

Science Leadership Academy Middle School

STUDENT HANDBOOK

2016 - 2017 School Year



Table Of Contents

[Table Of Contents](#)

[A Note to the Families](#)

[Absentee Policy](#)

[Academic Integrity Policy](#)

[Definition of Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty for this Policy:](#)

[MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS](#)

[MINOR ASSIGNMENTS](#)

[Student Sign-off](#)

[Acceptable Use Policy \(AUP\)](#)

[Chromebook Insurance and Breakage Information](#)

[Advisory](#)

[Appearance Guidelines](#)

[Assessment at SLAMS](#)

[SLAMS Rubric](#)

[Narratives at SLAMS](#)

[Rationale:](#)

[Process:](#)

[Classroom Policies](#)

[Class Schedule](#)

[Code Of Conduct](#)

[The Elevator](#)

[Gym/ Recess](#)

[Hours of Operation](#)

[Lateness Policy](#)

[Lunch and Food Service @ SLAMS](#)

[Marking Periods](#)

[Personal Electronic Devices](#)

[Transportation](#)

[Weather Emergencies](#)

A Note to the Families

The purpose of this handbook is to inform students and families about the practical aspects of life at the Science Leadership Academy Middle Schools (SLAMS). In addition, there are many people at SLAMS who are prepared to help make the middle school experience as powerful and enriching an experience as possible for students and their families. We look forward to getting to know you and your children. Additional information about the school can be found on our website: slamiddle.org, and if you have any more questions after reading this document, please feel free to call the school at **215-400-8320**.

Absentee Policy

On any day that a student is going to be absent due to illness or any other reason, families should telephone the SLAMS secretary, Kathy Spencer at **215-400-8320** or email at **attendance@slamiddle.org** by 8:30 am. After an absence from any contagious or communicable disease, a note from the family physician or release from the Board of Health should be delivered to the School Nurse or School Secretary. In the case of all absences, students are encouraged to stay current on their school-work using the SLAMS website to receive assignments and take part in classes.

Academic Integrity Policy

In all classes, we value student collaboration and expression of original ideas. We expect the majority of students to turn in assignments that either meet or exceed our expectations and contain no plagiarized or copied work. To honor students' hard work and promote fairness, we introduce the following policy to respond to work that has been plagiarized or copied.

Definition of Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty for this Policy:

In an instructional setting, plagiarism occurs when a student uses or supplies someone else's language, ideas, or other original material without acknowledging its source. Including, but not limited to:

- ❖ Copying from the Internet or any other source (including putting work into an online translator)
- ❖ Copying from another student
- ❖ Turning in another person's work as your own
- ❖ Submitting a group project that includes plagiarized or copied work
- ❖ Supplying another student with work that is not their own

MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS

If plagiarism/copying occurs on larger assessments in a given academic year (benchmarks, large projects worth 10% of grade or more):

- *1st offense:* Students will automatically fail the quarter if the assignment isn't re-done. Students can re-do the assignment, and any redone project that meets expectations can earn up to a 50%. The re-done project's grade will be mathematically factored in to determine the student's final grade for the quarter. If plagiarism/copying is caught at the very end of the quarter, student will earn an Incomplete for the quarter and will have a maximum of two weeks to re-do the assignment for 50% credit. There will also be a family meeting with advisors, teacher and student.
- *2nd offense in any class:* Student will fail the course where the second plagiarism occurs for the quarter and there will be a family meeting with advisors, teacher and Mr. Boyle.
- *3rd offense in any class:* Student will fail the course where the third plagiarism occurs for the year.

****Group Projects:** If a group project is submitted that contains plagiarized or copied work, other group members who didn't plagiarize will be penalized one full letter grade (10%) for the project, and the group member who plagiarized/copied will fall under the above consequences. If there is a concern about a group member possibly plagiarizing or not

completing his or her share of a group's work, other group members should voice this concern with their teacher as early as possible, and the teacher will work with the group to come up with a solution.

MINOR ASSIGNMENTS

If plagiarism occurs on other assignments (non-benchmarks; smaller assignments), the following consequences will apply for BOTH copier and copiee):

- *1st offense:* 0 and redo for 0 credit, meeting with advisor and alert families.
- *2nd offense in same class:* meet with advisor, teacher and Mr. Boyle
- *Additional offenses in class:* family comes in and meets with Mr. Boyle, possible suspension or failure for quarter depending on frequency of offenses.

*Adapted from the Council of Writing Program Administrators,
<http://www.wpacouncil.org>*

Student Sign-off

I have reviewed and understand the SLAMS Plagiarism Policy. All work presented in upcoming projects will be my own; I will not give or receive unauthorized help on any projects during the course of this year.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)

Science Leadership Academy Middle School values technology and encourages its use in creative ways to support student learning in a safe and secure learning environment. This policy is a guide ensuring the appropriate use as well as safety for all community members. While these technologies provide powerful learning opportunities, they must be used responsibly. Laptops are the School District of Philadelphia's property, we strongly encourage that the insurance purchased. That way if there is any major damage families are only liable for the deductible. All non-insured machines will be repaired at full cost.

