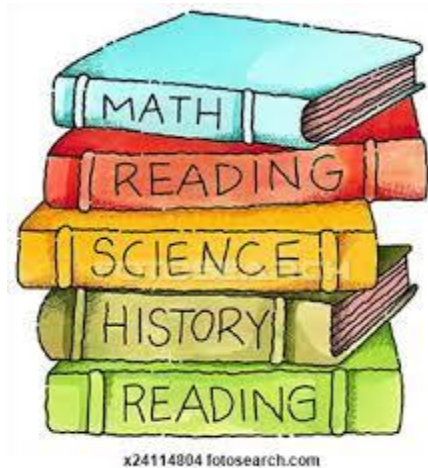


South Eastern Special Education

Next Step Day School Instructional Program Student/Parent Handbook



2026-2027

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Introduction

The South Eastern Special Education Next Step Day School serves students found eligible for special education services. Typically, a placement in this self-contained program follows placement in a less restrictive environment with insufficient progress. This program may be appropriate for students found eligible with coexisting disabilities.

The focus of the program for students with emotional difficulties is on the development of appropriate behavioral and emotional responses in the educational environment. Behaviors are targeted and replacement strategies are developed through the use of direct therapeutic instruction, modeling, and reinforcement of appropriate responses.

Academic development is addressed through researched based curriculum while closing any academic gaps with research-based interventions. The primary goal for all students attending the Next Step Day School is to return to the general education environment to the fullest extent possible.

A comprehensive, multilevel program that incorporates positive behavioral supports, scientifically researched practices, and interventions is implemented.

The students in this program receive individualized or group therapeutic services for anger management, empathy, social skills development, pragmatics, and coping skills. All staff are trained in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention. This ensures that de-escalation techniques are utilized when the potential for emotional outbursts exists. The day school program also utilizes restrictive measures when the student presents a safety risk to themselves or others including physical restraint. Late stay or after school detention may be utilized to assist in classroom discipline, to improve time on task, work completion and reduce negative behavior. Local law enforcement may be contacted when a student leaves school grounds without permission, in the event of extreme violence, and/or illegal activity. Staff may also contact the CARES hotline when thoughts of self-harm or harm to others are expressed.

The goal of this program is always the reintegration of the student into the general education environment. The students are encouraged to maintain self-control and learn techniques that will promote their success in college or a career and self-sufficiency in later life.

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 IEP will be reviewed yearly to determine progress on the current IEP as well as to develop a proposed IEP. The newly developed IEP will be in effect for one full year from the date of the annual review.

Annual Reviews will be arranged by South Eastern Special Education by contacting the Special Education Coordinator of the resident school district. The District Special Education Coordinator will be responsible for sending the meeting notification to all participants.

For those students in the Next Step Program, a general education teacher of the grade level will be invited by the special education coordinator to attend the meeting.

Building Principals are encouraged to attend annual reviews especially if transitional to the district will be discussed.

The following should be discussed at the Annual Review:

1. IEP progress on goals and objectives
2. Benchmark/progress monitoring results
3. Grades
4. Attendance (total number of days and days of absences)
5. Daily behavior sheet summary
6. FBA and BIP
7. Proposed IEP
8. Extended School Year

9. Transition Plans for students 14 yrs. of age.
10. Medical updates for student

Appropriate Dress

Backpacks are prohibited. If jewelry or hoodies become a problem in the classroom, the privilege can be taken away. Steel-toed boots are prohibited from the school environment. Shirts must fully cover undergarments and not expose excessive cleavage or the midsection. Tank tops and sleeveless shirts must have straps wide enough to provide appropriate coverage. Shorts should be modest in appearance and not expose undergarments or buttocks. If there is any doubt about dress and appearance, the supervisor will make the final decision. Students whose dress causes a substantial disruption of the orderly process of school functions or endangers the health or safety of the student, other students, staff or others may be subject to discipline.

Assessments

Functional Behavior Analysis

The Functional Behavior Analysis is a procedure designed to examine the relationship between a challenging behavior and the setting. The procedure will examine the antecedents and the consequences of the student's behavior. This procedure will be collected with written parental consent.

Antecedents: the events that happened immediately preceding a behavior, and that impact the manner in which a behavior occurs.

