



2020 - 2021
Family Handbook

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SKTCS's Responsibilities to Families

School's Commitment to Families

SKTCS teachers and administration agree to:

- Provide a safe and welcoming environment for students, families, and our greater community.
- Be a positive role model for our students and families by maintaining a positive attitude.
- Honor and respect diversity.
- Consistently and thoroughly share current standings and future goals relating to student achievement.
- Make learning meaningful.
- Provide consistent and frequent communication.
- Personalize learning to meet the readiness, interests, and learning styles of the student as much as possible.
- Use technology as a tool for learning and not a replacement for teaching.
- Join and/or attend school functions as frequently as possible.

Rights and Responsibilities as a Charter School

Pursuant to [O.C.G.A. §20-2-2065](#) and Georgia State Board of Education Rule 160-4-9.04, the Charter School shall be waived from state and local rule regulations, policies and procedures and/or provisions of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia, other than the provisions of the Charter School Act of 1998. The charter school shall not be subject to the provisions of this title or any state or local rule, regulation, policy, or procedure relating to schools within an applicable school system regardless of whether such rule, regulations, policy, or procedure is established by the local board, the state board, or the Department of Education.

In exchange for such a waiver, the charter school agrees to meet or exceed the performance based goals included in the charter and approved by the local board and will comply with all the requirements of the single statewide accountability system.



Equal Opportunity/Non-discrimination

Susie King Taylor Community School does not discriminate. All children will be able to participate in, and have access to programming, facilities, athletics, counseling, extracurricular activities, and other school resources regardless of skin color, creed, gender, national origin, religion, age, economic status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or (dis)ability. Students who identify as transgender students are permitted to use restrooms that match their gender identity.

Families' Rights and Responsibilities

Families' Commitment to School

By enrolling at SKTCS families have demonstrated their commitment to create a safe learning community that values each individual. Each student, family, and employee in our community agrees to:

- Maintain punctual and regular attendance.
- Encourage a positive school culture by supporting positive behaviors from students and adults
- [Seek peaceful resolutions to conflict.](#)
- Engage in productive and direct communication with adults regarding the needs of students.
- Participate in the school culture by attending and participating in school meetings and events.

Family Educational Records and Privacy ACT (FERPA) and Confidentiality of Student Records

All records maintained by the school will be held in confidence under the strictest digital and physical security measures. Only individuals or entities that have a legitimate reason to have access to this information will be given permission to view student files.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. Schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA



allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):

- School officials with legitimate educational interest;
- Other schools to which a student is transferring;
- Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
- Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
- Accrediting organizations;
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
- Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
- State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

Schools may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. Schools must notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA.¹ This handbook serves as an annual notice of your rights under FERPA.

Families' Right to Know

Families have the right to know the qualifications of their child's teacher. In compliance with statutory requirements, parents may request information about the professional qualifications of their child's teacher(s). The following may be requested:

- Whether the teacher has met the Georgia Professional Standards Commission requirements for certification for the grade level and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction;
- Whether the teacher is teaching under an emergency or other provisional status through which Georgia qualifications or certification have been waived;
- The college major and any graduate certification or degree held by the teacher;

¹ <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html?src=rn>



- Whether the student is provided services by paraprofessionals, and if so, their qualifications.

Parents will be notified if a teacher or a paraprofessional who has been determined non-Highly Qualified is teaching their child for 20 consecutive days.

Family Involvement

It is imperative for the growth of your students and the health of our organization to have a healthy home-school connection. Therefore, we will have numerous opportunities for home-school collaboration through family visitation days, parent-teacher conferences, discussions, back-to-school nights, orientations, guest speakers, student presentations, and others throughout the year.

Parent-Teacher Volunteer Association

Volunteerism

Families may wish to volunteer time at school. Volunteer hours may come in the form of reading to a class, volunteering to set-up or breakdown an event, performing maintenance, running an extracurricular class, or even chaperoning a field trip. Adults must attend our annual volunteer orientation prior to signing up for any volunteer opportunities offered by teachers or the main office.

Family Conferences

All parents/guardians will meet with their student's teacher in the fall regarding growth and goal-setting. These conferences are essential to helping students achieve their full potential. In the 2019 - 20 school year:

October 19th - 23rd: (mandatory)

January 4th - 8th: (optional - conference may be initiated by either the teacher or the parent)

March 24th: (optional - conference may be initiated by either the teacher or the parent)

School Rules for All Students, Employees, and Families

1. Use the SKTCS [conflict resolution](#) process to solve problems.



2. Take responsibility for yourself and your actions.
3. Adhere to the school rules and policies.

Governance

SKTCS Board

The SKTCS Governing Board is comprised of 11 community members, administrators, and two parent representatives. Board members volunteer and undergo training and provide a resource for the school. Board meetings are open to viewing by the public and are held monthly as indicated on the SKTCS website.

The committees and task groups of the Governing Board are listed on the SKTCS website (sktcs.org).

SKTCS Governing Board's role and responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Hire and supervise School Director.
- Fiscal oversight - making sure the school has the resources it needs.
- Set and review policy - which means making sure that policy is created to support fulfilling the charter contract and school mission.
- Set goals for the school in order to meet our charter and mission, and track progress on those goals.
- Manage board committees and task groups.
- Assures compliance with laws, regulations, and minimizes exposure.
- Engage in community outreach on behalf of the school.
- The board *does not* manage the daily operation of the school. That is the sole responsibility of the School Director.

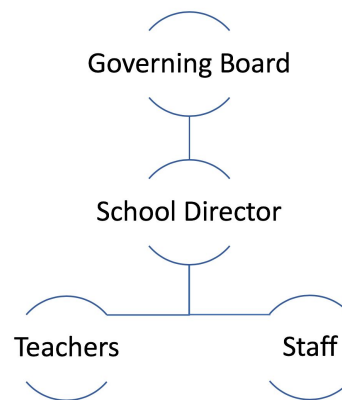
The Governing Board has several permanent committees and can create task groups to work on specific projects.

