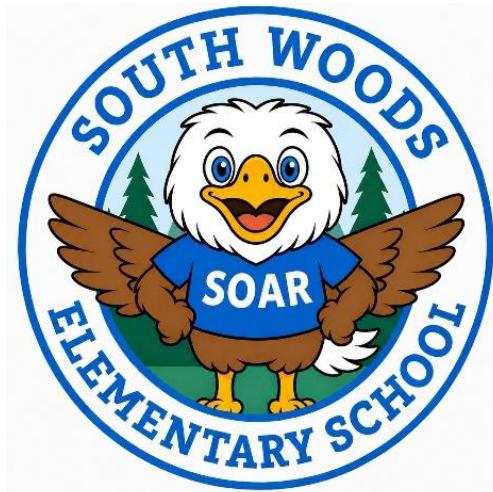




“A Community Partnership School”

Parent & Student Handbook 2026-2027

Angie Rodgers, Principal
Almarene Lowndes, Assistant Principal
Savannah Sims, Assistant Principal

4750 State Road 206 West - Elkton, FL 32033
Phone: .547.8610; Fax: 904.547.8615
Website: <http://www-swe.stjohns.k12.fl.us>



Welcome, South Woods Families,

We are looking forward to soaring through another school year as an SWE Eagle! Families who are involved in their children's education tend to have children who perform better in school. So, developing an active partnership with parents and families is essential. Communication is critical to our commitment to one another. These handbook pages have been compiled as a resource for parents and students. Familiarize yourself with the information and review with your child(ren) to ensure a safe and engaging learning environment for ALL.

This handbook is available on our school's website <https://www-swe.stjohns.k12.fl.us/>

Keep Soaring,

Angela Rodgers, Principal

Important Contacts & Numbers:

SJCSD Office	547-7500
SJCSD Transportation Dept.	547-7810
SWE Main Office	547-8610
Principal, Angela Rodgers	547-8612
Assistant Principal P-2, Savannah Sims	547-8613
Assistant Principal 3-5, Almarene Lowndes	547-8609
Attendance, Emily Owens	547-8610
Behavior Interventionist, Linda Fuce	547-8614
Cafeteria Manager, Jamie Burnett	547-8607
Computer Operator	547-8618
Maintenance Manager	547-8617
School Counselor, Tracy Impersine	547-8603
School Nurse	547-8604
Secretary/Bookkeeper, Dana English	547-8606

SOUTH WOODS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DAILY STUDENT SCHEDULE

8:00 AM - Parent pick-up doors open; students report to their classroom or the cafeteria for breakfast.

8:00 AM - Buses arrive; students report to their classrooms or the cafeteria for breakfast.

8:20 AM - Parent Pick-Up doors close; breakfast ends.

8:25 AM - School starts; morning announcements begin.

8:25 AM - Students are admitted to class with a tardy slip.

9:00 AM - Attendance is submitted. Students are now considered absent.

LUNCH (11:00 AM to 1:00 PM)

Parents are welcome to join their child(ren) for lunch. All lunch visitors must have an approved school access/volunteer application on file and will need to show picture identification, sign in at the front desk, and wear their ID badge. Lunch visitors must meet the students' class outside the cafeteria, eat at one of the picnic tables in the courtyard, and rejoin the students with their class for recess.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY/RECESS (varied)

In addition to teacher-led morning activities and double rotations with our PE Coach, students have 20 minutes of physical activity following lunch. ***Please do not send sports equipment to school with your child. The school is not responsible for lost or broken equipment.***

DISMISSAL PROCEDURES (2:45 PM) (1:45 EVERY WEDNESDAY)

2:45 PM - Extended Day students move to their designated locations; car riders report to the dismissal area.

2:45 PM - Dismissal begins, buses are called over the intercom.

3:00 PM - Parent/Teacher Conferences by appointment only.

Wednesdays: Dismissal begins 1 hour earlier, starting at 1:45 PM

Other Early Release Days: Released 1 hour early on December 19, 2025 & May 29, 2026

Provide a parent note or call the office at least 45 minutes before dismissal to change a student's dismissal plan. No dismissal changes after 2:15 PM or 1:15 PM on Wednesday. Please ensure that your child is picked up on time or has been instructed to ride the bus.

ACCESS to our SCHOOL

All visitors who want to enter the building during the school day MUST be registered volunteers with an approved School Access Form on file with the district. To get an approved School Access Form, you must complete the district's Volunteer Application, which you can find on the SJCS and South Woods websites. Once approved, when entering the building, you must scan your ID using the kiosk in the school office. After logging in, the system will print out a school access badge. Please present the printed school access badge and your ID to the front office secretary. We enforce this rule for your child's safety. Remember, you must **have your photo ID** when you come to visit our school. School staff will ask you to present your identification before receiving your badge and gaining entrance into the school. Please visit <http://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/volunteer> for the school access/volunteer application.

