Welcome

Dear Parents/Guardians,

The STEM Academy @ Bartlett opened its doors to students in August 2013. We serve students in grades 6 through 8. Our students are taught by educators committed to a high standard of excellence. Students at STEM have a state of the art facility that includes a gymnasium, a cafetorium, media center, networked computers in each classroom, and specially equipped classrooms for music, art, robotics/engineering, and design.

I request your assistance and cooperation in offering students the support they deserve. Our goal is to establish a strong home/school connection working together for all of our students. Volunteers, mentors, and guest speakers will be a valuable resource as part of our family. Our staff looks forward to working together with you as we ignite and inspire passion for learning.

Please read this student handbook and discuss it with your child. It is important for you and your child to be familiar with the school’s policies and procedures.

We strive to provide a quality education for all students in a safe, happy and orderly environment. We share the vision of all Savannah-Chatham Public Schools: From school to the world: All students prepared for productive futures.

Please contact me to schedule an appointment or share your thoughts.

Sincerely,

Peter L. Ulrich
Principal

The STEM Academy

Manners (excerpts from Emily Post’s Guide to Manners for Kids)
Most of your day in school is spent in the classroom. Your teacher, the other students, and you are like a cross between a job and a family. One way to get others to respect you is to show respect for them. There are eight important manners for the classroom that help make it a respectful place for everyone:

1. Make an effort to greet everyone with, at least, a “Good morning” and a smile. Adding a comment such as “How was your game last night?” or “Mrs. Bass, that chapter we read last night was hard!” makes others feel included and lets them know you are a friendly person.

2. Call teachers and any other adults in the classroom by the name and title they prefer. Some teachers prefer to be called by their first names, but unless they specifically ask you to do that, call them by their correct name and title (e.g., Mr. Smith, Dr. Stewart, etc.)

3. Call your friends by the names they prefer. Nicknames may seem fun, but sometimes they can be very hurtful.

4. Follow classroom guidelines for getting up, walking around, leaving to go to the restroom. Each classroom may be different. The important thing is to respect the rules set up for the room you are in.

5. Sit up at your desk or table just the way you do at mealtime. Lying all over your desk or table as if you’re bored or tired is both rude and disrespectful. If you are that tired in class, plan to get more sleep at night. If you are that bored, ask your teacher how you can be more involved.

6. Keep the area around your desk neat.

7. Chip in to help keep shared spaces neat and picked up – the sink, the reading area, the computer stations, the bulletin boards. Every part of the classroom is yours to share and keep clean.

8. Greet others who come into your room. Show respect by using the greeting that is normal in your school.

The STEM Academy will be using Love Your People's declaration as our school-wide expectations. More information is included later in this handbook.

Arrival

The student arrival window is from 7:25 - 7:55 am. Students may not arrive before 7:25 am. Students eating breakfast should report directly to the cafeteria. All other arriving students should report directly to 1st period. Car riders and walkers/bike riders are to use the front entrance for arrival. Any students arriving after 7:55 am must have a parent sign them in at the front office and will be marked tardy.
Dismissal
Student dismissal begins at 2:55 pm. Students are not to leave their class until dismissal has been called. Walkers/bike riders are to use the front entrance for dismissal. Parent drop-off and pick-up is at the front of the school. Parents exiting back on Montgomery Cross Road to turn right may exit right. Parents needing to turn left onto Montgomery Cross Road should turn left and follow the road around the school to exit.

Early Dismissal
If it is necessary for a child to leave school before the end of the school day, his/her parent or guardian with whom he/she resides must send a written request or arrive in person for the child and make the request in the main office. The person picking up the student MUST REPORT TO THE OFFICE. No students will be released early unless the office staff calls for them. In cases of doubt, the principal may require evidence that the person picking the child up is entitled to custody. Please be prepared to show identification. Students will not be released within an hour of dismissal time without express permission from Administration.