- The board can set up committees and task groups to work on specific tasks or areas of responsibility.
- Committees are subject to open meetings laws.
- Task groups are not subject to open meeting laws.



- Both committees and task groups can only make recommendations to the whole board. They can't set policy on their own.

SKTCS Organizational Chart



Those interested in serving on the board, a committee, or a task group should fill out a [board application](#).

Administration Team

School Director - Dr. Latrisha Chattin; director@sktcs.org
Dean of Social Emotional Learning - Dr. Julia Juechter; DSEL@sktcs.org
Instructional Coach: Reading - Yanis Medina; reading@sktcs.org
Office Manager - Quiana Aikens; frontoffice@sktcs.org

Enrollment

Enrollment Season opens in January. Returning students must submit a recommitment application to reserve their seat. New students should enroll using the application on our website.

The Administration establishes the number of seats available at each grade level and students are selected during a public lottery annually. The only prerequisites for admissions are residing in Chatham County and meeting the minimum age requirement.



Enrollment preference is given to siblings of currently enrolled students, to students of board members, teachers and staff. SKTCS will utilize the available weighted lottery option during our admission process in order to give qualifying educationally disadvantaged students an increased chance of being selected for an available seat. Qualifying students must meet one of the following: lives below the poverty line, qualifies for free or reduced lunch, or whose family qualifies for federal benefits including SNAP, TANF, WIC, or Medicare. Multiple birth siblings (twins, triplets, etc.) are entered as one application and will be admitted together if chosen. All applicants who have submitted a timely and complete application will be informed of their status and enrolled as space becomes available.

McKinney-Vento Homeless Program

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act is the federal law that governs the educational rights of children and youth in homeless situations. This act was reauthorized in 2001 as Title X Part C, No Child Left Behind Act

Homeless children have the right to a free, appropriate public education

A student is homeless if they:

- Live in a shelter or transitional housing
- Live in a motel, campground, car, abandoned building or on the streets
- Share the housing of friends or relatives due to loss of housing (eviction and foreclosure) or cannot afford housing
- Live on the streets
- Have a temporary foster care placement

Students who are homeless have the right to:

- Immediately enroll in and attend school without having health or school records and a permanent address
- Enroll in the school where you are living or the school attended when permanently housed, if in your child's best interest
- Receive transportation to and from the school of origin
- Participate in school activities for which they are eligible
- Utilize dispute resolution process if you have a grievance

For more information concerning the Homeless, please contact Sharon Hill, Homeless Liaison at 395-1092.



Policies and Procedures Regarding Daily Operations

Dresscode

Shirts/Tops:

- Any color, any pattern
- Shirts must have a sleeve (no cold shoulders), no tanks, no spaghetti straps

Bottoms:

- Any color, any pattern
- Shorts/dresses must be mid-thigh or longer
- Leggings/tights may be worn under skirts/shorts, but may not be worn as pants

Shoes:

- Can be any color, but must be rubber-soled, flat, and have at least a strap behind the ankle.
- Flip-flops, thonged sandals, athletic sandals or slides, clogs (including Crocs™), mules, , or any similarly styled shoe is inappropriate due to safety concerns.
- Shoes may not light up or emit sound.

General Appearance:

- No ripped or torn clothing
- No hats or hoods inside
- No distracting accessories (Blinking lights, themed headbands, etc., purses with trinkets ...)

Book bags

Students should bring a backpack/book bag or tote bag daily. They may be made of any material and do not need to be mesh or clear.

Purses

Purses may only be carried to the restroom in grades 3 and up. They must otherwise be stowed away with backpacks during the day.



Homework

Grades K - 3

In 2007, Alfie Kohn, a progressive educator wrote,

The negative effects of homework are well known. They include children's frustration and exhaustion, lack of time for other activities, and possible loss of interest in learning. Many parents lament the impact of homework on their relationship with their children; they may also resent having to play the role of enforcer and worry that they will be criticized either for not being involved enough with the homework or for becoming too involved.

At SKTCS we value the home life of our students and therefore have instituted a no homework policy. Instead, families are encouraged to read together, complete puzzles, go on a walk/hike, explore the outdoors, play at a park, visit a museum, play board games, or just go out to dinner and enjoy each other's company.

Teachers will communicate with families on a weekly or daily basis to share what learning has happened in school. Families are invited to extend that learning at home by asking students to share, teach, or interview you about what you know or think about the topic.

Grades 4-6

At this age we recognize that students must begin to gain independence and academic stamina. Students are expected to participate fully in their learning and demonstrate mastery of content areas.

In grades 4 - 6 students who do not demonstrate mastery will have work sent home for practice. This work will not be graded, but parents are required to sign-off that they have seen it. The purpose of this is to include the family in the student's areas of need and to start a conversation about how to bolster student performance.

Additionally, students in grades 4 - 6 who are unable to complete required assignments during class time will have their work sent home. This work is required to be completed at home, signed by an adult, and returned to school the next day. Teachers will be clear about whether an assignment is incomplete or for practice.



Arrival and Dismissal

Bell Times

School starts at 9 am and ends at 4pm. Students should begin arriving at 8:30 am and enter through either the patio (bus riders and walkers) or car rider doors. Breakfast is served starting at 8:30 and ends promptly at 9 am. If your student arrives at 9:01 breakfast service will be completed and they will not receive a meal.

For safety reasons students should not arrive prior to 8:30 am unless accompanied by an adult. **At 9:01 am students are tardy. Parents/Guardians should escort them to and through the front doors where they must be signed in by an adult. If the tardy is a result of a late or missing bus the absence is excused.**

School dismisses at 4 pm. **Parents do not need to begin arriving for pick-up until 3:50.**

Arrival and Dismissal Policies and Procedures

Arrival

No student may arrive at school prior to 8:30 **unless they are signed into Y-Base. We are mandated reporters. Students who are dropped off prior to 8:30 without adult supervision may be subject to legal consequences.**

Timeliness is important because it creates routine and prevents disruption. When your student is late is causes a disruption to the classroom community we are attempting to create. Our first period starts promptly at 9 am and students are considered late at 9:01. ***Any student arriving after 9 am will be required to be signed in by an adult at the main office, given a late slip to go to class, and marked tardy.*** Please strive to have your child on time to school every day.

