

Swanton Elementary School



Handbook for Parents and Students
2000-2010

Our Vision

The Swanton School is a caring, responsible, respectful community of learners. Our work, supported by inquiry and reflection, promotes personal integrity, citizenship, and lifelong learning.

Swanton Elementary School

Please see our web site - www.swantonschools.com- for a list of all staff.

Central Building – 868-5346

Babcock Building – 868-4920

Administration Julie Benay, <i>Principal</i> Brent Coon, <i>Assistant Principal</i>		Office Staff Lora McAllister, <i>Principal's Secretary/Office Manager</i> Dawn Tessier, <i>Secretary/Receptionist</i> Mary Ellis, <i>Receptionist</i>	
Behavioral Support Team Amanda Sweeney, <i>Behavior Action Team Coordinator</i> Lisette Trippany & Carlo Micheli, <i>Behavior Action Team Assistants</i>		Guidance & School/Home Services Cindy Rose – <i>School Counselor</i> Debbie Light – <i>School Counselor</i> Katy Thompson – <i>School Counselor</i> Melanie Steeneck, <i>School-Home Coordinator</i>	
Health Services Linda Lane, <i>School Nurse</i> Joan Kemp, <i>Associate School Nurse</i>		Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Karen Tyler, <i>Literacy Specialist</i> Beth Hunter-Jette, <i>Math Specialist</i> Peter Garrow, <i>Technology Support</i>	
Student Instructional Support		Special Education Services	
Deb Daly Deb Goslin Susan Crosby Robyn Brislin Frank Zaske	Mary Pelkey Stacie Scangas Joan Lumbra Lisa Bovatt	Karen Cameron Laura Terry Ellen Davenport Sue Palin, <i>SLP</i> Karen Tavlin, <i>SLP</i>	Leah Follensbee Paul Evelti Erin Gagne Karen O'Brien Phyllis Paro, <i>Psychologist</i>

Franklin-Northwest Supervisory Union - 868-4967

www.fnwsu.org

Dr. Jack McCarthy, <i>Superintendent, x17</i>	Linda Chaim, <i>Special Education, x16</i>
Dena St. Amour, <i>Curriculum, x13</i>	George Raynak, <i>Technology, x14</i>
Becky Hart, <i>Business Manager, x12</i>	Pierette Bouchard, <i>Personnel x18</i>

Swanton School Board

Corrine Bonnette	868-9444	Lisa Gorton, Clerk	868-3059
Donald Collins, Chair	868-7975	April Kilbury	527-7152
Roy Eckler, Vice Chair	868-5612	Patti Jo Walker	524-5749

Enrollment and Fiscal Information

Student enrollment: 640 students, Preschool through 6th Grade

Total budget PreK-6 program for fiscal year 2009: \$7, 676, 847.00

School Calendar

Please note these dates on your calendar and watch the monthly school newsletter for reminders or changes. The calendar & newsletters are posted on our web site.

Date	Event
August 25	First day of school for grades 1-6
September 1	First day of school for kindergarten
September 7	Labor Day, No School
September 24	Open House
September 25	No school, Staff in-service
Sept. 30 – Oct. 2	School pictures
October 22 and 23	No school – State Teacher’s Convention
November 23 and 24	No school – Parent-Teacher Conferences
November 25 - 27	Thanksgiving break
December 23 – January 4	Winter holiday break
February 5	In-service - No school for students

School Hours

Playground supervision begins at 7:30 a.m. **No students should arrive prior to 7:30 a.m.**

Crossing guards: 7:30 – 8:00 a.m. and 2:50 -3:20 p.m. at Fourth Street and Grand Avenue and at the Fourth Street entrance to the Central School

School day for students: 8:00 a.m. – 3:00* p.m. Grades 1-6. Please review dismissal procedures for those being picked up by parents or guardians.

8:00 – 11:15 a.m. Kindergarten M-Th; 8:00 – 3:00 on Fridays for all classes

Breakfast: is served from 7:30 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. in the Central cafeteria.

About Our School

Our Mission

The Swanton School community believes that given enough time and appropriate instruction students will achieve what is considered necessary to learn.

We recognize that students arrive at school with differing backgrounds, influences and needs. We are committed to the concepts of fairness and justice which reflect a concern for each individual's development, dignity and growth potential. Approaches to discipline and social responsibility in our school will promote behavioral changes that empower students to understand their obligations to others as members of a democratic society.

Attendance

Regular school attendance is critical for student success. We want each student to benefit from the educational opportunities offered at school. We ask that students and parents make every effort to be at school on time each school day. Students who often arrive late or have an inconsistent pattern of attendance are missing critical opportunities for instruction and the opportunity to join in the routines and patterns of classroom life.

Vermont law requires schools to keep an accurate register of student attendance. Students who arrive at school after 8:00 a.m. will be noted as **tardy** in their student record, with the exception of late bus arrivals due to inclement weather. Students who leave prior to dismissal will be noted as having an **early dismissal**. Students who are not in school will be marked either **absent excused** or **absent unexcused**. Valid excuses for student absence are illness, observance of religious holidays, family emergency, or other circumstances as determined by the School Board.

If your child is going to be absent from school, please call before 9:30 a.m. to let us know. If we have not received notice from you by 9:30, we will call you either at home or work to ensure that your child is safe.

