

Autism Classroom Parent-Student Handbook 2025-2026



SOUTH EASTERN SPECIAL EDUCATION

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Students participating in the SESE Autism program continue to be governed by their individual resident district policies. **This handbook merely serves as a supplement to each student's resident district handbook.** Each student is expected to also receive a copy of the resident district handbook.

Introduction

The Autism Classrooms are full-day programs that follow a bell-to-bell schedule. The focus of the Autism Classroom program is to teach and reinforce skills within the five developmental areas: academic, communication, motor (fine and gross), independent functioning, and social.

The Autism Classrooms are structured classrooms utilizing a wide variety of methodologies and strategies. Some of those methodologies include TEACCH, ABA, Differential Reinforcement of behavior, naturalistic teaching, modeling, prompting, redirection, scripting, social skills training, social narratives, task analysis, video modeling, visual supports, This structure is utilized to reduce prompt dependency and increase independence across a variety of skills. Visual supports are emphasized to reduce the need for additional cues and prompts after the original direction has been given. Verbal cues and excess verbal are kept to a minimum to prevent distractions, overstimulation, and dependence.

A typical day in the Autism Classroom at the elementary and junior high level includes the following: academic instruction using research based curriculum (implemented during small-group, large group, and individual instruction); large groups (meeting time, social skills, math, reading/language arts, science, social studies, calming time), scheduled and student-initiated sensory breaks, P.E., recess, breakfast, lunch, music, independent functioning skills. At the high school level, the above are included except for music. In addition, functional skills, such as cooking, community-based instruction, life, and vocational skills are emphasized. P.E. is not required for students who continue after they turn 18 as a second or third year senior.

Technology is utilized throughout the day at all three levels (elementary, junior high, and high school). Each classroom has an interactive smartboard as well as access to iPads that are provided based on individual needs of students.

The Autism Classroom teacher works closely with primary and related service providers, such as the speech-language pathologist, occupational therapist and psychologist. Many IEP goals and objectives are co-implemented between and among service providers.

Accommodating Individuals with Disabilities

Individuals with disabilities shall be provided an opportunity to participate in all school-sponsored services, programs, or activities and will not be subject to illegal discrimination. When appropriate, SESE may provide to persons with disabilities aids, benefits, or services that are separate or different from, but as effective as, those provided to others.

SESE will provide auxiliary aids and services when necessary to afford individuals with disabilities equal opportunity to participate in or enjoy the benefits of a service, program, or activity.

Annual Notice to Parents about Educational Technology Vendors Under the Student Online Personal Protection Act

SESEs throughout the State of Illinois contract with different educational technology vendors for beneficial K-12 purposes such as providing personalized learning and innovative educational technologies, and increasing efficiency in school operations.

Under Illinois' Student Online Personal Protection Act, or SOPPA (105 ILCS 85/), educational technology vendors and other entities that operate Internet websites, online services, online applications, or mobile applications that are designed, marketed, and primarily used for K-12 school purposes are referred to in SOPPA as *operators*. SOPPA is intended to ensure that student data collected by operators is protected, and it requires those vendors, as well as SESE and the Ill. State Board of Education, to take a number of actions to protect online student data.

Depending upon the particular educational technology being used, our SESE may need to collect different types of student data, which is then shared with educational technology vendors through their online sites, services, and/or applications. Under SOPPA, educational technology vendors are prohibited from selling or renting a student's information or from engaging in targeted advertising using a student's information. Such vendors may only disclose student data for K-12 school purposes and other limited purposes permitted under the law.

In general terms, the types of student data that may be collected and shared include personally identifiable information (PII) about students or information that can be linked to PII about students, such as:

- Basic identifying information, including student or parent/guardian name and student or parent/guardian contact information, username/password, student ID number
- Demographic information
- Enrollment information
- Assessment data, grades, and transcripts

- Attendance and class schedule
- Academic/extracurricular activities
- Special indicators (e.g., disability information, English language learner, free/reduced meals or homeless/foster care status)
- Conduct/behavioral data
- Health information
- Food purchases
- Transportation information
- In-application performance data
- Student-generated work
- Online communications
- Application metadata and application use statistics
- Permanent and temporary school student record information

Operators may collect and use student data only for K-12 purposes, which are purposes that aid in the administration of school activities, such as:

- Instruction in the classroom or at home (including remote learning)
- Administrative activities
- Collaboration between students, school personnel, and/or parents/guardians
- Other activities that are for the use and benefit of SESE

Annual Review/Meetings

Each child's Individual Education Plan (IEP) will be reviewed at least yearly to determine progress on the current IEP as well as to develop a proposed Individual Education Plan (IEP). The newly developed Individual Education Plan (IEP) will be in effect for one year from the day after the date of the annual review. The parent is an active member of the IEP and plays an important role in the child's educational progress.

Assessments

Universal Screener/Classroom

The Autism Classroom Teacher administers The Assessment of Functional Living Skills which assesses progress within individual student developmental areas. It is updated yearly.

Progress Monitoring

Students are progress monitored monthly through the curriculum based assessments linked to the Unique Learning System. A pre- and post-test are administered monthly.