Three tardies in any trimester will result in an unexcused absence. Families that are chronically tardy will be asked to meet with the Dean of Social Emotional Learning to create an attendance plan.

Dismissal

All families will be required to complete a dismissal plan form at the start of school. We are aware that emergencies happen and the best laid plans may need to change. We kindly request that you help us ensure your student's safety by providing **timely**



written notice of temporary and/or long-term changes to your student's dismissal procedures to the front office through our [Dismissal Form](#).

Dismissal Changes

No matter what, always inform **the office** of any changes – even if **you** choose to pick your child up instead of having him/her ride the bus. We need to know where our students are at all times.

Afternoon pick-up ends promptly at 4:15 pm . Two repeated failures to pick-up your student before 4:15 pm will result in a late notice. After 2 late notices your case will be given to the district social worker and your family will be required to meet with the School Director.

Early Dismissal

We understand that early dismissals are necessary at times. While we would prefer that appointments are made on school holidays and professional development days, we recognize that's not always possible. Please arrange for an early dismissal before 3 pm in order to prevent confusion at dismissal time

Additionally, please note that the end-of-day is always a hectic time. **To ensure that our young students are not confused about where to go after school please make all emergency changes to the [Dismissal Form](#) before 3 pm.** After 3 pm students will be sent home through the original method that the teacher/school was told.

Bus Transportation

The SCCPSS Transportation Department provides bus service for our students. They will contact you with pick-up and drop-off times if you have requested bus service. Busses will drop off on 34th Street. In order to provide safety and maintain order, students are expected to adhere to the rules of the bus driver. **All questions and concerns related to drop-off and/or pick-up should be directed to SCCPSS at 912-395-5591.** If ongoing issues are not properly addressed by Transportation, please contact the School Director.

Behavior issues on the bus should be sent to the School Director.

Car Rider Drop-Off

- All students riding in a car must be dropped off in the school parking lot. Not in the bus lane!!!



- Cars should enter the parking lot from 33rd Street.
- Once in the parking lot proceed to the double white doors to be escorted in.
- Children should only exit the car once an adult opens the door from the outside.

Car Rider Pick-Up

- Please pull into the parking line and join one of the five queues for pick-up.
 - Do not block the entrance. Instead go to the next line.
 - Leave room for cars to pass behind you
 - If the lot is full do not block the firehouse. Instead, circle the block until the lines ease up or park and pick-up from the front doors.

For expediency purposes:

- **Adults must stay with their vehicle.** A school employee or volunteer will come and assist your student with entering and exiting the vehicle. Do NOT exit your vehicle.
- Please be sure that **car seats and booster seats are placed on the passenger side of the vehicle.** Every family will be assigned a car tag. Please **ensure that your pick-up placard is displayed prominently on the passenger side in the front window.**
- Please be sure that **anything that needs to exit the car with the child is in the car with the child** (and not in the trunk).
- Please **pull forward** immediately.
- Please **do NOT attempt to go around the car in front of you.**
- If the line is too long or you are in a hurry please park in a legal parking space (not in the bus drop-off zone on 34th st.) and walk your child to the front door.

Please Note - We are mandated reporters:

- We are unable to load a child into any vehicle that does not have an age-appropriate car seat and we are mandated as reporters to file a report for children who do not have the appropriate car seat.
- If we smell illegal substances emanating from your vehicle a DFCS report will be made.

Walkers and Bikers

Students who are walking or biking to and from school should enter through the patio doors on 34th street and will be dismissed from the front doors. Please exercise discernment when deciding if your student can walk home alone. If you are



a part of a walking bus (a group of parents and students walking together) please indicate so on your dismissal plan form.

Attendance

Absences

Please call or email the main office immediately upon knowing your student will be absent from school. Upon returning to school students must present a note explaining the absence. **Notes may be written and sent in with a student, dropped off, or emailed to the Main Office.** Please include the student's name, date(s) absent and the reason for the absence.

Excused absences:

- Illness of the student or caregiver
- Death of an immediate family member
- Medical appointments (Although we ask that you please try to make these over the holidays, professional development days, or on early dismissal days if possible), or
- Appearance at court or other governmental agency.

After 3 unexcused absences the family may be required to meet with the Dean of Social Emotional Learning (DSEL) or school social worker in order to create a truancy elimination plan.

Any student missing more than 10 days in a school year will be retained and/or not permitted to re-enroll the following year. Additionally, the DSEL and/or social worker will contact you and legal proceedings may begin.

Early Dismissals

It is imperative that children attend school on time and stay for the full day in order to get the full experience of this choice school.

Students with three or more early dismissals in a marking period will receive an unexcused absence. Three or more unexcused absences requires a truancy elimination plan. No excuses.

Birthday Parties

In order to minimize social class distinction **birthday parties on campus are not allowed.** However, if you would like to send in a modest and healthy class snack to be consumed at snack time for your student's birthday you may do so. Please do not



bring family members to celebrate your student's birthday at school. We strongly recommend purchasing a book for the class instead of edible treats.

Acceptable Treats:

- Fruit Pops
- Fruit
- Yogurt
- Pretzels
- Crackers

Unacceptable Treats (these treats will be sent back home with students):

- Cupcakes/Cake
- Pizza
- Ice Cream
- Cookies/Muffins

If you are having an off-campus party for your student **you may distribute invitations at school only if you are inviting the whole class**. Otherwise, please personally distribute/mail/email those invitations off-campus as we wish to practice inclusion at SKTCS and not make children feel excluded.

Toys and valuables

Please do not send any toys and/or valuables to school. This includes sneakers and video games. SKTCS will not be responsible for the loss, theft, or damage of any personal property.

Cell Phones

While we do not encourage it, we recognize the need for some students to have cell phones. **All cell phones must remain off and inside of backpacks for the duration of the school day.** Any cell phone that rings during the school day will be confiscated and returned to an adult only. SKTCS will not be responsible for the loss, theft, or damage of any personal property.