According to state law the Superintendent of Schools may excuse up to 10 days of absence. Parents or guardians seeking to have student absences excused for any reason (such as vacation) other than those listed above must make a written request to Superintendent McCarthy. Teachers are not required to prepare schoolwork in advance for students who are on family vacations during the school year. Students who miss instructional time may develop gaps in their learning which could impact their progress.

You will be contacted if your child is tardy or absent from school more than 5 days in any one trimester or more than 10 accumulated days in the school year. We will contact you regardless of whether the absences are excused or unexcused. We will work with you and any necessary outside social service, health, or law enforcement partners to ensure your child is in school on time each day.

Celebrations

We enjoy the opportunity to celebrate together as a school community. Each class establishes goals for cooperating with behavioral expectations and votes on a celebration when they meet their goal. We set aside time to celebrate student birthdays and major holidays. We are inclusive in our celebrations and do not limit celebrations to those of one particular faith. Rather, we learn about how different cultures and religious traditions celebrate throughout the year. Holiday celebrations are limited in scope and aligned with our curriculum. We limit the amount of sweet treats served for celebrations in order to help our students make nutritional choices and follow our school nutrition policy. It is distracting for students to have flowers or balloons delivered during the school day. If you choose to have these items delivered, we will keep them in the main office and give them to your child at the end of the day. *Several members of our school community are allergic to latex. Latex balloons are not allowed in school.*

Class Placement

We begin the process of deciding class placement in March. Our goal is to make balanced classes, which reflect the rich diversity of the Swanton community. Typical factors considered in placement are: instructional level, gender, support needs, students who work well together and students who don't work well together. Parents and/or guardians are asked to describe what each child enjoys about school, what motivates him or her, what concerns do they have about the next year or any other information that you think will be helpful when making class assignments. Parents will receive an input form in March. Classroom teachers, guidance counselors, special services providers, and Unified Arts teachers all have input during the placement process, which is finalized at the end of May. Parents are notified in early June of their child's assignment for the following school year, and students visit their new teacher each June during a brief "Step Up" activity.

Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

The State of Vermont's Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities and Grade Expectations guide our curriculum. These may be viewed at: <http://www.state.vt.us/educ/new/html/pubs/framework.html>. These standards and grade expectations are interpreted at the local level through the Franklin Northwest Supervisory Union's written curriculum.

Vermont schools are guided by an *Action Plan*. Action planning is the key to continuous school improvement. It ensures that the educational programs students receive provide the content, knowledge and skills to meet rigorous academic standards. Using student performance results as a guide, action planning helps educators focus on measurable goals for improvement. Swanton's *Action Plan* for 2009-2010 may be viewed on our web page.

We know that high quality instruction is based on ongoing, authentic assessment of individual student progress. Our teachers work with content specialists to develop ongoing assessments. Instruction is designed to meet students where they are and bring them to new levels of

knowledge, skills, and understanding. Teachers at each grade level meet regularly to discuss curriculum and instruction and develop consistent standards and expectations for student work. Student progress reports are sent home mid-way through each trimester.

Our report cards are issued on a trimester basis, and are based on standards established through the Vermont Framework and the Grade Expectations. Parent-teacher conferences are held two times each year. At these conferences, parents can expect to view samples of student work and see how an individual child's work compares to a model, or "benchmark" that shows what is expected of students at that grade level.

Under the Federal "No Child Left Behind" law, each school district must develop a system of standardized testing. Each year our students take various standardized tests that are a part of this accountability system. Please see the Appendix for a description of this standardized testing.

Discipline, Behavioral Expectations, and Social-Emotional Learning

Our school vision states that we will create a community of caring, responsible, and respectful learners. To realize this goal, we have worked to develop a consistent approach to supporting the social and emotional development of our students. We have three simple expectations for everyone, students and staff alike:

Be respectful
Be responsible
Be caring



In addition, we work to support the positive development of character through Project SCOPE (Safe, Civil, Orderly and Positive Environment), which is a nationally recognized character education program. Our teachers use a framework developed at the University of Vermont known as The Supportive Classroom. Through this framework, teachers incorporate instruction in social skills and character development within the academic curriculum. We have chosen five Core Concepts of healthy character development to focus on. These are *Belonging*, *Caring*, *Respect*, *Responsibility*, and *Trust*. Through service learning projects, literature, civic education, student leadership, and creative lessons, our students learn what it means to be a caring citizen and community member.

Each classroom introduces our expectations and Core Concepts to students. Our goal is to help all students make behavior choices that will allow us to work together in an orderly and safe environment. Additionally, students help establish classroom rules and articulate behavior that disrupts the school environment. Our philosophy of discipline is stated below:

Discipline will be consistent, fair and just and will support a safe atmosphere with respect for the dignity of all. To create positive and orderly learning environments everyone will be responsible for his/her own behaviors. The entire school community, both adults and children will participate in and support the discipline procedures. Families and community will play an active role in promoting the discipline philosophy.

Our Behavior Action Team works with students and teachers to understand three levels of behavior that make it challenging to achieve our goal. These are:

Level 1: Your choice of behavior is starting to make it difficult for the teacher to teach and others to learn.

Level 2: Your choice of behavior continues to make it difficult for the teacher to teach and others to learn.

Level 3: Your choice of behavior has threatened the safety and security of people/and or the environment.

