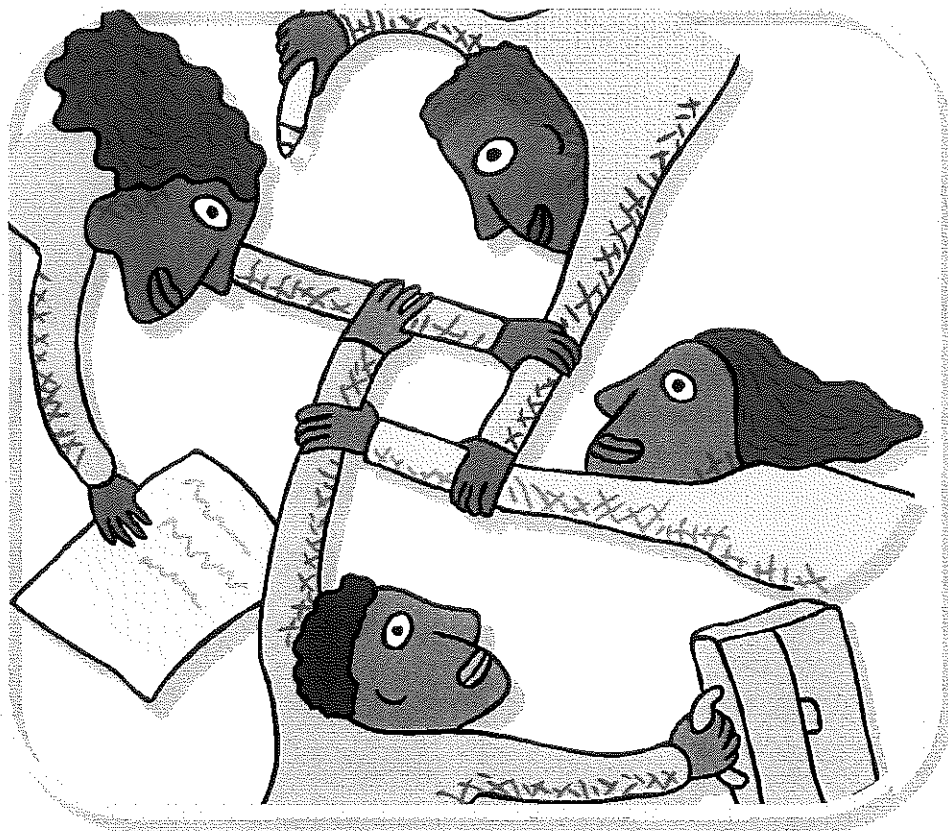


Seward Communication Arts Academy
Parent Handbook
2018-2019



*“Unless you try to do something beyond what you have already mastered,
you will never grow.” -Ronald E. Osborn*

Nora A. Cadenas, Principal

Patricia L. Zarate, Assistant Principal

Pebble C. Jackson, Assistant Principal

William H. Seward Academy
4600. S Hermitage
Chicago Il 60609
Main Office: 773-535-4890
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William H. Seward Communication Arts Academy

Parent Handbook

Table of Contents

| | | |
|-----|----------------------------|--------|
| I. | Background | Page 1 |
| II. | General Information | Page 2 |
| | Accidents/Illness/Injury | Page 2 |
| | Assemblies | Page 2 |
| | Attendance | Page 2 |
| | Breakfast in the Classroom | Page 3 |
| | Dress Code | Page 3 |
| | Early Dismissal | Page 3 |
| | Emergency Information | Page 3 |
| | Field Trips | Page 3 |
| | Grade Reporting | Page 4 |
| | Gym Attire | Page 4 |
| | Holidays | Page 4 |
| | Homework Policy | Page 4 |
| | Honor Roll | Page 5 |
| | Inclement Weather | Page 5 |
| | Last Day of School | Page 5 |
| | Local School Council | Page 6 |
| | Lost or Damaged Books | Page 6 |
| | Lunch Program | Page 6 |