Health & Safety

Child Abuse and Mandated Reporting

The well being of students and staff at SKTCS are our top priority. Every staff member is a mandated reporter and is required by law to report if abuse or maltreatment is suspected. Although this may result in uncomfortable situations, the law does not allow for individual discernment. Staff are not required to notify parents prior to making a DFACS report if abuse (physical, emotional, sexual, or neglect) is suspected.

Food on Campus

Free and Reduced Meals

SKTCS will participate in SCCPSS's school nutrition program. Lunch applications will be available online and will also be sent home at the beginning of the school year. Families can apply to see if they qualify for free or reduced meals. Whether families use this option or choose to send in money with their child, note that credit is not applied to the account for 24 hours.

Meals

If there are any concerns about lunch you should contact Ms. Nicole Black (nicole.black@sccpss.com).

Breakfast - Will be served from 8:30 – 9 am Monday - Friday. Students wishing to eat must arrive on time. If buses arrive late those students ONLY will be served breakfast when they arrive to class.

Lunch – Lunch times will vary between 11 am and 1 pm

Snack - There is a snack time each day for students. Please remember to pack utensils if they are needed to eat snacks as none will be provided. Please try to pack energy-producing foods such as fruits and veggies, cheese and crackers, yogurt, nuts, jerkies, meat sticks, etc. **Junk food (e.g. - chips, snack cakes, juice) will not be permitted at snack time.**



Nutrition

In order to model healthy eating please refrain from sending students to school with candy, chocolate, carbonated beverages, chips, snack cakes, artificially flavored juice, or fast food. Additionally, **please do not send any glass containers.**

Metal or plastic water bottles are permitted in class and on the playground.

They should be labeled with your child's first and last names and should be plastic or metal.

Students will not have access to microwaves, so please keep that in mind when packing lunch and snacks.

Due to food allergies and family dietary preferences students are prohibited from sharing food with their peers. Please do not encourage it. However, if you would like to send in a class snack for your student's class please discuss it with your teacher first.

SKTCS Approach to Student Behaviors

SKTCS believes that children are still developing their morals, personalities, and character traits. It is our responsibility to help guide their development by providing safe structure and logical consequences to behaviors that place them or others in danger in order to reinforce that we are all responsible for each other.

At SKTCS we utilize **logical consequences** as a part of our Peaceful Schools model. While punishment relies on enforcing student compliance through external controls, logical consequences require students to demonstrate self-control, internalize an understanding of why the behavior is inappropriate for this space at this time, and create an internalized desire to change the behavior.

A. DISCIPLINE POLICY

A large part of SKTCS's mission is to assist children in learning how to balance personal freedom with responsibility to the community. We aim to help children be grounded in a strong sense of empathy and conscious of the effects of his or her actions.

Our discipline policy is a culmination of our policies and procedures, our school culture, and our conflict resolution program. Conflict resolution is a key component of our school culture—and an essential part of the response to most discipline issues—but it is not the discipline policy itself.



A simple concept guides teachers' response to misbehavior in the classroom—remind, redirect, and remove. First, a teacher discreetly reminds a student of the rule being broken. If this does not end the behavior the student is gently redirected by, for example, being asked to work in another location or with a different partner. If the behavior continues, removal occurs. Removal might be a few minutes in the hallway with the student using this time to return to his or her best self. It might also mean meeting with the teacher or the Dean of Social Emotional Learning (DSEL). This response keeps the classroom community intact, allows students to take responsibility for their behavior, and helps students see how their behavior affects the classroom community.

If “remind, redirect, and remove” prove to be ineffective, the school requests parent involvement. Informal support from home often improves behavior, but a more formal behavior plan can also be used to provide structured feedback and communication. There is no one best way to respond to student misbehavior. Sometimes there is stress in a student's life, and when the stress diminishes the behavior changes. SKTCS values communication and collaboration with families so that all student challenges can be addressed with sensitivity and insight.

How we respond to undesired student behavior (in ascending order of gravity)

1. Remind student of desired expectations/ school rules
1. Redirect (i.e. - a new activity, a location near the teacher)
2. Remove (i.e. to a new seat, buddy room, et cetera).
3. Conference
4. Choose a consequence if necessary:
 - **Time Out:** Send child to teacher in prearranged classroom (a time out for a student is “an opportunity to return to your best self”). Parents should be informed whenever a child is removed from the classroom.
 - **Logical Consequence** (i.e. – If a student writes on a desk the natural consequence is to clean all of the desks in the room).
 - **Loss of privilege**
5. Direct student to the DSEL to discern if there is an underlying social/emotional cause to behavior
6. Notify School Director

Our students adhere to the acronym “FREE.” We expect our students and their families to be:



Focused - Clear the noise in your head. Envision the right thing to do and work toward a goal.

Respectful/Responsible - Do the right thing even when no one is watching. Use your manners. Leave the world better than you found it.

Empathic - Think about how others may feel - even before yourself. Challenge the status quo, seek to find the best solution for everyone.

Empowered - Acknowledge the power within. Set and achieve goals.

At the beginning of the year students will work with their peers and their teachers to develop shared expectations of the space, materials, and behaviors that are conducive to learning in a safe space.

Visitors

All visitors to the school, without exception, must sign in at the main office on every visit, regardless of the reason. Employees are mandated to require visitors show a Visitor's Sticker with the current date on it before conducting any business with them, including releasing a child. While on campus, please be prepared to show ID if asked at any time. Unless s/he has been vetted by the school and passed a background check, no volunteer may be alone with children at the school.

Additionally, while we welcome communication and collaboration with our community partners, it is also important that these times are scheduled in order to provide a maximum benefit to our students and prevent disruptions to the school day. **Parents and visitors must provide ample notice to the teacher if you wish to visit the classroom.** Unexpected visitors will not be able to visit the classroom and will be encouraged to make an appointment.

Volunteers

SKTCS values and appreciates the time and efforts of our volunteers and their desire to serve the school and its students.

