and Apprehension

Police or other law enforcement officers may be called to the school at the request of school administration, or may initiate contact with the school in connection with a criminal investigation. The school district shall inform parents when law enforcement officers seek access to their student prior to the student being questioned unless the officers are investigating charges that the student has been the victim of abuse or neglect. Members of the school district staff will comply with board policy regarding police questioning of students.

Video Surveillance

The Board of Education has authorized the use of video cameras on school district property to ensure the health, welfare, and safety of all staff, students and visitors, and to safeguard District facilities and equipment. Video cameras may be used in locations deemed appropriate by the Superintendent. If a video surveillance recording captures a student or other building user violating school policies or rules or local, state, or federal

laws, it may be used in appropriate disciplinary proceedings against the student or other building user and may also be provided to law enforcement agencies. Unless otherwise authorized by board policy or law, students are prohibited from making audio or video recordings during the school day on school grounds; when being transported to and from school activities or programs in a vehicle owned, leased, or contracted by a school being used for a school purpose by a school employee or by his or her designee; or at a school sponsored activity or athletic event, unless the recording is made in a manner permitted by the school for members of the public. For example, students making recordings of an athletic event for their personal use similar to a parent or other patron are permitted, but students are still subject to the district's appropriate use and student discipline policies. An exception will be made to this policy if photographs or video recordings are necessary to accommodate a student's disability or are required by the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Section 504 Plan. In no event shall photographs or video recordings be taken or made in restrooms, locker rooms, or other areas where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy. Students who violate this policy may be subject to discipline up to and including expulsion.

Field Trips

A well planned field trip is considered a worthwhile educational experience that contributes much to the overall school program. A permission form will need to be signed at the beginning of the school year. Teachers and other adults will accompany the students. The number of adults needed to accompany the students on field trips will be determined by the classroom teacher. If a parent is chosen to chaperone a field trip, they will likely have a small group of students with them throughout the field trip. As much as we value parent participation, we kindly suggest that parents refrain from attending field trips if not selected as a chaperone. This allows students to fully engage in the experience with their peers and teachers. If a parent is not chosen to chaperone, there may be occasional times that parents may attend as a private citizen (pay own admission fee, provide own transportation) and can join the group their child is in, but parents cannot take their child on their own tour/field trip and the child must stay with the group assigned. Siblings in a different grade level and/or students younger than school age are not allowed to join a field trip group with parent chaperones or in cases when it is permitted for parents to attend as private citizens, as field trips are special educational experiences for each grade level. Parents will be notified if the field trip allows for private citizens to join. In most circumstances, students must ride the bus with their classmates and teachers to their field trip destination and back to school at the conclusion of the field trip.

Parents will be notified in advance when field trips and activities requiring a bus ride will take place. However, on occasion the class may go on a tour within walking distance of the school. Parents will not necessarily be advised in advance of such excursions. (Board Policy 6027)

Classroom Parties

Classroom parties will be limited to three per year and will be no longer than one hour in duration. Supervision will be provided for those students whose parents request that they not participate.

Birthday Treats/Snacks

If children bring treats for the room on their birthday, they will be distributed and consumed before dismissal time. Delivered balloons and/or flower bouquets sent to students will remain in the office until the end of the school day. Suckers are discouraged because of safety concerns. Please make sure birthday treats do not include nuts of any kind, and treats cannot be refrigerated at school due to limited space.

Party Invitations

Although birthday parties, etc., are an "out of school" activity, it is permissible for your child to distribute invitations at school provided all children in the class receive one.

Gifts

The exchanging of gifts between pupil and teacher is discouraged. Gift exchanges among students are prohibited.

Toys

Toy guns, knives, bats, trading cards (baseball, Pokemon, cartoon, etc.), balls, skateboards, roller blades and other toys are not to be brought to school. Key chains and toys hanging from book bags are discouraged as they are a distraction and/or safety concern. Toys confiscated by school personnel will not be returned to the children until the end of the school year.