IEP Tracking

IEP goals and objectives are tracked according to the schedule designated on the IEP (daily, weekly, quarterly, or monthly). The classroom teachers maintain tracking sheets on which progress is documented. Data from IEP tracking is then reported through progress reports that are sent home according to the attending district's schedule for sending home report cards. For co-implemented goals, the involved service providers will track progress.

Attendance

The Autism classroom teacher/staff reports attendance of the students to the home district and South Eastern Special Education.

Classroom teachers will keep the SESE Classroom Supervisor informed of individual student attendance concerns. If students are absent 3 consecutive days or a total of 10 days per school year, then the Autism Classroom teacher will notify the Classroom Supervisor as well as the District Special Education Coordinator. The District Special Education Coordinator is encouraged to contact the parents/guardian in order to determine the cause of the absences. The SESE Classroom Supervisor will then inform the Resident District Special Education Coordinator of attendance/truancy issues. The Resident District Truancy policy will then be followed.

Bullying, Intimidation, and Harassment Prevention

Bullying, intimidation, and harassment diminish a student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate. Preventing students from engaging in these disruptive behaviors and providing all students equal access to a safe, non-hostile learning environment are important SESE goals.

Bullying on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, national origin, military status, unfavorable discharge status from the military service, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender-related identity or expression, ancestry, age, religion, physical or mental disability, order of protection status, status of being homeless, or actual or potential marital or parental status, including pregnancy, association with a person or group with one or more of the aforementioned actual or perceived characteristics, or any other distinguishing characteristic **is prohibited** in each of the following situations:

1. During any school-sponsored education program or activity.

2. While in school, on school property, on school buses or other school vehicles, at designated school bus stops waiting for the school bus, or at school-sponsored or school-sanctioned events or activities.
3. Through the transmission of information from a school computer, a school computer network, or other similar electronic school equipment.
4. Through the transmission of information from a computer that is accessed at a nonschool-related location, activity, function, or program or from the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by SESE or the school if the bullying causes a substantial disruption to the educational process or orderly operation of a school. This paragraph (item #4) applies only when a school administrator or teacher receives a report that bullying through this means has occurred; it does not require staff members to monitor any nonschool-related activity, function, or program.

Bullying includes *cyberbullying* and means any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically, directed toward a student or students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:

1. Placing the student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student's or students' person or property;
2. Causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's or students' physical or mental health;
3. Substantially interfering with the student's or students' academic performance; or
4. Substantially interfering with the student's or students' ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

Bullying may take various forms, including without limitation one or more of the following: harassment, threats, intimidation, stalking, physical violence, sexual harassment, sexual violence, theft, public humiliation, destruction of property, or retaliation for asserting or alleging an act of bullying. This list is meant to be illustrative and non-exhaustive.

Cyberbullying means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, including without limitation any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data, or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic system, photo-electronic system, or photo-optical system, including without limitation electronic mail, Internet communications, instant messages, or facsimile communications. *Cyberbullying* includes the creation of a webpage or weblog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages if the creation or impersonation creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of *bullying*. *Cyberbullying* also includes the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than

one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons if the distribution or posting creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of *bullying*.

Restorative measures means a continuum of school-based alternatives to exclusionary discipline, such as suspensions and expulsions, that: (i) are adapted to the particular needs of the school and community, (ii) contribute to maintaining school safety, (iii) protect the integrity of a positive and productive learning climate, (iv) teach students the personal and interpersonal skills they will need to be successful in school and society, (v) serve to build and restore relationships among students, families, schools, and communities, (vi) reduce the likelihood of future disruption by balancing accountability with an understanding of students' behavioral health needs in order to keep students in school, and (vii) increase student accountability if the incident of bullying is based on religion, race, ethnicity, or any other category that is identified in the Ill. Human Rights Act.

School personnel means persons employed by, on contract with, or who volunteer at SESE, including without limitation school and SESE administrators, teachers, school social workers, school counselors, school psychologists, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, school resource officers, and security guards.

Bullying is contrary to State law and the policy of SESE. However, nothing in SESE's bullying prevention and response plan is intended to infringe upon any right to exercise free expression or the free exercise of religion or religiously based views protected under the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution or under Section 3 of Article I of the Illinois Constitution.

Students are encouraged to immediately report bullying. A report may be made orally or in writing to the Nondiscrimination Coordinator, Building Principal, Assistant Building Principal, Dean of Students, a Complaint Manager, or any staff member with whom the student is comfortable speaking. Anyone, including staff members and parents/guardians, who has information about actual or threatened bullying is encouraged to report it to SESE named officials or any staff member. SESE named officials and all staff members are available for help with a bully or to make a report about bullying. Anonymous reports are also accepted; however, this shall not be construed to permit formal disciplinary action solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

Nondiscrimination Coordinator:

Robyn Payne

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Complaint Managers:

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Engaging in teen dating violence that takes place at school, on school property, at school-sponsored activities, or in vehicles used for school-provided transportation is prohibited. For purposes of this policy, the term *teen dating violence* occurs whenever a student who is 13 to 19 years of age uses or threatens to use physical, mental, or emotional abuse to control an individual in the dating relationship; or uses or threatens to use sexual violence in the dating relationship.

