

Sarah Rawson Smith Elementary Handbook

2025-2026



Sarah R. Smith Elementary School's Mission is to promote a safe, nurturing environment grounded in a relevant, comprehensive curriculum. With a commitment to excellence, our staff will ensure that all students become critical thinkers, life-long learners, and responsible citizens in a global community.

Our Vision is an inclusive community where learning is a passion, excellence is achieved, and the whole child is developed.

Our School Pledge

**Today I pledge
To do my best
For myself, my school, my country, and my
world.**

**I will listen,
I will learn,
I will work hard,
And I will treat others with respect.**



**Sarah
Smith**
ELEMENTARY

An SRS Student is...



IB learner profile

The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world.

As IB learners we strive to be:

INQUIRERS

We nurture our curiosity, developing skills for inquiry and research. We know how to learn independently and with others. We learn with enthusiasm and sustain our love of learning throughout life.

KNOWLEDGEABLE

We develop and use conceptual understanding, exploring knowledge across a range of disciplines. We engage with issues and ideas that have local and global significance.

THINKERS

We use critical and creative thinking skills to analyse and take responsible action on complex problems. We exercise initiative in making reasoned, ethical decisions.

COMMUNICATORS

We express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways. We collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspectives of other individuals and groups.

PRINCIPLED

We act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere. We take responsibility for our actions and their consequences.

OPEN-MINDED

We critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. We seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and we are willing to grow from the experience.

CARING

We show empathy, compassion and respect. We have a commitment to service, and we act to make a positive difference in the lives of others and in the world around us.

RISK-TAKERS

We approach uncertainty with forethought and determination; we work independently and cooperatively to explore new ideas and innovative strategies. We are resourceful and resilient in the face of challenges and change.