Pets

Please see that dogs and other pets are kept home and not allowed to follow pupils to school. A call will be made to the parents to come get the pet. If unavailable, the local law enforcement will be contacted. Pets may be brought to school for instructional purposes only. To do so, arrangements must be made with the classroom teachers and building administrator in advance.

School Dress Code

The school dress of elementary students is the responsibility of the parent. Students are expected to be appropriately dressed and acceptably groomed for school. Appropriate clothing shall be that which does not pose a health or safety hazard, does not disrupt classroom learning and behavior, and complies with reasonable standards for cleanliness. Students must wear shoes at all times. Heelys are not permitted at school. Clothing items with inappropriate statements, pictures, or expressions will not be allowed. Examples-drug or alcohol messages, obscenities, violence, and disrespectful/negative messages. Unacceptable clothing items include the following: very short shorts or skirts; oversized "sagging" pants and shorts; oversized tank tops worn alone; halter tops; and chains attached to billfolds or pants. For safety reasons during recess times, 'flip-flops' are discouraged. If a student wears a piece of clothing that promotes or advertises the above mentioned items, they will be asked to do one of the following:

- 1) Call home and request that a parent bring another piece of clothing.
- 2) If possible, turn and wear the garment inside out.
- 3) Proceed to the nurse's office to select and wear a piece of clothing from the school's supply. That piece of clothing should then be washed and returned to school the next day.

Makeup and colored lip gloss are not to be brought or worn to school. Writing on hands, arms, face and clothing is not allowed. Temporary tattoos are not allowed. Hair color is restricted to natural colors and should be kept clean and properly groomed. (Board Policy 5031) For playing outdoors in wet and snowy weather, your children need to be equipped with overshoes or rubber boots. Be sure both boots are marked as well as mittens, caps, scarves, etc. Except for extreme weather conditions, children will be outside every day.

Visitors

Parents are encouraged to visit school anytime after the first month. That first month is important to let children make the adjustment to school life. We request that visitors call ahead to inform the office staff and classroom teacher. Upon arrival, please check in at the office. In order to maintain an effective learning environment with limited disruption, classroom visits should not exceed one hour and should be arranged with the teacher and principal.

Requests exceeding one hour must have approval of the principal. (Board Policy 5018)

Bus Information

Students are expected to abide by the rules and regulations as set forth in the Seward Public School Bus Information Pamphlet. Please read and review these rules with your children. Safety is our first consideration, when transporting children to school. If the bus driver is distracted, danger exists. This is why standards of discipline have been established and must be maintained for our children's safety.

Parents are reminded that school buses are operated for the purpose of providing transportation for children to and from school. Once the bus arrives at the school, the students must enter the school and are subject to the discipline and rules. If for some reason you have not received a School Bus Information pamphlet, notify the Elementary Principal's office. Parents are asked to call the bus driver at his home or the neighbor if their child or children will not be riding the bus on a given day. Parents are asked to contact the bus driver and Bus Barn (643-6069) for approval if their child(ren) are to be delivered to a different stop on the established route. (Board Policy 5044)

After School Plans

If a child is planning to go home with a friend, those arrangements must be made between the parents ahead of time. The child must then bring a written note to the classroom teacher informing them about the arrangements. Students will not be allowed to call their parents about plans they made during the school day. The children will be sent home in the usual manner.

District Cell Phone Policy

Possession of cell phones/other electronic communication devices in school is discouraged. If it is necessary for a student to have a cell phone/other electronic communication devices in school, the following rules apply:

1. The cell phone/other electronic communication devices will be turned off during the school day.
2. The cell phone/other electronic communication devices (Example: Gizmo watch, Apple watch, etc.) are out of sight during the school day (in a book bag).
3. The only time the cell phone/other electronic communication devices can be used is outside of the school day and the student must be outside the school buildings.
4. Students are responsible for their own phone/other electronic communication devices at all times, even if it is taken from someone to whom they have loaned it.

If any of these rules are violated, the cell phone/other electronic device (Example: Gizmo watch, Apple watch, etc.) will be taken from the student by a school official and turned in to the principal's office.