Crisis Procedures

Due to the nature and severity of the behavior and crisis situations of individual students with autism, classroom and individual student crisis plans have been/or will be developed by the SESE administration and staff. Staff are trained in the use of Safety-Care which is designed to assist in de-escalation of aggressive behaviors and to assist in maintaining safety for all students and staff within the classroom environment.

Discipline

Classroom

Students attending the Autism programs will be required to follow all disciplinary procedures for the district that their classroom is housed in. Exceptions include students with IEP's containing an individualized behavior management plan.

Proactive behavioral supports and behavior management strategies are implemented within the daily routine of the classroom. Individual classrooms have a classroom behavior management plan as well as reinforcement system.

Individual Behavior Plans

A Behavior Intervention Plan must be developed for all students who have

behaviors which interfere with their learning or the learning of others, for example, those students who require the use of a restrictive intervention on more than one occasion in a thirty-day period. The behavior plan will contain criteria for when a cooling off period should be initiated by student or staff.

For those students who do not respond to the classroom-wide behavior management plan as well as reinforcement system and who display more intense and frequent behaviors that are interfering with his/her learning and the learning of others, data will be taken for 5 consecutive days.

A functional assessment of behavior can be completed with parental consent. Once the data is taken, the data will be analyzed and used to develop a behavior management plan. A separate meeting will be scheduled in order to develop the behavior management plan. Both of these forms will be attached to the current IEP. The Behavior Plan is in effect for one year.

For some students, data will be taken but it will be taken to develop an informal plan that will not be attached to the IEP.

In- School suspension

This is not utilized with students within the autism classroom.

Out-of-School suspension

Out-of-school suspension has not been found to be effective with most students with autism. Behaviors may be reinforced by out-of-school suspension, therefore, out-of-school suspension is selectively and rarely used. Because suspension is a restrictive intervention it should be treated very seriously. Only a SESE administrator may suspend a student that attends a SESE classroom.

It is the responsibility of the teacher to keep an accurate record of the number of suspensions for each student. After a student has served a total of 10 days, including bus suspensions the program supervisor must be notified and a Manifestation Determination must be scheduled.

If a suspension is appropriate, the notice will be sent to parents and resident district. This notice will contain the previous behavioral and disciplinary interventions exhausted and will indicate any additional services if required.

Lunch delay

Lunch delay is not practiced within the Autism Classrooms. If a behavior is occurring during the lunch or breakfast times, breakfast and lunch are always offered once the student is calm and safe.

Exclusion of non-academics

Only in the case of extreme safety issues (running from playground, building, bus, etc.), would recess, lunch, and other general education times be discussed for removal from the IEP.

Proactive supports are discussed and put into place in order to ensure safety within all educational settings.

Emergency Services

CARES Hotline

When a student exhibits at-risk behavior for intent to harm themselves or others, classroom teachers may need to call the CARES hotline to begin a risk assessment. When the contacted agency arrives to complete the risk assessment, they will use a confidential area to meet with the student, teacher, and parent.

DCFS

All SESE staff are mandated reporters and are required to follow the procedures outlined in the SESE Staff Handbook.

Equal Educational Opportunities

Equal educational and extracurricular opportunities shall be available for all students without regard to color, race, nationality, religion, sex, sexual orientation, ancestry, age, physical or mental disability, gender identity, status of being homeless, immigration status, order of protection status, actual or potential marital or parental status, including pregnancy. Further, SESE will not knowingly enter into agreements with any entity or any individual that discriminates against students on the basis of sex or any other protected status, except that SESE remains viewpoint neutral when granting access to school facilities. Any student may file a discrimination grievance by using Board policy 2:260, *Uniform Grievance Procedure*.

Expectations and Guidelines for Employee-Student Boundaries

All SESE employees must maintain professional employee-student boundaries and relationships with students. This includes meeting expectations and following guidelines established by SESE for employee-student boundaries. These expectations and guidelines apply to all professional, educational support, and contracted SESE employees. If they conflict with an applicable collective bargaining agreement, the provision is severable and the applicable bargaining agreement will control.

SESE understands that employees may have pre-existing relationships with families of students outside of school. These expectations and guidelines do not apply to employee-student relationships based in pre-existing relationships, including nuclear or extended families. These expectations and guidelines are not intended to prohibit such interactions, provided that an awareness of employee-student boundaries is maintained at all times. This list is not exhaustive, and an employee may be disciplined for boundary violations that are not specifically listed.

Employee Professional and Appropriate Conduct

All SESE employees are expected to maintain high standards in their school relationships, to demonstrate integrity and honesty, to be considerate and cooperative, and to maintain professional and appropriate relationships with students, parents, staff members, and others.