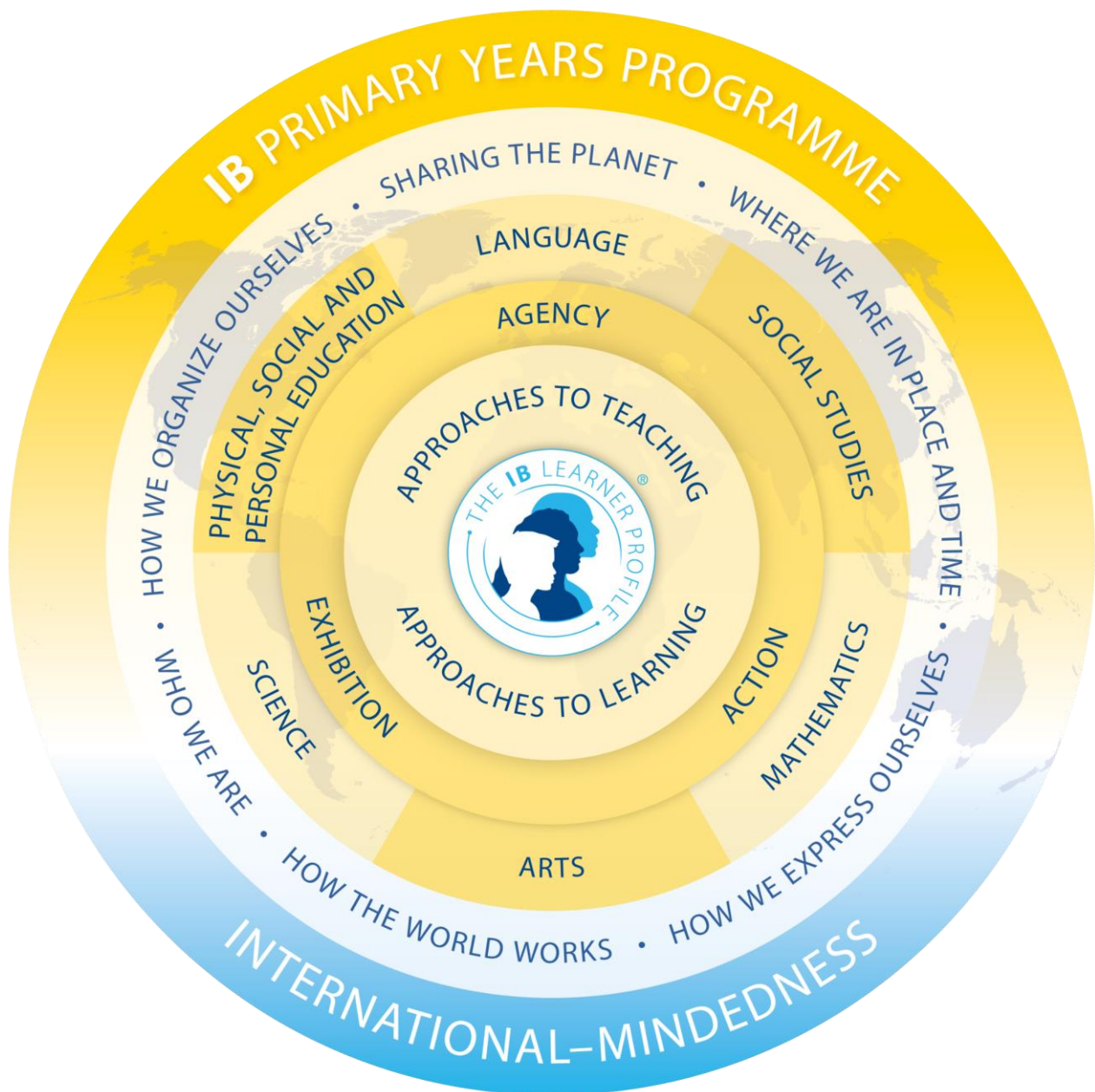
BALANCED

We understand the importance of balancing different aspects of our lives—intellectual, physical, and emotional—to achieve well-being for ourselves and others. We recognize our interdependence with other people and with the world in which we live.

REFLECTIVE

We thoughtfully consider the world and our own ideas and experience. We work to understand our strengths and weaknesses in order to support our learning and personal development.

The IB learner profile represents 10 attributes valued by IB World Schools. We believe these attributes, and others like them, can help individuals and groups become responsible members of local, national and global communities.



International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program

Sarah Smith Elementary is an authorized International Baccalaureate Organization Primary Years Program World school. The mission of IBO is: *The International Baccalaureate Organization aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable, and caring young people to help create a better, more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. To this end it works with schools, governments, and international organizations to develop challenging programs of international*

education and rigorous assessment. These programs encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

For more information on our IB program, please visit our website or contact the school's IB coordinator.

Equal Education Opportunities

The Atlanta Public Schools Board of Education believes that all students are entitled to equal educational opportunities regardless of their race, color, religion, sex, citizenship, ethnic or national origin, age, disability, medical status, military status, veteran status, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, genetic information, ancestry, hair texture, protective hairstyles (including, but not limited to, braids, locs, twists or bantu knots) or any legally protected status. No student shall be subjected to discrimination or harassment because of the student's race, color, religion, sex, citizenship, ethnic or national origin, age, disability, medical status, military status, veteran status, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, genetic information, ancestry, hair texture, protective hairstyles (including, but not limited to, braids, locs, twists or bantu knots) or any legally protected status in any of the Atlanta Public Schools' education programs, activities, or practices. The Board further recognizes its responsibility in accordance with applicable laws (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act) to ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to benefit from and participate in all programs and activities of the school system.

Curriculum

Literacy: Kindergarten, first and second grade teachers will utilize Flyleaf and Heggerty to support phonics instruction, as well as Orton-Gillingham in some classrooms. Third, fourth, and fifth grades will utilize Morpheme Magic, along with a variety of resources to support instruction. The goal of all reading instruction is for students to be able to read and comprehend a variety of texts for a variety of purposes. Daily small group instruction is based on individual student needs according to assessment data. Assessments are used periodically to measure growth in reading. Novel studies and book clubs may be used to support students who are fluent readers. Write Score is the primary writing resource with other resources used as needed. Grammar and writing are incorporated throughout the day in various ways and content areas.

Math: Math instruction at Sarah Smith focuses on nurturing classroom environments, teaching for mathematical understanding, precise oral and written communication of concepts, open-ended

contextual tasks, and continual assessment. Positive classroom culture and meaningful tasks that invite students into the mathematics classroom can make everyone feel they belong in math. Sarah Smith utilizes instructional learning plans from the Georgia Department of Education and follows the [Standard-Based Classroom Instructional Framework](#) and [Guide for Effective Instruction](#)

Science and Social Studies: Interdisciplinary IB Units are developed based on the Georgia Standards of Excellence.

Spanish: Spanish is the foreign language offered in grades K-5.

Specials: Students receive instruction in PE, art, media, SEL, and music from certified instructors in those special content areas.

Policies and Procedures

The policies and procedures contained in this handbook are the result of a concerted effort on the part of the faculty and the administration. This information has been carefully prepared and presented in order that the students and parents may know and understand the policies and practices. Each student will receive a Handbook from Atlanta Public Schools at the beginning of the school year which contains district policies and procedures. It should be reviewed carefully.

[Click Here for Detailed Student Arrival and Dismissal Policies and Procedures](#)

[Click Here for PC Traffic & Safety Video](#)

[Click Here for IC Traffic & Safety Video](#)

Morning Arrival

School begins at 7:45 a.m. Students are not to arrive on campus prior to 7:15 a.m. There will be no supervision prior to this time. In the morning, buses and cars are unloaded at both campuses starting at 7:15 a.m. Students who eat breakfast at school should first go to the cafeteria to eat and then

proceed to their homerooms. Students who arrive after 7:45 a.m. should go straight to the classrooms.