Consequences: events that immediately follow a behavior that have an effect on the likelihood a behavior will occur again.

Universal Screener/Progress Monitoring

Students will be benchmarked three times a year (fall, winter, and spring) in all areas of academic performance. Students are progress monitored weekly, monthly, or quarterly in the areas of reading fluency, reading comprehension, math calculation, math applications, and writing.

IEP Tracking

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

Attendance

The classroom teacher/staff reports attendance of the students daily.

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. Excused absences 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, 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. All other absences will be considered as unexcused absences, unless otherwise approved by the program supervisor.

Classroom teachers will keep the SESE Classroom Supervisor informed of individual student attendance concerns. When students accumulate more than 10 unexcused absences or are absent for three consecutive days, the classroom teacher will notify the program supervisor and the contact person in the student's home district regarding this situation. The home district will notify the appropriate agencies regarding truancy.

Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)

A Behavior Intervention Plan must be developed for all students whose behavior impedes his/her learning or the learning of others. This plan is based on the information gathered during the Functional Behavior Assessment. The plan must indicate which interventions will be utilized for that student. The behavior intervention plan should contain criteria for when a cool off period should be initiated by the staff or student.

The Behavior Intervention Plan must be reviewed when a change of placement is initiated or when a manifestation determination is required. If the IEP team determines that the plan is not appropriate then a Functional Behavior Assessment must be completed, with parental permission, and a new Behavior Intervention Plan developed.

Behavior Management

Positive reinforcement is the foundation for this program. All behavior plans must include positive reinforcement. In addition, response cost and negative reinforcement will be utilized to effect change in student responses. Restorative practices will also be implemented for learning purposes.

Behavior Sheet

All students will be monitored by the use of a behavior sheet. Each classroom teacher will send a message or email to communicate daily.

Bullying, Intimidation and Harassment Prevention and Response

All students attending Next Step Day School will participate in Bullying, Intimidation and Harassment Prevention training. During this training they will be instructed on how to identify and report any incident of Bullying, Intimidation or Harassment. SESE will investigate the reports and determine needed responses. All students attending Next Step Day School have access to School Social Work services, School Psychological Services and/or Counseling.

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
500 S. Scott Ave., Newton, IL
rpayne@sese.org
618-455-3396

Complaint Managers:

Robyn Payne	
500 S. Scott Ave., Newton, IL	
rpayne@sese.org	
618-455-3396	

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.

Cell Phone Policy

Students are required to turn off their cell phones upon arrival at school. All phones must be collected at the beginning of the school day and securely stored in a locked location by school staff. Devices will remain off and inaccessible throughout the school day. Phones will be returned to students at the end of the school day during dismissal. Cell phone use is not permitted during school hours unless specifically authorized by school staff for instructional purposes. Failure to follow this policy may result in disciplinary action.

Crisis Procedures

Supervisor Notification

Due to the nature and severity of the behavior and crisis situations of individual students with emotional disabilities, classroom and individual student crisis plans have been/are determined by the SESE administration and staff.

The Classroom Supervisor will determine the need for additional assistance, including, but not limited to SESE staff. Student in-service and training is available for the district students and parents upon request.

The Principal will also determine the need for additional assistance. If determined necessary, the SESE Principal will contact outside agencies as appropriate including but not limited to CARES hotline, DCFS, and local Police.

Discipline

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. All disciplinary actions are made by the Principal in collaboration with the classroom teacher. This includes out of school suspensions. Bus discipline is determined by the home district. The principal and staff members from Next Step will support the students and the district school to improve safe bus behavior.

Exclusion of non-academics

Students would be excluded from extra-curricular and/or non-academic activities only in the case of extreme safety issues (running from playground, bus, etc.). Parents would receive notice of such actions.

If a student wishes to participate on athletic teams, he/she must do so in the home district per IESA/IHSA guidelines.

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

Lunch delay

Lunch delay may be used at Next Step Day School. If an unsafe behavior is occurring during the lunch or breakfast times, breakfast and lunch are always offered once the student is calm.

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. Parents will be contacted as soon as possible. Safety concerns will be the first priority for all staff. When the agency arrives to complete the risk assessment, they will need a confidential area to meet with the student, teacher, and parent.

