SUSSEX ACADEMY

STUDENT HANDBOOK

2026 - 2027

A Guide for Students and Families

Sussex Academy | Georgetown, Delaware

www.sussexacademy.org

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Welcome Message

Welcome to Sussex Academy—a K-12 community where every student is encouraged to discover their strengths, grow through meaningful experiences, and strive for excellence in all areas of life. Guided by our motto, Explore • Experience • Excel, we provide opportunities for students to set goals, take ownership of their learning, and work collaboratively with others. Our mission and vision come to life through rigorous academics, character development, and active engagement in the school and wider community. Here, students learn not only to achieve personal success but also to contribute positively to the world around them—becoming well-rounded individuals prepared for the challenges and opportunities of the future.

Our Mission

Our mission is to create a supportive school environment with accelerated learning opportunities that prepare students to explore, experience, and excel.

Our Vision

Our vision is to be the premier K-12 school system in the state of Delaware.

Our Goals

To realize our mission and vision, Sussex Academy focuses on:

- Maintaining high academic performance
- Fostering critical, independent thinking and reflection
- Ensuring a safe, respectful school environment
- Promoting personal growth, responsibility, and opportunities for success
- Encouraging collaborative decision-making, environmental awareness, and technological competence
- Engaging families through parental partnerships and community service initiatives

Living the Motto: Explore • Experience • Excel

- **Explore** – We nurture curiosity by encouraging students to be active learners who seek out new ideas, ask thoughtful questions, and embrace challenges. Students are supported in setting meaningful goals, discovering their unique strengths, and developing a love for learning that extends beyond the classroom.

- **Experience** – Learning is most powerful when it's lived. We provide hands-on, real-world opportunities that encourage students to engage fully in their education. Through collaborative projects, service learning, and leadership opportunities, students learn to build positive relationships, take initiative, and contribute to shared success.

- **Excel** – Excellence is the result of consistent effort, self-discipline, and reflection. We empower students to maintain balance between academics, leadership, and personal well-being, while celebrating both progress and achievement. Students are encouraged to act with integrity, show empathy, and apply their learning to make a positive impact on their school and community.

This handbook will guide you through the policies, supports, and opportunities that help shape our shared journey. Together—students, families, staff, and community—we foster an environment where exploration leads to experience, and experience paves the way to excellence.

Here's to a great year ahead!

Warm regards,
The Sussex Academy Leadership Team

Quick Reference Directory

Department	Contact	Email
Elementary Campus	(302) 856-3300	-
Secondary Campus	(302) 856-3636	-
Attendance	Elementary- Jennifer Piper Secondary- Georgia Spencer	attendance@sussexacademy.org
Head of School	Kyle Bentley	kyle.bentley@saas.k12.de.us
Chief of Student Services	Dr. Sherry MacBury	sherry.macbury@saas.k12.de.us
Chief Academic Officer	Dr. Nikki Miller	nikki.miller@saas.k12.de.us
Elementary Dean	Megan Reed	megan.reed@saas.k12.de.us
Middle School Dean	Rachael Johnston	rachael.johnston@saas.k12.de.us
High School Dean	Lauren Hvorecny	lauren.hvorecny@saas.k12.de.us
Athletic Director	RJ Dina	r.j.dina@saas.k12.de.us
Athletic Trainer/ Assistant Athletic Director	Brian Huebler	brian.huebler@saas.k12.de.us
Constable	Mike Ziegler	mike.ziegler@saas.k12.de.us
Counseling Elementary	Juliane Hein	juliane.hein@saas.k12.de.us
Student Services Lead/Mental Health Counselor and Grades 10th-12th	Channel Chaplin	channel.chaplin@saas.k12.de.us
Middle School Counselor/6-7	Nikki Kaczmaryck	Nikki.Kaczmarczyk@SAAS.k12.de.us
Middle School/HS Counselor/8-9	Stacey Alinkoff	stacey.alinkoff@saas.k12.de.us
Nurse Elementary	Stephanie Brown	stephanie.brown@saas.k12.de.us
Nurse Secondary	Dawnyel Furlong	dawnyel.furlong@saas.k12.de.us