Teachers have established morning routines in their classrooms, which include unpacking, restroom breaks, and morning work, such as reading, review, technology, and 1:1 instruction. These activities continue until the start of the instructional day at 8:00 a.m. Children will not be marked tardy when:

1. There is a late bus arrival.
2. There is a delay in the school breakfast program which is the cause of the tardiness.

Student Dismissal

Dismissal begins at 2:15 p.m. Students are en route home no later than 3:00 pm unless one of the following occurs:

1. Participating in a scheduled after-school program activity or club with a coach/sponsor.
2. Tutorial.
3. Transportation delays.

Any child returning to the school grounds after dismissal of the regular school session and without a valid, approved reason is there at his/her own risk. There is no supervision and we cannot be responsible for the safety of children after school hours.

Written notice is required anytime a student's transportation changes.

Changes cannot be accepted over the telephone but may be emailed with the appropriate photo identification attached. Changes cannot be accepted after noon (12 pm) and no early checkout can occur after 1:45 p.m. When emailing the teacher before noon to share changes, please CC the following clerks at each campus to ensure the change is received:

Primary (Pre-K-2)

- Cynthia Gore
cegore@atlanta.k12.ga.us

Intermediate (3-5):

- Chevai Dee
chevai.dee@atlanta.k12.ga.us

These procedures are in place for the safety of the students and smoothness of dismissal.

Early Dismissal

For the safety of our students, parents must sign out a student in the office for early dismissal. Teachers will not release students from classrooms. No one other than a parent or guardian may sign out a student for early dismissal unless they are listed in Infinite Campus, on the student's clinic card, or the student brings a note to school signed by the parent or guardian stating the person's name as well as the date and time the student is to leave with the person (or an email from the parent's account). All persons signing a student out of school for early dismissal should plan to furnish photo identification.

Bus Transportation

Our goal is to provide each student who is eligible to ride the bus the most safe and sufficient means of transportation to our school. We believe that students are citizens of Atlanta and have a right to a safe and comfortable trip to and from school. Along with these rights are also responsibilities. When rules are broken, the privilege of riding the bus will be interrupted. We encourage our parents to help instill the rules of conduct in order to bring about an atmosphere of respect and safety for one another. Copies of the bus rules, transportation change procedures, and transportation expectations are available to all students and their parents. If a student violates the bus safety rules, he/she will be reported by the driver to the school administrator. The administrator has the authority to suspend the student from bus transportation.

Students are not permitted to get off at any stop other than his/her own, or to ride any other than his/her regular bus. If you are concerned that your child's bus is late, please call the school office.

Carpool and Vanpool Riders

Please remember to call your child's after school provider when your child is absent from school or will not be riding his/her bus for any reason. All children must be picked up by 2:45 p.m. Students who attend the Smith After-School Program in grades 3-5 will be transported, by school bus, to the Primary Campus for the program and should be picked up there.

A written notice is required anytime a student's transportation changes. Changes cannot be accepted over the telephone but may be emailed with a copy of the guardian's proper identification. **Requests need to be made in writing.** No change can be made after 1:45 p.m.

For carpool drop-off and pick-up, please follow the established traffic patterns at each campus. At the Primary Campus, drivers enter the carpool driveway (lower entrance) by turning right from Old Ivy Road. While waiting on Old Ivy Road, please pull as far right as possible to allow through traffic to pass. At the Intermediate Campus, carpool lanes are located beside the bus lane. Use only the carpool lanes and wait for the signal from the staff on duty to load/unload. Drivers must remain in their lanes until receiving a signal from staff to exit. Please do not attempt to change lanes.

At the Primary Campus, drop-off and pick-up of students take place in the long driveway next to the cafeteria. In the morning and afternoon, please drive down and around the one-way driveway to the carpool entrance/exit door in the cafeteria. In the morning, please have your child ready to disembark. Your child should unload on the sidewalk-side of the car (not the driver's side).

The staff members on duty are there to assist. It is not always possible to have them unload the children from the car. Parents who carpool in the afternoon must have a carpool number displayed and easily readable. These numbers are available for assignment at Celebration of Learning or in the front office. Please abide by the following rules. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that all drivers follow these rules. They are enforced for safety and efficiency.