School Hours
Refer to our district website @ www.sccpss.com. No adult supervision is provided before or after school unless your child is attending scheduled tutorials.

Transportation
“There and back again...” Sometimes, just getting to school can be a challenge. Some students have a long walk. Others ride a bus for as much as an hour each way. Some students pack into a car with other students, toddlers, and babies. Some students ride their bike, balancing lunch, books, or school projects as they go. No matter how students get to school, there are some key manners that will make getting there and home again fun and safe for everyone.

Walking or Biking to School
Here are some tips for students that like to walk or ride their bike to school:

- Cross at corners or in crosswalks. If there is a crossing guard or walk light, remember to wait for your signal to cross safely.
- Follow directions from the crossing guard. This is a great opportunity to practice your listening skills and display respect.
- Don’t try to walk and text or walk and talk on your smartphone.
- NEVER accept a ride with a stranger for any reason.
- NEVER go into someone’s house that you don’t know!
- When walking with a group, remember to walk single file or in pairs.
- Be aware of your backpack and ensure it doesn’t swing and hit other walkers.
- Wear your helmet!
- Be sure you have a method to carry all your belongings safely (basket, bookbag) to free your hands for steering.
- If you are riding with a friend, ride single file.
- Walk left, FACING traffic (or on a sidewalk) and ride your bike right, WITH traffic. Wear a bright shirt or jacket!
The roads may be especially crowded around school where buses and cars are arriving to drop off students, so **WATCH OUT!**

*Park your bike* in the bike rack and use a lock to secure it during the day.

**Cars and Carpooling**

Whether it's just you and your parent or you're in someone else's car with every seat full, you need to practice your car manners.

What if...you get in the car and can’t get the seatbelt fastened?
*You would...*ask the driver to wait while you buckle up. “Mrs. Smith, could you please wait a second? I can’t get my seat belt buckled.”

What if...you didn’t have time for breakfast at home and grabbed something on the way?
*You would...*be respectful of the driver’s rules about eating in their car. And you would always take your trash with you when you exit the car and throw away in the nearest trashcan.

What if...it’s your family’s turn to drive and your friends are getting louder and louder?
*You could...*Say, “Come on everyone, talk quieter. Mom’s trying to drive.” They’ll feel much better hearing it from you and she’ll really appreciate it. No matter whose car you’re in, when you get to school, be sure to take all of your stuff and remember to thank the driver!

**Riding the Bus**

School bus drivers have an awesome responsibility. Bus transportation is provided for students living one and a half miles or more from our school. Some bus drivers drive as many as seventy-two children to and from school every day. Safety is the number one thing on their mind. But they know the bus is also a space where students spend anywhere from 30 minutes to an hour every day. The atmosphere on the bus has a major impact on how students feel for the rest of their day so that is also on their mind.

Students share in this awesome responsibility. How students behave affects both the safety and atmosphere on the bus. Even if your bus driver seems grumpy, try giving a smile and a friendly “good morning” when you get on. A “thank-you” as you get off may pave the way for a better ride next time. Remember to get on and off the bus quickly. Cars are required to stop for a school bus with lights flashing. If students are walking slowly down the aisle, cars are tempted to pass the bus which can be very dangerous. The bus driver is trying to keep on schedule. When students follow the rules, everyone is safer. When students are friendly and polite, the whole atmosphere becomes more pleasant. There are some clear “Always” and “Nevers” associated with bus riding.

**ALWAYS:**

- Wait for the bus driver’s signal before crossing the road getting on or off the bus.
- Have your things organized so you can quickly get on or off.
- Keep your voice low. A lot of noise can be very distracting for the driver.
- Buckle up on buses where seat belts are available.

**NEVER:**

- Fight – especially on the bus.
- Throw things.
● Distract the driver.
● Stand or move about while the bus is moving.