Before you volunteer at SKTCS you must:

1. Volunteers must attend the annual school-wide Volunteer Orientation **each year** before they can volunteer.
2. Volunteer to assist with a single subject (e.g. - Math) or an event (e.g. - Halloween Party).
3. Volunteers should remain with the class/teacher they are working with that day.



Volunteers Should NOT:

1. Be in any classroom outside of the agreed upon subject/event they signed up to volunteer for.
2. Deliver academic content or conduct formal testing of students. However, volunteers may occupy the whole class, while the teacher or paraprofessional conducts assessments with individual students.
3. Enter the Teacher's Lounge, Exceptional Students' Suite(s), or main office without permission from the School Director and/or front office.
4. Be given any confidential information about students' behavior or academics (including reading levels, Tiers, etc.)

Drug and Tobacco-free Campus

In keeping with the School's intent to provide a safe and healthy environment for students, staff members, and school visitors are prohibited from using any tobacco product - including e-cigarettes and chewing tobacco - and/or illegal drugs (including prescription drugs) on campus at any time. Including, but not exclusive to any building, facility, vehicle, event owned, leased, rented, chartered, or operated by a student, parent, or employee of SKTCS at any school-sponsored or school-related event on- or off-campus.

Emergency Contact Form / Address Information

Each year we ask that families complete an Emergency Contact Form. On this form you will identify who has permission to pick up your student(s). In the event of an emergency we will not be able to release your child to anyone who is not on the form. You may change or add to this form at any time by visiting or emailing the Main Office and speaking to the Office Manager. It is critical that you keep this form updated.

Additionally, as Chatham County residency is required for enrollment in our schools, you will be asked annually to submit proof of address in the form of a utility bill, mortgage/lease statement or governmental mail. If your family moves out of Chatham County, you must notify the school within 2 weeks of the move and the School Director will advise on the course of action for your child's enrollment. If your family is in a state of transition or are experiencing homelessness, please see the Dean of Student Support.

Emergency Procedures / Severe Weather

SKTCS has created and will follow a comprehensive Emergency Response and Preparedness Plan for severe or emergency situations. In a weather-related



emergency families will be contacted via email, phone, the school website, and/or our Facebook page with further instructions regarding school closings, delays, and/or early dismissal procedures.

We follow SCCPSS delays and closings, which are reported by the local media. Families should have an emergency plan in place as early as possible for any of these emergency situations as aftercare is not available when there are emergency conditions

Illnesses & Communicable Diseases/Infections

Illness

If your student has vomited, had a body temperature over 100 degrees, has /had diarrhea, and/or has an undetermined rash please keep them home for at least 24 hours after symptoms subside. Additionally, you may consider taking him or her for a wellness visit and let the doctor decide when returning to school is healthy.

If a student presents any of these symptoms during the day a caretaker or emergency contact must come to the school to pick-up the child immediately and preferably take them in for a wellness visit.

Prescription and OTC Medication

SKTCS does not employ a school health practitioner. Therefore,

- If your student needs to take prescription medicine during school hours you must provide a prescription that will stay at school, in its original container with doctor's orders to the Office Manager.
- If your student has asthma you must submit all medications (e.g. – inhaler, nebulizer, etc.) with a breathing plan to the Administrative Specialist at the beginning of the school year.
- If your student needs to take over-the-counter medication for a short time, please submit the medication and written directions with your signature to the Office Manager.

The Office Manager will notify you when prescriptions need to be refilled, have expired, and/or need to be picked-up at the end of the year. The school will not distribute medication to students unless provided by the caregivers. No child should have medication on their person.



Lice

Lice are an unfortunate but frequent visitor in schools. Please try to do your own lice checks at home. If you find that lice are present in your home please do not send students to school until your home has been remediated and each person has been treated according to your family's wishes.

If a child is found to have lice at school SKTCS will follow the GA Dept. of Public Health Guidelines:

- **The student will be restricted from activities involving close contact** (i.e., hugging) or sharing personal items (i.e., hats, clothing, and brushes) with other children.
- **Parents will be contacted.**
- **The student will be sent home at the end of the day.** Children will be allowed to ride the school bus home. Transmission via school bus seats is not likely because of the biology of head lice.
- **A letter will be sent home notifying classmates' parents that a case of head lice is suspected and asking them to check all of their children for head lice.**
- The school will also provide parents with a copy of an information sheet on head lice infestation and treatment options.

Immunizations and Health Information

Families must maintain and submit current immunization records and EED (Form 3300) to the Main Office annually. ***Your student will be prevented from coming to school if these forms are not kept current.*** Additionally, you must document all immunization exemptions on the GA Department of Public Health's Form 2208.

It is imperative that you inform the school if any changes occur with a student's health or medication plan, including information on allergies and medical conditions, and medications that your child takes because these documents will accompany your child to the hospital in the event of an emergency.

Medication Policy

Families should make every effort to have medication times set for time periods other than school hours. However, the office manager will maintain and distribute prescription and nonprescription medications that are necessary at school.

When this is not possible, the office manager may assist in the administration of medications during school hours, subject to the following rules.



1. **Written Authorization.** Any medication to be administered to students must be accompanied by written authorization. This written authorization is valid for the school year during which it is received, and is kept in the front office.

- a. Prescription medication to be given for two weeks or less is considered **short term** and parents may fill out the authorization form.
- b. Prescription medication to be given for more than two weeks is considered **long term** and requires written authorization and administration directions by the child's physician.

1. **Original Container.** Both prescription and over-the-counter medication to be given to students during the school day must be in their original bottle with the student's name on the label. All medication must be brought to the front office.

1. **Check-In Procedure.** The front office staff records the date medication is brought in, ensures that the required authorization is on file, and notes the number or amount of medication in the Medication Records book kept in the front office. A separate medication check-in sheet is maintained for each student.

1. **Changes to Prescription.** It is the family's responsibility to notify the school of any changes to an original prescription. A new pharmacy label and container, along with new written authorization and distribution directions must be submitted with any change.

1. **Self-Medication.** Students cannot administer any medications to themselves.

1. **Documentation.** The front office staff keeps a separate medication administration record for each student that includes the student's name, medication, dosage, times to be given, and the initials of the person administering the medication; it also has a form for other information to be recorded, such as any observed reaction to the medication. These records are a permanent part of the student's file and are confidential, unless they need to be shared with other staff.