Professional and appropriate employee conduct are important Board goals that impact the quality of a safe learning environment and the school community, increasing students' ability to learn and SESE's ability to educate. To protect students from sexual misconduct by employees, and employees from the appearance of impropriety, State law also recognizes the importance for SESE employees to constantly maintain professional and appropriate relationships with students by following established expectations and guidelines for employee-student boundaries. Many breaches of employee-student boundaries do not rise to the level of criminal behavior but do pose a potential risk to student safety and impact the quality of a safe learning environment. Repeated violations of employee-student boundaries may indicate the grooming of a student for sexual abuse. As bystanders, employees may know of concerning behaviors that no one else is aware of, so their training on: (1) preventing, recognizing, reporting, and responding to child sexual abuse and grooming behavior; (2) this policy; and (3) federal and state reporting requirements is essential to maintaining the Board's goal of professional and appropriate conduct.

The Director or designee shall identify employee conduct standards that define appropriate employee-student boundaries, provide training about them, and monitor SESE's employees for violations of employee-student boundaries. The employee conduct standards will require that, at a minimum:

1. Employees who are governed by the *Code of Ethics for Illinois Educators*, adopted by the Ill. State Board of Education (ISBE), will comply with its incorporation by reference into this policy.
2. Employees are trained on educator ethics, child abuse, grooming behaviors, and employee-student boundary violations as required by law and policies 2:265, *Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedure*; 4:165, *Awareness and Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse and Grooming*

Behaviors; 5:90, Abused and Neglected Child Reporting; and 5:100, Staff Development Program.

3. Employees maintain professional relationships with students, including maintaining employee-student boundaries based upon students' ages, grade levels, and developmental levels and following District-established guidelines for specific situations, including but not limited to:
 - a. Transporting a student;
 - b. Taking or possessing a photo or video of a student; and
 - c. Meeting with a student or contacting a student outside the employee's professional role.
4. Employees report prohibited behaviors and/or boundary violations pursuant to Board policies 2:260, *Uniform Grievance Procedure*; 2:265, *Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedure*; and 5:90, *Abused and Neglected Child Reporting*.
5. Discipline up to and including dismissal will occur for any employee who violates an employee conduct standard or engages in any of the following:
 - a. Violates expectations and guidelines for employee-student boundaries.
 - b. Sexually harasses a student.
 - c. Willfully or negligently fails to follow reporting requirements of the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act (325 ILCS 5/), Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. §1681 et seq.), or the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 7926).
 - d. Engages in *grooming* as defined in 720 ILCS 5/11-25.
 - e. Engages in grooming behaviors. Prohibited grooming behaviors include, at a minimum, *sexual misconduct*. *Sexual misconduct* is any act, including but not limited to, any verbal, nonverbal, written, or electronic communication or physical activity, by an employee with direct contact with a student, that is directed toward or with a student to establish a romantic or sexual relationship with the student. Examples include, but are not limited to:
 - i. A sexual or romantic invitation.
 - ii. Dating or soliciting a date.
 - iii. Engaging in sexualized or romantic dialog.
 - iv. Making sexually suggestive comments that are directed toward or with a student.

- v. Self-disclosure or physical exposure of a sexual, romantic, or erotic nature.
- vi. A sexual, indecent, romantic, or erotic contact with the student.

Employee-Student Boundaries

The relationship between students and school employees is an inherently unequal imbalance of power because school employees are in a unique position of trust, care, authority, and influence in relation to students. SESE employees breach employee-student boundaries when they misuse their position of power over a student in a way that compromises the student's health, safety, or general welfare. Employee-student boundaries are categorized into four areas that are not mutually exclusive:

- **Emotional Boundaries** – both the employee's own emotional state and self-regulation as well as students' emotional states and developmental abilities to self-regulate.
- **Relationship/Power Boundaries** – recognizing, as noted above, that the employee-student relationship is unequal and employees must safeguard against misusing positions of power.
- **Communication Boundaries** – how and what employees communicate to students, including communication that is verbal, nonverbal, in person, or via electronic means.
- **Physical Boundaries** – physical contact between employees and students.

While some employee-student boundaries are clear and easy to recognize, there are some unclear, *grey* areas that employees must plan for and respond to with sound judgment. This means recognizing the potential negative consequences for students and/or employees engaging in certain behaviors with students or allowing inappropriate conduct to continue. Employees may use *time, place, and circumstances* as a guiding principle by asking themselves:

- Is this the appropriate *time* for my planned action?
- Have I chosen the appropriate *place* for the planned action?
- Are these appropriate *circumstances* for me to take my planned action?

To avoid behavior or conduct which may lead to a breach in employee-student boundaries, employees should also recognize their own unique vulnerabilities. Examples of vulnerabilities that employees may experience include, but are not limited to:

- Employees regarding students as peers
- Employees who too closely identify with students and their issues
- Employees experiencing adult relationship issues
- Immature employees, or employees with an under-developed moral compass

- Employees feeling a need for attention
- Employees who abuse alcohol or other substances
- Employees who lack personal crisis management skills

Employees experiencing difficulties in their personal lives may be particularly susceptible to engaging in at-risk behavior or conduct with students. Employees must be alert to such risks and ensure they maintain professional boundaries at all times. The Markkula Center for Applied Ethics' Framework for Ethical Decision-Making may help employees evaluate and address conduct that concerns them. See www.scu.edu/ethics/ethics-resources/ethical-decision-making/.

Guidelines for Specific Boundary Areas.