● Students must exhibit satisfactory behavior on the bus and at the bus stop. Students who fail to behave on the bus may have their privilege of riding the bus suspended for a period of time. If a student is suspended from the bus, it becomes the responsibility of the parent to provide transportation during the suspension.
● Bus transportation prohibits students from going to destinations other than their regular assigned stop. If a parent wishes for a student to get off at an alternate stop, a written note with a contact number must be provided to the school office explaining the reason for the change.

Rainy Days
● Parents, please plan ahead for rainy days. Students need to know what to do if it is raining at the time school is dismissed. Make certain that your child understands how he/she is to get home.

Attendance
All students enrolled should be in attendance each day. Only certain instances qualify as an excused absence (family illness, personal illness, death of a family member, religious holidays for the student’s recognized faith, service as a page in the General Assembly of Georgia, or orders of governmental agencies.) Students in grades K through 8 who accumulate more than seven (7) absences, including those excused and unexcused in either semester, or accumulate fifteen (15) excused or unexcused absences in a year, will not be promoted unless the site-based attendance committee excuses the absence. Exemption from the above requirements may be authorized by the Superintendent or his designee in accordance with State Law and State Board Policies. Problems relating to pupil absenteeism that cannot be handled on the individual school level are to be referred to the school social worker. Students who arrive late must obtain a tardy slip from the main office before going to class. Students are encouraged to arrive on time each day in order to avoid missing valuable instructional time.

BE AWARE:
Frequent early check-outs (before 1:55PM) could be considered absence from instruction and referred to the school social worker.

Registration
New students to The STEM Academy should bring: (1) Proof of residence (rent receipt, water, or electrical bill), (2) Certificate of Immunization, (3) EED Certificate (Eye, Ear, and Dental Certificate), (4) Certified Birth certificate or passport, and (5) Guardianship papers if the student lives with anyone other than the parent or parents.

Breakfast Program
Breakfast is available for all STEM Academy students. Students eating breakfast must do so BEFORE going to class in the morning. After breakfast, all students must go DIRECTLY TO THEIR 1ST PERIOD CLASS.

Lunch Program
A well-balanced lunch is served in the lunchroom each school day. Students are encouraged to take advantage of the opportunity to eat a well-balanced meal. Children are urged to bring money on Monday to buy lunch for the week; however, cash will be accepted on a daily basis (Sorry, no personal checks). Milk will be sold on a daily basis. You can also pre-pay for your child’s lunch at www.mylunchmoney.com. Please visit our website (www.stem.sccpss.com) for more information. Free or reduced meals are available for those who qualify. Lunch assistance forms should be completed and returned promptly within the first week of school or enrollment. Parents will be notified of lunch program status as soon as possible upon receipt of application.

School lunch can be crazy! You may be scheduled to eat at 11:00 but then have to wait in line or wait for a seat, leaving you only fifteen or twenty minutes to eat. It’s a recipe for frayed nerves and short tempers. But no matter how fast you have to eat, how crowded the table is, or who is sitting at your table, manners are just as important in the school cafeteria as they are at home or in a fine restaurant.

ALWAYS:
- Say “Please,” “Thank You,” and “Excuse Me” to the staff serving food in the lunch line, the adults supervising you, and the students sitting at your table.
- Pick up after yourself. Clean up any spills, pick up paper wrappers, napkins, etc. Empty your tray in trash cans.
- Make way for the next group coming in. Be courteous and orderly; save your socializing for the appropriate time.

NEVER:
- Chew with your mouth open. That’s just as gross in the cafeteria as it is anywhere else.
- Talk with your mouth full. No one can understand you and you could choke.
- Throw your food, play with it, or blow bubbles and slurp your drink.
- Burp out loud or make other rude noises.
- There are some special manners that help keep school lunchtimes as civil as possible. If everyone follows these guidelines, lunch can still be an opportunity to socialize with friends as you eat a quick lunch. If students ignore these guidelines, the lunchroom becomes a disaster zone, the school then imposes rigid rules, and lunch becomes a simple refueling stop with no opportunity to talk to friends.

