

# SWAN RIVER SCHOOL

STUDENT HANDBOOK



**HOME** OF THE **WARRIORS**

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## **WELCOME**

Our Swan River family sincerely welcomes you to a new school year. The staff of Swan River School is here to help students be successful as well as have fun. Every student who comes to school ready to learn, with good attendance and good work habits, will succeed.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide a brief overview of school policies and procedures. It is also to help answer questions which may arise during the year. Please review the information thoroughly. If the answers to your questions cannot be found, please feel free to contact the school to clarify any concerns.

The Swan River School staff welcomes parent volunteers and looks forward to parent participation when opportunities arise.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission statement of Swan River School is to produce contributing members of America's diverse society. Swan River School stimulates intellectual curiosity within an environment where students feel a sense of safety, community, and ownership. Swan River School promotes pride in individual achievement and helps students meet their potential by instilling the value of accomplishment based on good behavior, work, and effort.

## **EQUAL EDUCATION AND NONDISCRIMINATION**

The Swan River Public School District #4 is committed to equality of educational opportunity. Because freedom from discrimination is a fundamental right under the Montana Constitution, it is the policy of this District to provide a learning environment free of discrimination.

All students have the opportunity to participate in and receive benefits from all programs, services and activities of the school.

Discrimination in education because of sex, race, color, creed, religion, national origin, age, physical or mental disability, political belief, marital or parental status, economic or social conditions is a prohibited unless based upon reasonable grounds as provided by law. The District is committed to taking any appropriate and feasible remedial action necessary to eliminate existing discrimination and its effects.

Inquiries regarding discrimination or intimidation should be directed to the Public Schools Title IX Coordinator (or Title IX/ section 504 Coordinator).

In compliance with federal regulations, the District will notify annually all students, parents, staff, and community members of this policy and the designated coordinator and will be carried in all handbooks and published in community newspapers.

An individual with a complaint alleging a violation of this policy shall follow the Uniform Grievance Procedure.

Swan River School Title IX Coordinator: JJ Lamb, Principal  
Swan River School  
1205 Swan Highway  
Bigfork, MT 59911  
406-837-4528

## **APPOINTMENTS DURING SCHOOL HOURS**

Parents are encouraged to leave their children in school all day. Doctor's and other appointments should be scheduled outside school hours whenever possible. If your child needs to be dismissed early, he/she should bring a note to his/her teacher stating the time and reason. In order to protect each child who leaves school prior to regular dismissal, the parent, or an adult listed as the student's emergency contact, must personally come to the office and sign the student out. Teachers will provide make-up work at their convenience. Class time will not be used to provide make-up work for students leaving school early.

## **ATHLETICS**

All students must have medical physicals dated for the current school year on file in the office for eligible participation. All students will be eligible until midterm of the first quarter. An "F" or "I" in any subject will result in suspension from participation in any sport or activity for the next grading period (approximately 4 1/2/ weeks). The student will have the opportunity to be placed on a week-by-week principal monitoring plan of academic improvement to maintain eligibility. If the incomplete is replaced with a passing grade or the student meets the requirements of the plan of academic improvement, the student will be reinstated.

Athletes are expected to positively reflect Swan River School during the sport season. If an athlete fails to do so, he/she will face immediate dismissal from all activities for the remainder of the sport season.

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

The District is committed to the principle that every student should attend school every day and that poor attendance results not only in a loss of valuable instruction time, but creates lifelong behavior patterns dramatically influencing a student's career success. Regular attendance and promptness are expected and essential for success in school. The law of the State of Montana, Section 20-5-103, MCA, specifies the requirements for compulsory attendance in school. It requires parents and guardians who are responsible for the care of school-age children to enforce attendance to the school in which the child is enrolled. The District recognizes the importance of monitoring all children's attendance and is committed to taking whatever action is necessary, up to and including legal action, to assure that students attend school regularly.

### **DEFINITIONS**

**Absence:** A student missing all or any portion of the school day. The level of precision the school uses to measure individual attendance and absences is tenths of a school day.

**Truancy:** Absences which take place without the approval of the parent and/or supervising teacher or principal.

**Excused Absences:** Generally, absences will be considered excused in cases of illness, bereavement, family vacations, situations resulting from “acts of God” and other emergencies. Other absences will be considered unexcused.

**Excessive Absences:** Similarly, the Federal Government’s US Dept. of Education deems a student to be “chronically absent” if he/she misses 10% (17.5 days) or more of the school year.

## **REPORTING STUDENT ABSENCES**

When a student must be absent for illness or other unforeseen emergencies, parents must inform the school of the reasons for the student’s absence by 9:00 a.m. on the day of the absence. If the student is not present, and the parent has not notified the school of the absence, the school will attempt to call the parent by 11:00 a.m. the same day. The fact that the school will attempt to call the parent does not relieve the parent of the responsibility to call the school to report a child’s absence.

## **EXCUSED ABSENCES**

In cases where doubt occurs concerning the validity of an excuse, the Supervising Teacher or Principal may require verification of medical conditions contributing to the absence. In the event the Supervising Teacher or Principal determines an absence is unnecessary, the absence will be considered unexcused. A permanent record will also be maintained of student absences.

## **ABSENCE/STUDENT PERFORMANCE**

Once the teacher observes that the student’s absences are having an adverse effect on the student’s progress, he/she will make parental contact to express concern and to explain the problem. If the absences have been unavoidable because of illness, bereavement, or other reasons, the teacher may request a meeting to develop a plan so that the absenteeism has minimal effect on the student’s academic success. In the event that reasons for absences have been questionable, the teacher will explain that the student will not get credit for work missed during those unexcused absences. Additionally, the teacher will not be required to provide make-up work. Absences may be a significant factor in decisions of retention.

Good attendance is essential to have success in school. By attending school regularly and being on time, students will be developing a habit that helps them be successful in everyday life. The school deems “outstanding attendance” to be five or less days absent from school for the school year.

Parents are reminded that Montana State Law (20-15-103) states that the parent or guardian is responsible to have the student in school on a regular basis.

## **TARDINESS**

Being on time for school is a valuable part of a child's learning and should be stressed. By being on time, students are able to prepare for the day's work in a relaxed manner. If your child is late, please send a note stating the reason.