At each level, responses from the adults will be designed to teach self-control and responsibility. Parents will always be informed and involved with “Level 2” and “Level 3” challenges. In accordance with State law, bullying, harassment, possession of regulated substances, or any form of weapon are not tolerated and are considered a “Level 3” conduct. Behavior infractions at “Level 2” and “Level 3” are recorded and become part of your child’s school record. Please see the Appendix for a more complete description of disciplinary responses and references to relevant school policies.

Dismissal Procedures

In an effort to ensure the safety of our students, parents/guardians are asked to wait in the front of the building until dismissal is called over the intercom. *Please turn off your cell phones or go outside to have conversations while you are waiting. Students are moving through our hallways up until dismissal and adult conversations can be disruptive.* Students being picked up are dismissed a few minutes before those who ride the school bus. Once dismissal has been called, adults must go to the classroom and be identified by the classroom staff. If no adult has arrived by the time the bus riders are dismissed, students will walk the bus loop with their class and return to the building for pick up. **Our staff members have meetings or other activities after school; we cannot provide safe supervision for students beyond dismissal time. Please make every effort to be on time each day if you are picking up your child.**

Dress Code

As part of our efforts to provide a safe, orderly learning environment, we ask our students and staff to conform to a reasonable code of attire. Student dress is at the discretion and judgment of the parents. We assume parents will consider weather, safety, the various settings (classroom, gym, playground) of student activities and age appropriateness when supervising student dress. ***The school reserves the right to request that a child make better choices in instances of inappropriate or inadequate dress.*** Students will be requested to change or cover clothing deemed inappropriate including, but not limited to: items that advertise substance use, sexual innuendo, or other items which may be considered demeaning or offensive to the general population, and/or minority groups and/or individuals. Also inappropriate are midriff blouses, short shorts, and any suggestive clothing such as pants with slogans written on the rear end.

Straps on halter-tops must be at least two fingers wide. Pants showing boxers are not permitted. Shoes will be worn at all times for both health and safety reasons. While sandals and “flip flops” are permitted, they are not safe for active playground use and often result in injury. We recommend comfortable shoes that allow your child to play actively during recess without the risk of injury. *These standards for appropriate dress apply to all students in grades K-6.* Please put your child's name on each article of outside clothing (boots, coats, hat, mittens). If your child has lost clothing, ask him/her to check in the lost and found area at each school.

Educational Support System

Within each school district’s comprehensive system of educational services, Title 16 of the Vermont Statutes requires each public school to develop and maintain an educational support system (ESS) for children who require additional assistance in order to succeed in the general education environment.

Many factors may affect a student’s school performance, including overall nutrition and health, vision or hearing difficulties, emotional stress, or the need for a different instructional approach. Our teachers meet to review student needs and offer one another instructional alternatives. If concerns continue, a child may be referred to the Educational Support Team (EST) for a more thorough review. Parents will be asked for input for this EST review. One possible outcome may be a referral for additional testing through the Special Education system.

Enrollment and Transfer

Vermont State law requires a child to attend school in the town where one and/or both parents reside. On occasion an issue arises where the residency of one and/or both parents is in question. School officials are required to investigate these situations and determine the legal residence of the parent(s). In these situations, the parent is notified by the administration of the concern and asked to provide proof of residency.

Every effort will be made to make new students feel welcomed. New students will not attend classes the day they register. New students generally begin attending class one to two days after registering. This gives the school time to make appropriate class placement and to prepare materials for the new student. In the case of students with very special needs, the school may require additional time to ensure that the student’s start at the Swanton School is successful.

Parents should notify the office when moving their child to another school. Necessary paperwork must be completed so your child's records can be forwarded to his/her new school. Parents may not hand carry student records to the new school. Your timely notification will enable us to expedite the transfer of records so your child’s transition to his/her new school will be as smooth as possible.

Guidance Services

Our school guidance program is based on the Vermont Framework, and incorporates the teaching of social and emotional skills students will need to be successful and productive members of our community. Our school counselors work closely with classroom teachers to provide lessons in

age-appropriate areas such as goal setting; respect; making decisions; healthy choices; and problem-solving. Additionally, our school guidance program, behavioral staff, and teachers work together to prevent and address issues of bullying, teasing, and harassment.

Health Services

The Swanton School District, in cooperation with the Vermont Department of Health, requires that all entering students comply with the Vermont Immunization Law. In accordance with this law, children who have not met the immunization requirements will not be allowed to attend school unless there is a medical or religious exemption on file, updated yearly. Students are provided with health appraisal and supervision, health counseling, emergency, and first aid care. The school takes steps to control communicable diseases.

A child entering kindergarten or first grade should have a recent physical examination and then be re-evaluated every two (2) years thereafter.

Students who need medication during school hours must do the following:

Non-prescription Medication - A written consent form signed by the parent or legal guardian must be on file before medication can be given.

Prescription Drugs: School nurses will administer prescription medications under the following procedures:

1. A written form from the physician with the student name, medication dosage, reason for medication, and time medication is to be given.
2. Written parental permission for the school to follow the physician's order.
3. Medication must be in the original prescription bottle.
4. Medication must be brought to school by a parent or guardian. Students should not carry medication.

Screenings: As recommended by the Vermont Departments of Education and Health, students will be screened annually for vision, hearing, height, and weight. In addition, 6th grade girls will be screened for scoliosis and all 4th grade students will have blood pressure checked. If there are concerns raised by any of these screenings, parents will be notified both by phone and by a written referral.