ABSENCES

PLEASE CALL IN ALL ABSENCES BEFORE 9:00 AM (547-8610). Messages can be left when our Main Office is closed. To excuse an absence, a **note** with your child's name, date, and reasons for absence must be received within 48 hours of the absence.

Excused Absences

Excused absences shall be granted for personal illness, illness or death of a member of the immediate family, emergencies when approved by the school, and observance of an established religious holiday. Absences beyond a consecutive third (3rd) day require a doctor's excuse. Students having an excused absence will be responsible for all work and assignments missed. Students shall make arrangements with teachers for these assignments. Students will be given a minimum of 2 days to complete work missed due to an excused absence.

Pre-Approved, Excused Absences

Special exemptions may be given for dental and medical appointments, religious holidays, and special circumstances. Prior arrangements may be made by a written request from a parent or guardian to the Principal or Principal's designee for appointments and religious holidays. **Requests for absences due to special circumstances or pre-authorized absences, including dental and medical appointments, must be submitted in writing to the principal.** The principal or designee will review each request. If the absence is approved, the teacher will be notified and will assign work. Work for pre-approved absences is due on the first day the student returns to school. ***The only exception to this is the observance of an established religious holiday.***

Unexcused Absences

Shopping trips, hunting, fishing, attendance at sports events, hair appointments, birthdays, car troubles, flat tires, suspensions, truancies, appointments without prior approval (except emergencies), vacations, or other avoidable absences shall result in unexcused absences. Field studies are an important part of the school

curriculum, and failure to attend will be considered unexcused (except emergencies). Coursework assigned must be made up and is due on the first day the student returns. Tests, quizzes, and projects must be completed at least three days in advance of the student's absence. Work can only earn up to 50% credit. Tests and quizzes can earn up to 100% credit.

Excessive Absences

More than 20 absences from the 180-day school year are excessive and may result in a student's retention in the same grade for the following year. A student is considered truant if they have missed 15 days in a 90-day window.

Homework Request

- Students who are absent for one (1) day will receive their make-up work on the day they return to school.
- Students who are absent for two (2) or more days may request homework through the Front Office. It can be picked up at the front office. (Thank you for allowing our teachers adequate time to pull together missed assignments.)

Tardies and Early Check-Outs

To be considered present, students must be in attendance for 3 hours during the school day. A tardy student must be checked into the Front Office by their parent or guardian. Parents are encouraged to make appointments, etc., on early dismissal days (Wednesdays, 1:45 PM). If a student is tardy for more than three (3) days in nine weeks, each additional tardy will be considered unexcused. The school will contact the parent or guardian via phone or letter, and may be asked to meet with the principal if the problem continues.

Assignments are summarized and reviewed at the end of our day. To ensure that your child's learning environment is not interrupted during this time, early check-outs cannot be accommodated after 2:15 PM (1:15 PM on Wednesdays). If your child has an appointment that requires early check-out, please pick them up before 2:15 PM (1:15 PM on Wednesdays). Students will stay in class until the front office calls for them to be dismissed. Children will only be released to their parents unless the school has been notified in writing that another person has permission to pick up the child. Parents and authorized individuals picking up students must present identification before students can be released.

Attendance Recognitions

At South Woods, we believe that regular attendance is important for your child's success in school. Thank you in advance for your efforts to have your children at school on time each day during the 2025-2026 school year. Students who are in school 100 percent of each day, and have no tardies, early checkouts, and/or absences will receive recognition at the end of each quarter.

BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

Our school takes pride in providing a positive learning environment for all students to succeed. Our school-wide behavioral expectations are shared and modeled for students. Positive Behavior Intervention Supports and Conscious Discipline strategies are used to improve students' educational environment and reduce school disruptions. Each morning, our students are instructed on social skills and/or SJCSO Character Counts! Pillars. Each day, our students pledge to SOAR: Be **S**-Safe, **O**-Organized, **A**-Accountable, **R**-Respectful

BEHAVIOR INTERVENTIONIST

We have a full-time Behavior Interventionist to assist students and parents with behavior difficulties. Parents are encouraged to contact the Behavior Interventionist for assistance in meeting their child's needs. The Behavior Interventionist supports teachers and students in promoting appropriate behaviors that help create a positive learning environment for all. She also assists with correcting inappropriate behaviors that impede learning for individuals and/or classes.