Students who arrive late to school must report to the office before going to class. A tardy is counted as an absence for a portion (one-tenth) of a school day.

## **BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETINGS (Policy 1400-1420)**

The Swan River Board of Trustees meets the second Monday of every month at 4:30 p.m. in the Eighth grade room.. Board meetings will be no longer than two (2) hours in length unless a majority of the Board agrees through formal action to table an item(s) and/or extend the meeting. The agenda for any Board meeting shall be prepared by the Board Chair in consultation with the Principal and Clerk. An item may be placed on the agenda if submitted to the District Clerk five days before the meeting. Items of immediate importance may be submitted not later than 48 hours prior to the Board meeting. Anyone wishing to be placed on the agenda must call the clerk before 4:00 on the fifth working day prior to the meeting, make a request to be placed on the agenda, and state the reason for appearance. In addition, if the reason for the appearance is a complaint against school district personnel, that complaint must be in writing, signed by the complainant, and presented to the Principal at least five working days prior to the Trustee's meeting. This follows district policy number 1700 (see page 19). School personnel are required to follow the complaint procedure established specifically for their use. District citizens wishing to make brief comments about school programs or procedures or item on the agenda need not request placement on the agenda and may attend the meeting and ask recognition by the chair at the appropriate time. No employee or citizen has first pursued the matter through the appropriate grievance/complaint procedure.

The agenda includes a "public comment" portion to allow members of the general public to comment on any public matter under the jurisdiction of the District which is not specifically listed on the agenda, except that no member of the public will be allowed to comment on contested cases, other adjudicative proceedings, or personnel matters. The Board Chairperson may place reasonable time limits on any "public comment" period to maintain and ensure effective and efficient operations of the Board. The Board shall not take any action on any matter discussed, unless the matter is specifically noticed on the agenda, and the public has been allowed opportunity to comment.

Individuals, after identifying themselves, will proceed to make comments as briefly as the subject permits. Any representative of a firm eligible to bid on materials or services solicited by the Board shall also be entitled to express an opinion. The Chair may interrupt or terminate an individual's statement when appropriate including when statements are out of order, too lengthy, personally directed, abusive, obscene or irrelevant. The Board as a whole shall have the final decision in determining the appropriateness of all such rulings. If the subject matter of the agenda item involves a matter of individual privacy which clearly

exceeds the merits of public disclosure and the individual(s) whose privacy rights are at issue have not waived their right of privacy, then the Board shall receive comments from individuals in executive session.

## **BOARD POLICY**

School Board Policy is available on the District website. Community members are welcome to review it at any time. [www.swanriverschool.org](http://www.swanriverschool.org)

## **BULLYING/HARASSMENT/INTIMIDATION/HAZING**

Bullying, harassment, intimidation, or hazing, by students, staff, or third parties, is strictly prohibited and shall not be tolerated.

All complaints about behavior that may violate this policy shall be promptly investigated. Retaliation is prohibited against any person who reports or is thought to have reported a violation, files a complaint, or otherwise participates in an investigation or inquiry.

[See Policy 3226]

## **CHANGE OF ADDRESS OR EMERGENCY INFORMATION**

If at any time during the school year, you change your address, day care provider, phone number (work or home), or emergency contacts, please contact the office as soon as possible. In case of illness or emergency, we need to be able to reach the parent or guardian immediately.

## **CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT REPORTING (Policy 5232)**

### **BASIC POLICY**

The Board of Swan River School District supports those sections of Montana law concerned with the reporting of suspected cases of child abuse and neglect perpetrated by persons within or outside District employment.

Realizing the seriousness of child abuse and neglect, this Board requires compliance with Montana law by all school teachers and other employees.

When a teacher or other employee suspects child abuse, sexual child abuse, or neglect, that person must promptly notify the Department of Family Services, or its local affiliate.

## **PENALTY FOR FAILURE TO REPORT**

Any of the District's employees who fail to report to the Department of Health and Human Services known or suspected cases of child abuse or neglect, or who prevent another person from reasonably doing so, may be civilly liable for the damages

Approximately caused by such failure or prevention, and are guilty of a misdemeanor (41-3-207, MCA). These persons will also be subject to disciplinary action, including discharge, by the Board of Trustees.

## **CHILD CUSTODIAL AGREEMENT**

Confrontations that occur as parents come to school to enact a change in custody arrangements for their child are disruptive to the school environment as well as upsetting to the child involved. It is important to emphasize that whenever possible every effort should be made to settle custody disputes outside of the school setting.

Parents who come to the school or call the school with information that a child is leaving because of a change in custodial arrangements will be informed that the Flathead County

Sheriff's Department oversees the process. The parent will be directed to contact the Sheriff's office.

## **COMMUNICABLE DISEASES / CONDITIONS**

To protect children from contagious illnesses, students infected with certain diseases, including Head Lice, are not allowed to come to school while contagious. Parents of a student with a communicable or contagious disease should phone the school so that other students who may have been exposed to the disease can be alerted.

These diseases include, but are not limited to:

Amebiasis	Hepatitis	Rubella (German Measles),
Campylobacteriosis	Influenza	including congenital
Chickenpox	Lyme disease	Salmonellosis
Chlamydia	Malaria	Syphilis
Colorado Tick Fever	Measles (Rubella)	Scabies
Diphtheria	Meningitis	Shigellosis
Gastroenteritis	Mumps	Streptococcal disease, invasive
Giardiasis	Pinkeye	Tuberculosis
Hansen's disease	Ringworm (scalp)	Whooping Cough (Pertussis)

[Further information may be found at policy 3417 in the District's Policy Manual]

## **COMMUNICATION**

### **(Answering Questions, Resolving Concerns, Solving Problems)**

Cooperation between home and school is very important at any stage of your child's development. An unanswered question can lead to a serious concern. To avoid problems, please be sure to ask questions as soon as they arise. The place to start is with your child's teacher, if not resolved there, contact the principal, then the Board if necessary.