Boundary Area	Inappropriate	Appropriate
Emotional	<p>Favoring certain students by inviting them to your classroom at non-instructional times to "hang out."</p> <p>Favoring certain students by giving them special privileges.</p> <p>Engaging in peer-like behavior with students.</p> <p>Discussing personal staff issues with students.</p>	<p>Inviting students who need additional instructional support to your classroom for such additional support.</p> <p>Conducting one-on-one student conferences in a classroom with the door open.</p>
Relationship/Power	<p>Meeting with a student off-campus without parent/guardian knowledge and/or permission.</p> <p>Dating, requesting, or participating in a private meeting with a student (in person or virtually) outside your professional role.</p> <p>Transporting a student in a school or private vehicle without administrative authorization.</p> <p>Giving gifts, money, or treats to individual students.</p>	<p>Meeting with a student off-campus with parent/guardian knowledge and/or permission, e.g., when providing pre-arranged tutoring or coaching services.</p> <p>Transporting a student in a school or private vehicle with administrative authorization.</p> <p>Taking and using photos/videos of students for educational purposes, with student and parent/guardian consent, while abiding by student</p>

Boundary Area	Inappropriate	Appropriate
	<p>Sending students on personal errands.</p> <p>Intervening in serious student problems instead of referring the student to an appropriately trained professional.</p> <p>A sexual or romantic invitation toward or from a student.</p> <p>Taking and using photos/videos of students for non-educational purposes.</p>	<p>records laws, policies, and procedures.</p>
Communication	<p>Initiating or extending contact with a student beyond the school day in a one-on-one or non-group setting.</p> <p>Inviting students to your home.</p> <p>Adding students on personal social networking sites as contacts when unrelated to a legitimate educational purpose.</p> <p>Privately messaging students by any means.</p> <p>Maintaining intense eye contact.</p> <p>Making comments about a student's physical attributes, including excessively flattering comments.</p> <p>Engaging in sexualized or romantic dialog.</p> <p>Making sexually suggestive comments</p>	<p>Limiting communication to what is necessary for educational and/or extracurricular activities.</p> <p>Using SESE-approved methods for communicating with students.</p>

Boundary Area	Inappropriate	Appropriate
	<p>directed toward or with a student.</p> <p>Disclosing confidential information.</p> <p>Self-disclosure of a sexual, romantic, or erotic nature.</p>	
Physical - when not related to sensory needs of individual students.	<p>Full frontal hugs.</p> <p>Invading personal space.</p> <p>Massages, shoulder rubs, neck rubs, etc/</p> <p>Lingering touches or squeezes.</p> <p>Tickling.</p> <p>Having a student on your lap.</p> <p>Physical exposure of a sexual, romantic, or erotic nature.</p> <p>Sexual, indecent, romantic, or erotic contact with a student.</p>	<p>Occasionally patting a student on the back, shoulder, or arm.</p> <p>Momentary physical contact with limited force designed to prevent a student from completing an act that would result in potential physical harm to the student or another person or damage to property; or to remove a disruptive student who is unwilling to leave the area voluntarily.</p>

Free and Reduced-Price Food Services Eligibility

When the parents/guardians of students are unable to pay for their child(ren)'s meal services, meal charges will apply per a student's eligibility category and will be processed by the district accordingly. A student's eligibility for free and reduced-price food services shall be determined by the income eligibility guidelines, family-size income standards, set annually by the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, and distributed by the Illinois State Board of Education.

Home School Communication

Communication between home and school is vital to your student's success! Your child's teacher will communicate with you via an app text message system, phone, or home-school communication logs. Another way to communicate with your student's teacher is to send an email. Email addresses are found on the

www.sese.org webpage as well as teachers will share it at the beginning of the year.

Make sure to go on the SESE website and look at your child's classroom page. There are pictures of your student participating in activities as well as information of activities for you to do at home. Important information about classroom events and activities are also posted here. The website is www.sese.org. Then click on CURRENT NEW & EVENTS the top left hand corner. About half way down the page is a section titled **CURRENT NEWS**. Click on autism classrooms. Then click on your student's classroom teacher name.

Homework

Homework is not assigned within the Autism Classrooms. Additional materials, work tasks, suggestions may be sent home during the school year and summer for individual students by the classroom teacher, speech-language pathologist, etc. Students may be given access to their Unique accounts for additional work at home.

Mainstreaming Procedures

Mainstream Classes

The integration of students with autism into classes with same-aged peers is an integral part of the Autism program. The program strives to find appropriate supports and get those firmly in place before integrating students into mainstream classes. The goal is to make sure the students are successful in their mainstream classes. The 23 Illinois Administrative Code S.226.50 (e) states: "The district shall provide nonacademic and extracurricular services and activities in a manner necessary to afford children with disabilities an equal opportunity to participate in these services and activities." In accordance with the Code, SESE students will mainstream into PE and other nonacademic courses as each child is able to do so. At times, those nonacademic classes are overwhelming for the student with autism due to noise level and number of students involved. Students are mainstreamed into academic classes as determined by the IEP team.

IEP Documentation

All general education time is documented on the student's IEP.

