

STONY BROOK SCHOOL

136 Cedar Grove Road
Somerville, New Jersey 08876
(908)722-2400
Fax: (908) 722-4201

August 2019

Dear Parents/Guardians:

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you and your child (ren) to our school. We are extremely excited about the upcoming school year and we are eager to see our Stony Brook students. Recognizing that parents and children enter a new school situation with concern and apprehension, I offer the following information that will hopefully be helpful to you.

SCHOOL BUILDINGS

PRIMARY SCHOOL – Whiton School provides for children in grades K-3

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL – Stony Brook School provides for children in grades 4 and 5

MIDDLE SCHOOL – Branchburg Central Middle School provides for 6th, 7th and 8th grade students

HIGH SCHOOL – Students attend Somerville High School

CLASS ASSIGNMENTS

Each classroom contains children with wide ranges of ability and achievement. Our primary and intermediate grade classes are self-contained classes with the classroom teacher providing the academic instruction for most children. In grade 5 the students are placed on academic teams where the teachers share the instructional responsibilities among the team teachers. In grade 6, we have a modified departmental organization and classes in grade 7 and 8 are departmentalized to a greater extent.

SCHEDULE

Stony Brook School operates on a six-day cycle schedule for this year. Simply stated, this means that the first day of school, September 5th will be Day 1; September 6th, Day 2; September 9th, Day 3; September 10th, Day 4; September 11th, Day 5, September 12th, Day 6, September 13th will begin the cycle again as Day 1. The primary reason for this type of schedule is to assure that all classes will meet for a similar number of days throughout the year. The schedule explanation will be reviewed thoroughly with the children on their first day of school.

READING

Our reading program is based on an integrated approach with a focus on developing skills to improve reading comprehension. It is our goal to instill a love for reading. In grade 4 and 5, the children are grouped heterogeneously.

MATH

Everyday Mathematics - This math program is based on understanding concepts of “why” not just “how” to arrive at an answer. Although some format and terminology may be new to parents, do not hesitate to help your child if he/she seeks your assistance in solving a problem. A quick review of some of the preceding problems in the child’s book will probably help you to understand the format and the objective of the problem. Also, you can assure the child that often a problem can be solved in different ways. Also, this math program does not eliminate the need to know the basic “facts” of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Therefore practice at home on these facts (according to the child’s grade level) usually helps the child in computation and comprehension. As with reading, heterogeneous grouping is utilized in grades 4 and 5.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

This program is conducted by our physical education specialists. Sneakers are required and time is provided to change shoes before and after physical education classes. Marking sneakers with your child's name will help in identification if they are lost or misplaced. A written statement from a doctor is required to excuse a child from participation. However, a note from the parent will be honored to excuse a child for a few days because of temporary health problems.

MUSIC

A vocal and rhythmic music program is scheduled on a cyclic basis with our music specialist in grades 4 and 5.

STRINGS PROGRAM-

Students in grade 5 may participate in our introductory strings program this year.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

An instrumental music program is available to the fifth graders.

COMPUTERS

The children receive computer instruction once a cycle. The focus of the program is to have the children become proficient users of computers. Additional time is available for research and use of the computer lab throughout the cycle.

ART

Our art teacher meets on a cyclic basis with each class. An old shirt (with your child's name on it) could be kept at school to protect clothing during art lessons.

LIBRARY

A scheduled library period is provided once each cycle for all classes. Additional library time is available for research and book exchange throughout the cycle. Parents are also encouraged to take children to our county library (in Bridgewater).

SPANISH-

The Spanish Program provides students with a cultured experience and an introduction to a foreign language.

LUNCH

At Stony Brook, children may order from a choice of lunches at a cost of \$2.95. A computerized lunch ticket system is in place and can be used by each child. Our teachers share responsibility of supervising children during the lunch period. When weather permits, outdoor recess is scheduled during a 45 minute lunch/recess period for fourth and fifth graders.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Conferences are scheduled for November. However, we do encourage parents to contact the teacher whenever a problem or question arises. A short note to the teacher can initiate a personal conference or a phone conference. Often a small problem can be easily solved before it becomes a large one.

SCHOOL VISITATIONS

All visitors must report to the office when delivering forgotten lunches, books, sneakers, etc. This regulation is necessary for the safety of children and to minimize disruption to the program. I also would like to remind visitors to only visit the area of the school that they signed in for. Please do not make unannounced visits to other classrooms/areas.

PUPIL HEALTH

It is very important that our school nurse is aware of any health problems of our students. Medication cannot be administered without written instructions from a doctor and a note from the parents. Please contact our nurse about any health problems.

ABSENCE

Conscientious attendance and punctuality is essential. Legal absences are recognized only for religious reasons and take your child to work day. A note from home is required after each absence.

PUPIL ABSENTEE CALL IN PROGRAM

If your child is absent, the parent/guardian should call (908)722-2400, option #2 prior to 9:00 a.m. Please provide the information requested:

1. The day and date of your child's absence
2. Child's name
3. Homeroom
4. Reason the child is out
5. Please call office even if you send an email to homeroom teacher. If homeroom teacher is also out, we cannot access the teachers' email.