Locked Cabinet. School staff will keep all medication in a secure, clean, and locked cabinet at all times.



Communication

Website

The school website is a valuable resource for finding the information you need. Including archives of board minutes, calendars, frequently asked questions, and other important documents. If you have a comment or recommendation for the school, please see the “Who to Contact” section of this handbook (p. . Frequently asked questions will be added to our website.

Social Media

While Bloomz and newsletters are used for communication with our families, SKTCS Facebook page will be our portal to push information out to the wider community.

At SKTCS we value positive and open communication. Therefore, **all social media groups purporting to be associated with the Susie King Taylor Community School operate with the understanding that social media is a means of sharing information, but is not useful in resolving conflict.** Families and employees may not create closed groups on social media using the school name or logo or by obtaining names from school directories or distribution lists.

The School and/or its representatives will not be able to respond to concerns raised on social media. Instead, in accordance with our conflict resolution process concerns should be directed to the person directly responsible for the outcome and if needed escalated from there.

Email

The school will mainly communicate through email. Please ensure that your personal email remains current with the front office.

If you have a question or concern about a specific issue please send an email to the appropriate party (See Who to Go to For What).

Phone/Text

The school will at times utilize robo-calling or mass texting to send out important and emergent information. Please note that your information will remain private and will not intentionally be shared with any other parties. Therefore, it is imperative that you keep your cell phone number and email up-to-date with the front office.



Newsletters

A school newsletter will be sent home on the first (non-holiday) Monday of the month. The newsletter will contain important information and dates that will be helpful to families.

Each individual teacher will also send home a weekly newsletter on Mondays.

Teacher newsletters will detail what students are learning, reminders for projects and/or assessments, and invitations for volunteer opportunities.

Who to Contact?

Teachers

Your classroom teacher is typically your first stop for information. SKTCS employees may be contacted through their SKTCS emails. The format of emails is firstname.lastname@sktcs.org.

Please do not contact employees through their personal email, phone numbers, home addresses, or social media regarding school matters. At SKTCS we respect our employees' home lives and expect them to have a work-life balance. Therefore, unless it is an emergency, please allow 24 business hours to pass for a returned phone call or email. Additionally, contacting them about school business on their personal devices, phones, homes, and/or email accounts is a violation of their agreement with their school.

Teachers can answer questions regarding:

- grades
- tests
- schedules
- behavior
- peer relationships
- recess
- curriculum
- lunch activities

Meeting with the teacher



We know that you value instructional time as much as we do. Impromptu conferences during the school day – including at arrival and dismissal – prevent teachers from being able to prepare for the day, monitor, and supervise your students as well as the classrooms and hallway. Furthermore, hallway discussions will not give you the proper time or privacy you deserve.

Please be considerate of teachers' planning and break time by scheduling meetings or phone calls at a mutually convenient time. Conferences can be scheduled during the teacher's planning time during the school day, before and after school during the teacher's contractual hours as long as they don't interfere with mandatory school meetings or duties the teacher must attend. Teachers will respond to your request within 24 hours and plan to meet with you within 48 hours of your request. If you are experiencing difficulty getting a response from an employee in a timely manner, please contact the School Director.

Dean of Social Emotional Learning -
Mrs. Sandra Hardy (DSEL@sktcs.org)

The Dean of Social Emotional Learning (DSEL):

- 1. Assesses Student, Family and School Needs**
Assess and address the assets and needs of students, families, and SKTCS personnel in order to utilize our community's strengths.
- 2. Provides Direct Services / Service Delivery**
Successfully implement crisis interventions, home visits, conflict resolution, Second Step, and individual and group counseling as determined by the school.

Counseling services are available for students through the Dean of Social Emotional Learning (Dr. Juechter). Students may be eligible for individual or group counseling based on their level of need and scheduling availability of the DSEL. Students may be referred for individual or group counseling by parents and/or teachers. Students themselves may also request to see the DSEL for an individual counseling session. Please note that students have the right to request to see the DSEL at any time. However, if the DSEL believes that ongoing counseling sessions may be beneficial to the student, she will contact the parents/guardians for permission to continue meeting with the student. Written permission from parents/guardians will always be obtained prior to placing students in a counseling group. Small group counseling may



include (but are not limited to) topics such as grief/loss, divorce/separation, self-esteem, self-control, or anger management.

If you would like to request to meet with the DSEL to discuss concerns and/or possible counseling services for your child, please contact Dr. Juechter.

3. Advocates

Identify and initiate mental-health and behavioral services for students and their families as needed.

4. Is the Behavior Response To Intervention Coordinator

Provide school-wide support to assist in the identification of students in need of RTI services, implementation of interventions, and coordination of SST meetings.

5. Creates Positive School Climate

- a. Acts as a resource and provides professional development for teachers in their instructional practice, especially as it relates to issues of discipline, relationships with students, classroom management, and school culture,
- b. Assists teachers, students, and parents in the effective creation and implementation of individual behavior plans,
- c. Helps to reinforce the effective use of a school-wide behavior plan,
- d. Keeps accurate student discipline records, documenting all conferences

6. Is the 504 Coordinator

[What is the difference between a 504 and an IEP?](#)

Math Interventionist

Ms. Tanika Johnson (math@sktcs.org)

The Math Interventionist/MTSS coordinator has the following responsibilities:

1. Multi-tiered Systems of Support

- a. Provide school-wide support to assist in the identification of students in need of math MTSS interventions in Tiers 1-3.
- b. Implementation of math interventions and math progress monitoring for Tiers 1 - 3.
- c. Coordination of Student Support Team meetings.
- d. Coordinator of all MTSS plans relating to Math

2. Teacher Coach

Make regular visits to classrooms to observe teachers informally, provide



feedback, and monitor progress. Meet with teachers as scheduled to problem-solve issues related to math as they may arise.

3. Vertical Alignment

Assure that the math curriculum meets both Georgia standards and the innovative models of the school.