The following rules apply to any device connected to the School District of Philadelphia's network. Learning always takes priority while using the SLAMS wireless and hardwired internet connections. The following guidelines apply to any school device, whenever it is in use, and any device logged into the the School District of Philadelphia's network. Some of these rules differ for home use, so it is the responsibility of the student to know the difference and to adhere to the School District of Philadelphia's network rules and Acceptable Use Policy while in school.

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- ❖ Do not touch or explore data on another person's laptop/device unless invited by the owner
 - ❖ Only access areas of the network you have been given permission to access at school
 - ❖ Do not load any game, video or music file on your machine that is not paid for or have the rights to use by you.
 - ❖ Do not play games at school, unless school and family approved
 - ❖ Do not chat online or play music/videos unless given permission by your teacher
 - ❖ Do not post or send any message/picture/sound/video that is obscene, rude, harassing or insulting to anyone
 - ❖ Do not attack, threaten or intimidate another student via technology (or otherwise)
 - ❖ Do not take pictures or post pictures of others without asking their permission
 - ❖ Do not take up bandwidth by downloading movies, music, pictures, or by playing online games
 - ❖ Do not store data on the hard drive, all personal files must be saved on an external hard drive/cloud space
 - ❖ Do not download any illegal materials or intellectual property that was not purchased by you
 - ❖ Peer to peer file sharing is strictly prohibited and monitored by the School District of Philadelphia
 - ❖ Do not plagiarize, for more information see SLA's academic integrity policy
 - ❖ Do not forward or send any content not directly associated with your learning
 - ❖ Do not deliberately or negligently spread viruses, malware, or spyware

Science Leadership Academy Middle School and The School District of Philadelphia will monitor user data and internet access and has the right to check the contents of any electronic device brought onto the school's premises or on any official school event. Educational use of the network and computer resources takes precedence over non-educational use. This statement covers (but is not limited to) the use of any and all electronic devices owned by the school and by the students that are brought onto school's premises or at other official school functions.

An email address with the suffix **@philasd.org** will be provided to all students. Students may use this to communicate with families, teachers, friends, experts and fellow students around the globe. This address is to be used for all school-related business. Your private account should be used for all other communications. Communicating online is very much like communicating with people in person. You must be respectful of others at all times. Remember that all email & Google Apps files can be read by the SLAMS Technology Team and the administration. Don't write anything you would not want to share with teachers and families.

While many members of SLAMS, including staff members, use instant messaging and blogging software to communicate, part of the learning experience at SLAMS is to responsibly use these types of communication methods as part of your school day.

Above all follow the school rules:

Respect Yourself ~ Respect the Community ~ Respect SLAMS as a Place of Learning

Chromebook Insurance and Breakage Information

SLAMS will offer an insurance policy for student Chromebooks. More information on this policy will be posted soon.

Advisory

The purpose of the Advisory class at SLAMS is to provide academic support to students and to foster a sense of community within the school. Advisory is a safe-haven for students founded on confidentiality and mutual respect. It provides a place for student to express themselves about issues that are important to them, including transitioning from elementary school into middle school, managing classwork expectations, peer pressure, conflict resolution with teachers, and more.

Families should view the advisor as their first link to the school. They should email/phone the advisor about matters such as extended absences and/or special issues, or to check on a student's progress.

Families and their child meet with their child's advisor three times throughout the year to review the student's academic and social progress, and to discuss the student's achievements and challenges. Whenever possible, students are paired with an advisor for their entire middle school career. Therefore, advisors have the advantage of looking at a student's academic and social adjustment to middle school holistically and across disciplines. As students advance to the seventh and eighth years, Advisory discussions also deal with course choices and high school selection issues and activities. Advisory meets Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 12:00-12:30pm.

Appearance Guidelines

SLAMS students must dress respectfully in such a way that their dress does not interfere with another student's learning. Students are expected to be dressed respectfully, neatly, and modestly in clothing suitable for school.

Assessment at SLAMS

Students at SLAMS are assessed through a variety of means with a focus on project-based learning and our five core values of inquiry, research, collaboration, presentation, and reflection. Our students do not take the School District of Philadelphia benchmark exams; rather, they complete projects in every subject that are assessed based on the SLAMS rubric (see below). The descriptions in the empty boxes are filled in according to the subject and project nature.

SLAMS Rubric

	Exceeds Expectations 20-18	Meets Expectations 18-16	Approaches Expectations 15-13	Does Not Meet Expectations
Design - Does student plan and structure the project thoughtfully and purposefully?				
Knowledge - Does student demonstrate the understanding of ideas through inquiry, research, analysis, or experience?				
Application - Does student use a variety of skills and strategies to apply knowledge to the problem or project?				
Process - Does student take the necessary steps to fully realize the project goals?				
Presentation - Does student effectively communicate the central ideas of the project?				