DCFS

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

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, *gray* 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	Favoring certain students by inviting them to your classroom at non-instructional times to “hang out.” Favoring certain students by giving them special privileges. Engaging in peer-like behavior with students. Discussing personal staff issues with students.	Inviting students who need additional instructional support to your classroom for such additional support. Conducting one-on-one student conferences in a classroom with the door open.
Relationship/Power	Meeting with a student off-campus without parent/guardian knowledge and/or permission. Dating, requesting, or participating in a private meeting with a student (in person or virtually) outside your professional role. Transporting a student in a school or private vehicle without administrative authorization. Giving gifts, money, or treats to individual students. Sending students on personal errands. Intervening in serious student problems instead of referring the student to an appropriately trained professional. A sexual or romantic invitation toward or from a student. Taking and using photos/videos of students	Meeting with a student off-campus with parent/guardian knowledge and/or permission, e.g., when providing pre-arranged tutoring or coaching services. Transporting a student in a school or private vehicle with administrative authorization. Taking and using photos/videos of students for educational purposes, with student and parent/guardian consent, while abiding by student records laws, policies, and procedures.

Boundary Area	Inappropriate	Appropriate
	for non-educational purposes.	
Communication	Initiating or extending contact with a student beyond the school day in a one-on-one or non-group setting. Inviting students to your home. Adding students on personal social networking sites as contacts when unrelated to a legitimate educational purpose. Privately messaging students by any means. Maintaining intense eye contact. Making comments about a student's physical attributes, including excessively flattering comments. Engaging in sexualized or romantic dialog. Making sexually suggestive comments directed toward or with a student. Disclosing confidential information. Self-disclosure of a sexual, romantic, or erotic nature.	Limiting communication to what is necessary for educational and/or extracurricular activities. Using SESE-approved methods for communicating with students.
Physical - when not related to sensory needs of individual students.	Full frontal hugs. Invading personal space. Massages, shoulder rubs, neck rubs, etc/ Lingering touches or squeezes.	Occasionally patting a student on the back, shoulder, or arm. Momentary physical contact with limited force designed to prevent a

Boundary Area	Inappropriate	Appropriate
	Tickling. Having a student on your lap. Physical exposure of a sexual, romantic, or erotic nature. Sexual, indecent, romantic, or erotic contact with a student.	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.

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.

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.

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*.

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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.

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 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.

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.

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.

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 SESE 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.

Homework

If the student is having trouble completing the homework, the student will be provided time in the classroom, if appropriate, or late stay time may be assigned in order to complete assigned work. If 3 or more homework assignments are late, the student may be assigned a late stay per classroom supervisor.

Late Stay Accumulation Procedures:

Late stay time will be accumulated in the following manner:

1. When a student accumulates up to two (2) hours off-task, they may earn a late stay (i.e. after school detention).

2. If a student is verbally aggressive either with name calling to peers or adults or with a comment that has sexual or racial connotations to peers or adults, they may accumulate late stay time for verbal aggression.
3. If a student is physically aggressive and/or unable to get on the bus, late stay may be arranged.
4. If a student runs away from the classroom either during the regular school day or during late stay they may receive additional late stay time. Run precautions will be put in place in the classroom for the next 48 hours. This includes the removal of shoes while in the classroom, restriction to the room, and additional supervision.
5. The Principal will determine all late stay time accumulations and reductions.
5. If a student needs to take a period of time in order to cool down after an upsetting situation, they may do so. They should put their head down and this will indicate their need. This time spent will not accumulate toward any late stay time. This should not be allowed to be abused. If the student has their head down for more than five minutes, they will be given a warning and then begin timing toward late stay.

Late stay time is to be served the same day if possible. Any deviations, other than transportation issues, must be approved by the principal. Students will be excused from late stay for medical, counseling or court appointments with proof of the appointment. During late stay students are to work on assignments not completed during the school day and other work provided. Only conversation that is related to academic work is permitted.

SESE administration will determine which students will be assigned to late stay that evening based on available staff. South Eastern Special Education will contact the student's home district coordinator as well as the parent/guardian. The coordinator will arrange for transportation.

Late stay may need to be adjusted by thirty-minute intervals due to available transportation. Appropriate materials will be provided to the student during this time.