4. Professional Development

Seek and implement professional development opportunities for staff as related to the school's annual improvement plan and the Five Year (Innovation) Plan.

5. Testing Coordinator

Assist in the preparation of staff, students, and technology for formal district assessments. Assist in administering MAP/NWEA and GMAS tests.

Dean of Lower School/Reading Coach

Mrs. Yanis Medina (reading@sktcs.org)

The Reading Coach/MTSS coordinator has the following responsibilities:

6. Multi-tiered Systems of Support

- e. Provide school-wide support to assist in the identification of students in need of reading MTSS interventions in Tiers 1-3.
- f. Implementation of reading interventions and reading progress monitoring for Tiers 1 - 3.
- g. Coordination of Student Support Team meetings.
- h. Coordinator of all academic MTSS plans

7. Teacher Coach

Make regular visits to classrooms to observe teachers informally, provide feedback, and monitor progress. Meet with teachers as scheduled to problem-solve issues related to reading as they may arise.

8. Vertical Alignment

Assure that the reading curriculum meets both Georgia standards and the innovation models of the school.

9. Professional Development

Seek and implement professional development opportunities for staff as related to the school's annual improvement plan and the Five Year (Innovation) Plan.

10. Testing Coordinator

Assist in the preparation of staff, students, and technology for formal district assessments. Assist in administering MAP/NWEA and GMAS tests.



Gifted Education

If you have a question about your student's gifted contract, would like to have your student evaluated for gifted, or would like to schedule a meeting regarding your student's official gifted identification please contact:

Ms. Erica Scalmato (erica.scalmato@sktcs.org)

Special Education

If you have a question about your student's Individual Education Plan (IEP), would like to have your student evaluated, or would like to schedule an amendment meeting please contact:

Grades K - 2: Ms. Breana Brown (breana.brown@sktcs.org)

Grades 3 -5: Ms. Sherrylynn Burney (sherrylynn.burney@sktcs.org)

Grades 6-7: Mrs. Kisha McRae- Kennedy (kisha.kennedy@sktcs.org)

To encourage innovative practices or unique programs, charter schools are not required to comply with many Georgia Title 20 laws and State School Board Rules that specifically apply to public education. However, charter schools may not waive any aspect of federal law. This includes the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)/Section 504, and all applicable civil rights legislation. Federal Requirements Charter schools are not exempt from federal laws based on their status as charters. Key federal laws include, but are not limited to the following:

- Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)
- Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA)
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
- Occupation Safety and Health Act of 1970
- Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972
- Equal Employment Opportunity
- Fair Labor Standards Act
- The Americans with Disabilities Act
- Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

Special Education Legal Compliance

The District is required by law to serve the students with disabilities that are attending its public charter schools in the same manner that it serves students in its other schools (See 20 U.S.C. 1413(a)(5)). The District adheres to this mandate by



allocating equivalent per student federal, state, and local funding to charter schools and/or by providing in-kind services to charter schools and their students that are of equal or greater value than the proportional value of IDEA funding that a charter is entitled to receive. The District delegates the implementation of “same manner” service to the charter schools, based on the funding and in-kind services provided.

Flexibility and Accountability Requirements

Legal compliance is a major component of the services of students with disabilities. Charter schools are encouraged to act in compliance with the District’s Special Education “Implementation Manual” to help ensure legal compliance and to facilitate effective collaboration with the District. All charter schools will provide the District with the Charter School’s IDEA policy or guide that provides the procedures and protocols for addressing special education matters and the needs of students with disabilities for the district to ensure legal compliance. With the exception of the standard in-kind services provided by the District, charter schools should not incorporate agreements to provide services or placements in an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) that the charter school is unwilling or unable to pay for with its allocated funds. District team-member participation and consensus is required with respect to any provision in an IEP where a charter school seeks to offer special services or off-campus placements that it does not expect or intend to pay for through regular allocated funding.

Special Education Discipline

Charter schools are subject to federal laws and regulations governing the discipline of students with disabilities including requirements of the IDEA and the U.S. Department of Education’s implementing regulations, 34 CFR § 300 et seq. Charters should address topics such as the discipline of students who have a Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP) in their IEP and also detail how classroom teachers would be knowledgeable about such plans. The District “Implementation Manual” includes procedures and protocols for addressing special education matters and the needs of students with disabilities.

Charter schools are encouraged to adhere to the District’s special education procedures, policies, regulations and protocols to help ensure legal compliance with the IDEA and Section 504 and to assist and enable the District’s oversight concerning charter compliance with those laws. General Student Discipline Charter schools must satisfy Constitutional due process standards when disciplining students. See *Goss v. Lopez* 419 U.S. 565 (1975).



Charter Schools should conduct their hearings in a fair and prompt manner before an unbiased and properly trained hearing officer. The School Board expects its charter schools to conduct disciplinary procedures in a manner substantially consistent with Georgia laws and regulations established for Georgia public schools. See e.g. O.C.G.A. § 20-2-752 through 754 as well as State Board of Education Rule 160-4-8-.15.

Charter schools should not expel or suspend any student in preschool through third grade for more than five consecutive or cumulative days during a school year without first providing a multi-tiered system of supports, such as Response To Intervention (RTI), unless such student possessed a weapon, illegal drugs, or other dangerous instrument or such student's behavior endangers the physical safety of other students or school personnel. See O.C.G.A. § 20-2-742.

With respect to students who withdraw from a charter school and attempt to enroll in a District school, charter schools shall provide the District with any factual findings that serve as the basis of any disciplinary action taken by a charter school against the student seeking enrollment. O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2066(d).