BIRTHDAYS/HOLIDAY PARTIES

Birthday and holiday celebrations are saved for non-school times. Birthday treats such as cookies or cupcakes may be shared during lunch. Items such as cake, candles, balloons, and party favors are not permitted due to health, safety, and disruption concerns. ***Please contact your child's teacher regarding these arrangements to avoid any potential life-threatening student allergies. Only store-prepared food is permitted to be shared with students.***

Party invitations

As a courtesy to all, please do not send party invitations to the school for distribution.

BULLYING

There are legal procedures that must be followed if bullying is suspected. Bullying means systematically and chronically inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more students. Bullying includes cyberbullying, teasing, social exclusion, threats, intimidation, stalking, theft, public or private humiliation, destruction of property, and/or sexual, religious, or racial/ethnic harassment. Please be cautious in using this term. According to District guidelines, for behaviors to be labeled as bullying, all three of the following components must be present: The behavior is repeated, intentional, and there is an imbalance of power. If a concern does arise, please contact our Behavior Interventionist. She will explain and conduct the investigative process to ensure that all laws are followed and all students are safe on campus. Please use the following link to review information from our District on bullying:

<https://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/sdfs/reporting/>

BUS EXPECTATIONS

Students are given the privilege of using the transportation services of the St. Johns County School District if they qualify for services. Standards of discipline must always be maintained to meet requirements. Whenever a driver must take their eyes off the road, danger exists. No student will be allowed to endanger the other students on the bus. ***Parents are not to board the bus at any time.***

While waiting for the bus:

1. Stand off the roadway.
2. Be on time. The bus will not wait if you are tardy.
3. No playing at the bus stop.

While on the bus:

1. ***Safe on the bus:***
 - Remain seated at all times
 - Keep hands, feet, and all objects to yourself, inside the bus, and out of the aisle
2. ***Organized on the bus:***
 - Be on time
 - Wait patiently in your assigned area
 - Sit down, slide over, buckle up, and keep feet on the floor and hands and objects to yourself
3. ***Accountable on the bus:***
 - Enter and exit the bus in a single file line
 - Keep all belongings in your book bag and take them when exiting the bus
 - Board or exit the bus only at your designated stop
4. ***Respectful on the bus:***
 - Use voice level 1 with your seat partner
 - Use kind words and actions towards the bus driver and others
 - Follow the bus driver's instructions the first time

Students are expected to conduct themselves in an orderly and courteous manner while riding the bus. Misconduct may result in students being suspended from bus riding privileges. Under suspension circumstances, parents are required to provide transportation.

Bus schedules can be obtained by utilizing BusPlanner, a new online transportation portal designed to give parents easy access to their students' bus information. Parents can access BusPlanner through its web portal at <https://sjcsd.mybusplanner.com> or by downloading the companion mobile app, Chipmunk, available for Android and Apple devices.

BusPlanner will also enhance communication by providing timely updates about bus delays and other important transportation-related notifications. In addition, parents can use the system to send messages directly to the SJCS D Transportation Department.

To get started, families should create an account on the BusPlanner website or the Chipmunk app using the same email address associated with their Home Access Center (HAC) account. SJCS D encourages all families with bus riders to register early and stay informed ahead of the upcoming school year—view instructions showing how to create your BusPlanner/Chipmunk account by visiting the district website at www.stjohns.k12.fl.us.

CAFETERIA

South Woods Elementary participates in a program called the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). Schools that participate in CEP can provide healthy breakfasts and lunches each day at no charge for **ALL** students enrolled in that CEP school, regardless of income. There are no forms to complete for students enrolled at the CEP schools to receive meals at no charge.

Households are still responsible for any negative balances accrued during previous school years. For any children attending a non-participating school but residing in the same household as children attending a CEP school, parents or guardians will still be required to submit a Free and Reduced School Meals Application or Direct Certification documentation.

The cafeteria provides a choice menu for students. This menu has been evaluated on a nutritional needs scale and is distributed monthly. We take pride in delivering a nutritious, balanced meal for our students. The available foods are planned, prepared, and served with your children in mind. Students are to finish all of their meals in the cafeteria and are not permitted to take food/drink out of the lunchroom. ***Note: Soft drinks, energy drinks, and glass containers are not allowed.*** Please call Mrs. Burnett, Food Service Manager, at 904-547-8607 for any questions or further information regarding CEP or balances on your child's account.

Although lunch is a time to relax and socialize, students are expected to use their inside voices and use good manners and orderly behavior.