Level System

In addition Next Step will utilize a level system. This system will be appropriate for the age span of the classroom. The level system is composed of levels 1, 2, and 3 (with 1 being the entry point). Each level has its own responsibilities and privileges. In order to progress from one level to the next, the student must meet the requirements. Students may lose their level with certain behaviors or failing to maintain a level of behavior for the predetermined criteria. Occurrence of physical aggression will result in a level drop.

Field Trips

Students must be on Level 2 or 3 in order to participate in field trips outside of the school building.

All students who wish to attend a field trip must receive written permission from a parent or guardian with authority to give permission. A field trip permission slip is available at the entry of the program each year. Students may be prohibited from attending field trips for any of the following reasons:

- Failure to receive appropriate permission from parent/guardian or teacher;
- Failure to complete appropriate coursework;
- Behavioral or safety concerns (including bus write-ups/incidents);
- Denial of permission from administration;
- Other reasons as determined by the school.

Mainstreaming

The reintegration of students into the general education environment is the primary goal of our program.

The IEP team will determine when a student has reached a point at which mainstream is appropriate, with parental input. The SESE Administrator will review the student's progress and needs. The classroom teacher then must contact the resident district coordinator and the parent to discuss the change. An IEP meeting will be set up to discuss the reintegration process and options.

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 to sign in. When a parent arrives to pick up their student the teacher is called to send the child to the office rather than that parent coming to the classroom. The teacher or the classroom program assistant should then walk that student to the office.

Physical Aggression

Physical aggression may occur in two situations in the classroom. There are times when a student is not in control emotionally and may unintentionally strike a staff member. This is not considered as a malicious attack and should be recorded on the student's point sheet.

However, if a student deliberately and with malicious intent hits or kicks a staff person during a non-restraint situation, this may be a suspendable offense and should be reported to the SESE administration as soon as possible. The staff should consider this as an assault and they are encouraged to pursue this through the local law officials. If a student is significantly aggressive and unable to be restrained then the local law enforcement officials should be contacted (911).

If a student leaves the school grounds without permission the program supervisor and local law enforcement will be contacted. This offense may result in a late stay.

If a student attacks another student, de-escalation techniques or physical restraint may be employed to ensure safety for all students. The program supervisor will be contacted immediately and the parents of the violated student will be notified and advised of their right to contact local law enforcement. This may also be a suspendable offense.

Guidelines of Physical Restraint:

Physical restraint shall only be used if the student's behavior presents an imminent danger of serious physical harm to the student or others, and other less restrictive and intrusive measures were tried and proven ineffective in stopping it. All restraints are to be achieved by using the TCIS methodology.

Communication should be limited in a restraint situation. This may increase the student's level of agitation. Other students should also refrain from communicating with the student being restrained.

The staff will always attempt to defuse confrontation and be proactive in situations of physical aggression.

Police Services

An assistance call will be made in a situation where all other alternatives have failed. It is appropriate to contact law enforcement when:

1. A student has assaulted staff or another student and is continuing to remain out of control.
2. A weapon has been recovered.

3. Alcohol, drugs or drug paraphernalia have been discovered.
4. A student has run away from the school grounds.

The SESE administration will be alerted. The administrator will notify the student's parents and contact the appropriate Special Education Coordinator.

Research Based Curriculum **(NS I, II, III & IV programs)**

Reading

Reading is taught daily 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.

Math

Math is taught daily 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.

Writing

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

Science/Health

Research-based curriculum is implemented to teach science concepts. Hands-on activities are utilized to teach and to reinforce science concepts.

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.

Social/Emotional

Research based curriculum and strategies are utilized in all educational environments to develop appropriate skills. A variety of technological materials are used.

Grading Scale

A = 90% – 100%

B = 80% – 89%

C = 70% – 79%

D = 60% – 69%

F = Below 60% (0% – 59%)

Restitution

Students are expected to respect all school property, including buildings, furniture, equipment, instructional materials, and personal belongings of others. When a student is found responsible for the loss of or damage to school property, or the personal property of others, whether due to intentional actions, negligence, or carelessness, restitution may be required.

Restitution may include, but is not limited to:

- Payment for the repair or replacement of damaged or lost property.
- Other reasonable means to restore the damaged property or compensate the affected party, as determined by school administration.