On a regular basis the school nurse and a team of volunteers examine each student for head lice. The school has adopted a "no-nit" policy (F20), which requires a student to be sent home if any nits are found - even after treatment. Though this policy may cause frustration for some families, it has been a critical factor in preventing outbreaks. For a complete outline of procedures and guidelines, please refer to the complete School Board policy on **Head Lice**.

Homework

We have general homework guidelines that ask students to complete about 10 minutes of homework for each grade level. Thus, kindergarten and first grade students should expect 10

minutes of homework each day, while sixth grade students may be asked to complete up to 60 minutes per evening. Homework is intended to reinforce skills already taught in the classroom. Your child should be able to understand any homework assignment. If you have struggles getting homework completed, please talk to your child's teacher. We are in the process of evaluating our homework procedures and the quality of our homework. Please complete the parent survey regarding homework and return it to us the first week of school.

Meals and Snacks

Nutrition is an important factor in school success. We encourage all our students to make good nutritional choices that support healthy growth and optimal learning.

The Abbey Group manages the food service program for the Swanton Elementary School. **Any questions regarding food services and/or payment should be directed to the Abbey at 868-3376 or 933-4747.**

At the beginning of each school year all students receive a school information packet that includes the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines for receiving free or reduced price meals. We encourage all parents to review this material to see if they qualify for free or reduced priced meals. If you do not receive such a form at the beginning of the school year, please contact the school's main office. Also, should your income change during the year, you may become eligible for free or reduced priced meals. Please contact the school secretary for a new form to complete. New forms must be completed each year.

This is a pay in advance system and you must have funds in your account for your child to purchase lunch. Please pay by a check made out to the Swanton Elementary Hot Lunch Program. If you do not have a balance in your account, the administration will direct the food service provider not to serve hot lunch to your child. Any questions regarding accounts should be directed to the food service manager (868-3376).

The School has the following procedures regarding payment:

1. All students (with the exception of those with free lunch eligibility) must maintain a positive balance in their lunch account.
2. The food service will use the Wednesday Weekly to provide you with written notification of a low balance.
3. The food service will send home written notification of a zero or minus balance and up to 3 lunches may be charged to your account until the account balance is cleared and a positive balance established.
4. If no response is received to a zero or minus balance notice, and the 3 lunch charging limit has been reached, a child will not be served hot lunch. A basic emergency lunch (cheese sandwich and milk) will be provided. These emergency lunches will be charged to the child's account. The administration will contact parent directly to resolve the situation. Lunch at school is a service the school provides and the right to receive it may be revoked if the account is not kept up to date.

If the food service provider makes an error in your account resulting in a zero or no balance notice being sent home, they will provide your child with one week of free hot lunches.

The food service, on an annual basis, will provide specific information regarding the breakfast and lunch program, as well as the cost. **Please see the Appendix for a full description of the cost and programs provided by the Abbey Group.**

Breakfast and lunch: The food service provides a healthy breakfast each morning beginning at 7:30 a.m. in the Central cafeteria for all students. Lunch periods are 30 minutes in length. Students may participate in the meals program or bring a lunch from home. Each month the food service publishes the breakfast and lunch menus, which are sent home in the student's Wednesday Weekly and published on our website.

Snacks: Each classroom will provide time within the day for a brief snack break. The Food Service does provide a snack program, which will be explained in the information packet. Parents may purchase snack from the food service program or send in a snack.

Parent Involvement and Communication

In schools where parents are actively involved, student achievement soars. There are many ways for parents to be involved in our school. Each month we publish a school newsletter to update parents on current events in our school. Each child will have a plastic bag called The Wednesday Weekly. We understand how busy today's parents are and try to compile all school communication into this weekly packet. It is very important that you review the material in the Wednesday Weekly and return the empty bag to the classroom each Thursday, with your signature indicating the material has been reviewed. Those with Internet access can stay in touch via our website at www.swantonschools.com. If you would like to receive a weekly email update, please send your email address to jbenay@fnwsu.org.

Parents who would like to volunteer in the classroom or on field trips must complete a background check. This is a free service and a simple form to complete. Staff members at both Central and Babcock buildings are able to notarize this form at no cost.

We encourage parents and community members to visit the school for classroom, playground, or lunch times. When joining your child for lunch, we ask that you refrain from bringing "fast food" meals as this tends to cause resentment and disruption among the other children. Parents should speak with their child's teacher to explore ways that they may volunteer and participate. When visiting a classroom, please let the teacher know and always check in with the secretary before visiting the classroom and/or child. **ALL VISITORS MUST PICK UP A VISITOR NAME TAG AT THE OFFICE UPON ENTERING THE SCHOOL. VISITORS WITHOUT NAME TAGS WILL BE ASKED TO GO TO THE OFFICE TO CHECK IN.**

If parents are picking up their child at the end of the school day, please wait in the main hallway/lobby of the schools. **Please do not go directly to the classroom or wait in the hallways outside the classrooms.**

Parents are welcome to attend School Board meetings, which are held on the second Monday of each month in the Central Library. Your school board members are volunteers who work hard to

review policy, personnel, and fiscal matters. We ask that parent concerns follow a “chain of communication” that allows for positive resolution as early as possible without disruption of the key functions of your school board. If you have questions or concerns, please contact your child’s teacher first. If you do not feel your issues were resolved, contact one of the school principals. If you still feel concerned, contact Superintendent Jack McCarthy at 868-4967 x 17. Dr. McCarthy may refer your concern to the School Board where appropriate.