1. **No left turns** into or out of the school driveways between 7:15 and 8:00 a.m. as well as 2:00 until 3:00 p.m.
2. No curb parking on school premises between 7:15 to 8:15 a.m. and 2:00 to 3:00 p.m.
3. No parking near or blocking the dumpsters behind the dining room.
4. **No unloading of children on Land O'Lakes (PC), Old Ivy Road (PC), Whittington (IC), Wieuca (IC) or any road where it is unsafe.**

5. Off-school parking is permitted on the school-side of Land O'Lakes only.
6. **No cell phones should be used while in the carpool line.**
7. **Carpool Numbers must be displayed and easily viewable by school staff during dismissal.**

After School Program

An After School Program is provided for parents of students registered at the school. The program is available every day that school is in session from dismissal time until 6:00 p.m. Enrichment activities, study time, and a snack are provided. Certified and non-certified school personnel provide supervision. If, for any reason, school is not in session, the ASP will not operate. The Program is offered at the Primary Campus. Students participating in the program in grades 3-5 are transported to the Primary Campus by school bus each afternoon. For more information, visit www.smithafterschool.com.

Daily Attendance Criteria

Board Policy JB governs student attendance. Students are expected to be present at school and to arrive and depart on time in accordance with the provisions of the Georgia compulsory attendance law. Students who are absent or tardy miss valuable instructional time and other important school activities. Chronic tardiness and absence from school result in a student being less likely to master those skills, concepts, and principles needed to be successful in life and to achieve on his/her respective grade level. Also, absenteeism and tardiness are disruptive to the "teaching-learning" process.

Excused absences include:

1. Personal illness of the student and/or when attendance in school would endanger the health of the student or the health of others.
2. Serious illness or death in the immediate family of the student that would reasonably necessitate absence.
3. Special and recognized religious holidays observed by the faith of the student.
4. Weather or other environmental conditions preventing a student from getting to school or rendering school attendance hazardous to health or safety of the student.

Upon return to school from any absence, the student is to bring to the school a note, signed by the parent/legal guardian, stating the reason for the absence.

Unexcused absences are recorded when the reason for absence:

1. Fails to meet the criteria for an excused absence.
2. Is due to disciplinary action enacted by the school.
3. Fails to be documented by the parent or physician in the form of a written note or doctor's excuse.

Partial Day Attendance

In order to be counted present, students must attend the required number of hours each day. Therefore, students who are tardy or leave school before the end of the day must be present one-half of the instructional day, excluding lunch, in order to be counted present for the day. If a student leaves and returns to school, the number of hours must equal or exceed 3 ½ hours in order to be counted present that day.

Attendance Monitoring

Our mission is to educate all students to their optimum level of academic performance. Regular attendance is necessary to reach this goal. If a child is not at school or frequently arrives late, he/she misses essential learning opportunities necessary for his/her academic growth. After 3 absences occur, parents will be contacted by the student's teacher to aid in solving the problem.

After 5 absences and/or 5 tardies occur, parents will be contacted by an Attendance Ambassador, Clerk, Assistant Principal or Social Worker to aid in solving the problem.

It is strongly urged for you to consider carefully before making the decision to take a vacation trip during the school year. The student is missing instruction, which may leave gaps in needed skills. Absences due to vacation trips are considered **unexcused** and will be reflected in the student's permanent record. Please help by having your child attend school regularly. Also, attendance data is reported to the system and federal level, so please strive for minimal absences for your child. School

goals and annual yearly progress are affected. Make up work will be assigned as follows:

With EXCUSED Absences:

1. Students must complete all work missed in a time frame equal to the number of days absent.
2. The parent and student share the responsibility for the student getting the makeup work completed and turned in on time.
3. When a child is ill, often it is best to wait until he/she is completely well and back at school before attempting to make up work.
4. Failure to make up missed work will be reflected in the student's grades, and in some borderline cases, could have long-range effects on progress.
5. As a consideration to the teacher, we ask that make-up work be obtained at the end of the school day.
6. Some in-class work is not possible to make up.

With UNEXCUSED Absences:

1. Students must complete all work missed in a time frame equal to the number of days absent.
2. The parent and student share the responsibility for the student getting the makeup work completed and turned in on time.
3. Failure to make up missed work will be reflected in the student's grades, and in some borderline cases, could have long-range effects on progress.
4. Make-up work/tests will be expected for unexcused absences due to the need to master/practice skill acquisition. However, grades may not be given for such work.

Make up work is not provided in advance.

Electronic Devices

To avoid disruption of instruction, the use of electronic devices, including, but not limited to cellular telephones and other portable communication devices, is allowed with the

restrictions outlined in APS board policy JCDAF. If electronics are used without permission, they will be confiscated and held for parent retrieval. Employees of SRS will not investigate the loss or theft of any electronic device. Students may use electronic devices to communicate with parents during dismissal, with the permission and supervision of a staff member. Bus riders may only use their devices prior to entering the bus. Students are not permitted to use electronic devices while riding the bus. They may resume communication with parents after disembarking the bus.