## **COMPUTERS AND INTERNET**

Computer education is part of the curriculum at Swan River School. Computers at Swan River have access to the internet. All students and parents should read the acceptable use policy sent home the first week of school. Only students who have returned a signed permission form will be allowed to access the internet at school. (See Appendix B)

## **COUNSELING PROGRAM**

Goals for the counseling program include providing counseling and consulting services for students, teachers, and parents. Please contact the school office if you would like to make an appointment.

## **DISCIPLINE**

The Board of Trustees and teachers of Swan River School feel it is the responsibility of the parents, and not the responsibility of the school, to discipline students when necessary.

However, broken rules, tantrums and lack of cooperation are real problems that occur in the classroom and on the playground every day. It is our goal to teach children how to behave in an acceptable manner. The following techniques developed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children will be utilized.

1. A staff member may distract children from potential problems by stepping in to shift a child's attention before a problem gets out of hand.
2. A staff member may remind students of rules.
3. A staff member may help children solve problems and make choices.
4. A staff member may call time out. A student may be asked to leave a game or the classroom until his/her behavior changes.
5. A staff member may ignore inappropriate behavior as many times it is used to gain attention.
6. A staff member may notice good behavior.
7. A staff member may help children see consequences for their actions and words toward others.

Swan River Board of Trustees and staff believe one of the most important lessons to be gained from education is self-discipline. While it does not appear as a subject, it underlies

the whole educational structure because it develops self-control, character, orderliness and proper consideration for other people and properties. The intention of the school is to work with parents through open communication when a problem arises. Our goal for discipline is to help young people build their own self control.

Students are expected to respect and obey authority. Students are expected to comply with personnel, including teachers, aides, school secretary, administrators, custodians, cooks, etc. At times when students do not meet reasonable expectations, a disciplinary referral form will be completed detailing the infraction.

Swan River School is in the process of developing a school behavior plan that follows the Montana Behavior Initiative (MBI) model. You will receive updated information as the process continues.

### **CONDUCT GUIDELINES, GRADES K-8**

Each student is expected to strive to take full advantage of his/her educational opportunities and to do his/her best in all areas of school life. Each student has the right to an education in an orderly, safe, and sanitary atmosphere and is expected to contribute to his/her environment by meeting the following responsibilities.

1. Respect and work cooperatively with fellow students and school staff.
2. Be punctual and regular in school attendance.
3. Respond positively and promptly to direction by faculty or staff members.
4. Refrain from fighting or other abusive behavior directed toward any student, faculty, or staff member.
5. Refrain from the use of profanity or vulgarity.
6. Avoid encouraging or assisting another student to take action which would subject a student to suspension or expulsion.
7. Refrain from unauthorized entry into or misuse or damage of school property.
8. Refrain from damage to or theft of personnel property.
9. Be financially responsible, with his/her parent or guardian, for willful damage or destruction of school property.
10. Refrain from throwing rocks or snowballs.
11. Walk bicycles onto the school grounds and walk in the school.
12. Go home immediately after school. The student may return to school at 4:00 p.m. after checking in with his/her parents.
13. Refrain from possession, use, and/or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol on school premises or as a part of any school sponsored activity.
14. Cell phones are not allowed to be used during school hours. Cell phones being used will be taken away and may be picked up by a parent at the end of the school day.
15. No walk-mans, I-pods, MP3 players, radios, etc. are allowed on school property during the school day.

16. No coffee, hot chocolate, energy drinks or soda is allowed in school. Water will be the only beverage allowed inside of the hallways and classrooms during school.

Compliance with these guidelines of conduct is mandatory. Failure of a student to comply with these regulations constitutes an infringement upon the rights of other students.

## **DISCIPLINARY MEASURES**

Disciplinary measures include, but are not limited to: loss of privileges, loss of bus privileges, restitution for damages to school property, detention, suspension, expulsion, and notification of juvenile authorities and/or police.

## **PLAYGROUND**

Students need to respect and obey the directions of the noon and recess supervisors and all teachers on the playground. Rough or dangerous play is not acceptable. Good sportsmanship rules will be observed at all times. Abusive or profane language is not allowed. Students will keep the grounds clean and put litter in trash cans.

Students are not to climb fences or go into streets to retrieve balls, nor are they to climb backstops or buildings. Students who wish to leave the playground for any reason must check with the supervisor first.

Hard balls, skateboards, roller blades, etc. are not allowed on the playground. Tackling games, pushing, fighting, or wrestling are not allowed. Each classroom teacher will discuss appropriate use of the equipment and all students are required to use the equipment as directed.

Snowballs and rock throwing are not allowed.

## **INTOLERABLE BEHAVIOR**

While on school property and/or at school sponsored activities the following are considered intolerable behaviors.

**Harassment:** Any unsolicited comments, gestures, or physical contact that has the purpose or effect of intimidating, or creating a hostile or offensive learning environment.

**Defiance of Authority:** The unwillingness to comply with authority.

**Disrespect:** Lack of consideration for others and property.

**Intimidation:** To purposefully cause another to be timid or frightened including bullying other students by calling them names or making fun of them.

**Inappropriate Language and Actions:** Profane language or gestures.

**Accumulation of Infractions:** Breaking rules over a period of time in the classroom, hallway, recess, lunchroom, and other school-sponsored activities.

## **CONSEQUENCES FOR INTOLERABLE BEHAVIOR**

### **1<sup>st</sup> Offense**

1. In School Suspension
2. Parent Contacted by principal
3. Student held accountable for work missed
4. Restitution by student for damage done when appropriate
5. Law enforcement notified when appropriate
6. Suspension from extracurricular activities and field trips during suspension

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Offense**

1. Out-of-School Suspension
2. Principal/Parent/Student/Teacher Conference for readmission
3. A behavioral contract developed
4. Student held accountable for work missed
5. Restitution by student for damage done when appropriate
6. Law enforcement notified when appropriate
7. Suspension from extracurricular activities and field trips during suspension

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Office**

1. Out-of-School suspension
2. Expulsion hearing before Board of Trustees

## **ILLEGAL BEHAVIOR**

While on school property and/or at school sponsored activities the following are considered examples of illegal behaviors.