Parking

Parking lots are located both at 113 Grand Avenue and at 24 Fourth Street. Additionally, there is a small parking area near the bus loop on Bushey Street. Those using this lot may not exit the lot until 3:10 when all busses have left the yard. Parents of preschool and kindergarten students may use the bus loop for pick up at dismissal time (11:15 am). Otherwise, **there is no parking in the bus loop.** At the Fourth Street facility, parents should not use the inside employee parking area near the main entrance for pick up and drop off of students. Our parking lots are busy places and we ask that you use extreme caution and courtesy at all times.

Personal Belongings

We discourage students from bringing personal belongings to school unless for a specific assignment or “show and tell.” This includes personal music players, cell phones, or trading cards. Please review the recess guidelines in the Appendix regarding use of personal items at recess. We are not responsible for loss or theft of personal items.

Physical Plant and Playground Areas

Lanny Brow, *Head Custodian*

June Dishaw, *Custodian*

Edward “Larry” Barratt, *Custodian*

Susan Giovannangelo, *Custodian*

Tom Murray, *Custodian*

The Swanton Schools are one educational facility located in two separate buildings. The Mary S. Babcock building is named for distinguished educator Mary Babcock, who has served the Swanton Community for decades as a teacher, principal, and volunteer. The Babcock Building, located at 113 Grand Avenue, was constructed in 1964. Children in preschool through second grade attend classes in this building, which also houses a library and a multi-purpose room with refurbished rubber flooring.

The Swanton Central School, located at 24 Fourth Street, was built in 1992. The Central Building consists of three "houses" with seven classrooms in each house. In the middle of the "house" space is a core room used for computer labs, small group work, and special projects. The Central School has a regulation gymnasium used by our students along with junior high and community recreation teams. Two sections of second grade are in the Central Building, along with students in grades 3 through 6. When students leave Swanton Central, they move to Missisquoi Valley Union Middle/High School.

Our playground and field space are widely used by our students and the community. The playground is open for community use from 3:45 p.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday, and

from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on weekends and school holidays. **Children must be supervised at all times by an adult when using the school playground.** The playground is closed to the public from 8 p.m. – 7:30 a.m. Our playground is protected from vandalism by security cameras. Trespassing and/or vandalism will be prosecuted.

PTO

The Swanton PTO is an active group of involved parents who raise “fun” and “funds!” Every parent is encouraged to participate in PTO activities. The PTO has organized activities to allow anyone to give a few minutes of their time to label fundraising materials, supervise a family movie night, clip box tops, or help out in some way. The PTO provides ALL the funding for school field trips and enrichment activities. Please join the PTO for a reception during our First Day activities and sign up to help out in some way.

Student Safety

One of our most important responsibilities is to ensure the safety of our students. We need your assistance and cooperation in fulfilling this responsibility. Please be sure to:

- ∟ Notify us no later than 9:30 a.m. if your child is not going to be in school.
- ∟ Stop at the front desk to sign in and get a visitor’s badge if you are going to be on the playground, in the lunchroom, or visiting the classroom.
- ∟ Keep your home, work, and emergency numbers current. Notify the office immediately of any changes in these numbers.
- ∟ Follow the guidelines above for parking and use extreme caution when driving in our parking lots.
- ∟ Provide the office with written notice from the court if there are legal restrictions against a spouse or family member having contact with your child.
- ∟ Notify the office if someone other than a parent or guardian will be picking up your child from school.
- ∟ Use front entrances to enter the school. Do not open locked doors from the inside for other parents.

We are committed to the safety of the students and staff that work in the Swanton Elementary School buildings. Toward that end, we conduct at least 10 drills per school year to prepare for the event of a fire or other emergency. In addition, we have worked with community agencies to prepare procedures that will ensure student and staff safety in the event of a bomb threat or other significant emergency. We have coordinated these efforts with the local fire and police departments as well as consulting with the State Department of Education. If you would like to discuss our approach, please contact the administration.

Students are not allowed to access certain areas within the building unless accompanied by an adult: food preparation and storage areas, boiler rooms, custodial rooms, storage closets, or any other area not specifically designed for student use.

If Vermont weather makes it unsafe for our busses to travel, schools will be closed. This determination is made by the Superintendent in consultation with town road departments and the bus company. Our “Alert Now” emergency phone system will call the numbers you have provided in the event of a weather related school closing, or you may tune to local media to learn of school closings.

If school is ever dismissed early due to an emergency, your child must know what to do if you are not at home. Please inform the school of where your child is to go in case of an early closing. Please see the Appendix for further suggestions as you plan for emergency school closings. It is crucially important to keep us updated in any changes in your phone numbers as we have an automating dialing system that will alert you to school closings.

Telephone

Our phone lines at both buildings are very busy. We do have an answering service on each line; if you do not receive an answer during school hours, please leave a message. If your message is urgent, you should call back to be sure we did receive the message.

Calls to teachers are best made before and after school hours. Only emergency phone calls will be put through to the classroom. Each staff member also has a voice mail extension where you may leave messages that are not of an urgent nature.

Students may only use the school’s telephone for emergencies. Please do not call the school to speak with your child unless it is an emergency.