Sussex Academy Full Staff Directory

Sussex Academy Board of Directors

Name	Role	Email
Ed Hale	President	ed.hale@saas.k12.de.us
Erin Perchiniak	Vice-President	erin.perchiniak@saas.k12.de.us
Tom Clark	Treasurer	tom.clark@saas.k12.de.us
Rebecca Anderson	Director	rebecca.anderson@saas.k12.de.us
Sara Bluhm	Director	sara.bluhm@saas.k12.de.us
Amy Goodhue	Director	amy.goodhue@saas.k12.de.us
Shante Hastings	Director	shante.hastings@saas.k12.de.us
Adrian Mobilia	Director	adrian.mobilia@saas.k12.de.us
Chris Moody	Director	christopher.moody@saas.k12.de.us
Jerica Morris	Director	jerica.morris@saas.k12.de.us
Stephanie Sherman	Director	Stephanie.Sherman@saas.k12.de.us

- Click here for more information on board meeting dates, agendas, minutes and recordings.

Chapter 2: Student Code of Conduct

School Policies and Procedures

The policies in the student handbook are enforced:

- On school property, buses, field trips, and school-sponsored events
- Off-campus behavior affecting school safety or order

Activity Fee

To support engaging student experiences, including extracurricular programs, field trips, enrichment activities, and student events, Sussex Academy requires an annual activity fee:

- Elementary (Grades K–5): $185
- Middle School (Grades 6–8): $205
- High School (Grades 9–12): $225

Important Notes:

- Fees must be paid to participate in school-sponsored extracurriculars and end of year events.
- Failure to pay the fee may restrict participation in non-academic school activities.
- Financial Assistance: Families needing support may submit a Meal Benefits form to determine eligibility for a reduced or waived fee. Qualified students may have their fee adjusted accordingly. Please reach out to the school office with any questions.
- Click here for online payment link.

Attendance Policy Highlights

At Sussex Academy, student attendance is a top priority—because consistent attendance is directly linked to academic success. Research clearly shows that students who attend school regularly perform better academically, develop stronger peer relationships, and are more likely to stay on track for promotion and graduation.

We are committed to providing a rigorous, college-preparatory learning environment, and there is no substitute for in-person instruction. Students must be present to engage meaningfully with their teachers, peers, and coursework. Chronic absenteeism negatively impacts academic performance, course grades, and promotion to the next grade level.

While we understand that unexpected and serious situations may arise, Sussex Academy expects that all students attend school consistently and arrive on time. Attendance concerns will be addressed with care, but also with urgency to ensure student success.

School Hours

- Secondary (Grades 6–12): 8:00 a.m. – 2:55 p.m.
- Elementary (Grades K–5): 8:15 a.m. – 3:10 p.m.

Students **must be in their classrooms** by the start of the school day. Late arrivals disrupt instruction and learning.

Reporting an Absence, Tardy or Early Dismissal::

Elementary Campus: Call 302-856-3300 ext. 1002
Secondary Campus: attendance@sussexacademy.org or call 302-856-3636

Click here for more information on Sussex Academy's Attendance Policy and Protocols

***State Law Reference:** In accordance with Delaware Code Title 14, Chapter 27, all students are required to attend school every day that school is in session. Any student who is absent without a valid excuse for more than 3 days is considered truant. Excessive absenteeism, tardiness, or unexcused absences will be addressed according* to this state law. *View Delaware Attendance Code:* https://delcode.delaware.gov/title14/c027/index.html

Bullying Prevention & Reporting

Sussex Academy is committed to providing a safe and respectful learning environment for all students. Bullying, harassment, or intimidation of any kind will not be tolerated.