Breakfast & Lunch Menu

This can be found on the St. Johns County School District website, <http://stjohns.nutrislice.com>, and choose your school. Breakfast is served daily in the cafeteria. The cafeteria serving lines open at 8:00 AM daily.

CHARACTER COUNTS!

At South Woods, every child is expected to exhibit the six pillars of character at school and home. The program has been in place in St. Johns County Schools since 1999. There are six pillars of character: Fairness, Respect, Responsibility, Citizenship, Caring, and Trustworthiness that support character education. In our school district, character education is part of our teaching environment. At South Woods, Character Counts! is the foundation for helping students make good behavior choices.

CHARACTER COUNTS! is integrated into classroom lessons and activities throughout the year. Each character trait is focused on during a designated month. Classes will choose a student who demonstrated the monthly trait the most, and those students will be recognized at a monthly celebration.

COMMUNICATION

Please keep the front office updated on any changes in address or phone numbers (home, cell, or work). We may need to reach parents quickly in case of an emergency. This is critical for your child's safety.

School News

We strive to keep our parents informed as to what is happening at our school. A newsletter to parents, The 'Word from the Woods', is sent home monthly. Read the newsletter for up-to-date and important school news. Teachers and grade levels will be sending home information as well. We also have an informative website, www-swe.stjohns.k12.fl.us, where you will find important information as well as The 'Word from the Woods' published electronically.

Conferences

Parent and teacher communication is vital to the success of your student. To contact a teacher or make an appointment, you can call the school, leave a message for the teacher, or send the teacher an email or note.

E-mail

All staff at South Woods can be reached by email and are available on the school website. Teachers will provide their email addresses to parents at the beginning of the school year. Please keep in mind that our faculty and staff are busy working with students throughout the day and have limited time to read emails. We will respond to emails within 24 hours.

ParentSquare

ParentSquare is a new mass email and text system to provide timely updates on important school dates and events. Please download the ParentSquare application from the App Store on Android or iOS.

School Marquee

We will use the sign outside our school for important dates and events.

Social Media

We're officially on social media! Follow South Woods Elementary on Facebook at South Woods Elementary School <https://www.facebook.com/share/1Uhxrzy9NB/?mibextid=wwXIfr> or Instagram at @southwoodselementary

<https://www.instagram.com/southwoodselementary?igsh=MWFyNXN4MzE0YzNsZg==>

Use our social media pages to stay connected with school news, events, student celebrations, and daily smiles!

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP SCHOOL

South Woods is a Community Partnership School with a focus on the pillars of Family and Community Engagement, Student Supports, Extended Learning, and Collaborative Leadership. The partnership consists of four core partners, the St. Johns County School District, Children's Home Society, Flagler Health, and St. Johns River College, who made a 25-year commitment to work collaboratively to empower children and family success. Services through the Parent Resource Center include counseling, dental screenings/referrals, free summer enrichment, Food 4 Kids, medical support, and more.

CONFIDENTIALITY CONCERNS

If at any time you wish for your child NOT to be photographed, or if you want for their name NOT to appear

in public documents such as, but not limited to, school web pages, social media, newspapers, school newsletters, class projects, etc.... the child's guardian will need to notify the school administration in writing. For more information, refer to the SJCS District Student Code of Conduct book (distributed on the first day of school) and guidelines for school web pages.

DISCRIMINATION NOTICE

The St. Johns County School District Board Policy 2.16 contains the procedures related to harassment and discrimination against employees, students, and applicants. If you believe you have been harassed or discriminated against, contact the School Administration, District Office at 904-547-7500.

DRESS CODE

The primary responsibility for a student's attire resides with the student and their parent(s) or guardian(s). The St. Johns County School District expects students to dress in a way that is appropriate for the school day or any school-sponsored event. Student dress code requirements reflect fair, equitable, and consistent practices for all students, while contributing to a safe and positive school climate. For special events and occasions (spirit weeks, earned privileges, etc.) South Woods will communicate modifications. Enforcement will focus on positive guidance without embarrassment to the student and should not disrupt the educational process.

- ❖ Personal attire may be in the style of the day. Clothing, piercings, and accessories displaying profanity, violence, discriminatory messages, sexually suggestive phrases, or symbols of alcohol, tobacco, or drugs are unacceptable.
- ❖ Headgear, including but not limited to caps, hats, bandanas, and/or sunglasses, shall not be worn indoors on campus unless permitted by school administration for religious or medical reasons. Students may wear sunglasses, hats, or other sun-protective wear while outdoors during school hours.
- ❖ Clothing must cover areas from one armpit to the other armpit, down to the mid-thigh. Tops must have shoulder straps and be long enough to cover the waistline and not expose the midriff adequately.
- ❖ Students must wear shoes that are safe and appropriate for the learning environment. Students must wear shoes that have a back or a strap on the heel.
- ❖ See-through or mesh garments must be worn with opaque clothing over them or underneath that meets the standard for clothing coverage.
- ❖ Rips or tears in clothing above the mid-thighs must not expose the skin.