Business and Operations Manager

Mrs. Quiana Aikens (business@sktcs.org)

The Director of Business and Operations serves as a member of the Administration Team and enables instructional leaders and staff to focus on student achievement:

- School Operations
- Finance, & Purchasing
- Facilities & Maintenance
- Risk Management, Compliance, and HR Administration

Administrative Assistant

(frontoffice@sktcs.org)

The Front Office Manager Can Assist With:

- Enrollment



- Withdrawal
- Demographic Update (e.g. - phone numbers, addresses, email, etc)
- Early Dismissal
- Absences (notification of and excuses for)
- Student Records
- Messages for students/teachers
- School Director's Calendar
- Directing entities to the right party
- Lunch
- School calendar/schedule
- Mailings
- Communications

School Director

Dr. Latrisha Chattin (director@sktcs.org)

The School Director Can Assist With:

- Answering questions about policies or procedures if the classroom teacher or other directly responsible employee cannot provide an answer.
- Conflict and/or official grievances between families and teachers or families and families
- Student suspensions
- Community liaisons
- Questions regarding implementation of mission and vision
- Volunteerism

Governing Board

Grievance Coordinator (grievances@sktcs.org)

The Governing Board oversees compliance with the charter contract, school policy and supervision of the School Director.

The Governing Board can assist with:

- Grievances regarding school policy (School Director oversees school procedures).
- Support navigating the school Conflict Resolution and Grievance Policy.
- Discussing serving on a committee, task group, or joining the Governing Board.



Lunches

Ms. Nicole Black (nicole.black@sccpss.com) 912 - 395- 5235

Transportation - 912 - 395 - 5591

Conflict Resolution

In any community, conflict is inevitable. How we deal with that conflict as a community determines how resilient we are, and has a direct impact on our collective success. We understand that when our children are involved, those conflicts are extremely personal. The Governing Board and Administration of Susie King Taylor Community School both have the ultimate goal of our students' well-being, and reserve the right to interpret school rules, guidelines, policies and personnel issues fairly, without retaliation, and with respect to all parties involved. We see conflict as a chance for growth and improvement. The steps in the conflict resolution and grievance policy reflect the Susie King Taylor Community School's values. We encourage staff, faculty, families and board members to model the behavior stated in the core values. Taking the courageous steps to utilize this process, and constructive conflict resolution practices, demonstrates transformative teaching and learning, developing the capacity for responsible choice and responsibility to others.

Conflict Resolution. As is human nature, from time to time we will experience disagreements in our community. We invite adults to share their grievances through proper channels:

- **Step 1:** Speak directly with the person (e.g. – parent, teacher, administrator) you have an issue with and attempt to come to an understanding.
- **Step 2:** Invite a third-party to mediate at a second conference. If no resolution occurs move to step 3.
- **Step 3:** Arrange a meeting with the School Director where all parties will be present. If your grievance is with the School Director then you may arrange a meeting with the SKTCS Governing Board Clerk and/or another board member.



STUDENT TECHNOLOGY USE POLICY

Personal Technology Use Policy

- 1) All personal, portable technology, including but not limited to, cameras, cell phones, music devices, and video game devices, will remain turned off and inside of backpacks while at school (including Y-Base).
- 2) The Internet will be used for educational purposes only. It may **not** be used to:
 - a) Give out personal information, including but not limited to, name, home or school address, phone number, credit card numbers, Social Security information, et cetera;
 - b) Conduct financial transactions, such as purchasing items or giving money to other entities;
 - c) Meet someone online or develop personal, non-school-related relationships;
 - d) Conduct non-educational communication, including, but not limited to, personal email, instant messaging, chat rooms, MySpace or Facebook pages, et cetera
 - e) Play Internet computer games or visit Youtube unless they are for educational purposes proposed by a teacher; or
 - f) Visit inappropriate websites.
- 3) Ethical standards of the community will be followed at all times. Students should immediately report to school personnel if they encounter a person or a site online which attempts to meet them outside of school, asks for personal information, is aggressive, or makes them feel uncomfortable for any reason.
- 4) All research information found on the Internet will be properly cited or credited. Plagiarism is a serious violation of school policy.
- 5) All student activity on any technology used at SKTCS can and may be monitored and/or reviewed by an adult.
- 6) All technology at SKTCS will be used in a responsible, respectful manner. Students will bring any questions or concerns about appropriate use to an adult.

Use of Student Learning Device



Susie King Taylor Community School is providing students with a learning device to support the continuation of teaching and learning through online software and Internet resources.

Student's/Parent's Responsibilities

- The Learning Device is provided for the student only. Student ID and password is required to access the device.
- The student is required to practice good digital citizenship and adhere to the attached Student Technology Agreement
- Student/Parent agrees to use the device for learning during the period of assignment, protect the device, maintain it, and promptly return the device (including power cable) when requested.
- The Learning Device will remain checked out to the student until it is returned to the issuing school. This means that the record will follow the student until the equipment has been returned in the same condition that it is issued (reasonable wear is expected).
- If a student has borrowed technology from the school they are expected to participate fully in the online curriculum or arrange immediate pick-up of the device.
- If the device is stolen, you are required to file a police report and notify the school.
- If the device is lost, stolen, or damaged, you are responsible for repairs or replacement (current retail value is about \$250.00/device).



STUDENT TECHNOLOGY AGREEMENT

Below are policies that will regulate our use of the Internet and computer at home:

1. Refrain from having food or drinks when using the computers.
2. Unless assigned, games, Facebook, Internet Games, YouTube, chat rooms, Instant Messengers, Blog Websites, Fantasy Football/Basketball, Instagram, Snapchat, taking pictures, making videos, etc are NOT permitted!!!
3. No installing software onto the computers.
4. No "Hacking," accessing unauthorized files, or using the network in any way other than that intended.
5. Students will be held responsible for the condition of the computer. Any damages presumed above normal wear and tear will be financially assessed to the students' family.
6. Students **MUST** sign in with their district assigned username and password and be sure to NEVER give the password to anyone.
7. Do not touch the screen.
8. Computers should always be placed on a flat surface. Never on the ground.
9. Do not carry computers by their lids or tops. Computers should be closed when being transported.
10. Do not change their desktop, screensaver, or settings on your device.
11. Do not save anything to the desktop or harddrive of the computer.
12. All technology should be properly turned off, put away safely and charged each night.

The use of the Internet or technology for profit, to send personal email, to surf inappropriate websites (as defined by the commonly shared standards of the school community), to offend or harass others, or for plagiarism may result in loss of privileges, suspension, or expulsion, depending on the seriousness of the situation.