First offense: The cell phone will be confiscated and held in the principal's office. A phone call will be made for the parents to pick up the cell phone/other electronic communication devices. The principal will inform the parent that a second offense by the student is insubordination.

Second Offense: The cell phone/other electronic communication devices will be confiscated and held in the principal's office. A phone call will be made for the parents to pick up the cell phone/other electronic communication devices. Depending on the circumstances, the principal will determine whether the student receives an in-school or out-of-school suspension for insubordination. (Board Policy 6025)

Child Abuse

School employees will report suspected abuse or neglect of a child as required by state law and school policy. Nebraska law defines abuse or neglect as knowingly, intentionally, or negligently causing or permitting a minor child or an incompetent or disabled person to be (1) placed in a situation that endangers his or her life or physical or mental health; (2) cruelly confined or cruelly punished; (3) deprived of necessary food,

clothing, shelter or care; (4) left unattended in a motor vehicle, if such child is six years of age or younger; (5) sexually abused; (6) placed in a situation to be sexually exploited through sex trafficking of a minor as defined in state law or by allowing, encouraging, or forcing such person to engage in debauchery, public indecency, or obscene or pornographic photography, films, or depictions; or (7) placed in a situation to be a trafficking victim as defined in state law.

Complaint Procedure

In the event of complaints or concerns, parents are advised to initially attempt to resolve the situation with the teacher or school employee involved. If the problem cannot be resolved, please contact the school principal, who will schedule a meeting with all the people involved. The superintendent and school board members are to be involved after the above steps are exhausted.

(Board Policy 2006)

Bluejay Alerts

To receive important information about Seward Public Schools sent as a text message or voice message directly to mobile, home or office phones, wireless PDA or pager, sign up for Bluejay Alerts. Information consists of emergency information, school closings, early dismissals and school event reminders. Please contact Craig Williams, District Technology Coordinator at 643-2988 or craig.williams@connectseward.org

Special Education Identification and Placement Procedure

The Board of Education affirms that all eligible children in the School District of Seward are entitled to a Free Appropriate Public Education and an equal opportunity for education according to the needs of the individual student. All procedural safeguards, policies, and programs implemented in the District are administered in conformity with statutory requirements of NDE Rule 51, NDE Rule 55, Public Law 93-380, Public Law 94-142, and all other applicable state and federal regulations. (Board Policy 6010)

Substitute Teachers

If a long-term substitute is needed for four weeks or more, the school district will do its best to find a substitute that is highly qualified for the position. If this is not possible, parents will be notified in writing.

Student Data and Information for NDE

Information for the Nebraska Student and Staff records system is collected by the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) for the purpose of doing state and federal reporting. This data includes information for the Nebraska State Accountability (NeSA), state aid, special education, and the federal *No Child Left Behind Act*. Student data are protected by state and federal laws and must be maintained in a confidential matter at all times. Parents may review the kinds of data that are collected about our students and the methods that the Nebraska Department of Education uses to manage this data at the Department of Education website: <http://www.nde.state.ne.us/>

Notice of Nondiscrimination

The School District of Seward does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, marital status, disability, or age in admission or access to, or treatment of employment or educational programs and activities. Any person having inquiries concerning The School District of Seward's compliance with the regulations implementing Title VI, Title IX, or Section 504 is directed to contact Superintendent Josh Fields, in writing at 410 South St., Seward, Nebraska or by telephone at (402) 643-2941. Any person may also contact the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, in writing at 8930 Ward Parkway, Suite 2037, Kansas City, Missouri, 64114-3302 or by telephone at (816) 268-0550, regarding compliance with the regulations implementing Title VI, Title IX, or Section 504.

Additional Information:

In addition to the foregoing information, a copy of the following policies are enclosed:

1. 2024-2025 Summary of the School Immunization Rules and Regulations
2. 2024-2025 School Calendar
3. Seward Elementary Homework Guidelines

Elementary Administration & Teaching Staff

If at any time a parent/guardian would like to contact the administration or a teacher, please consider the following options:

Telephone: School number is (402) 643-2968

E-mail : firstname.lastname@sewardschools.org

Example: jessica.dominy@sewardschools.org