Notification regarding CPR and AED Video

State law requires the Ill. High School Association to post a hands-only cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and automated external defibrillators (AED) training video on its website. The law also requires SESE to notify staff members

and parents/guardians about the video. You are encouraged to view the video, which will take less than 15 minutes of your time, at:

- www.ihsa.org/Resources/SportsMedicine/CPRTraining.aspx.

Parental Pick-up

All parents should report to the main office of the school. When the parent arrives to pick up his/her child, the teacher is called to send the child to the office rather than that parent coming to the classroom. The autism classroom teacher or the classroom program assistant will then walk that student to the office.

Physical Aggression

Guidelines of Physical Restraint:

Physical restraint is only to be used when a student is an immediate danger to him/herself or others. All restraints are to be achieved by using the Safety Care methodology. This is a one, two, or three person procedure. The school staff must make a reasonable attempt to notify the student's parent/guardian on the same day the event occurred.

Classroom staff always try to defuse confrontation and be proactive.

Reporting Child Sexual Abuse, Grooming Behaviors, and/or Boundary Violations

Reasonable suspicions of child sexual abuse and grooming behaviors shall be reported to DCFS. Other boundary violations and violations of the code of conduct shall be reported to the building principal.

Research Based Curriculum

Reading

Reading is taught and reinforced through the following contexts (one-on-one direct instruction, small group instruction, independent work, use of technology). Research-based reading curriculum is utilized for each student and determined based upon the individual student's current skills and individual learning styles. Unique curriculum is the instructional curriculum utilized.

Math

Math is taught and reinforced through the following contexts (one-on-one direct

instruction, small group instruction, independent work, use of technology). Research-based math curriculum is utilized for each student and determined based upon the individual student's current skills and individual learning styles. Unique curriculum is the instructional curriculum utilized.

Science/Health

Research-based curriculum is implemented to teach science concepts. Manipulatives and hands-on activities are utilized to teach and to reinforce science concepts. Unique curriculum is the instructional curriculum utilized.

Social Studies

Social Studies instruction incorporates concepts that are relevant and functional to the students within the program. Research-based curriculum is implemented to teach social studies concepts. Unique curriculum is the instructional curriculum utilized.

Social/Emotional

Social stories, video modeling, and direct instruction in social skills is used to teach following the rules and social skills. The Incredible Five Point Scale and other research-based methods and curriculums are utilized to teach and to reinforce social skills.

A Social Story™ describes a situation, skill, or concept in terms of relevant social cues, perspectives, and common responses in a specifically defined style and format. The goal of a Social Story™ is to share accurate social information in a patient and reassuring manner that is easily understood by its audience. Half of all Social Stories™ developed should affirm something that an individual does well. Although the goal of a Story™ should never be to change the individual's behavior, that individual's improved understanding of events and expectations may lead to more effective responses.

The Incredible Five Point Scale is a 1-5 scale system that is applicable for a variety of behaviors and responses to behaviors, including feelings of anxiety, obsessions, concepts of personal space and feelings of anger. The book includes stories suitable to be read to a child, visual scales and tips on how to implement the particular scale. The purpose of using this method for calming and self-modulation is to teach students what emotions/observable behaviors are at each level and also how to deescalate using a variety of individualized applicable strategies.

Video modeling of peers and adults engaged in positive behavior is used to teach and reinforce positive social skills and interactions.

Independent Functioning

Self-Care

Toileting skills, including hand-washing, are visually shown and reinforced during scheduled bathroom breaks. Brushing teeth is integrated into the daily schedule. Other self-care skills are taught and reinforced at naturally-occurring, in-context times.

Communication

Students may be verbal or nonverbal. Many students use voice output devices, which they may own or may be provided by SESE. Communication opportunities are integrated throughout the daily routine. Receptive (understanding), expressive (verbal), and pragmatic (social) communication skills are taught and reinforced throughout the daily routine and activities.

Adaptive Functioning

Organization and planning skills are integrated within the routine of the classroom. Students are encouraged to be as independent as possible through the use of visuals and task-analysis of skills.

Searches

If a student is suspected of possessing a weapon or illegal drugs local law enforcement will be contacted. **There must be adequate evidence of reasonable suspicion.**

Right to Request Classroom Teachers' Qualifications

Parents/Guardians have the right to request the professional qualifications of the teachers who instruct their child and the paraprofessionals, if any, who assist them. Parents/Guardians may request the following information about each of their child's classroom teachers and their paraprofessional assistants, if any:

- Whether the teacher has met State qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction;
- Whether the teacher is teaching under an emergency or other provisional status through which State qualification or licensing criteria have been waived;
- Whether the teacher is teaching in the field of discipline of the teacher's licensure; and
- Whether any instructional aides or paraprofessionals provide services to their child and, if so, their qualifications.

Sex Equity

No student shall, based on sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity be denied equal access to programs, activities, services, or benefits or be limited in the exercise of any right, privilege, advantage, or denied equal access to educational and extracurricular programs and activities.

Social Networking Passwords

1. School officials may not request or require a student or his or her parents/guardians to provide a password or other related account information to gain access to the student's account or profile on a social networking website. Examples of *social networking websites and platforms* include Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, and Snapchat.
2. School officials may conduct an investigation or require a student to cooperate in an investigation if there is specific information about activity on the student's account on a social networking website that violates a school behavior rule or policy. In the course of an investigation, the student may be required to share the content that is reported in order to allow school officials to make a factual determination.