Failure to make restitution within a reasonable period may result in further disciplinary action, including but not limited to loss of privileges or involvement of legal authorities.

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.

Search & Seizure

In order to maintain order, safety, and security in the schools, school authorities

are authorized to conduct reasonable searches of school property and equipment, as well as of students and their personal effects. "School authorities" includes school liaison police officers.

School Property and Equipment as well as Personal Effects Left There by Students

School authorities may inspect and search school property and equipment owned or controlled by the school (such as lockers, desks, and parking lots), as well as personal effects left there by a student, without notice to or consent of the student. Students have no reasonable expectation of privacy in these places or areas or in their personal effects left there.

The SESE Administrator may request the assistance of law enforcement officials to conduct inspections and searches of lockers, desks, parking lots, and other school property and equipment for illegal drugs, weapons, or other illegal or dangerous substances or materials, including searches conducted through the use of specially trained dogs.

School authorities may search a student and/or the student's personal effects in the student's possession (such as purses, wallets, knapsacks, book bags, lunch boxes, etc.) when there is a reasonable ground for suspecting that the search will produce evidence the particular student has violated or is violating either the law or the school or district's student rules and policies. The search will be conducted in a manner that is reasonably related to the objective of the search and not excessively intrusive in light of the student's age and sex, and the nature of the infraction.

School officials may 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 the school's disciplinary rules or school district policy. In the course of the investigation, the student may be required to share the content that is reported in order for the school to make a factual determination.

Seizure of Property

If a search produces evidence that the student has violated or is violating either the law or the school or district's policies or rules, evidence may be seized and impounded by school authorities, and disciplinary action may be taken. When appropriate, evidence may be transferred to law enforcement authorities

Metal Detectors for Student Safety

Nothing in this procedure shall limit the authority of school officials to search a student. All property removed as a result of this procedure that may be legitimately brought onto SESE property will be returned to the individual. Property removed from a student shall be confiscated and the student disciplined

at the discretion of the SESE administration. Students who fail to cooperate with school personnel performing their duties may be subject to discipline for insubordination.

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 (x), 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/>

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 a 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.

Suspension (Out of School)

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

Technology

Hardware

All students are required to abide by all SESE and host district internet and technology use policies. An internet use policy agreement form must be signed by both student and parent before students will be granted access to the internet.

All technology and hardware in use in the SESE classroom is purchased by South Eastern Special Education. Technology is an integral part of the ED classroom. SmartBoard, laptop computers, iPads, and/or Chromebooks are available for individual student use.

Software

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

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, IL 62448
 rpayne@sese.org
 618-455-3396

Complaint Managers:

Robyn Payne	
500 S. Scott Ave., Newton, IL 62448	
rpayne@sese.org	
618-455-3396	

Transportation

Transportation is provided by the resident district and is documented by the District Special Education Coordinator on the student's IEP. All bus discipline is determined and administered by the resident district.

Next Step Day School students are not allowed to drive themselves to school.

Transporting Students

SESE staff are never allowed to transport a student in their personal vehicle

unless the staff member receives prior written consent from the Director and the student's parent. In case of an emergency, the program supervisor will be contacted.

Video & Audio Monitoring Systems

A video and/or audio monitoring system may be in use on school buses and a video monitoring system may be used in areas of the school building. These systems have been put in place to protect students, staff, visitors, and school property. If a discipline problem is captured on audiotape or videotape, these recordings may be used as the basis for imposing student discipline. If criminal actions are recorded, a copy of the tape may be provided to law enforcement personnel.

Visitors Policy

Per policy, parents/guardians as well as those who would like to observe the classroom for educational purposes (college observations, evaluations, etc.), the SESE website contains a form that requires the Classroom Supervisor's signature. 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. Observation periods are to be scheduled for no more than for 50 minutes of duration.

For those children who have not been found eligible for Special Education, parent observations are not scheduled until after eligibility has been determined.

Volunteer Policy

SESE has a Volunteer Handbook. Volunteers must contact South Eastern Special Education in order to request to volunteer or talk with the classroom teacher. The classroom teacher is to contact the principal. The principal will review the handbook as well as the required volunteer form with the prospective volunteer. The volunteer will complete the required forms.