Withdrawal of a Student

If it is necessary to withdraw your child, there are important steps to follow:

1. Notify the office of your withdrawal date as early as possible.
2. Return all classroom books & devices.
3. Return all books/materials to the media center.
4. Make certain all lunch and after school charges have been paid in full.
5. Provide the office with a forwarding address.

After these steps have been completed, the school will provide you with a withdrawal form to take to your child's new school. Once your child is enrolled in the receiving school that school will request your child's records and Sarah Smith will forward them by mail.

Health Services Program

Do not send your child to school if he/she is ill or has: fever, bad cough, severe sore throat, diarrhea, skin rash, vomiting, lice, or pink eye.

Usually following an illness, your child may return to school if the above symptoms have not been present for at least 24 hours.

If a child in the clinic cannot return to the classroom within a reasonable length of time, a parent or emergency contact will be called to take the child home. If a child needs to be sent home during the day, it will be necessary for the parent or emergency contact to come to the school, sign out the child, and take the child home immediately.

Parents wishing school personnel to administer medication must complete the Administration of Medication Form and have it on file in the clinic. These forms may be obtained from the office.

Clinic information must be kept current, especially telephone numbers.

Medication Policy

The parent/legal guardian must bring to the school any medication that the school is expected to administer. No medication, prescribed or non-prescribed, can be dispensed without an Administration of Medication form, which must be signed by the parent, physician, and the school principal. This form must be brought to the school by the parent along with the medicine in its original container. The medicine must be labeled with the student's name, the name of the medication, directions for taking, dosage, time of day to be taken, the physician's name, and the date of the prescription. A non-prescription medication must be in its original container and labeled with the student's name and directions for giving the dosage. To take the medicine, the student will go to the clinic where the medication is kept in its original container. Under normal circumstances, no medicine is kept in the classrooms. At the end of the year, parents must pick up a child's medication from the clinic or it will be discarded. ‘

Change of Contact Information

The school must have correct, active telephone numbers and addresses of parents/legal guardians and emergency contacts on file in the school office. It is vitally important for the school to be able to contact parents/legal guardians immediately in the case of emergency. Notify the office and teacher immediately if your address, any telephone numbers, or email addresses are changed. A change of address must be accompanied by written documentation of the new address.

Proof of Residency

Every family must provide proof of residency **upon request**. Notification of the required documentation will be provided early during the second semester. Please keep a close watch on expiration dates of leases as new leases will be required upon the

expiration of current ones. Failure to provide appropriate proof of residency may result in your child's withdrawal from school and the expectation to enroll him/her in the home school.

Breakfast Program

A nutritious breakfast is served daily from 7:15 until 7:45 a.m. Students must arrive by 7:45 a.m. to be served. Students who ride APS buses will be served upon arrival.

Lunch Program

A nutritious lunch is served daily. Students may purchase a school lunch or bring a lunch from home. Menus will be sent home monthly. Lunches can be prepaid by using [My School Bucks](#). Please arrange for your child to have lunch/lunch money each day. If a student does not have lunch/lunch money, he/she will be served an alternate meal. Milk and juice are available with lunch.

Carbonated beverages such as Coca-Cola, Sprite, and Pepsi are not allowed. Food from "fast-food" restaurants such as McDonald's, Chick-fil-A, Burger King, or Wendy's is discouraged.

Lunch Visits

Parents may visit the cafeteria to have lunch with their children twice per semester. These visits must be prearranged with your child's teacher. Parents may not bring food for students other than their own child.

No Food Delivery Policy

To ensure the safety and well-being of students and staff, as well as to preserve uninterrupted instructional time, Sarah Smith is implementing a policy to manage the delivery of outside foods. Parents, students, and visitors are required to follow this policy, which prohibits the delivery of outside foods during school hours. Prohibited foods include restaurant, fast-food, or takeout items from parent, visitor or food delivery establishments such as UberEats, DoorDash, or GrubHub.

Lost and Found

It is suggested that parents write with permanent ink or sew the child's name in articles of clothing (coats, sweaters, raincoats, sweatshirts, etc.) and personal belongings (book bags, umbrellas, lunchboxes, etc.). At the end of each quarter, "found" articles and clothing will be donated to a charitable organization. You may check the Lost and Found collection during school hours.

Dress Code

In preparation of our students for college, career and life, and to build character and foster respect among students, the Atlanta Board of Education sets expectations for student dress that create a warm and welcoming environment for every student. The primary responsibility for a student's choice in attire resides with the student and their parent(s) or guardian(s). Our dress code policy aims to protect the health and safety, religious/spiritual expression and medical needs of students. Restrictions on student dress must be necessary to support the overall educational goals of the school and must be explained within the dress code. This student dress code shall not be interpreted or enforced in any manner that conflicts with Policy JAA, Equal Educational Opportunities, which states that:

"No student shall be subjected to discrimination or harassment because of the student's race, color, religion, sex, citizenship, ethnic or national origin, age, disability, medical status, military status, veteran status, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, genetic information, ancestry, hair texture, protective hairstyles (including, but not limited to, braids, locs, twists or Bantu knots) or any legally protected status in any of the Atlanta Public Schools' education programs, activities or practices. Students are allowed to wear clothing that expresses their self-identified gender."