Please remember this program has been initiated to provide a measure of safety for the children.

STUDENT ACCIDENT INSURANCE

The Branchburg Township Board of Education does not carry student accident insurance. A voluntary program is available to our students. We suggest that you review your family program prior to a decision on student insurance.

SCHOOL HOURS

Stony Brook School's hours are 8:15 a.m. to 3:15p.m. **To assure proper supervision, children should not be dropped off before 8:05 a.m. and cannot go to their classroom prior to 8:15 a.m.** For parents who need to drive to two different schools, students can be brought to school and dropped off 10 minutes prior to school starting at 8:05 a.m. in the back of the school at the music room door. Proper supervision will be available for these students. Children arriving after 8:20 a.m. must stop at the office for a late pass. Also, children who must leave early for dental appointments, etc., will be dismissed from the office, only to the parents. We must have a note from the parent for dismissal with anyone but a parent. Whenever possible, appointments should be made at times that do not interfere with a child's school day. The school office hours will be from 7:45 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on days when school is in session.

SCHOOL SECURITY

As you are aware, Branchburg Schools follow a safety protocol that all doors of the building will be locked throughout the school day. Visitors who want access to the building will need to be "buzzed in". At Stony Brook School, the buzzer is located at the main entrance between the sets of doors. When you wish to enter the building during the school day, press the button on the gray box. The main office will be able to see and speak to you via the system. Depending on the circumstances, the office staff may ask you for information regarding your visit before allowing entrance. The door will open when the light turns green. Once in the building, please report to the main office.

These procedures are in no way meant to discourage parent participation or involvement. They are meant to provide a safe environment for your children to learn. Please keep the following in mind:

1. Access to the building will be limited to office hours (7:45 AM – 4:00 PM)
2. Students will not be able to enter the building after 4:00 PM for materials, supplies, homework, etc.
3. Walkers and students who are dropped off will not have access to the building before 8:05 AM when staff members are available to monitor students.
4. Students arriving to school after the start of the day (approx. 8:20 AM) will need to be buzzed in the main entrance. Please make sure your child has entered the building before you pull away.
5. Parents picking up from the after school program will need to ring their bell near the main entrance for admittance.
6. The school will notify you of the time and place to pick up children at after school events. The door will remain locked until a staff member is available to let you in.

I thank you for your support and understanding with this security system. The added inconveniences are a small price when compared to the added safety and security of our children.

PARENT PICK-UP

★ If you plan to pick your child up early from school, please send a note *with your child's full name, teacher's name, and if applicable, scout leader's name*, to school with your child. Please keep in mind that we require a signed note from a legal parent/guardian to release a child from school. **If your plans change during the day, you may call the office prior to 2:15.** We ask for your full cooperation, as this procedure is in place to oversee the safety of every child.

★ **When there is a change in parent pick-up schedule due to an activity ending, you must send a note stating the change.**

★ **Any change in student pick-ups, scouts, etc. must be submitted in writing to the teacher and office.**

★ As we keep track of all students, it is imperative that you send in **daily notes** for pick up for your child. We cannot accept weekly notes, however, we will allow one note for yearly pick-up for specific days of the week (i.e. CCD) this does not include scouts.

★ If you e-mail your child's teacher with any information related to arrival, dismissal, or attendance, **please copy sbsoffice@branchburg.k12.nj.us**

★ **No change in pick-up can be accommodated after 2:30 pm.**

★ **All parents/designees must sign your child out before leaving the school building.**

When picking students up from parent pick up, all parents/designees will be required to show ID before signing out their child.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS

Stormy Weather- School Messenger will be utilized this year to alert parents for school closings. **Closing, Delayed Opening, and Early Closing information will be posted on our Web Site. Our Site address is www.branchburg.k12.nj.us**

Emergency School Closings-Should an emergency (such as snow) require early dismissal we will utilize the School Messenger System. Also, children will be instructed to go directly to their homes. If parents are not at home, they should go to a neighbor or friend as instructed by parents. We recommend that all children be aware of the procedure to follow in the event parents are not at home on any school day. When school is closed for an emergency, the after-school program is also closed.

PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION

Your participation is welcomed in this district-wide organization.

TRANSPORTATION

Most students are transported by school bus. Please remind your child frequently of the importance of safe and proper behavior at bus stops and on the bus. Questions regarding transportation should be directed to that department at (908) 725-2895.

BUS PASSES

Bus Passes are not permitted. Students will always be picked up and dropped off at their assigned stops. In the event of an emergency, please contact the school for assistance. Emergency bus passes will only be considered for another stop on the student’s assigned route upon approval from the Transportation Department.

Examples of an emergency include: a parent being called out of town at the last moment, or a doctor’s appointment that can only be scheduled at a time that conflicts with your child return home, etc.

Examples of non-emergencies include: playtime, music lesson, CCD, school projects.

If you need further assistance please contact the Transportation Department at (908)725-2895.