| | |
|---|--------|
| Medication | Page 6 |
| Parent Conference Guidelines | Page 6 |
| Parent Programs | Page 6 |
| Professional Development Days , School Improvement Days Teacher Institutes Days | Page 6 |
| Progress Reports and Report Cards | Page 6 |
| Promotion Policy | Page 7 |
| Recess | Page 7 |
| School Hours | Page 7 |
| Student Discipline | Page 8 |
| Student Entry and Dismissal | Page 8 |
| Student Records | Page 8 |
| Student Registration | Page 8 |
| Tardy and Truant Students | Page 8 |
| Visitors | Page 8 |
| Volunteer Program | Page 8 |
| Spring and Winter Breaks | Page 8 |
| Withdrawal/Transfer of Students | Page 8 |
| Volunteer Programs | Page 8 |
| Web Addresses and Resources | Page 8 |



Seward's
Guidelines for Success

Strive for my personal best

Encourage each other

Welcome Differences

Accept Responsibility

Respect myself and others

Develop a positive attitude

Created by K. Enders & M. Rojas

BACKGROUND

Seward Communication Arts Academy was named after a man of vision who was Secretary of State during Abraham Lincoln's presidency. William H. Seward engineered the purchase of Alaska by the United States from Russia. This purchase was initially referred to as "Seward's Folly". However, his political peers and the citizens of this country soon began to recognize the importance of this resourceful purchase, strategically and financially.

Seward was built on the corner of 46th and Hermitage in 1896. During the past years, Seward School has undergone a number of changes as it continues to serve the Back of the Yards Community.

An addition was built onto the original school building as Seward's student population grew. Mobiles placed on the playground to relieve overcrowding in 1972 were removed in 1993. The Holy Cross School building located at 45th and Wood has continued to house ten classrooms of Seward students and teachers for over a decade.

Under the leadership of Seward Academy's former principal, Mrs. Marcey Reyes, there were many new and exciting changes. First and foremost, the school was renamed the William H. Seward Communication Arts Academy. The new name denotes a new focus for the educational program. The use of creative writing, drama, public speaking, and technology has been integrated into the curriculum.

We, like Mr. Seward, seek to be people of vision.



GENERAL INFORMATION

Accidents/Illness/Injury

If a student is injured in an accident or becomes seriously ill at school, the parent will be called immediately. If the parent cannot be reached, we will attempt to contact the adult listed on the Emergency Form.

When necessary, injured or seriously ill students will be transported by ambulance to the nearest hospital. Students cannot receive treatment at a hospital unless a parent has been contacted. For this reason, the school must have a current Emergency Form on file for each student.

Assemblies

Assembly programs are a vital part of our Communication Arts focus. They are scheduled throughout the school year. An assembly gives you an opportunity to see your child perform on stage with other children. Notices are sent home prior to each performance. You may also check your child's monthly calendar for special dates. It is important to show your support for your children and their instructional program by attending each activity in which they take part.

Attendance

PARENTS ARE REQUIRED TO CALL THE SCHOOL TO INFORM THE CLASSROOM TEACHER OF A CHILD'S ABSENCE.

You may call the school office on the morning of the absence.

**Main Building - 535-4890
Branch Office - 535-4198**

There are four acceptable causes for a student absence:

1. Illness
2. Death in the Immediate Family
3. Family Emergency
4. Observation of Religious Holidays

For every absence, the parent should call the school. **It is very important that your child return to school with a note in hand explaining his/her absence.**

Please note that absenteeism is associated with lower academic achievement.

In addition, please be aware of the following:

Family vacations during the regular school year is strictly prohibited.

If a student is chronically truant a home visit will be made by administration and/or off duty CPD.

In the event that your child is absent, please pick up the homework from his/her classroom teachers.

Breakfast in the Classroom

Your child will be offered breakfast at 7:45 a.m. Students select a breakfast as they walk to their home room at the entry bell. If you would like your child to eat breakfast, it is important to **arrive to school on time.**

Dress Code

The CPS and the LSC has instituted a uniform dress code. All students must wear a **solid maroon polo, navy blue skirt or pants, and solid black shoes**. School uniforms will allow for easy identification of our student population and the attire is considered most appropriate for a learning environment.