The student dress code **requires the following**:

1. A top (shirt/sweater/blouse) of opaque (non-see through) fabric
2. A bottom (pant, skirt, shorts, dress) of opaque (non-see through) fabric
3. Shoes (covering entire foot)
4. Appropriate undergarments that are not visible

Students are free to wear specific apparel for medical purposes or as a part of a personal religious or spiritual practice as applicable.

Restrictions:

1. Clothing and/or jewelry must not contain words or symbols that are gang- related, sexually suggestive, obscene or promote illegal behavior.
2. Clothing and/or jewelry must not contain any advertisement or display of words or symbols associated with alcohol, illegal drugs or tobacco.
3. Students may not wear flip-flops, athletic slides or any footwear that does not support the front and back of the foot.(i.e.Crocs should be in sports mode.)

Revisions of the dress code will be distributed as they are made.

A warning will be given on the first violation. Any violation following, phone calls to parents to bring a change of clothing will be made.

Items Not Allowed On Campus

To best promote the school's safe and orderly school environment, any item that causes an interruption to the academic atmosphere or proves to be a safety hazard will not be allowed on campus. If students bring such items to school, the item will be taken and returned only after a parent meeting is held with the administrator or teacher. Disciplinary action may be necessary.

Examples of these items include:

1. Electronic games (i.e., Game Boy)
2. Radios, tape players, CD players, head phones
3. Aerosol sprays (i.e., hairspray, perfume)
4. Skateboards, roller skates, roller blades
5. Imitation or real knives or other weapons
6. Stun devices/immobilizers (devices delivering an electric shock)
7. Electronic paging devices (beepers) (real or toy versions)
8. Tobacco products, alcohol, drugs, etc.
9. Make-up (i.e., lipstick, nail polish)
10. Trading cards

11. Toys
12. Footballs
13. Yo-yos
14. Balls
15. Chewing gum

This list is not intended to be all-inclusive.

Weapons Policy

Because of its commitment to a safe learning environment for our students and staff, the Atlanta Board of Education has enacted a very strict policy prohibiting weapons on campuses and at school-sponsored events. Serious consequences for violation of this policy have been developed and will be strictly enforced. A copy of this policy and the penalties for violation of it are available through the office.

Money at School

Children should not bring any more money to school than is required for school store purchases, or certain approved fund-raising activities. There will be no buying or selling of any items among children at school.

Media Center

The media center is for all students, parents, and staff members. Students are responsible for all materials they check out from the media center. We expect students to treat all books and magazines carefully and responsibly. They are responsible for all lost or damaged books and are expected to pay for replacement.

Field Trips

There is a definite place for the educational experiences provided by field trips. Donations are sometimes solicited to cover expenses of such trips. While no child is denied these experiences, failure to receive sufficient funding may result in the cancellation of the trip. Official field trip permission forms must be completed, signed, and returned to the student's teacher before the date of the planned trip. Notes and phone calls from parents cannot be accepted as a form of permission to attend an off-campus activity. Due to space limitations,

chaperones for field trips are limited and arranged in advance.

Homework

Teachers assign homework to help students practice skills, review material, do reference work, and complete special projects or reports. Homework also helps students develop responsibility, independence, and good work habits. The specific needs of the grade level determine the amount and type of homework assigned.

To help your child, please do the following:

- Schedule a regular place and time for your child to complete homework.
- Avoid distractions, such as TV, music, etc.
- Check assignments for neatness and completion.
- Communicate any questions or difficulties completing homework with your child's teacher. This partnership allows us to address challenges and support your child's success.

Student Progress Reporting

Student progress updates are issued to all parents four times during the school year at the mid-grading period point. Report cards are issued at the end of the nine-week grading period. You may retain the copy sent home for your own records. Sign and return the signature card indicating you have received the reports.

If you have any questions about your child's progress, contact his/her teacher and arrange for a conference. Report cards and progress reports may be held for outstanding lunch charges, picture money, library books, proof of residency, etc.

Student Visitors

Children from other schools are not allowed to visit our campus during regular school hours without prior office approval. Requests for such visits must be done in writing. Students who are not enrolled at our school are not allowed to attend field trips with the school.

Visits and Conferences

To protect our students, all visitors must register in the front office and receive a badge. Staff members will stop people without a visible visitor's badge and redirect them to the front office.