DROP OFF AND PICK-UP

Our parent drop-off and pick-up gate is open at 8:00 AM **and ends at 8:20 AM**. There is no supervision before 8:00 AM. Parents are not to use the west gate (with the bus loop) between the hours of 7:25 AM and 3:10 PM. This is our bus loading, teacher parking, and supply delivery entrance. All children will report directly to their classroom unless they are eating breakfast in our cafeteria.

Morning Parent Drop Off (8:00 AM-8:20 AM)

Between 8:00 AM and 8:20 AM, please drive up to the curb and **unload your child from the passenger side of the car, nearest to the curb**. If unable to use the passenger side of your car, the vehicle should be pulled forward to the first spot, so an adult can safely walk children around to the sidewalk. For those last-minute things that need to be done before the student leaves the car (signing papers, report cards, writing excuses, monies, etc.), please use the parking area. If you need to visit the office, please park. ***Parents must use the main entrance and check in with the office when entering the building.*** The side door is for students only. ***Cross only in the designated crossing area*** (the white lines) and do not cross until cars have stopped. For the safety of your child, at 8:25 AM, please park in the parent pick-up lot and escort your child into the office.

Afternoon Parent Pick-Up (2:50 PM-3:15 PM)

At the beginning of the school year, parents/guardians will be given two parent pick-up cards. Please make sure to place the card in the right passenger side windshield. (Be sure to remove it when leaving the campus.) As you enter the parent pick-up area, an adult will call for your child. For safety reasons, we will load students from the curb directly to your vehicle. ***Do not park and walk over to get your child. If you get out of your***

car, you will need to go to the office for checkout or get back in the parent pick-up line. If you do not have your card, you will be asked to park and go to the front office to verify your identity and permission to pick up the student.

All cars must line up in the lane closest to the sidewalk. All adults should remain in their vehicles while in line. If your child does not come out within a reasonable time, an adult will ask you to move your vehicle up to the front of the line. This will keep the line moving. If someone else is picking up your children, you must either give them your parent pick-up card to display or write a note for them to be picked up in the front office. Our goal is to ensure the safety of the children and prevent them from being picked up by an unauthorized person.

Do not use your cell phone or digital device while dropping off or picking up your child. Be careful when exiting the school campus. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated in helping create a safe environment.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

At the beginning of the year, we asked you to fill out the emergency contact information for your student. Please keep SWES **up to date on any changes** throughout the year to phone numbers (home, work, cell numbers) and/or email addresses so that we may contact you quickly in the event of an emergency.

EXTENDED DAY PROGRAM

Extended Day is designed to provide a nurturing, safe, and positive environment that enlists age-appropriate programs and activities to enhance and enrich the experiences within our students' day. Such programs and activities include arts & crafts, homework & reading club, and outside recess, as permitted by the child's afternoon schedule. Our program hours are from 6:30-8:00 AM (morning care) and until 6:00 PM (afternoon care).

School Clubs

SWE offers a variety of activities to participate in before & after school. They include robotics, art, dance, soccer, running, jumping rope, culinary, basketball, gardening, cheerleading, and more. This year, our clubs will be run through our extended day program. To participate, you must register your child in our Extended Day Eagle Care program.

- ❖ Physicals are required for Basketball and Cheerleading.

FIELD STUDIES

Educational field studies are planned periodically throughout the school year. It is our school district's policy that all field studies must be related to the grade-level curriculum currently being studied. Detailed plans for the field studies will be provided to parents in advance and in ample time to sign the written permission form and pay the necessary fees. Fees need to be paid at least one week before the field study date.

Field Study Chaperones

A specific number of chaperones is identified for each trip. This number is commonly set by the guidelines of the places we visit. Please be sure to check with your child's teacher before attending the class for a field study. We do not want any disappointed parents coming and finding out that they cannot join the class due to the number restrictions set by the field study location. Again, field studies are planned learning opportunities. It is expected that children will learn while having a day of fun in each field study. Therefore, the role each chaperone plays is vital, as they will play a huge part in ensuring this objective is met. All chaperones must have completed and been approved using the School Access/Volunteer application to chaperone a field study. Chaperones are not allowed to bring siblings or other children, as they must pay full attention to the students they are supervising.