- Stealing
- Severe fighting
- Destruction of property
- Possession and/or use of illegal drugs or misuse of prescription
- Medication or any other mood altering chemicals (including tobacco,
- Alcohol, inhalants, or any paraphernalia)

## **CONSEQUENCES FOR ILLEGAL BEHAVIOR**

### **1<sup>st</sup> Offense**

1. Out-of-School Suspension
2. Conference with student/parent/principal/any appropriate staff

3. A behavioral contract developed
4. Appropriate referral to proper program
5. Recommendation for deferred expulsion status
6. Law enforcement notified
7. Student held accountable for work missed
8. Suspension from field trips and extracurricular activities for the period of Suspension

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Offense**

1. Suspension (out of school) from school
2. Expulsion hearing before Board. Strong recommendation from Administration for expulsion.
3. Law enforcement notified when appropriate.
4. Students held accountable for work missed.
5. Suspension from field trips and extracurricular activities for the period of suspension.

### **NOTES**

1. Any single serious violation may result in an automatic expulsion hearing with the Board.
2. Any illegal act will be reported to the proper legal authority.
3. Possession and/or use or misuse of illegal or legal drugs will result in a 3-day suspension.
4. “Pushing” and or/selling drugs in any form (prescription, over the counter, or illegal) will be cause for immediate expulsion from school. Readmission will be ONLY by the recommendation of a team of counselors and with Board consent.
5. Threats against a person’s life will be taken seriously and the Sheriff’s Department may be called.
6. All students who ride motorized vehicles to school will be reported to the Montana. Highway Patrol as the school is responsible for students to and from school.

### **DEFINITION OF TERMS**

**In-School Suspension:** Students may be placed in the Work Study room for the school day. Assignments are provided by the student’s classroom teachers(s).

**Out-Of-School Suspension:** The student is not allowed to attend school for up to, and including, three days. Parents are required to meet with the principal before the student is readmitted.

**Deferred Expulsion:** A meeting with the principal where a decision is made about readmitting the student, or having an expulsion hearing before the Board of Trustees. If the student is readmitted, he/she is placed on a

Deferred Expulsion Contract. Should this contract be broken, an expulsion hearing is scheduled.

**Expulsion Hearing:** Action following due process procedures taken by the Board upon administrative recommendation where the student is expelled from Swan River School. Extenuating circumstances may lead the Board to override administrative recommendation by either dismissing the case, extending the suspension, or deferring an expulsion. The Board will decide the length and terms of an expulsion.

## **DUE PROCESS**

Students, parents, and teachers all have rights under the Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, which guarantees that no state shall “deprive any person of life, liberty, or property without due process of law.” Due process essentially means “fair play.” In order to ensure due process, the Board shall provide the following to all individuals who may be subject to Board action.

1. Notification of charges
2. Opportunity for a hearing
3. Adequate time to prepare a rebuttal to the charges
4. Access to evidence and names of witnesses
5. Hearing before an impartial tribunal (ex. School Board, County Superintendent)
6. Opportunity to be represented by legal counsel
7. Opportunity to present evidence and witnesses
8. Opportunity to cross-examine adverse witnesses
9. Decision based on evidence and findings of the hearing
10. Opportunity to appeal an adverse decision

The principal may handle matters less formally, but any student or parent may require any or all of these steps in a written grievance.

## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

Emergency information must be on file for all students enrolled in the school. If your child becomes ill or has an accident, or there is an emergency at the school, we must be able to call you or your designated emergency contact.

The school district has an emergency plan which specifies actions to be taken in case of emergencies such as earthquakes, severe weather, or fire. Regular emergency drills take place throughout the school year.

## **PROCEDURE FOR RELEASE OF STUDENTS IN AN EMERGENCY**

The school's emergency plan has been designed for the safety of students. We are prepared to care for your children in times of emergency. If you are not able to reach the school, we will care for your children here. We will be in communication with various local emergency agencies. Release procedures will be observed to ensure that the whereabouts of all students are known at all times. If an emergency occurs and it becomes necessary to send students home early, relocate them, or ask parents/guardians to pick them up, the following procedures will be followed as much as possible.

1. After receiving authorization to relocate or release students, the school will initiate phone trees to notify parents of the situation, using all available phones and communication messages such as remind. Information provided will include: Name of caller, type of emergency, action to be taken, and where the parent may pick up the child.
2. No student will be dismissed from school unless a parent (or individual designated by the parent) comes for him or her.
3. No child will be allowed to leave with another person, even a relative or baby-sitter, unless we have written permission to that effect, or that particular person is listed in the student's emergency contact information. Please keep this information up-to-date.
4. All parents or designated parties who come to pick up students should bring a photo ID. Each person will be responsible for filling out an Emergency Pupil Release Form. This form allows the school to know exactly where your child has gone, when he/she left, and with whom.

Following an earthquake or other emergency, do not immediately drive to the school. Access to the school may be cluttered with debris. The school access route and entrances must remain clear for emergency vehicles. Please do not call the school. In the event of an emergency, school personnel need to be involved with caring for the children, and telephone lines need to be kept open for communications with the proper authorities.

## **FIELD TRIPS AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

Through the school year there are occasional educational field trips and extracurricular activities. Any student who has NOT performed appropriately prior to the trip could be prohibited from going. This includes behaviors on bus routes, playground, classroom or anywhere within the jurisdiction of the school district. The district requires the utmost in behavior and courtesy for success and any breach of these behaviors could result in early termination of the trip for that student.

## **GRADING POLICY**

Progress reports will be sent home during the middle of each quarter of the school year. Report cards will be sent home every nine weeks. Students in grades 1-3 do not receive letter grades. In grades 4-8, the following grading policy will be used:

A= 90-100

B= 80-89

C= 70-79

D=60-69

F= 59 or below

Plus or minus grades may also be used.

## **HOMEWORK**

Teachers may give homework to students to assist in the student's educational development. Homework may be assigned for one or more of the following purposes:

1. Practice: To help students to master specific skills which have been presented in class.
2. Preparation: To help students gain the maximum benefits from future lessons.
3. Extension: To provide students with opportunities to transfer specific skills or concepts to new situations.
4. Creativity: To require students to integrate many skills and concepts in order to produce original responses.