We hold parent/teacher conference weeks twice a year, in the fall and spring. If another conference is needed, we encourage parents to request one with the teacher by note or email. Teachers can schedule conferences before or after school or during a planning period. Preferable methods of communication are Dojo and email. Please realize our teachers are busy and responsible for many children throughout the day, and student instruction is our priority.

We encourage parents to ask for a conference with the teacher whenever needed. Make arrangements by note or by telephone. It is best to set a time before school, after school, or during a teacher's planning period. A good way of communication with the teacher is through email. You are encouraged to exchange email addresses with your child's teacher and utilize this means of communication whenever possible. Conference weeks are held twice a year.

Multi-Tiered System of Supports

The school's Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework will assist teachers in addressing students' academic or behavioral concerns across three tiers. In Tier 1, universal supports are provided to all students to promote positive behavior and academic success. Tier 2 involves targeted interventions for students who need additional support beyond what is provided in Tier 1. Tier 3 includes intensive, individualized interventions for students with significant needs. Parents will be notified before any Tier 3 interventions begin and will be encouraged to actively participate in the Student Support Team (SST) process. A variety of assessment tools will be utilized to gain a deeper understanding of a child's specific academic and/or behavioral needs. If you have any questions or would like more information about the MTSS process, please contact your child's teacher.

Safe and Orderly School

At our school, we have high expectations for student behavior and student commitment to learning. Teachers and staff use various strategies to encourage all students to exhibit positive behavior. Incidents of negative behavior, along with appropriate consequences, will be shared with both students and parents. Consequences may include notes home, time-out periods, parent conferences, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, restriction of privileges, withdrawal from certain school-sponsored activities, etc. In addition, we implement progressive discipline and restorative practices when responding to negative student behaviors or incidents. A student who is suspended from school will be excluded from all school activities and is prohibited from being on the school grounds during the dates of suspension.

Discipline

Our school integrates progressive discipline and restorative practices by focusing on both accountability and the holistic development of our students. Progressive discipline is employed to ensure that consequences are appropriate to the severity of the behavior, allowing for fair and measured responses that encourage reflection and growth. This approach is complemented by restorative practices, which aim to repair harm and rebuild relationships through dialogue and understanding. By fostering an environment where students actively engage in resolving conflicts and addressing the impact of their actions, we create a community centered on empathy, respect, and mutual support. This dual strategy not only addresses behavioral issues but also promotes a positive school culture that values learning from mistakes and personal development.

Developing a positive school climate involves the use of natural, logical, and realistic consequences; a simple structure; reasonable rules; as well as the involvement of the student in his/her own educational programming. In such an atmosphere, the class is neither teacher-dominated nor student-controlled; rather, it is a joint effort to learn, relate, and experience. A positive learning environment is necessary in order for students to be successful. Good behavior is essential to a positive environment.

At Sarah Smith, we believe that parental support and involvement are vital to good behavior and student success. Policy JBD is the Board Policy for Student Conduct. Please review the nine important points listed in this policy with your child.

The Atlanta Board of Education provides for and expects student conduct to be consistent with these nine points. A school-wide discipline plan will be shared with the parents and reviewed with every student during the first month of school.

Safety Procedures

Throughout the year, students and staff members participate in safety drills. Drills will include procedures for bus evacuation, severe weather, tornado, fire, and immediate danger including bomb threats or an intruder situation.

Parties & Events

Birthdays: Parents can schedule a lunch visit for birthday celebrations. You may also bring a class set of treats for the class to enjoy. To avoid disrupting instruction, this should be done during lunch and must be prearranged with the teacher. Please check with your child's teachers on their preferences for treats (cupcakes are very messy for Kindergartners) and to confirm any dietary allergies.

Please only bring treats for your child's homeroom. We appreciate thinking of others but we insist on only providing treats to the one homeroom class. It is difficult to explain to a class being left out why they can't have what others are getting. (edited 8/6/25 for clarity)

Class Parties:

Principal Perot will communicate party preferences after grade level teams define them within parameters (after Labor Day).

Thanksgiving: Only Kindergarten will host Thanksgiving Feasts/Parties. The date will be provided as the event approaches.

Valentine's Day: The students may exchange valentines, but there will not be class parties.

December & May Celebrations: Parents may enjoy the festivities and assist during our school-wide December and May celebrations.

2nd Grade Walk to IC (Spring): Each class may have up to 5 parent volunteers to act as chaperones, ensuring safety and maintaining pace during the event. No other parents are needed for the event.

School Closing

When the Atlanta Public School System is going to be closed because of inclement weather, the decision for closing schools is usually made and given to local radio and television stations by 6:00 a.m. Please watch or listen. If a decision to close school is made during the school day, the statement will be given to the media. The school will not be able to call parents in this situation. Please discuss emergency weather plans with your child.