Suicide and Depression Awareness and Prevention

Youth suicide impacts the safety of the school environment. It also affects the school community, diminishing the ability of surviving students to learn and the school's ability to educate. Suicide and depression awareness and prevention are important goals of SESE.

SESE maintains student and parent resources on suicide and depression awareness and prevention.

DHS SASS

SASS provides intensive mental health services for youth experiencing a mental health crisis.

SASS services are available by calling the Crisis and Referral Entry Services (CARES) line.

(800) 345-9049

(773) 523-4504 (TTY)

National Suicide Prevention

Lifeline- <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, and prevention and crisis resources.

Chat counselors are also available 24/7 via the Lifeline Chat program on the Lifeline's website.

Three Digit Dialing Code: 988

(800) 273-8255

(888) 628-9454 (Spanish)

(800) 273-8255 (TTY)

- **The Crisis Text Line-** crisistextline.org

Text HOME to 741741 to reach a volunteer Crisis Counselor any time. A live, trained Crisis Counselor receives the text and responds from a secure online platform.

Volunteer Crisis Counselors are available to message on WhatsApp (Crisis Text Line)

- **Safe2Help Illinois helpline-**<https://www.safe2helpil.com>

Safe2Help Illinois offers students a safe, *confidential* way in which to share information that might help prevent suicides, bullying, school violence, or other threats to school safety.

Call 800-273-8255- available 24/7

Text SAFE2 to 72332 to reach a trained staff member

Email: HELP@Safe2HelpIL.com

The Trevor Project-<https://www.thetrevorproject.org>

A support site for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, or Queer youth who are experiencing depression or suicidal thoughts.

Connect to a crisis counselor 24/7, 365 days a year by:

- Texting START to 678-678
- Calling 1-866-488-7386
- Starting a Chat on the Trevor Project website (thetrevorproject.org/get-help/).

Jasper County Health Department

106 E. Edwards St.

Newton, IL 62448

Phone: (618) 783-4154

TTY: None

Website: <https://www.jasperhealth.org/>

Support Services

The Director or designee will ensure that each school building's Student Support Committee identifies counseling options for students who are affected by sexual abuse, along with SESE and community-based options for victims of sexual abuse to obtain assistance and intervention. Community-based options must include a Children's Advocacy Center and sexual assault crisis center(s) that serve SESE, if any.

Surveys Requesting Personal Information

School officials and staff members shall not request, nor disclose, the identity of any student who completes any survey or evaluation (created by any person or entity, including SESE) containing one or more of the following items:

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student's parent/guardian.
2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student's family.
3. Behavior or attitudes about sex.
4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior.
5. Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom students have close family relationships.
6. Legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those with lawyers, physicians, and ministers.
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or the student's parent/guardian.
8. Income other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such program.

The student's parent(s)/guardian(s) may:

1. Inspect the survey or evaluation upon, and within a reasonable time of, their request, and/or
2. Refuse to allow their child to participate in the activity described above. The school shall not penalize any student whose parent(s)/guardian(s) exercised this option.
3. The parent/guardian of a student who is enrolled must authorize all absences from school and notify the school in advance or at the time of the student's absence. A valid cause for absence includes illness (including mental or behavioral health of the student), observance of a religious holiday, death in the immediate family, attendance at a civic event, family emergency, other situations beyond the control of the student as determined by the Board, voting pursuant to policy 7:90, *Release*

During School Hours (10 ILCS 5/7-42 and 5/17-15), other circumstances that cause reasonable concern to the parent/guardian for the student's mental, emotional, or physical health or safety, or other reason as approved by the Director or designee. Students absent for a valid cause may make up missed homework and classwork assignments in a reasonable timeframe.

Student Run Businesses

High school students run businesses to learn a wide variety of functional and vocational skills. The programs at Clay City and Hutsonville both run coffee carts and serve a wide variety of hot and cold beverages to staff within the buildings. They are involved in the shopping, supply gathering, preparing the drinks, taking orders, counting money, etc.

Bark Bites is a student run business that creates homemade dog treats. Students are involved in all aspects of the business. Our businesses do not make a profit. It is simply charging enough money to support the business and continue to purchase the necessary supplies. To place an order for Bark Bites or learn more about the business, go to www.sese.org and click on **CLASSROOM VOCATIONAL BUSINESSES**. You will then find Bark Bites order form that you may click on to order. Anyone interested in supporting the businesses may order! Feel free to share!

Unique Like Me is a student run business that creates handcrafted soaps and sugar scrubs. These make great gifts! Students are involved in all aspects of the business. Our businesses do not make a profit. It is simply charging enough money to support the business and continue to purchase the necessary supplies. To place an order for Unique Like Me or learn more about the business, go to www.sese.org and click on **CLASSROOM VOCATIONAL BUSINESSES**. You will then find the Unique Like Me order form that you may click on to order. Anyone interested in supporting the businesses may order! Feel free to share!