## **IMMUNIZATION**

A student must be fully immunized against certain diseases or must present a certificate or statement that, for medical or religious reasons, the student will not be immunized. The immunizations required are: diphtheria, pertussis, rubella (measles), varicella (chicken pox), mumps, poliomyelitis and tetanus. Haemophilus influenza type B is required for students under age five (5).

A student who transfers into the District may photocopy immunization records in the possession of the school of origin. The District will accept the photocopy as evidence of the immunization. Within thirty (30) days after a transferring student ceases attendance at the school of origin, the District must receive the original immunization records for the student who transfers into the District.

If a student's religious beliefs conflict with the requirement that the student be immunized, the student must present a statement signed by the student (or by the parent, if the student is a minor) stating that immunization conflicts with the beliefs and practices of a recognized church or religious denomination of which the student is an adherent or member. This statement must be renewed yearly.

If a student should not be immunized for medical reasons, the student or parent must present a certificate signed by a Montana licensed physician stating that, in the doctor’s opinion, the immunization required would be harmful to the health and well-being of the student or any member of the student’s family or household. This certificate must be renewed yearly unless the physician specifies a life-long condition.

[For further information, see policy 3413]

**LUNCH (Free to all students August 31, 2021-June 2, 2022)**

To encourage good nutrition, a well balanced lunch is offered to students at a reasonable price. Menus will be posted in the classrooms, and sent home each month. Menus are subject to change with the availability of products. You will receive a letter if your child owes lunch or milk money.

Hot Lunch	Extra Milk	Breakfast Program
\$2.10	.45	\$1.10

**MEDICATION (Policy 3416)**

Any student required to take prescription medicine or any over-the-counter medication (i.e.-aspirin, ibuprofen, etc...) must have a written statement from a physician. This statement must be submitted to the office prior to the student consuming any medication.

No student will be dispensed medication of any kind without a physician’s note documenting dosage, reason and his/her signature. The medication must be kept in the office. Students are not allowed to have medication of any kind in their possession.

**NEWS**

The School News is posted and updated regularly on the school’s website or may be sent home with each student. The news is written to give parents, legal guardians, and other interested community members information about the school calendar of events, student/staff recognition and news of interest to you and Swan River students.

**PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES**

Conferences between parents and teachers are a critical part of a child’s success in school. Formal parent-teacher conferences will be held following completion of the first quarter. Parents are encouraged to contact the teacher when they feel it is necessary to discuss any phase of their child’s progress. Please remember, it is important to prearrange a conference

time either by note or phone contact so the teacher will be better prepared to inform and advise you concerning your child.

### **READINESS PHILOSOPHY**

Swan River School maintains a developmental philosophy toward school entrance and promotion. It is our belief that the attainment of a certain birthday is not a lone indicator of readiness for the work and demands of a given grade. It is a fact that children in different stages of their development require different environments, tasks, and expectations in order to function most effectively and to learn and cope without stress. For children to be expected to maximize their full potential in school, considerations must be given to developmental and/or behavioral age. The importance of having children fully ready for beginning a given grade should not be underestimated.

It is our belief that children should start school and be subsequently promoted on the basis of their developmental age (maturity level) rather than their age in years. This developmental age may or may not correspond with a child's chronological age, it includes social, emotional, adaptive, and physical, as well as intellectual, functioning and provides a clearer picture of school readiness than simple birthday age.

### **RECESS**

Children should arrive at school dressed for the weather of the day so they can safely and comfortably enjoy recess. As a general rule, if a child is well enough to go to school, he/she is well enough to play outside during recess. However, we realize that there are some exceptions. Please use discretion in asking to have a child stay in during recess. If your child should not go outside at recess for health reasons, please send a note with your child each day he/she is to stay inside. Your child will be able to stay inside although not always in the classroom. Please realize many students want to stay indoors in the morning but often ask to go outdoors at lunch and afternoon recess. We will follow the wishes of the parents who have written a note.

### **SCHOOL DAY**

The school day begins promptly at **8:14 a.m.** Students may not arrive at school before 8:00 a.m. If it becomes necessary for a child to arrive before 8:00 (due to work schedules, etc.), an early arrival permission slip must be completed by the parent. Early arrivals must enter the building and go directly to the designated room. Students are expected to use this time to study or read. Any student who misbehaves will lose early arrival privileges.

The school day ends at **3:15 p.m.** Students are expected to go immediately home as there is no playground supervision available. Students may not play on the playground equipment until 4:00 p.m.

## **SCHOOL SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS (Policy 4210)**

The Board encourages the formation of a parent-, teacher-, and student-, as appropriate, association at the school for the purpose of providing an opportunity through which parents, teachers, and students may unite their efforts and interests to enhance the school program. Booster clubs and/or special interest organizations may be formed to support and strengthen specific activities conducted within the school. All such groups must receive the approval of the Board in order to be recognized as a booster organization.

## **FUND RAISING BY SCHOOL SUPPORT GROUPS (Policy 4210)**

Fund-raising by school support groups such as booster clubs, parent councils, and the like are considered a usual and desirable part of the function of such groups. The specific fund-raising activities must be approved in advance by the Principal and must be consistent with Board Policy #3530 pertaining to student fund-raising.

The Board of Trustees shall approve all expenditures over \$1000.00. All such funds raised by school adjunct groups are to be used for the direct or indirect support of school becomes the property of the District and may be used or disposed of in accordance with District policy and state law.

These fund-raising activities must conform to the following guidelines:

1. If the fund-raising activity involves students or the school, the fund-raising must be approved in advance.
2. The fund-raising activity must not interfere with the educational program.
3. Any student participation must be purely voluntary. Door-to door solicitation by students is discouraged but the District recognizes that parents have responsibility for directing the behavior of their children in non-school hours.
4. The number of fund-raising activities in any school should be limited to a few each year.
5. The purpose of the fund-raising effort must be well publicized to parents and other citizens.
6. The fund raising activity must be such that it is not likely to create a poor image for the school support group or the District.
7. If a license or permit is required by local or state agencies for the fund-raising activity, the license or permit must be obtained in advance by the school support group.