Each campus (Elementary and Secondary) develops and maintains a campus-specific Anti-Bullying Plan aligned with state and district guidelines.

Students and families are encouraged to report concerns as soon as possible. Reports can be made anonymously or with identifying information.

Sussex Academy Elementary School Anti-Bullying Plan and Reporting Process

Sussex Academy Secondary Campus Anti-Bullying Plan

Bullying Reporting Form- Secondary Campus

Bullying Reporting Contacts:

Elementary Campus: megan.reed@saas.k12.de.us

Middle School: rachael.johnston@saas.k12.de.us

High School: lauren.hvorecny@saas.k12.de.us

Bus Transportation

The bus is an extension of the school day. The Student Code of Conduct remains in effect any time a student is on a school bus, including but not limited to the assigned bus to and from the school, activity buses, sports buses, and field trip buses. Riding the school bus is a privilege for each student. If the rules and regulations are not followed, the student **may** no longer be given the opportunity or privilege to ride the bus. If this privilege to ride a bus is suspended or revoked, the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be responsible for transporting their child to and from school. Further information about bus safety and regulations can be found here.

If your child needs a different mode of transportation at dismissal (parent pick-up instead of riding the bus) please call the main office. Be sure to TALK to someone in the office - please don't assume we received a note or email.

Cell Phones

The school is committed to maintaining a focused, respectful, and engaging learning environment. To minimize distractions and protect instructional time, classrooms are designated as cell phone-free zones. This expectation applies during all instructional activities, including classes, assemblies, testing sessions, presentations, and other designated learning activities.

Parents and guardians who need to contact a student during instructional time should communicate through the school office. Students who need to contact a parent or guardian may request permission to go to the office to contact their parent or guardian.

Counseling & Support Services

- Short-term Individual and Group counseling for issues such as stress, anxiety, peer relationships, grief, and behavior challenges.
- Crisis intervention.
- MTSS Social-Emotional and Behavioral Support and Trauma-Informed Practices
  Elementary MTSS Secondary MTSS
- Social- Emotional and Behavioral support for students with IEPs or 504 plans, and BIPs.
- Collaboration with teachers, families, and outside providers to coordinate appropriate level of care.
- Liaison for community resources.

Dress Code Highlights

- Blue or white SA logo shirts, khaki bottoms.

- No open-toe shoes or sandals.
- P.E. uniform: SA-approved gym uniform
- Dress Down Days: No inappropriate or revealing attire.
- Click here for more details

Driving and Parking Privileges

- Permits to park on campus are required. All students, even those with a previous year's permit, must apply via Google Form and provide documentation of license and insurance.
- Click here for more details.

Grading Highlights & Academic Integrity

- Click here for more details on guidelines and practices

Teachers in grades K-2 will communicate grades on a mastery progression level only.

Performance Indicator	Meaning
E	Student is meeting grade-level expectations with distinction
3	Student is meeting grade-level expectations
2	Student is progressing toward grade-level expectations
1	Student is not meeting grade-level expectations
N/A	Not assessed
M	The standard(s) for the area indicated have been modified

Detailed commentary will be provided along with the performance indicators.

Teachers of grades 3-12 will assign grades using the following scale:

Grade	Numeric	Quality Points (HS Only)*
A +	97-100	4.3
A	93-96	4.0
A-	90-92	3.7
B+	87-89	3.3
B	83-86	3.0

B-	80-82	2.7
C+	77-79	2.3
C	73-76	2.0
C-	70-72	1.7
D	65-69	1.0
F	64 and below	0

The lowest grade a student can be assigned at the end of a trimester in grades 6-8 is a 50.