STUDENTS ARE NOT PERMITTED to wear shorts, halter tops, fishnet shirts, rubberbands at the bottom of the pants or mini-skirts. Pants are not to be rolled up. Hats are not to be worn in the building. Tattoos and facial piercings are NOT allowed at Seward and will be covered. Students will be asked to remove FACIAL PIERCINGS.

Students who wear colors or symbols affiliated with gangs will not be permitted in class. Parents will be contacted and asked to bring appropriate clothing. Shirts or clothing with suggestive words or phrases, pictures, or advertisements of cigarettes, drugs, alcoholic beverages, wrestling emblems or decadent rock groups, are not appropriate or conducive to a learning environment. Students wearing such clothing will be required to change. **STUDENTS MUST WEAR THE UNIFORM DAILY.**

In addition, **boys are not permitted to wear earrings** in school or wear a haircut that includes any letters or symbols. **Similarly, the wearing of make-up by our young ladies is not permitted.**

| |
|--|
| <p>It is recommended to leave expensive jewelry at home. The school is not responsible for these personal items.</p> |
|--|

Early Dismissal

Parents are urged to schedule doctor, dentist or other appointments outside school hours or on school holidays. If a child needs to be dismissed early, he/she should bring a note to the teacher stating the departure time and reason. Parents must sign-out the child in the school office.

Emergency Information

During the first week of school, your child's teacher will send home an Emergency Form for you to complete. Please return this form immediately. Make sure that all telephone numbers and addresses are current. Remember to put the name and telephone number of a person who can be contacted in case you (the parent or guardian) cannot be reached.

Please notify the school if you change your address or telephone number during the year. It is very important that our records are kept up to date. This personal record is kept confidential and is used by school staff only in an emergency.

Field Trips

Each class is expected to take field trips during the school year. Good discipline on the bus and during the event is expected of all students.

A **permission slip signed** by a parent **must** be on file with the teacher **before** a child may leave the building. **Verbal permission is NOT allowed.**

Parents are welcome and encouraged to help chaperone these trips. Per the new CPS policy, all chaperones are required an approved Background Check on file at the school.

Grade Reporting

Report cards and Progress Reports are issued quarterly throughout the school year (see "Report Cards").

The following scales will be used to determine your child's grade:

GRADING Scale for Report Cards

Kindergarten:

The following symbols mean that your child's habits, attitudes, and skills are:

- 4 =Exemplary
- 3 =Proficient
- 2 =Developing
- 1= Beginning
- /= Not Assessed

Grades 1-8:

- | | |
|------------|--|
| A-90%-100% | Substantially exceeds the standards |
| B-80%-89% | Exceeds the standards |
| C-70%-79% | Meets the standards |
| D-60%-69% | Less than acceptable performance on the standards. |
| F-59%-0% | Does not meet the standard |

IB MYP Report Cards

Each semester, students in grades 6-8 will receive an additional IB MYP Report Card.

Parents are required to provide the school with an email address in order to access the **Parent Portal**. You can access the parent portal from the following link: <https://parent.cps.k12.il.us/>.

Gym Attire (Grades 3-8)

Students are required to wear a gym uniform for physical education classes on their designated gym day. Gym shoes must be worn to ensure safety.

Holidays

The following are non-attendance days for students:

| | |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| September 3 | Labor Day |
| October 8 | Columbus Day |
| November 12 | Veterans' Day |
| November 21,22, 23 | Thanksgiving Break |
| January 21 | M.L. King's Birthday |
| February 18 | Presidents Day |
| May 27 | Memorial Day |
| July 4 | Independence Day |

Homework Policy

Each child is required to complete homework every night. Homework includes written work, independent reading, projects, and studying. It is related to ongoing classroom activities, reinforcing and enriching daily instruction.

The following are daily suggested time allocations for teacher-directed homework assignments by grade level:

| | |
|--------------|---------|
| Kindergarten | 15 min. |
| Grades 1,2,3 | 30 min. |
| Grades 4,5,6 | 45 min. |
| Grades 7 & 8 | 90 min. |

PRIMARY LEVEL (Pre-K-2) HOME READING REQUIREMENTS

Pre-K Parent reads to or with the child for at least 70 minutes per week.

Kdg. Parent reads to or with child for 15 minutes each night.