## **SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY (Policy 3225)**

Swan River School prohibits sexual harassment of all students. Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination and is prohibited. An employee, District agent, or student engages in sexual harassment whenever that individual makes unwelcome advances,

requests sexual favors, or engages in other verbal, non-verbal, or physical conduct of a sexual or sex-based nature, imposed on the basis of sex, that:

1. Denies or limits the provision of educational aid, benefits, services, opportunities, or treatment, or that makes such conduct a condition of a student's academic status; or
2. Has the purpose or effect of:
  - a. Substantially interfering with a student's educational environment;
  - b. Creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment;
  - c. Depriving a student of educational aid, benefits, services, opportunities, or treatment; or
  - d. Making submission to or rejection of such unwelcome conduct the basis for academic decisions affecting a student.

Students who believe they have been the subject of sexual harassment by an employee or student of the district must report the alleged sexual harassment to a district employee, principal, or to the District Title IX compliance officer and follow the Uniform Complaint Procedure, as detailed in this handbook and Board Policy.

The investigation process will include notification of the accused and parents of the accused, if appropriate, of the complaint, and of appropriate due process procedures for all concerned.

Substantiated violations of this policy may result in appropriate disciplinary action, including expulsion for a student, or dismissal for an employee.

## **STUDENTS' RECORDS AND TRANSFER OF RECORDS**

### **STUDENT RECORDS (Policy 3600-3600P)**

School student records are confidential and information from them shall not be released other than as provided by law. State and Federal law grants students and parents(s)/guardian(s) certain rights, including the right to inspect, copy, and challenge their or their child's school records. The information contained in school student records shall be kept current, accurate, clear and relevant. All information maintained concerning a student receiving special education services shall be directly related to the provision of services to that child. The District may release directory information as permitted by law, but parent(s) guardian(s) shall have the right to object to the release of information regarding their child.

The Board of Trustees shall implement this policy and State and federal law with administrative procedures. The Board shall inform staff members of this policy, and shall inform students and their parent(s) guardian(s) of it, as well as their rights regarding student school records.

### **TRANSFER OF STUDENT RECORDS**

A certified copy of the permanent, or cumulative, file of any student and the file containing special education records of any student shall be forwarded by mail, or electronically, providing the reasons why the District is unable to comply with the five-day time frame. The District shall also include in that notice the date by which the requested records will be transferred. A request for the transfer of records may not be refused because the student owes fines or fees.

### **TELEPHONE USE**

School telephones are for business and emergency use only. Other use by students will be discouraged. Please make arrangements for after school activities prior to the school day.

Please ask our clerk to deliver messages only in case of emergency. Cell phones are not to be used during school hours.

### **TEXT BOOKS**

Textbooks and library books checked out to the child become the responsibility of the child. No deposit is required, but students are responsible for keeping the books clean and neat and returning them in the same condition as received. The school will require payment for lost or damaged books. Fines will be assessed according to loss or damage.

### **TRANSPORTATION REIMBURSEMENT**

If you transport your child beyond three miles to school and still reside in the school district, please inquire at the office about transportation reimbursement.

### **UNIFORM COMPLAINT PROCEDURE (Policy 1700)**

All individuals should use this grievance procedure if they believe that the Board, its employees, or agents have violated their rights guaranteed by the State or Federal Constitution, State or Federal statute, or Board policy.

The District will endeavor to respond to and resolve complaints without resorting to this grievance procedure and, if a complaint is filed, to address the complaint promptly and equitably. The right of a person to prompt and equitable resolution of the complaint filed hereunder shall not be impaired by the person's pursuit of other remedies. Use of this grievance procedure is not a prerequisite to the pursuit of other remedies, and use of this grievance procedure does not extend any filing deadline related to the pursuit of other remedies.

#### **Level 1: Informal**

An individual with a complaint is first encouraged to discuss it with the appropriate teacher, counselor, or administrator, with the objective of resolving the matter

promptly and informally. An exception is that a complaint of sexual harassment should be discussed directly with an administrator not involved in the alleged harassment. A complaint filed against the Principal shall go directly to the Board.

### **Level 2: Administrator**

When a complaint has not been or cannot be resolved at Level 1, an individual may file a signed and dated written complaint stating: (1) the nature of the complaint; (2) a description of the event or incident giving rise to the complaint, including any school personnel involved; and (3) the remedy or resolution requested. This written complaint must be filed within thirty (30) calendar days of the event or incident or from the date an individual could reasonably become aware of such an event or incident.

When a complaint alleges a violation of Board policy or procedure, the administrator will investigate and attempt to resolve the complaint. The administrator will respond in writing to the complaint, within thirty (30) calendar days of the administrator's receipt of the complaint.

If either the complainant or the person against whom the complaint is filed is dissatisfied with the administrator's decision, either may request, in writing, that the Board review the administrator's decision. (See Level 3.) This request must be submitted to the Principal within fifteen (15) calendar days of the administrator's decision.

When a complaint alleges sexual harassment or a violation of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (the Civil Rights Act), Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the administrator may turn the complaint over to a District nondiscrimination coordinator. The coordinator will complete an investigation and file a report and recommendation with the Principal. The Board may hire an independent investigator to conduct the investigation. Within fifteen (15) calendar days of the Board's receipt of the coordinator's or independent investigator's report and recommendation, the Board will respond to the complaint and take such administrative steps as the Board deems appropriate and necessary. A decision of the Board is final, unless it is appealed pursuant to Montana law within the period provided by law.

### **Level 3: The Board**

Upon written appeal, the Board will consider the administrator's decision in Level 2. Upon receipt of written request for appeal, the Chair will either: (1) place the appeal on the agenda of a regular or special Board meeting. The Board will report its decision on the appeal, in writing, to all parties, within thirty (30) calendar days of the Board meeting at which the Board considered the appeal. A decision of the Board is final, unless it is appealed pursuant to Montana law within the period provided by law.

### **Level 4: County Superintendent**

When a matter falls within the jurisdiction of a county superintendent of schools, the decision of the Board may be appealed to the county superintendent by filing written appeal within thirty (30) calendar days of the Board's decision, pursuant to Montana law.