Field Study Check Outs

All students must return to school from a field study on the bus. In the event a field study goes past regular school hours or is held out of town, students may be dismissed from the field study. The safety and accountability of all students is our priority. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

FLORIDA ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT THINKING

The Florida Assessment of Student Thinking (F.A.S.T.) will take place three times a year instead of just once at the end of the year. The F.A.S.T. will take hours versus days. It will monitor student progress and foster individual growth. For more information about the F.A.S.T., visit <https://www.fldoe.org/fast/>.

GRADING SCALE

3rd, 4th, 5th Grades

<u>Grade/Percent</u>	<u>Definition</u>
A 90-100	Outstanding progress
B 80-89	Above average
C 70-79	Average progress
D 60-69	Lowest acceptable progress
F 59 and below	Unacceptable progress/Failure

Kindergarten -2nd Grade

<u>Marking Code</u>	<u>Definition</u>
M	Meeting mastery level of the standards
P	Progressing towards mastery of the standards
I	Improvement needed

Interim grades are issued at the mid-point of each nine weeks to students in grades 1-5. Grades 1-2 receive a paper copy, and Grades 3-5 have access on HAC (Home Access Center). Report cards are issued every nine weeks to inform you of your child's progress in school. All report cards will have narrative comments from your child's teacher.

HOME ACCESS CENTER

Home Access Center (HAC) allows students and parents to view their child's educational information via a secure, password-protected website, Android app, or iPhone app. (<https://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/hac/>). Contact Ms. Sherman or Ms. Owens if unable to access 547-8611.

HOMEWORK

Homework is an extension of the classroom. It reinforces the concepts being taught and helps to build critical thinking skills. Homework is assigned at all grade levels at South Woods. The amount of homework and expectations regarding homework vary at each grade level. Students in grades kindergarten through fifth are required to complete assigned homework and turn it in on time. Thank you for your assistance in teaching your child to be a responsible learner by understanding what is expected from your child's teacher and reinforcing our homework policies.

HONOR ROLL PROCEDURES

Honor Roll is an opportunity to recognize student achievement and celebrate individual accomplishments. Students will have three categories to demonstrate success: academic performance, attendance, and character. The following are the criteria for each:

All A's Honor Roll: All A's in academic subject areas and all S's in resource areas.

A/B Honor Roll: All A's and/or B's in subject areas and all S's in resource areas.

Perfect Attendance: In attendance each day of the grading period. Tardies and early check-outs will eliminate the student from consideration.

Character Counts: Teacher and/or class selection of a student exemplifying the character trait(s) each month.

Most Improved: Pre-K through 2nd-grade teachers identify four students who have shown the most personal growth in reading or math.

INTERNET USE POLICY

A copy of this policy is available for all parents to sign at the beginning of the school year as part of the Student Code of Conduct. Please discuss appropriate computer usage with your child, which includes not visiting any websites that promote drug usage, violence, or other inappropriate behaviors or language.

ITEMS NOT TO BE BROUGHT TO SCHOOL

Animals - Students may not bring animals to school or transport them on the school bus without school approval.

Toys/Collectibles - Students may not bring toys, collectibles (toy action figures, trading cards), or electronic games to school during the regular school day. *Bringing in a toy gun, knife, or any other toy weapon to school may result in suspension.*

Chewing Gum and Lollipops - Gum and/or lollipops are not to be brought to or chewed in school or on the bus for safety reasons.

Cell Phones and Wireless Communication Devices- Students may possess these devices at school, on buses, and at school functions. However, during the school day, they must be turned off and stored in a student's backpack or purse. Devices up to and including smart watches shall not be used during the school day without administrative approval. Inappropriate use of cell phones or wireless communication devices, on school property or while attending a school function, shall be cause for disciplinary action, including confiscation of the device and/or search of stored information.

Key Chains - For safety reasons, we ask that students not attach key chains to their backpacks.

Rolling Back Packs - Rolling back packs are not allowed. With as many students as we have at our school, it becomes a safety issue as students enter and exit the building. The only exception to this is if a child provides the school with a written excuse from a doctor. Please be assured that teachers do monitor the number of books students need to take home in the afternoon.

LEGAL NAMES

The name that appears on the student's birth certificate is the legal name and will be used on all official school documents (report cards, certificates, etc.) unless other legal documents are provided to the registrar that would indicate a change of name is necessary.

LICE

If a student is suspected of having lice, they will be sent to the clinic for a check. If lice are present, the student will need to be picked up by a parent/guardian and treated. The student may return to school with a parent present the following day. At that time, school personnel will conduct a head check before students are permitted back into class. If lice are still present, the student will be sent home and will be rechecked upon return by office personnel. If the child has siblings in another class, that class will also be checked. Notify the school clinic if you find your child has lice. This will help reduce the spread of lice in school.