SIX STEPS TO LUNCHROOM ETIQUETTE:

1. Do follow the directions of the adults in charge at all times, even if they are not seated at your table.

2. Don’t push, shove, or engage in rough play of any kind in the lunch lines.

3. Do hold your food tray with two hands, and don’t touch other people’s trays or food.

4. Don’t ask for someone else’s food. And don’t offer your food to others.
5. Don’t make comments about other people’s meals or eating styles. Just because a classmate follows a special diet or brings lunch from home while others buy theirs is no excuse for teasing or rude remarks.

6. Don’t exclude others if you have an empty seat next to you. There are many adults in schools besides the teachers and principal. Because they are not responsible for giving grades, some students ignore them. It takes secretaries, custodians, paraprofessionals, nurses, media specialists, clerks, and cafeteria workers to make a school work. It is just as important to be polite to them as to the teacher and principal. You can’t turn manners on and off. So the next time you pass a custodian or lunchroom worker, show the same respect you would give your teacher. Being polite is for everyone!

Medication
School board policy states that medication will be administered only after parents have brought the prescribed medicine to the school office in the original container and completed the required medical forms. The parent’s signature on these forms authorizes school officials to administer the medication according to the specifications written on the form. No medication will be given without this information and authorization, and no medication should be brought to school by the student.

Emergencies
Be sure that the school has the name and phone number of someone who can be reached in the event of an emergency. Even though every effort is made to avoid accidents, they do happen. We must have someone to contact when immediate action is needed. It is the parent’s responsibility to keep the school informed regarding whom to contact. If this contact information should change, please notify the school office immediately. If you have an unlisted number, it will be used only for emergencies and will never be given to anyone else. If you do not have a phone, provide us with an alternate contact who can give you the message immediately. We need at least two phone numbers on file in case no one answers the first call. If there are several numbers where we may call please send them. Again, be certain to notify us if any phone numbers change.

Textbooks
Textbooks and other reusable materials and equipment are issued to students free of charge; however, it is the responsibility of each student to use these materials carefully. Abuse, damage, or loss of textbooks and other school property assigned to students may result in fines to repair or replace items according to board policy #0991.

Homework
Teachers establish their own individual requirements for homework as supported by BOE policy. Homework is intended to practice skills already taught and to give students the opportunity to work on projects or to locate information. The amount of work assigned may vary among teachers or grade levels.

Parents should share the responsibility with the teacher for seeing that students complete homework assignments. When parents do not understand assignments or when they have questions about the value, length or absence of homework, they should contact the school for a conference with their child’s teacher.
Progress Reports (Report Cards)
The school year is divided into four nine-week periods. Academic status reports go out every two weeks and report cards go home every nine weeks. A parent wishing to request a conference may write a request in the space provided on the portion of the card that is returned to school. A student's overall grade for each nine-week marking period will be determined by several factors including teacher- made tests and activities, objective tests, class participation, and homework.

Testing
According to board policy, “Group and individual testing programs will be used to serve the needs of the instructional program.” Parents are encouraged to schedule appointments with the teacher, counselor, or principal to discuss the testing program for Savannah-Chatham Public Schools and The STEM Academy. Test results will be interpreted upon request from the parents.

Field Trips
Field trips are a part of the regular education program. During the school year classes may make several visits to businesses, factories, and community facilities. Transportation is provided by the Savannah-Chatham Board of Education. Field trips are supervised by teachers, paraprofessionals, and volunteer parents. Parents are given advanced information about field trips outlining the purpose of the trip, date, and place to be visited. Parents must sign a permission form before students will be allowed to leave campus. At no time may any student take part in a field trip without signed permission from their parent. Since all Field Trips are educational, all students are invited to attend field trips. However, if a student has displayed inappropriate behavior that has led to a Discipline Referral, parents will be asked to attend the field trip in order to ensure student safety.