Weighted GPA (High School):

- +1.0 for AP/Dual Enrollment courses
- +0.5 for Pre-AP, Honors, and Academic Challenge (9–10)

Retake Policy:

- One summative retake per trimester
- Retakes must demonstrate new learning and may be in a different format
- Highest grade will be recorded

Formative vs. Summative Assessment Weighting:

- Grades 3–5: 60% Formative / 40% Summative
- Grades 6–8: 40% Formative / 60% Summative
- Grades 9–12: 30% Formative / 70% Summative (including final exam)

Additional Guidelines:

- No grading on behavior, effort, or attendance
- Feedback before grades: students receive actionable feedback prior to summative assessments

Athletic Eligibility:

- Governed by DIAA (14 DE Admin. Code §1008/1009)

- A student who is scheduled to serve, or actually serves, a detention or suspension may not participate in any athletic practice, scrimmage, contest, or other team activity on that day. If the student's team holds a practice or other team activity before the start of school on the following calendar day, the student may not participate in that activity. A student serving a

multi-day suspension remains ineligible for all team activities throughout the suspension period.

Grade Advancement & Promotion Criteria:

- Grades K–5: Pass 3 of 4 core areas (including Reading and Math), fewer than 21 absences
- Grades 6–7: Pass 4 core subjects including Reading, Writing and Math, fewer than 21 absences
- Grade 8 → 9: Pass 4 core subjects including Reading and Math, fewer than 21 absences
- Grade 9 → 10: 6 total credits (4 core including ELA & Math), max 7 unexcused absences per trimester and fewer than 21 total absences for the school year.
- Grade 10 → 11: 11 total credits (7 core including ELA & Math), max 7 unexcused absences per trimester and fewer than 21 total absences for the school year.
- Grade 11 → 12: 19 total credits (13 core including ELA & Math), max 7 unexcused absences per trimester and fewer than 21 total absences for the school year.
- Final promotion decisions may consider extenuating circumstances with administrative review

Lockers

- Lockers are school property and are subject to search under reasonable suspicion.
- Locks on lockers are encouraged. If a lock is borrowed, it must be returned by the end of the school year or students will be placed on the school debt list.
- Grades 9-12: Locks are available to borrow from the HS Dean upon request.
- Grades 6-8: Locks are available to borrow from students' homeroom teachers.

Student Services

Sussex Academy Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)

Please click here for more information.

School Constable

Sussex Academy is staffed by a school constable, who responds to calls and provides other services to our students, faculty and community:

- Responds to emergencies and investigates reports of crimes that occur on school property.
- Supports the school discipline and counseling teams in de-escalating a crisis situation.
- Is responsible for all on-campus driving and parking concerns or issues.

- Is responsible for ensuring all necessary drills are created, implemented and monitored.

Transgender and Gender-Diverse Students

Sussex Academy is committed to providing a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment for all students. Discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity is not permitted. Transgender and gender-diverse students have the right to privacy, respect, and equal opportunities in academics, athletics, clubs, social events, and all school activities. Our goal is to ensure every student feels safe, respected, and fully included in the Sussex Academy community.

Click here for further details.

Technology Use

- K–5: Use school devices only
- 6–8: No personal devices during school hours
- 9–12: Cell phone free classroom
- Chromebooks issued to each student; student is responsible for damages to device
- Technology Acceptable Use Agreement

Title IX Compliance

Sussex Academy is committed to ensuring a safe and inclusive learning environment. Discrimination on the basis of sex—including sexual harassment and sexual violence—is prohibited under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.

To Report a Title IX Concern:

Michele Torrence
Human Resources Manager
michele.torrence@saas.k12.de.us

Office for Civil Rights Contact:
Office for Civil Rights, Philadelphia
U.S. Department of Education
The Wanamaker Building
100 Penn Square East, Suite 515
Philadelphia, PA 19107
Tel: (215) 656-8541
Fax: (215) 656-8605

More info: https://www.ed.gov/laws-and-policy/civil-rights-laws/title-ix-and-sex-discrimination

Wellness Resources

- On-Campus Nurses and School Health Services
- **Delaware Department of Health and Social Services:** Health and Social Services for DE residents. Call (302) 515-3080 or visit https://dhss.delaware.gov/