LOST AND FOUND

Articles found in and around the school should be given to the receptionist. Lost and Found is located in the cafeteria/stage hallway for lunch boxes and clothing. *Unclaimed articles are donated at the end of each month to organizations that support those in need.* Labeling student belongings with their name would ensure that items are returned to the rightful owner.

MEDICATION

If a child needs to take a doctor's prescribed medication, a parent must bring the medication **IN THE ORIGINAL MEDICATION BOTTLE** to the office and **COMPLETE A PARENT AUTHORIZATION FORM**. Please keep us updated on any medical conditions your child may have. Medication may not be sent on the bus. Cough drops and other "over-the-counter" medications may not be brought to school.

PARENTSQUARE

ParentSquare is the mass e-mail and texting notification system provided by our school district to communicate important or emergency information efficiently and rapidly to our parents. This system will primarily be used to communicate accurate information to parents about any safety issues, weather updates, or news from our school. Parents must notify the school when their phone number changes so ParentSquare calls can continue to be received, as school news is communicated via the system.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

We expect parents and teachers to confer throughout the school year. Conferences can be arranged with your child's teacher at a mutually agreeable time. You can contact a teacher by writing a note and sending it in your child's planner. You can also email your child's teacher.

PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION (P.T.O.)

PTO is an organization that sponsors family-oriented activities and provides items to enhance students' school experiences. Some examples of items provided by our PTO are playground equipment, water bottle fillers, and additional computers. We hope to have all families and staff members join for just \$5.00. See our school newsletter for special events. PTO members are invited to attend a meeting each month.

PHYSICALS

Physicals are required for basketball and cheerleading.

RETURNED CHECKS

St. Johns County School District is under contract with Check-Redi to pursue all returned checks. Banks will redirect returned checks to Check-Redi, which will electronically re-present them. Check-Redi will add service charges and processing fees as permitted by Florida State Law to all checks written and returned to all St. Johns County Schools. Parents who write a check that is returned will be contacted by Check-Redi rather than by the school. This includes all checks written to the school, including the cafeteria.

PERFORMANCES

South Woods' students will have opportunities to perform throughout the school year. These performances are exciting family events. All family members and friends are welcome to attend these special functions. Listed below are a few guidelines that we ask all attendees to adhere to:

- Remain seated during performance.
- Arrive on time. Stay until the end of the performance.
- Turn off all noise-making gadgets, such as watches and cell phones.
- Take coughing and/or noisy children outside the cafeteria area.
- Clap enthusiastically to show your appreciation. Don't hoot and holler.

SAFETY DRILLS

To provide the safest environment for our students, we hold regularly scheduled evacuation drills on a monthly basis. These drills consist of fire drills, lockdown (active shooter) drills, bomb threats, and tornado drills. An evacuation route map is posted in every room. For student safety, students must comply with the teacher's instructions immediately. Volunteers and visitors are reminded to check the evacuation maps posted in each room. Everyone must exit quietly, walking to the designated area. We also maintain a Critical Incident Plan

for specific incidents. Should we ever need to vacate our school site, we would be taken by school bus to Gamble Rogers Middle School or Pedro Menendez HS. The ParentSquare mass calling system will be used to communicate information and provide directions as needed.

SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL (SAC)

The School Advisory Council (SAC) is an advisory committee to the principal, comprised of teachers, parents, district representatives, community members, and business partners. The primary role of SAC is to help collect information related to decisions involving school climate, student performance, working conditions, community expectations, and other “big picture” issues requiring a great deal of information from a great number of sources. SAC meets monthly during the school year. Teachers, parents, and community members are invited to attend.

SCHOOL CLINIC

Children who become ill during the school day are sent to the clinic. Parents are contacted to pick up any child who is sick. Please pick up your child immediately when contacted. Please provide the office with updated phone numbers so you can be reached during an emergency.

SCHOOL COUNSELOR

We have a school counselor to assist students and parents. Students may request permission from the teacher to go to the guidance office if they need assistance. Parents are encouraged to call the counselor for assistance to discuss individual concerns as they arise.

SMOKE FREE CAMPUS

All St. Johns County Schools are designated Smoke-Free Campuses (St. Johns County School District board policy - 9.0411 - Tobacco Use in District Facilities). Please be aware that there is to be no smoking on the grounds at any time. This includes the school parking lots. This policy is in effect whether school is in session or if students are on campus.