Parent/School Activities

PTA
All parents are invited to join and participate in PTA. A monthly PTA Newsletter is sent home. Executive Board meetings and monthly meetings are scheduled to inform parents and determine goals. We look forward to your participation and contribution to our PTA. We are all in this together! (Annual Membership fees are $5 per parent/ grandparent/guardian.)

Parent Volunteers
Parents are encouraged to become involved in the school programs. The time and talent contributed by volunteers can provide a more effective learning experience for students and a closer school-community relationship. If you would like to become involved in the school volunteer program, contact the school office or your child’s teacher.

Conferences
Conferences with your child’s teachers may be arranged by sending a written request (email is acceptable) to the teacher stating the date and time desired or by asking the teacher to call you to arrange the time. Teachers cannot conference with parents during instructional time. Also, be aware that many teachers begin assisting students early in the morning so a “walk-in” conference is strongly
discouraged. An administrator will participate in the conference if the teacher and/or parent request; however, parents are urged to discuss any concerns with the teacher before involving the school administrators. The faculty and administration at The STEM Academy need parent cooperation and participation in order to provide a successful education. We will be happy to work with parents and respond to your concerns in order to accomplish your child’s academic goals.

General Information

Asbestos In School
The 1986 Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) requires annual notification of any asbestos-containing building materials (ACM) within the school system. Under certain conditions, asbestos fibers could cause a health problem. Therefore, in order to minimize any hazard, an Asbestos Management Plan has been developed for each school. Each facility has an Asbestos Management Plan available, which identifies the location of ACM in the facility, available for public viewing during regular hours of operation. If you have any questions, please call Maintenance and Operations at 395-5563.

Telephone
The school telephone is for school use only. We do not call students to the telephone. Messages cannot be delivered except in the event of an emergency. We place high value on the instructional process and do not want to interrupt unless absolutely necessary. Teachers typically cannot talk to parents during the instructional day, but will respond to messages and emails within 24 hours.

Student Safety
All precautions should be taken to insure your child’s safety during school hours and when your child is coming to or going home from school. Students should be aware of and have programmed into their devices an ICE contact (In Case of Emergency). Students should be reminded frequently that they must never accept rides from strangers.
For added safety and security, students must go directly to school each morning and directly home in the afternoon. Additionally, students should not arrive on campus unless it is 30 minutes before the instructional day begins. Staff are not available for supervision before that time. Students should also be picked up promptly upon dismissal. Students not picked up on time for dismissal are subject to being escorted home by Campus Police.

Documents To Be Signed
When students bring documents home to be signed, sign your name and return them immediately. Your signature is not an indication that you approve of the papers, but means that you have seen them. If you require additional information, please contact your child’s teacher or the school.

Board Policies & Procedures
Board of Education policies are under constant review and updating due to changes in State and Federal laws and Local Board directives. Please refer to the Student/Parent Handbook for Success for the most current Policies and Procedures or visit www.sccpss.com.

Eligibility And Admittance
All students receiving special education, EIP, and gifted services must go through a screening process before entering the various programs. The request for screening may be made by the parent or the teacher. This process is a lengthy one; therefore, early identification is desirable.

**SLD**
Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD) is a program which provides special help for those students who have been diagnosed as having difficulty in learning to write, read, discriminate sounds or work with numbers. These students often have average and above average intelligence but due to a learning problem are not doing well in one or more of the academic areas. Special materials are available within the school and additional resources are provided by the school system.

**EBD**
The Emotional Behavior Disorders Program provides help for students who have problems functioning full-time in a classroom. The amount of time spent in BD class is determined by the extent of the behavior disorder.

**Speech**
Students who have problems in speech may receive the assistance of a speech therapist for short periods of time each week. The particular type of speech problem is identified and the therapist plans activities to help correct the difficulty.

**Gifted**
The Gifted Program is a program designed to meet the educational needs of identified gifted students. This program is designed to nurture the unique abilities of these students.