STUDENT CLOTHING

Students are expected to come to school in clothing that is appropriate for the activities of the day. Please mark all articles of clothing that are likely to be removed during the day. (Example: coats, sweatshirts, hats, boots, sneakers, etc.) At the close of each year we have a large collection of such items which cannot be identified.

PERSONAL POSSESSIONS

Students should not bring items such as electronic games, baseball cards, football cards, valuable jewelry, coins, etc., to school. On occasion, a teacher may request such items as part of a report or project. Otherwise, we do not want students to bring these items to school. Students are not to be selling items in school.

NOTIFICATION OF COURT ORDERS

The State of New Jersey has indicated that it is incumbent on school officials to notify all school families of the requirement that any domestic violence order, divorce order, or divorce custody decree which affects any of the school’s students be immediately provided to the school principal or designated administrator.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Branchburg **PRIDE** – All members of the Stony Brook School Community will follow the behaviors and characteristics that exemplify proper conduct to and from school, at school, and at all school sponsored events.

Preparedness – Be prepared for class by having all supplies and materials and by having assignments complete.

Responsibility – Be responsible for your actions, belongings, and assignments, clean up after yourself, take credit for your successes and accept consequences for your mistakes.

Integrity – Do the right thing, even when nobody is watching.

Diligence – Always try your best, don’t give up.

Exhibit RESPECT (to self, others and school) – Treat others the way you want to be treated; use school facilities and equipment correctly and follow directions from adults.

When a student does not meet PRIDE expectations, the result will be consequences. The school rules are enforced by teachers and administrators. If rules are broken, the students will be subject to consequences that include: warnings, conferencing with a teacher, Guidance Counselor, Lead Teacher, and/or the Principal, contacting parents, taking privileges away, confiscating items, assigning detention, in-school suspension, or suspension from school.

Consequences are determined based on frequency and the severity of the student’s infraction. A re-entry conference for students who are suspended will be scheduled with the school administrator after the suspension period is served to discuss the incident and the future behavioral expectations.

The rules apply to all school-sponsored events, including those activities that take place on school grounds before or after regular school hours and for all activities that take place off school grounds.

STUDENT THREAT PROCEDURE

A threat is defined as a written or spoken statement that shows intent to inflict serious physical injury or death to self or another. The threat can be witnessed directly or made known to administration by a witness report or discovery of a drawing or writing sample. Specific and immediate threats such as, “I’m going to kill someone/myself” or “I have an explosive and am going to blow up the school.” can be considered dangerous threats and could result in exclusion from school. (Correlates with BOE Policy/Regulations #8468) Parents are encouraged to teach their children that those threats, even if idle, are not appropriate at any time and should provide them with appropriate avenues to discuss anger or frustration.

WEAPONS

A pupil convicted or found to be delinquent for possessing a firearm on any school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored function or a pupil committing a crime with a firearm shall be immediately removed from the school’s regular education program for a period of not less than one calendar year in accordance with Chapters 127 and 128 of 1995, The Zero Tolerance for Guns Act and Policy No. 5611. Parents/Guardians are urged to continue to keep pocketknives, firearms, explosives (including fireworks) realistic toy weapons, and other dangerous items away from children.

FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age (“eligible students”) certain rights with respect to the student’s education records. These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student’s education records within 45 days of the day School receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the School principal (or appropriate school official) a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The School official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student’s education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate or misleading. Parents or eligible students may ask the School to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write the School principal (or appropriate official), clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the School decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the School will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the School as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person servicing on the School Board; a person or company with whom the School has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her task. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.
4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the School to comply with the requirements of FERPA.

PROTECTION OF PUPIL RIGHTS AMENDMENT (PPRA)

PPRA – Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment affords parents certain rights regarding the conduct of surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams. These include the right to:

- *Consent* – Before students are required to submit to a government survey that concerns one or more of the following protected areas:
 1. Political affiliation or beliefs of the student or student's parents;
 2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family;
 3. Sex behavior or attitudes;
 4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
 5. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships;
 6. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
 7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents; or
 8. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.
 - *Receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of–*
 1. Any other protected information survey, regardless of funding;
 2. Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under State law; and
 3. Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others.
- *Inspect* – Parents/Guardians should contact the school to inspect:
 1. Protected information surveys of students;
 2. Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes; and
 3. Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum.

These rights transfer to from the parents to a student who is 18 years old or an emancipated minor under State law.

BEFORE SCHOOL AND AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

Branchburg does not have a district run Before/After School Program. For working parents or parents attending school, before and/or after school care is available on a tuition basis.

Branchburg does provide bus transportation to and from these programs. For more information please click on this [link](#) to access these programs.

It has been our experience that children adjust well to a new school experience within a very short time. If your child has any problems in his/her new school situation please contact your child's teacher(s), the guidance counselor, or me. Together the school and the home can provide a meaningful and rewarding educational opportunity for each child.

Again, I welcome you and your family to Stony Brook School.

Sincerely,
Frank Altmire