SNACKS

Individual teachers may plan for snack time based on the class lunchtime and student needs. Snacks brought to school are to be healthy food choices. Water is the only permissible drink. Appropriate snack suggestions include sliced apples, bananas, cheese cubes, string cheese, pretzels, granola bars, breakfast bars, Goldfish crackers, dried fruit, raisins, etc. Please do not send snacks with chocolate, candy, frosted snacks, gum, etc.

SPIRIT DAY

Every Friday is designated Spirit Day at South Woods. Children and staff are encouraged to wear South Woods spirit shirts purchased from PTO.

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

A copy of the St. Johns County Student Conduct Code is sent home at the beginning of the school year and can be found on the SJCSO website. We ask that you review this document with your child, as they are expected to be familiar with the policies and understand the meaning of responsible behavior.

TECHNOLOGY

South Woods provides an environment that empowers learners with access to information through various devices. Most of the student textbooks are available online to access from home. Students will be informed and taught how to utilize different technology tools and applications.

TEXTBOOKS/LIBRARY BOOKS

Textbooks and library books are provided free of charge, but are the property of the school on loan to students. Parents must pay for damaged or lost books.

TRANSPORTATION CHANGES

Bus Changes

If your child is going home a different way than usual, please send a note to the classroom teacher. The note must include the student's first and last name, the teacher's name, the date the note is written, the date the change will occur, and a description of the transportation change. If you need your child to ride a different bus, you must apply for a Transportation Waiver through the District's Transportation Department. This also applies if the student is usually a bus rider but is taking a different bus or if they are going to ride the same bus but get off at a different stop. Bus transportation concerns can be addressed at 904-547-7810.

Transportation Services Waivers

Schools are no longer authorized to issue bus passes or instruct bus operators regarding bus ridership or stops. Instead, the Transportation Department is now responsible for issuing provisional Transportation Services Waivers for a specific period due to extenuating circumstances. Parents may apply for this waiver via the St. Johns County School District webpage under the "Transportation Department." Waivers will not be available from individual schools.

Parent Pick Up or Extended Day Changes

If your child is usually dismissed as a parent pick up or extended day, please send in a dated and signed note if a transportation change is going to occur. The student will be given a transportation change pass from the front office. If an emergency arises and you must make changes after the school day begins, please notify the office by **2:15 PM (1:15 PM on Wednesdays)**. We will get the message to your child's teacher. Please do not leave the message in the teacher's email or voicemail.

VISITORS

For the safety of our students at SWES, all visitors are required to report to the front office, show a photo ID (driver's license), and sign in. Visitors will then be issued a School Access/Volunteer badge to be worn while on campus. If on campus, we ask that you not visit other areas around the school unannounced. A great time to see your child is during lunch. Thank you for your help and understanding for the betterment of your child.

VOLUNTEERS IN THE CLASSROOM

Parents and volunteers are welcome at South Woods Elementary School. Guidelines have been established by St. Johns County School District, as well as SWES, to help maintain consistency and a positive, safe learning environment for all. All parents or adults who plan to volunteer *in any capacity* (including field studies, classroom helper, and/or PTO events) must complete a School Access/Volunteer form. This form may be found online at www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/volunteer/.

We have a new volunteer application for school access:

<https://apps.raptortech.com/Apply/OTY0OTplbi1VUw==>. A "button" for this site, as well as a QR Code for use on a smartphone, is now located on the St. Johns County School District Volunteer Services Website under Volunteer Services. This volunteer application button, the QR Code, and a short message to applicants will be placed on the front page of each school's website soon.

Important Note – File information from KeepnTrack (the former visitor/volunteer management system) has been exported into Raptor (the new system), so if a person had access, they do not need to complete another application.

Classroom volunteers who will be working with students must attend our ***SWE Volunteer Trainings*** facilitated by our Community Partnership School director. Please contact CPS for the monthly times and dates.

Following your training, arrange times in advance to volunteer with a teacher. For safety reasons and to ensure the best learning environment for our students, younger children may NOT accompany parents or other volunteers who are working (volunteering) in our school, chaperoning a field study, or assisting a teacher. Your child's teacher is not able to confer with you regarding your child during the time you are volunteering.

Confidentiality – At all times when you volunteer, we ask that you respect our confidentiality rule. Please do not discuss students whom you have met while volunteering with other parents. Thank you for treating other students as you would like your child(ren) to be treated by other volunteers. We appreciate your time.

While this Parent Handbook is updated annually, SWE administration may deem it necessary to add, amend, or remove policies during the school year. Any additions or changes to policies or protocols stated in this handbook will be communicated.