Students are not permitted to receive or send messages on a cell phone during the school day. We discourage children from bring cell phones to school. Any cell phones brought to school must be left in a backpack and be turned off during the school day. The school is not responsible for lost or damaged cell phones.

Technology

Technology is integrated into all instructional areas. Students become familiar with computers and learn to view them as tools that can make their lives easier and more productive. Computers in the classrooms and the learning centers give students opportunity for drill and practice, word processing and publishing, data storage and manipulation, enrichment, and research. An important aspect of research is the appropriate use of the Internet. We have developed specific guidelines for student use of technology, which are sent home annually. Parents are asked to

review the guidelines with students and to give permission (or not) for their children to access the Internet for educational purposes. We employ filtering software when accessing the Internet.

Transportation

Transportation services are provided by Grand Avenue Enterprises. **Parents may reach owner Diane Begnoche at 868-2761.** Please direct all questions regarding bus transportation to Diane. Grand Avenue Enterprises provides transportation to all Swanton students, grades K-12 within a designated area. The primary responsibility of the drivers is safe, reliable transportation. It is the responsibility of students to follow bus safety rules and procedures to avoid distracting the drivers. **Transportation services are a privilege, not a right and any student who fails to follow safety rules may have his/her transportation privilege suspended or revoked.** Please refer to the appendix for a list of bus safety rules and disciplinary responses, and review these with your children.



Appendices

- I. Behavioral expectations and procedures for transportation
- II. Behavioral expectations and procedures for recess and lunch
- III. Discipline procedures
- IV. State and Local Assessments
- V. Access to school policies
- VI. Asbestos management
- VII. Sample Family Plan for Emergency School Closings
- VIII. Comprehensive System of Educational Services
- IX. Food Service information from the Abbey Group

Appendix I: Behavioral Expectations and Procedures for Transportation

1. Keep your seat while the bus is in motion. Do not leave your seat at bus stops until the bus is completely stopped and the door is opened. Students may have assigned seats.
2. Talk softly so you will not distract the driver. Save your questions until the driver has finished the trip. NO whistling, yelling, or screaming will be tolerated.
3. Backpacks, instruments, and lunch boxes should be held on your lap or on the rack (if one is provided). Please keep your belongings and legs out of the aisle, as they obstruct those leaving the bus and the driver's visibility to the rear. Toys and other items must remain in your backpack unless the bus driver specifically grants permission. Books and personal radios with headphones will be allowed, but we will not be responsible for these items being lost or stolen. Weapons or objects that can be used as weapons are not permitted on the bus or in school. No pets are permitted on the bus.
4. When loading, go immediately to a seat and STAY THERE for the entire trip. When leaving the bus, wait your turn. Do not push. Look where you are going. Leave the unloading area immediately to allow others to get off the bus.
5. When waiting to load, do not approach the bus until it is completely stopped and the door opened. While loading or unloading, wait for the driver's signal to cross, check for traffic, and then cross 10 feet in FRONT OF THE BUS. Bus drivers cannot wait for children to get mail from mailboxes.
6. Throw refuse in the trashcan when you leave the bus. Help keep your bus clean. Do not throw anything out the windows. Eating/drinking on the bus will not be allowed.
7. Know where the emergency door and fire extinguishers are. If an emergency arises, stay calm, and quickly follow directions.
8. Act in a way that is respectful of fellow students and your driver. That means NO slapping, hitting, roughhousing, throwing things, or vulgar language. Of course, there is NO SMOKING on the busses at any time. In addition, you may not bring smoking materials, matches, lighters, etc. on the bus. Smoking or possession of smoking materials will result in a suspension from the bus.
9. Cover your coughs and sneezes.
10. Keep arms and hands inside the bus.
11. NO student is permitted to ride another student's bus without written permission from a parent and the approval of a school official. This will be permitted only in an emergency or when overcrowding isn't a problem. If you have concerns, please contact Grand Avenue Enterprises (868-2761).

NOTE: Children must wait outside for busses. A bus is a hazard when it is stopped in the road. Bus drivers cannot wait for late students.

BUS DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

Our school standards for behavior apply on the bus (see page 5). Safety is our main concern! When behavior choices result in distraction of the driver, all students are put at risk.

If a student's behavior is making it difficult for the driver to operate the bus safely, a referral will be made to the Behavior Action Team. The student will meet with a member of the team to discuss the behavior and make a plan for appropriate conduct on the bus, and parents will be notified. If the plan is not successful and difficulties continue, parents may be asked to attend a meeting with school staff and representatives from the bus company. A warning or suspension may result.

The administration reserves the right to suspend a child if the infraction involves a physical altercation and/or presents a safety threat. Riding the bus is a privilege extended to parents and their children by Swanton taxpayers. If a child's behavior requires removal from the bus, parents are responsible for providing transportation.

Bicycle, Skateboard, Roller Blade, and Scooter Rules

1. Students must dismount their bicycles, skateboards, roller blades, and scooters prior to coming on school grounds.
2. Students will put these items in the appropriate location (bike rack for scooters and bicycles or back pack for roller blades and skateboards).
3. Students may not congregate around the bike racks.
4. Students riding to school will be dismissed with walkers. When leaving school grounds at the end of the day, bicycles, skateboards, roller blades, and scooters must be walked off school grounds.
5. For safety reasons, we strongly urge students to wear a helmet when riding a bicycle, skateboard, scooter, or roller blades to school.
6. If students ride these items to school, the school will not be liable for damage or theft.
7. Students will not be allowed to ride during the regular school hours.