Teacher/Classroom Request Policy

It is the policy of Sarah Smith that classroom assignments will be made by the teachers and finalized by administration. Parents will have the opportunity to share input about their individual student's educational needs each spring via a Google form sent out by the Principal. Establishing a class roster entails many variables, such as gender, age, race, ability level, matching of teaching style with a student's learning style, dynamics with peers, parent input surrounding individual student needs, etc. At all grade levels, the teachers, supporting faculty and administration will attempt to distribute students so that every class is as comparable as possible. **This is a process that is quite involved and each is carefully assessed based on needs.** Requesting certain teachers creates an extremely difficult situation and equity is hard to maintain, therefore teacher requests are not accepted or considered.

Telephone Messages

Be sure your child has all the instructions and necessary materials for the day prior to leaving for school. Out-going calls by students must be approved. Teachers and students are unavailable to take phone calls during instructional time; however, the office personnel will relay any messages to the teachers and students. Students should not use cell phones to call home during school.

Textbooks

Textbooks for the students are provided through district and state funds as well as Foundation donations. Students are responsible to the school for the proper care of books and must pay for lost or damaged books. In cases where the damage is so extensive as to render the book unusable, the full price will be collected since the book will no longer be in use. Each student shall return all textbooks and library books issued to him/her when leaving the school or at the end of the school year.

Gifted Education Services

The Georgia State Board of Education defines a gifted students as "...a student who demonstrates a high degree of intellectual, and/or creative ability(ies), exhibits an exceptionally high degree of motivation, and/or excels in specific academic fields, and who needs special instruction and/or special ancillary services to achieve at levels commensurate with his or her abilities."

Atlanta Public Schools provide services for identified gifted students at all levels. The gifted program is designed to meet the very specific needs of these students and extend competencies in the areas of cognitive skills, learning skills, research and reference skills, communication skills, and metacognitive skills beyond the experience of the regular classroom.

The Georgia State Department of Education governs the procedures for identifying and placing students in the gifted program. Eligibility criteria are available in the office.

School Property

Respect should be shown to all school property at all times. Costs for any damage to school property may become the responsibility of the student. This includes textbooks, furniture, computers, and other school-owned items.

Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO)

The Sarah Smith PTO is a support organization consisting of all the stakeholders in your child's education. We work together to secure, for all

children, the highest quality advantages in physical, mental, and social education. This involves participation in school fundraising, committee input, and social communication. The PTO Executive Board meets monthly. General membership meetings are held during the school year. All PTO meetings are open to the public. Dates are found on the school calendar.

In order to become a voting member, you must register at one of our meetings or functions and pay your annual dues. If you have any further questions, contact the school and leave a message for the PTO President.

Volunteer programs are offered at Sarah Smith Elementary School. Participants in this program perform a very important role. Areas in which help is needed include: working with teachers, assisting in the media center, etc.

By volunteering in our school programs, you play a crucial role in shaping our students' lives. Even one hour per week would help strengthen our school. For more information, contact the school office.

Teacher Gifts

Parents who want to give gifts to their teachers are strongly encouraged to give individual gifts. Per the staff Code of Ethics that is tied to their certification staff may not accept gifts over \$50. Please help us protect our teachers by not placing them in a situation that tempts them to violate their Code of Ethics.

While we know our parent community is generous, we ask that funds can also be directed to the PTO Staff Appreciation Fund to ensure equitable treatment of all SRS teachers and staff. This fund provides teachers and staff with meals, birthday gifts, holiday gifts, and appreciation gifts throughout the year.

Sarah Smith Education Foundation

The Sarah Smith Education Foundation, Inc. (SSEF) believes in the relationship between strong schools and a strong community. To this end, the foundation is committed to supporting our school's pursuit of excellence in education. The Foundation is dedicated to actively enhancing public education by stimulating academic achievement and enriching the learning environment. The Foundation is a not-for-profit organization, relying on individual and corporate donations and community fundraising events for support of its mission. An annual report of the Sarah Smith Education Foundation will be shared.

Sarah Smith Go Team

Parent and community support are critical to the success of our school and students. The Go-Team will approve our school's strategic plan, monitor updates to the plan, and provide oversight of its implementation. This team will provide input into curriculum selection, as well as instructional materials. The Go-Team helps to develop and approve the annual budget recommendations made by the Principal. Furthermore, this team provides input into school operations that are consistent with the school's strategic plan. In the event of a Principal vacancy, the Go-Team participates in the hiring and selection of the Principal. Finally, the Go-Team provides annual feedback to the Associate Superintendent on Principal performance.

Important Phone Numbers

Atlanta Public Schools	(404) 802-3500
APS Security	(404) 802-2000
Student Enrollment	(404) 802-2233
Transportation	(404) 802-5500
Smith PC	(404) 802-3850
Smith IC	(404) 802-3880
Smith PC Cafe	(404) 802-3867
Smith IC Cafe	(404) 802-3879