2nd Parent reads to or with child for 30

1st Parent reads to or with child for 20 minutes each night.

minutes each night.

Homework Guidelines

Please take the time to review each of your child's homework assignments with him/her every night. Be sure that children complete their homework independently.

Please check the school bag every night to check for teacher notes and homework and to remove old notes and homework.

Chronic missing homework will result in the cancellation of extra-curricular activities for your child.

Honor Roll

Honor Roll is based on a student's grade point average for each marking period. There are two categories:

- 1) Honor Roll - G.P.A. of 3.0 or above and no checks on the report card.
- 2) Principal's Honor Roll - G.P.A. of 4.0 and no checks on the report card.

Inclement Weather

Parents are encouraged to send their children to school as close to 7:45 a.m. as possible on inclement days. On these days, students are allowed to wait inside the building until the bell rings. Students should be dressed appropriately for the weather.

Last Day of School

The last day of school for the 2018-19 school year is Friday, June 18, 2019. (Please check your monthly calendar or newsletters for any changes.)

Local School Council

LSC meetings are held on a monthly basis. All parents are welcome to attend. A time and place will be designated for each meeting in order to maximize

participation. The LSC meetings are held on **the last Wednesday of every month at 8:15 a.m. with the exception of October and March where the meetings are held at 3:00 p.m.** All meetings are posted on the monthly calendar and the school sign.

Lost or Damaged Books

All textbooks are loaned to students for use during the school year. Each student is responsible for the condition of his/her textbooks. We encourage all books to be covered, kept clean, and handled carefully. Make sure that your child's name, grade, and school are written in the books. Library books can be checked out on a weekly basis. These books must be returned on time.

Your child will be charged for lost or damaged books or materials.

Lunch Program

During the first week of school, all parents are required to complete an application for free or reduced breakfast and lunch.

All parents are required to complete the 2018-2019 Student Medical Information Form. If there are specific foods that your child cannot eat, please notify the teacher and the office.

Our lunchroom is a clean and friendly place. Students are responsible for cleaning up after themselves and should respect all lunchroom personnel.

Medication

No medication, including aspirin, may be administered by school personnel without proper documentation. Students who need to take prescribed medicine must present the required CPS forms signed by the doctor and parent before the medication

can be brought to school and administered. The medication and form must be left in the office until medication time.

In an effort to best serve your child, it is important that the teacher and school staff know about critical and chronic medical conditions and /or allergies. Please ensure that you complete the **Student Medical Information Form** annually.

Parent Conferences Guidelines

If you would like to speak to a teacher, please call the office at 535-4890 (Main) and 535-4198 (Branch) to schedule an appointment. Parent conference appointments will be scheduled before 7:45 a.m. or after 2:45 p.m., or during the teacher's regularly scheduled preparation period. For security reasons, upon entering the building, parents must sign in at the main door security desk and proceed to the main office to get a pass.

Electronic Devices/Cell Phones

No radios, Ipods, C.D. players, MP3 players or electronic/wireless devices are allowed in this school. Please make sure that your child keeps these items at home or they will be confiscated and it will only be returned to a parent or legal guardian. **Cell Phones must be turned off before your child enters the building and at all times during the school day. (The school is not responsible for lost cell phones or electronic devices.)**

Parent Programs

There are several ways to learn about parent programs.

1. Check the monthly calendars.

2. Attend the LSC Meetings.
3. Call Mrs. Marcella Martinez at the Main Building for B.A.C. at 535-4897, Ms. Zarate for PAC at 535-4198 and Pebble Jackson for Parent Mentors at 773-535-4898.
4. The Seward website link is the following:
<https://seward.cps.edu/>

Professional Development and Teacher Institute Days

Teacher Institute and Professional Development days are mandated by CPS and will take place during the school year. These are non-attendance days for students.

School Improvement Days

November 2, 2018

February 1, 2019

April 5, 2019

June 19, 2019

Teacher Institute and Professional Development Days

August 27-31, 2018

June 20, 2019

Progress Report Distribution

Wednesday, October 5, 2018

Wednesday, December 14, 2018

Wednesday, March 8, 2019

Wednesday, May 17, 2019

Report Card Pick-Up Days:

Wednesday, November 14, 2018

Wednesday, April 10, 2019

Report Card Distribution Days:

Reports cards are sent home with students on the following days:

Friday, February 8, 2019
Tuesday, June 18, 2019

Promotion Policy Grades 3, 6 and 8

Students in benchmark grades (3, 6, and 8) must meet or exceed the criteria outlined in the policy in order to be promoted to the next grade.