Appendix II: Behavioral expectations and procedures for recess and lunch

Our school wide expectations apply on the playground and lunchroom as in the classroom. The three levels of behavior choices also apply. If students choose behavior that is unsafe (Level 3), they will be sent to a Behavior Action Team Assistant and parents will be notified. They may miss one or more recess periods or eat lunch in an alternative setting as a result. These specific guidelines will help you and your child understand behavior choices that will make our playgrounds available for all students to play safely, be fair, and have fun and our lunchrooms available for an enjoyable meal time:

Recess Guidelines

1. Students may not leave the playground without permission (get pass from supervising adult).
2. Students will use the equipment in a safe manner. No jumping off swings, double swinging, twisting or swinging sideways, two on a slide at the same time, climbing up the slide, sliding backwards, touching others on ladders, throwing stones or dirt, etc.
3. Students will wear clothing appropriate to the weather conditions when outside.
4. Students will follow all directions from the supervising adults.
5. Activities and games that are permitted include: kick ball, soccer, catch, jump rope, sitting and talking, coloring, reading, sand play, swinging, marbles, hopscotch, basketball, equipment play, and other games organized by the supervising adults.
6. Activities and games that are NOT permitted include: throwing snowballs, throwing rocks, dirt, or other objects, chase games, shoving, tackle football, piggy backing, or gymnastics.
7. Children are not permitted to bring trading cards or expensive toys including radio controlled cars to school for use during indoor or outdoor recess. Cell phones and radios should not be used at school. The school is not responsible for items brought to school that may be damaged or lost.
8. Any adult visiting the playground during school hours must sign in at the front office and wear a visitor's badge.

Lunchroom Guidelines

1. Students will line up quietly when waiting for their lunch.
2. Students will say please and thank you when being served. Cafeteria staff must be addressed politely and with respect.
3. Students must demonstrate good table manners.
4. Conversations at the table must be at a low volume and may only be with those seated with you.
5. Students must clean up their eating area (both the table and the floor).

Appendix III: Discipline Procedures

Level 1: Your choice of behavior is starting to make it difficult for the teacher to teach and others to learn.

1) Proactive strategies

Teacher or supervising adult will use positive reinforcement, redirection, encouragement, reminders, or other proactive strategies to guide student behavior. No documentation is necessary. Parents will not be notified.

Level 2: Your choice of behavior continues to make it difficult for the teacher to teach and others to learn.

1) Separation

Student will be removed from the classroom until the teacher is available to process with the student.

2) Referral

Teacher will complete a referral sheet. The teacher or behavior team member will meet with the student at a convenient time, which may include recess, centers or choice time, break/snack time, before school, or after school. If a paraprofessional was involved, she/he will be included in the planning session if at all possible.

3) Parental Notification

Teachers will notify parent via a phone call, home/school log, email or other method.

4) Documentation

Behavior team logs incident and makes copy for classroom teachers

5) Follow Up

The Behavior Action Team will follow up with the teacher to help implement plans that will prevent further disruptive behavior choices. Parents, guidance counselors, school-home coordinator, or others may become involved in the planning. The administration may become involved as necessary.

Level 3: Your choice of behavior has threatened the safety and security of people/and or the environment.

Note: If a student is highly agitated or aggressive, s/he will be removed immediately by trained school staff to a quiet "time away" space to calm down and regain self-control.

1) In-School Suspension

Once student is calm, she/he will be escorted to the quiet room to be supervised by the Behavior Action Team assistant. Student remains in an in-school or out of school suspension for a period of time to be determined by the behavior team and teacher. Administration is informed.

2) Processing and Planning

a. Behavior Action Team Assistant will contact the parent to notify them their child has chosen behavior that constitutes a Level 3 violation.

- b. The student will discuss the situation with a member of the Behavior Action Team often with a school counselor, school psychologist, administrator, or special educator present.
- c. Parent(s) or guardian(s) will meet with an administrator, the teacher, and a member of the Behavior Action Team to discuss the student's behavior choices and factors that may be affecting student success. At this initial meeting, the team will determine the need for and membership of a planning team that may include other school or agency personnel. As needed, a schedule for regular planning team meetings will be established. The adults will also determine who should meet with the student to develop a plan for success.
- d. Student meets with identified team members to develop a re-entry plan that includes review of the situation, acceptance of responsibility, a plan for restitution, and a discussion of what is needed for classroom re-entry.
- e. Teacher, administrator, counselor, Behavior Action Team member and/or other staff develop a plan to support the other students as necessary.
- f. Note of all meetings along with a completed referral sheet are included in the student's file.

3) Ongoing support

Behavior Action Team consults with teacher and student to support the planning for positive behavior choices. As needed, regularly scheduled planning team meetings with the parents are held to monitor and adjust the student plan.

4) Other restrictions and consequences

- a. Students who engage in Level 3 misconduct may not participate in any after school activities sponsored by the school. Students may begin after school activities once they reenter their classroom program successfully.
- b. If a student chooses behavior that constitutes a Level 3 violation more than two times, the following options will be considered by the administration:
 - Intervention team meeting including law enforcement, social services, mental health providers, or others who may assist the student and family.
 - Formal Coordinated Services Plan meeting involving representatives from SRS and Northwestern Counseling and Support Services.
 - Out of school suspension for up to 10 days as per school policy.