## **VIDEO CAMERAS**

The District uses video cameras on District property to ensure the health, welfare, and safety of all staff, students, and visitors to District property, and to safeguard District facilities and equipment. Video cameras may be used in locations as deemed appropriate by the Principal. Students in violation of Board policies, administrative regulations, building rules, or law shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action. Others may be referred to law enforcement agencies.

Video recordings may become a part of a student's educational record. The District shall comply with all applicable state and federal laws related to record maintenance and retention.

## **VISITORS**

All visitors must sign in at the office for a visitor tag when visiting the school. Visitors who do not check in at the office will be asked to return to the office. For the protection of all students and staff, we must know who is on campus at all times.

## **VOLUNTEERS**

Parents, grandparents, and other volunteers are warmly welcomed at Swan River School. Please help us by volunteering. It's the children who benefit the most. Please call the office if you are interested in becoming involved in helping young people by giving a little of your time each week. All volunteers must sign in at the office.

## **FIREARM AND WEAPON FREE SCHOOL (Policy 3311)**

In accordance with 20-5-202 (3), MCA, a teacher, superintendent, or a principal shall suspend immediately for good cause a student who is determined to have brought a firearm to, or possess a firearm at any setting that is under the control and supervision of the school district. In accordance with Montana law, a student who is determined to have brought a firearm to, or possess a firearm at any setting that is under the control and supervision of the school district must be expelled from school for a period of not less than 1 year.

However, on a case-by-case basis, the Board of Trustees will convene a hearing to review the underlying circumstances and, at the discretion of the Board, may authorize the school administration to modify the requirement for expulsion of a student.

Any person who uses, possesses, carries, transfers, or stores a weapon in any school building, or at any school-related activity, shall be referred to law enforcement for immediate prosecution. In addition, a parent or guardian of any minor violating this policy shall also be referred for possible prosecution on the grounds of allowing a minor to possess, carry, transfer, or store a weapon.

“Weapon” means any object, device, or instrument designed as a weapon or through its use is capable of threatening or producing bodily harm or which may be used to inflict self-injury, including but not limited to air guns; pellet guns; BB guns; fake (facsimile) weapons; all knives; blades; clubs; metal knuckles; nunchucks (also known as nunchucks); throwing stars; explosives; fireworks; mace or other propellants; stun guns; ammunition; poisons; chains; arrows; and objects that have been modified to serve as a weapon.

Any student who violates this policy will be suspended from school and ordered to appear before the Board of Trustees for an expulsion hearing.

## **STUDENT DRESS CODE GUIDELINES**

The District’s dress code is established to teach grooming and hygiene, prevent disruption, and minimize safety hazards. Students and parents may determine a student’s personal dress and grooming standards, school personnel, or other persons, or for the purpose of self-defense.

The District’s belief is that dress codes play a significant role in reducing security threats and improving school safety. Knowing that a safe and orderly environment is the mark of an effectively achieving school, our District has developed a dress code for all students. The dress code provides specific expectations for safety and appropriate professional dress in the educational environment. In cooperation with this effort, please use these guidelines in selecting your wardrobe for school and all school functions:

### **Acceptable Dress:**

1. All pants must be worn at the waist. A belt is required if pants DO NOT remain at the waist.
2. Shorts, skorts, rolled up pants, or capri pants may be worn year round, but prudence should be used when choosing to wear this attire, especially during cold weather. (Keep in mind that some classes or activities may be conducted outside for extended periods of time, even during inclement weather. Students are expected to be clothed appropriately to allow for their full participation in these classes or activities.)
3. Hooded sweatshirts may be worn BUT hoods must not be worn on the head inside of the school building.
4. Head covering as part of a religious belief or medical need will be allowed.

### **Unacceptable Dress:**

1. Clothing must be worn appropriately (example: no shirts worn half on and half off)

2. No holes or tears are allowed in pants, above the knee.
3. Bare midriffs, spaghetti straps, halter tops, tank tops, see-through, or sheer tops through which undergarments can be seen, or shirts / tops that expose cleavage or the entire shoulder.
4. Leggings, jeggings, tights, and spandex are considered undergarments and must be accompanied by a pair of shorts, a skirt, or an upper garment which must cover to mid-thigh.
5. No clothing or jewelry may be worn with suggestive or questionable language or drawings (some examples may include, but are limited to: graffiti, gang related symbols, racial, ethnic, and/or sexual slogans or innuendos, tobacco products, pictures or language about alcohol, violence, weapons, drugs, language that is blatantly disrespectful of other's beliefs, or images deemed offensive or not in good taste.)
6. Heavy coats are not allowed to be worn inside of the classrooms under normal circumstances.
7. Hats are not to be worn inside of the school.
8. Pajamas and slippers are not allowed.
9. Shoes with wheels or stiletto heels are not allowed.

The Supervising Teacher or Principal shall monitor student dress in school and at activities in accordance with these policies.

If the student's dress or grooming violates the guidelines of the school or takes away from the learning environment, his/her Supervising Teacher or Principal shall request the student to make appropriate corrections. If the student refuses, the Supervising Teacher or Principal shall notify the parents and request that the parent and the student make the appropriate necessary corrections. If both the student and the parent refuse, the Supervising Teacher or Principal shall take appropriate action.

## **APPENDIX – BOARD POLICY 3600F**

### **RIGHTS CONCERNING STUDENT RECORDS**

This notification may be distributed by any means likely to reach the parent(s)/guardian(s).

The District maintains two (2) sets of school records for each student.

1. **Permanent Record:** The permanent record shall include:
  - Basic identifying information
  - Academic work completed (transcripts)
  - Level of achievement (grades, standardized achievement tests)
  - Immunization records (per § 20-5-506, MCA)
  - Attendance record
  - Statewide student identifier assigned by the Office of Public Instruction
  - Record of any disciplinary action taken against the student, which is educationally related.
2. **Cumulative Record:** The cumulative record may include:
  - Intelligence and aptitude scores
  - Psychological reports
  - Achievement test results
  - Participation in extracurricular activities
  - Honors and awards
  - Teacher anecdotal records
  - Special education files
  - Verified reports or information from non-educational persons
  - Verified information of clear relevance to the student's education
  - Information pertaining to the release of this record.
  - Disciplinary information

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) afford parents/guardians and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. They are:

1. The right to inspect and copy the student's education records within a reasonable time of the day the District receives a request for access.