Technology

Hardware

All technology and hardware in use in the SESE classroom is purchased by South Eastern Special Education. Technology is an integral part of the Autism classrooms. Each classroom has an interactive whiteboard as well as a netbook/laptop for use with the Smartboard. Computers or iPads are also available for student use.

Software

Research-based software is utilized during group and individual instruction.

Title IX Sexual Harassment Prohibited

Sexual harassment as defined in Title IX (Title IX Sexual Harassment) is prohibited. Any person, including a SESE employee or agent, or student, engages in Title IX Sexual Harassment whenever that person engages in conduct on the basis of an individual's sex that satisfies one or more of the following:

1. A SESE employee conditions the provision of an aid, benefit, or service on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct; or
2. Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to SESE's educational program or activity; or
3. *Sexual assault* as defined in 20 U.S.C. §1092(f)(6)(A)(v), *dating violence* as defined in 34 U.S.C. §12291(a)(11), *domestic violence* as defined in 34 U.S.C. §12291(a)(12), or *stalking* as defined in 34 U.S.C. §12291(a)(36).

Examples of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to, touching, crude jokes or pictures, discussions of sexual experiences, teasing related to sexual characteristics, spreading rumors related to a person's alleged sexual activities, rape, sexual battery, sexual abuse, and sexual coercion.

A person who wishes to make a report under this Title IX Sexual Harassment grievance procedure may make a report to the Title IX Coordinator, Nondiscrimination Coordinator, Building Principal, Assistant Building Principal, Dean of Students, a Complaint Manager, or any employee with whom the person is comfortable speaking. A person who wishes to make a report may choose to report to a person of the same gender.

School employees shall respond to incidents of sexual harassment by promptly making or forwarding the report to the Title IX Coordinator. An employee who fails to promptly make or forward a report may be disciplined, up to and including discharge.

Title IX Coordinator:

Robyn Payne

500 S Scott Ave, Newton, Illinois 62448

rpayne@sese.org

618-455-3396

Transportation

Transportation is provided by the home district.

Uniform Grievance Procedure

A student, parent/guardian, employee, or community member should notify any SESE Complaint Manager if he or she believes that the Board, its employees, or its agents have violated his or her rights guaranteed by the State or federal Constitution, State or federal statute, or Board policy, or have a complaint regarding any one of the following:

1. Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. §12101 et seq.
2. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C. §1681 et seq., excluding Title IX sexual harassment complaints governed by policy 2:265, *Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedure*
3. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. §791 et seq.
4. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, 42 U.S.C. §2000d et seq.
5. Equal Employment Opportunities Act (Title VII of the Civil Rights Act), 42 U.S.C. §2000e et seq.
6. Sexual harassment prohibited by the State Officials and Employees Ethics Act, 5 ILCS 430/70-5(a); Illinois Human Rights Act, 775 ILCS 5/; and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. §2000e et seq. (Title IX sexual harassment complaints are addressed under policy 2:265, *Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedure*)
7. Breastfeeding accommodations for students, 105 ILCS 5/10-20.60
8. Bullying, 105 ILCS 5/27-23.7
9. Misuse of funds received for services to improve educational opportunities for educationally disadvantaged or deprived children
10. Curriculum, instructional materials, and/or programs
11. Victims' Economic Security and Safety Act, 820 ILCS 180/
12. Illinois Equal Pay Act of 2003, 820 ILCS 112/
13. Provision of services to homeless students
14. Illinois Whistleblower Act, 740 ILCS 174/
15. Misuse of genetic information prohibited by the Illinois Genetic Information Privacy Act, 410 ILCS 513/; and Titles I and II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act, 42 U.S.C. §2000ff et seq.
16. Employee Credit Privacy Act, 820 ILCS 70/

A person (hereinafter Complainant) who wishes to avail him or herself of this grievance procedure may do so by filing a complaint with any SESE Complaint Manager. The Complainant shall not be required to file a complaint with a particular Complaint Manager and may request a Complaint Manager of the same gender.

Nondiscrimination Coordinator:

Robyn Payne

500 S Scott Ave, Newton, Illinois 62448

rpayne@sese.org

618-455-3396

Complaint Managers:

Robyn Payne

500 S Scott Ave, Newton, Illinois 62448

rpayne@sese.org

618-455-3396

Visitors Policy

Per policy, parents/guardians as well as those who would like to observe the classroom for educational purposes (college observations, etc.), the SESE website contains a form which requires the Classroom Supervisor's signature. Often the Classroom Supervisor will schedule to be present in the classroom the day/time of the observation in order to answer questions so that there are minimal distractions to the routine. The form must be completed and submitted at least 24 hours in advance. All visitors should report to the school office to obtain a visitor's badge. Observation periods are to be scheduled for no more than for 50 minutes of duration.

Volunteer Policy

SESE has a Volunteer Handbook. The classroom supervisor will review the handbook as well as required volunteer form with the prospective volunteer to determine appropriate volunteer activities.

Website

South Eastern Special Education hosts a website www.sese.org that provides information about your child's classroom as well as resources you may utilize to assist your child. Staff email addresses are also located on this website to assist you in contacting the service providers who work with your child.