Please note: If a student makes statements and/or exhibits behaviors the administration deems are an immediate threat or serious risk to the safety and welfare of the students and/or staff, then the child will be immediately removed from the general school population. This action may involve the police and other community support agencies. The parents of the child will be notified as soon as possible and the appropriate School Board policies will be followed.

Appendix IV: State and Local Assessments

In accordance with State and Federal requirements, Swanton students participate in standardized testing beginning in the second grade. Following are brief descriptions of these required state assessments:

New England Common Assessment Program: Beginning in fall 2005, the Vermont Department of Education introduced a new state testing program for students in grades 3 through 8. The New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP), a series of custom-designed tests developed in collaboration with the Rhode Island and New Hampshire departments of education, will measure students' proficiency on reading, math and writing grade level expectations (GLEs). Reading and math will be assessed at every grade level 3 through 8 and writing will be assessed in grades 5 and 8. Science will be assessed for Grade 4.

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP): NAEP is often called the "Nation's Report Card." It is the only measure of student achievement in the United States where you can compare the performance of students in your state with the performance of students across the nation or in other states. NAEP, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education, has been conducted since 1969. The results are widely reported by the national and local media. Our fourth grade students will take the NAEP exam in January.

In addition to the NECAP annual testing, we use the following local assessments each year:

Reading	Writing	Math
Curriculum Based Measures K-6 (3x per year)	Genre Writing Assessments Grades K-6	Curriculum Based Measures K-6 (3x per year)
Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment Grades K-6		Trimester Assessment Grades K- 6 (3x per year)
Phonics Assessment Grade 2 and 3		Problem Solving Assessments Grades K-6
Developmental Spelling Assessment Grades 1-6		

If you have questions about any of these assessments, please talk with your child's teacher or an administrator.

Appendix V: Access to school policies

Vermont schools are governed through state law and administered through policies written, reviewed, and adopted at the local level by the School Board. Swanton is currently in the process of updating all school policies. For a complete list of policies or an opportunity to review the policy manual, contact an administrator. Policies of particular interest to parents include:

- A3: Board commitment to non-discrimination: The Board will not unlawfully discriminate against any person or group on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), ancestry, national origin, place of birth, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age, or marital status
- F20: Prevention of Harassment of Students
- F9: Alcohol and Drug Abuse
- F25: Weapons

Appendix VI: Asbestos management

The Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (40 CFR 76£.93 [g] [4]) requires that written notice be given that the Swanton Schools have Management Plans for the safe control and maintenance of asbestos-containing materials found in their buildings. These Management Plans are available and accessible to the public at the administrative office of each building.

Appendix VII: Sample Family Plan for School Closings

Every effort will be made to keep children in school once the school day has started. There may be incidences where Vermont weather or other emergency forces a school closing. Staff will use personal cellular phones as much as possible to reach families, as we have very limited numbers of phone lines. Please do not call the school unless you have to change your emergency information. In the event that school must close early, please be sure your family has planned for the following:

- 1) Where will the child go in the event of an emergency school closing?
- 2) Are those responsible for supervising the child during an emergency closing aware that you have designated them as the emergency contact?
- 3) Is your child aware of where s/he is to go in the event of an emergency closing?
- 4) In the event the first emergency contact is not available, what is the family back up plan?
- 5) Where can the parents be reached during the school day?
- 6) Does your child know how to reach you to ensure you they have arrived safely at the emergency contact home?



Appendix VIII: Comprehensive System of Educational Services

Within each school district's comprehensive system of educational services, Title 16 of the Vermont Statutes requires each public school to develop and maintain an educational support system (ESS) for children who require additional assistance in order to succeed in the general education environment. Act 117 requires each school board to assign responsibility for developing and maintaining the ESS to the superintendent or principal. It also requires each superintendent to annually report on the status of the ESS in their schools including how funds, such as Medicaid, are used to support the ESS.

Components of Swanton's Educational Support System

Preschool

Free community playgroups: Monday mornings 9 a.m. at the Mary S. Babcock Building on Grand Avenue sponsored by Swanton Success by Six

Free developmental screenings for three and four year olds: call Sally at 868-4457

Preschool classes: May be available depending on eligibility. Please request a free developmental screening and learn more about preschool services (see above), or call Champlain Valley Head Start at 800-651-4180.

School Age

School-home coordination: Assistance with social service or health needs, communication with the school, or other services to strengthen families

Academic support: Small group or individual tutoring during the school day in reading, writing, or math by a professional or paraprofessional

English Language Learners: Small group or individual tutoring in reading and writing by a certified English Language Learners instructor

Psychological services: Individual psychological counseling, observations, and screening

Guidance: Small group or individual guidance to help with social skills and social-emotional issues

Behavioral support: Planning and classroom accommodations for success in learning self-control, impulse control, organizational skills, and cooperation with adults and peers

Health Services: Individual or small group teaching regarding management of diabetes, asthma, or nutritional issues. Screenings for vision, hearing, and other health issues (see p. 7)

After school programs: Activities and homework assistance for students in grades 5 and 6

Academic screenings: Informal assessments to assist teachers in determining sources of academic difficulty and develop differentiated instructional plans