Students less than 18 years of age have the right to inspect and copy their permanent record. Parents/guardians or students should submit to the Supervising Teacher or the Principal a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The school personnel will make arrangements for access and notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected. The District charges a nominal fee for

copying, but no one will be denied their right to copies of their records for inability to pay this cost.

The rights contained in this section are denied to any person against whom an order of protection as been entered concerning a student.

2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent(s)/guardian(s) or eligible student believes is inaccurate, misleading, irrelevant, or improper.

Parents/guardians or eligible students may ask the District to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate, misleading, irrelevant, or improper. They should write the appropriate school personnel, clearly identifying the part of the record they want changed, and specify the reason.

3. The right to permit disclosure of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA or state law authorizes disclosure without consent.

Disclosure to permit without consent to school officials with legitimate educational or administrative interest. A school official is a person employed by the District as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the Board; a person or company with whom the District has contracted to perform a special task (such as contractors, attorneys, auditors, consultants, or therapists); volunteers; other outside parties to whom an educational agency or institution has outsourced institutional services or functions that it would otherwise use employees to perform; or a parent(s)/guardian(s) or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

Upon request, the District discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student has enrolled or intends to enroll as well as to any person as specifically required by state or federal law. Before information is released to individuals described in this section, the parents/guardians will receive prior written notice of the nature and substance of the information, and an opportunity to inspect, copy and challenge the records. The right to challenge school student records does not apply to: (1) academic grades of their child, and (2) references to expulsion or out-of-school suspensions, if the challenge is made at the time the student's school records are forwarded to another school to which the student is transferring.

Disclosure is also permitted without consent to: any person for research, statistical reporting or planning, provided that no student or parents/guardians can be identified; any person named in a court order and

appropriate persons if the knowledge of such information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other persons.

4. The right to a copy of any school student record proposed to be destroyed or deleted.
5. The right to prohibit the release of directory information concerning the parent/guardian's child.
  - Throughout the school year, the District may release directory information regarding students, limited to:
    - Student's name
    - Address
    - Telephone listing
    - Electronic mail address
    - Photograph (including electronic version)
    - Date and place of birth
    - Major field of study
    - Dates of attendance
    - Grade level
    - Enrollment status (e.g., undergraduate or graduate; full-time or part-time)
    - Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
    - Weight and height of members of athletic teams
    - Degrees
    - Honors and awards received
    - Most recent educational agency or institution attended

Any parent(s) guardian(s) or eligible student may prohibit the release of any or all of the above information by delivering a written objection to the Supervising Teacher or Principal within 30 days of the date of this notice. No directory information will be released within this time period. Unless the parent(s) guardian(s) or eligible student is specifically informed otherwise.

6. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the District to comply with the requirements of FERPA.

The name and address of the office that administers FERPA is:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202-4605

#### **ACCEPTABLE USE OF COMPUTERS (Policies 3612-3612P)**

**Acceptable Use of Computers:** New technologies are shifting the ways that information may be accessed, communicated and transferred. Those changes may

also alter instruction and student learning. Swan River School offers students access to the Internet.

**Rules and Responsibilities:** Students are responsible for good behavior on school computer networks just as they are in a classroom or school hallway. Communications on the network are often public in nature. General school rules for behavior and communications apply.

The Internet is provided for students to conduct research and general education purposes. Access to network services is given to students who agree to act in a considerate and responsible manner. Parent permission is required.

Access is a privilege, not a right. Therefore, based upon the acceptable use guidelines outlined in this document, the system administrators will deem what is inappropriate use and their decisions are final. The system administrators may close an account at any time. The administration, faculty, and staff of Swan River School may deny computer privileges.

Individual users of the Internet are responsible for their use of the network. Computer use must be in support of education and research and must be consistent with academic expectations of Swan River School. Use of other organizations' networks or computing resources, including copyrighted, threatening, or obscene materials, is prohibited. Use for commercial activities by for-profit organizations, product promotion, political lobbying, or illegal activities is strictly prohibited.

**The user is expected to abide by the following network rules of etiquette:**

- No email or transmission of messages of any kind.
- Be polite.
- Use appropriate language. Do not swear, use vulgarities or use any other inappropriate language.
- Transmission of any materials is prohibited. Sending, receiving or viewing of offensive messages or pictures from any source will result in immediate suspension of privileges.
- Do not reveal the personal address or phone number of yourself or other students.
- Do not communicate any credit card number, bank account number, or any other financial information.
- Do not use the network in such a way that would disrupt the use of the network by other users.
- Vandalism: Any malicious attempt to harm or destroy data of another user will not be tolerated. Any questionable action will result in cancellation of user privileges.
- Access to personal accounts of any kind is prohibited.

Violation of any of the above-mentioned rules and responsibilities will result in a loss of access and may result in other disciplinary or legal action.

## **SCHOOL CLOSURE INFORMATION**

In the event adverse weather forces the closure of school, you may obtain information through the following sources:

**KOFI Radio:** AM – 1180; FM 103.9, BEE Broadcasting, KIBG, BIG 100.7

**Swan River School:** Remind Communication System (Phone / Text / Email)

The decision to close school will normally be made by 6:30 a.m. unless circumstances cause a delay. A decision to close school is made by the Principal, in coordination with the Flathead County Superintendent and Bigfork Superintendent. These decisions are made after an onsite check of road conditions through the district, weather updates and contact with the Department of Transportation, Montana Highway Patrol and Sheriff reports on the roadways.

Should Montana State Highway officials issue an ***EMERGENCY TRAFFIC ONLY WARNING*** prior to 6:30 a.m., the Swan River School District will close. If the warning occurs while school is in session, students will remain at school until arrangements can be made with parents to transport them home safely. During these circumstances, parents are welcome to pick their children up from school or contact the school office to arrange transportation.

Any school closure requires that the missed time be made up to meet the Office of Public Instruction's hourly and daily requirement. Please be aware that make-up days have been pre-scheduled on our school calendar, if needed. If a make-up day is not needed on the scheduled dates, then students and staff will have the day off of school.