24/7 support hotlines, including:

- **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline:** Call or text 988 anytime for free, confidential support for anyone in crisis.
- **Delaware 211:** Call 211, text your zip code to 898211, or use their live chat for help connecting to a variety of essential health and human services, including mental health support.
- **Delaware 24/7 HopeLine:** 1-833-946-7333 for peer counseling and support for addiction, emotional distress, and mental fatigue.
- **Crisis Text Line:** Text "HOME" to 741741 for a national crisis text line. You can also text "DE" to 741741 for a Delaware-specific text line.
- **Delaware Mobile Response and Stabilization Services (MRSS) Crisis Hotline:** 1-800-969-4357 for 24/7 help for children and adolescents facing a behavioral health crisis.
- **SAFE DE APP:** 24/7 anonymous support system for students, families, and school employees, and assists with students battling bullying or depression, families requiring essentials like food or housing, school employees navigating stressful times, and anyone grappling with personal challenges.

  To get started:

  1. Download the app from the Google Play Store or Apple App Store.
  2. Select Sussex Academy (Elementary or Secondary) from the dropdown menu.
  3. Accept the Terms & Conditions.

  Or… visit this link: https://safede.helpmeresources.com/login, then:

  1. Click search for your organization
  2. Type in "Sussex Academy" and select Elementary or Secondary Campus
  3. Accept the Terms & Conditions

Chapter 3: Discipline System

At Sussex Academy, discipline is more than correcting mistakes—it is an opportunity to help students grow. Our motto, Explore • Experience • Excel serves as a guide for shaping responsible choices and building strong character. Students are encouraged to reflect on their actions, understand the impact of their behavior, and explore better choices for the future.
Through reflective practices, problem-solving, and constructive consequences, students experience the process of making amends, rebuilding trust, and learning from challenges. By applying what they have learned, students develop self-control, resilience, and integrity—skills that help them excel both in school and in life. Discipline becomes part of the learning process, supporting our mission to prepare students to succeed academically, socially, and personally.

All members of our school community—students, staff, and families—share the responsibility of upholding these values each day. The following links outline how these expectations are supported and enforced across all grade levels.

Sussex Academy K-12 Discipline System

Sussex Academy Elementary School Matrix

Sussex Academy Secondary Campus Behavior Matrix

Final Thoughts

This handbook is intended to be a comprehensive guide for students and families as we work together to create a positive and productive learning environment. It reflects Sussex Academy's core values and commitment to academic excellence, personal growth, and mutual respect.

Please note that this handbook is a **living document** and may be updated throughout the school year to reflect changes in school policy, state law, or best practices. The most current version will always be available through the link provided to you as well as on the **Sussex Academy website**, and families are encouraged to check periodically for updates. If you have questions or need clarification, please do not hesitate to contact school administration.

As a reminder, our approach to student behavior and discipline is rooted in the following principles:

- **Relationship-Centered Accountability** – A practice that focuses on repairing trust and restoring relationships through open dialogue, reflection, and shared responsibility. It

ensures that students are held accountable for their behavior in a way that builds understanding, empathy, and a stronger school community.

- **Progressive Discipline** – A structured approach to addressing student behavior that applies increasingly serious responses based on the frequency, severity, and impact of the behavior. The goal is to correct behavior through fair, consistent, and developmentally appropriate interventions—while supporting the student's growth and learning.
- **Due Process** – Ensures that all students are treated fairly and respectfully when they are involved in a disciplinary situation. It means that students have the right to know what they are being accused of, to share their side of the story, and to have their situation reviewed in a thoughtful and impartial way before any final decisions are made.

By understanding and upholding the expectations outlined in this handbook, we can ensure that Sussex Academy remains a safe, respectful, and empowering place to learn and grow.

We thank you for your partnership and look forward to a successful school year ahead!