- **District-Wide Assessment (DWA) scores in reading and math at or above the 24th percentile.**
- **Final report card grades in reading and math of "C" or better.**

Recess

Students will have recess daily. Usually the recess will occur outside, but on inclement days, the recess will be held in the gym.

If a student decides not to follow the recess rules, or if the student is found to be a danger to himself or others during this time, the student's recess activities will be restricted or revoked.

School Hours

Start and end times for ALL Seward students: **7:45 a.m. to 2:45 p.m.**

Student Discipline

Seward Academy adheres to the rules outlined in the CPS Student Code of Conduct for all disciplinary infractions and appropriate interventions and/or consequences. Copies of the SCC are distributed at to parents at Open House, and are available in the main office or at cps.edu.

As a school, we are adopting the CHAMP system to establish clear behavior expectations in all areas in the school.

If a student vandalizes the school with graffiti, s/he will be fined \$35. If property is damaged, the students will be charged the cost to replace the damaged item.

Students may not chew gum or eat candy in the classroom unless it is part of instruction and the teacher has given permission. Food and drink may be consumed only in the lunchroom.

Student Entry and Dismissal

The entry bell rings at 7:45 a.m. Students are marked tardy after 7:55. The school day ends promptly at 2:45 p.m.

*It is important that parents pick up their children on time. Teachers are unable to wait with students after the 2:45 p.m. dismissal. Call the main office (773-535-4890) or the branch (773-535-4198) when you must arrive late to pick up your child.

ENTRY & DISMISSAL for K-2 Students

The entry bell will ring at 7:45 a.m. Parents are to drop off their child at the correct entrance outside the school. Please do not walk your child to his/her classroom door after the first week of school. Rest assured that there are Seward staff persons stationed throughout the school building to assist your child if necessary. Students will be dismissed promptly at 2:45 p.m.

Student Records

If you wish to examine your child's records, notify the school counselor in writing.

Student Registration

A parent / guardian may enroll any student by presenting:

- * an original birth certificate
- * proof of guardianship
- * proof of address (a utility bill in your name)
- * a medical immunization form.

In order to register, a family must reside within the attendance boundaries of Seward Academy.

Tardy and Truant Students

If a student arrives after 7:55 a.m., they must report to the office to obtain a pass to his/her classroom. Students who are absent without parent consent are truant.

Truancy violates state and local attendance laws and is considered a serious offense. Persistent truancy may result in legal action. Parents are ultimately responsible for their child's attendance in school.

Excessive absences or tardies:

Students may be excluded from activities that are not critical to the student's academic program, dances or graduation activities including the luncheon or 8th field trip. The students will be provided make-up work during this time.

Visitors

Parents and other visitors to our school are required to sign in at the main entrance and receive a visitor's pass in the main office. This procedure is strictly

enforced in order to maintain a safe environment within the school building.

Volunteer Programs

Parents who wish to volunteer may do so through their child's classroom teacher. In order to be approved, parents **must** take a TB test and undergo the **required CPS criminal background check**. Parents will be notified by the teacher of their hours and duties.

Winter Break

December 24, 2018- January 4, 2019
Schools reopen on **Monday, January 7, 2019.**

Spring Break

Schools are closed **April 15-19, 2019.**

Withdrawal/Transfer of Students

The office requests at least two days advance notice of student withdrawal. All textbooks and library books must be turned in. All outstanding fines must be paid before a transfer is issued.

8th Grade Activities

A mandatory meeting is held during the first marking period to discuss the 8th grade activities and required fees: Luncheon, Field Trip and the Graduation Ceremony. Parent are required to sign a written letter of commitment.

Web Addresses and Resources

Chicago Public Schools Main Site
www.cps.edu.

Seward website
www.seward.cps

Parent Portal
<https://parent.cps.k12.il.us/pc/default.aspx>