**Student Behavior – “common expectations”**

*Our expectations are your expectations – the best behavior a child can exhibit should be seen by all, in any place, at any time. School work happens in the classroom. School social life happens outside the classroom – in the halls, before and after school and during the weekend. Projects, music, movies, and TV are all very important parts of students’ social lives.*

*While this may feel like unstructured time, there are guidelines that help keep this school social life civil. School rules about bullying, fighting, noise, and fair play give structure to this time. Good manners help make this time positive. The STEM Academy is proud to hold students to exceptionally high expectations for good manners and good behavior throughout all school activities (bus rides, field trips, lunch, and classroom participation) that they are held to at home, at athletic events, and any other community setting.*

Effective instruction requires engaged and thoughtful behavior; the presence of a friendly, helpful and caring, yet business-like atmosphere. Discipline is an important part of every student’s education. It is a shared responsibility between students, parents, teachers, and administrators. Discipline and respect are necessary in order to maintain a safe and orderly learning environment in which every child is provided the opportunity to reach for excellence.
The following behaviors (from Love Your People) are listed as guidelines for students and are reminders from earlier sections about using good manners in all aspects of your daily school life:

1. Contribute
2. Be Kind
3. Be Patient
4. Be Honest
5. Encourage People
6. Apologize & Forgive
7. Thank People

In order to encourage good citizenship, school-based policies have been set up for rewarding good behavior and discouraging unacceptable behavior. These guidelines include a “ticket” system with negative consequences for students who do not follow the school rules, and rewards for those who follow the rules and exhibit excellent behavior.

We ask for your full support and cooperation in making this a successful program. We are excited by our partnership with you, as we work together to maintain your high expectations for behavior while your children are with us.

How The Ticket System Works
A student may receive one yellow ticket when they consistently exhibit inappropriate behavior. At the time the ticket is issued, the parent will be contacted to discuss the problem. If behavior does not improve, the next ticket issued will be a red ticket. Please review the information listed in the narrative section of the tickets for more information. (This ticket would result in a detention.) The next step would be a discipline referral to an administrator. Any Level 2 Offense or Level 3 offense, as listed in the SCCPSS Student/Parent Handbook for Success, will result in a Discipline Referral and circumvent the ticket system. Once a student receives a discipline referral to an administrator, they will be placed in Tier 2 of the RtI process to gather data about their behavior and implement appropriate interventions. For more information on the RtI Process, please see pages 21-22 in the SCCPSS Student/Parent Handbook for Success. The ticket process receives a “fresh start” after student data supports consistent behavior that meets The STEM Academy standards.

Student Uniforms
Solid navy or khaki (as specified by each school uniform committee) shorts, skirts, skorts, jumpers, capri pants, or pants/slacks (no knit pants, leggings, jogging or cargo pants; no zippers or pockets on pant legs). Black watch tartan skirts, skorts and jumpers are also allowed. Uniforms must be worn and belted at the natural waist and made of standard uniform material (cotton and/or twill). No denim jeans, skirts, etc. Shorts, skirts, and jumpers must be no shorter than three inches above the knee.

Solid white, dark hunter green or navy blue tops. Tops may be polo-style shirts, collared blouses or turtlenecks. They may have the school insignia, if one is available, but no other ornamentation is permitted. All shirts must be tucked.

All shoes must be enclosed and fastened/tied properly.
Solid white or solid navy socks or tights

Solid colored sweaters (color appropriate to the school), vests or sweatshirts may be worn over uniform shirts. No hooded sweatshirts. Jackets must have a zipper and be worn open at school.

No hats, caps, or sunglasses may be worn in the building. Coats and jackets must be worn open in the building.

Extreme hair color/style that causes a disruption, or interferes with the learning environment will not be allowed.

We have a Uniform Closet available for exceptional circumstances when the uniform policy is broken by something out of the student’s control.