Narratives at SLAMS

Rationale:

The purpose of narratives is to communicate information about student progress and achievement with regard to areas of proficiency, areas of challenge and examples to demonstrate those points.

Process:

Each interdisciplinary teacher will craft a narrative for each student twice per year (after the first and third quarter), students are then given a narrative report card in addition to their school district report card. During family-advisor report card conferences, advisors, families and students go through their report cards for each class, and the narrative serves as a means for better understanding of the grades entered on the traditional report cards.

Classroom Policies

Families should be aware that while there are universal guidelines at SLAMS, teachers may have different classroom procedures regarding hats, food, etc. We expect all students to respect those guidelines. Students who cannot abide by the classroom policies and, therefore, are asked to leave class more than once in a school year may have to have their family come in and follow them through several class periods so that family can observe student behavior.

Class Schedule

The SLAMS class schedule is rather unique. Classes meet for 80 minutes four times a week at different times during the day. Classes meet during the letter bands, for example a student might have Humanities during A Band. The class period schedule is as follows:

Mon., Weds., Thurs., & Fri.		Tuesdays	
8:15-9:35	A	8:15-9:25	A
9:40-11:00	B	9:25-10:35	B
11:00-12:00	Lunch	10:35-11:45	C
12:00-12:30	Advisory	11:45-12:55	D
12:30-1:50	C	12:55-1:25	Lunch
1:55-3:20	D	1:30-3:20	Mini Courses

- All students are involved in their Mini Courses from 1:30 - 3:20 on Tuesdays.
- Teachers are in Faculty Workshops from 1:30 - 3:20 every Tuesday.
- Please note: SLAMS students may remain in classes, on days when other School District of Philadelphia schools have an early dismissal for staff development afternoons. Please refer to the SLAMS calendar for more information.

Code Of Conduct

At SLAMS, we have come together to try to further each other's knowledge, wisdom and abilities. To do that, we all need to feel safe, valued and respected. To that end, we offer the following three guidelines for student behavior:

- ❖ Respect and care about yourself.
- ❖ Respect and care about the community and its members.
- ❖ Respect and care that this is a place of learning

All other specific guidelines for behavior stem from these simple statements.

Disciplinary actions for students who violate any or all of these codes of conduct range from family conferences, to loss of privileges, to suspension and/or expulsion from SLAMS. Students and families should be familiar with the School District of Philadelphia's Code of Conduct that can be found at www.philasd.org.

The Elevator

The elevator at SLAMS is owned and operated by the Dornsife Center, and they have asked that students not ride the elevators due to safety concerns. Therefore, students are not allowed to use the elevators without an elevator pass or authorization from a teacher. Students who use the elevator without permission will be subject to a \$20 fine.

Gym/ Recess

Recess is scheduled every day at the West Philadelphia Community Center gym. It is highly recommended that students wear clothes and shoes appropriate for physical activity.

Hours of Operation

The school building is open from **7:45 am** to **3:20 pm** Monday-Friday. The first class starts at **8:15 am** every morning, and school ends at **3:20 pm**.

Lateness Policy

School starts at 8:15 every morning. The school opens for student access at 7:45 am, so there should not be a reason for students to time their arrival so closely as to risk being late. Students who have accrued 4 unexcused latenesses within a one month period will necessitate a meeting between the school and family.

Latenesses that are the result of doctor visits or other extenuating circumstances, accompanied with a note, will not count toward a family attendance meeting. Train/Bus delays that are not reported by SEPTA are not excused. If you know your child will be late, please email attendance@slamiddle.org or send in a note and cc your child's advisor.

Lunch and Food Service @ SLAMS

All students are entitled to a free breakfast and lunch according to School District of Philadelphia regulations. Students will eat in the cafeteria, or the designated picnic area outside, weather permitting. Students are expected to respect the school and assist SLAMS staff in keeping the lunch areas clean.

Marking Periods

SLAMS follows the School District of Philadelphia high school calendar for marking periods. Please Note: SLAMS students may remain in classes on days when other School District of Philadelphia schools have an early dismissal for staff development afternoons. (see class schedule) Please refer to the SLAMS calendar for more information.

Personal Electronic Devices

At SLAMS, we are proud to be a 21st century school and we promote responsible and thoughtful use of personal electronic devices. However, cell phones, iPods, PDA's and other items should not interfere with the learning process. Teachers reserve the right to confiscate a student's device if it is interfering with class. The first time a student's personal electronic device appears to be disruptive, it will be taken away and returned to the student at the end of the school day. Families will need to come to the school to collect their child's personal electronic device the second time it is confiscated.

Transportation

The following buses and trolley stops near 3509 Spring Garden Street: Bus 31, 43 and Trolley 10. Free transpasses are available from SEPTA for students who live at least 1.5 miles away from the school ([School District of Philadelphia's transportation policies](#)). Transpasses will be handed out on the first day of school during advisory. Throughout the year, transpasses will continue to be distributed by their advisor.

Weather Emergencies

SLAMS is a School District of Philadelphia school and operates the same as other Philadelphia public and charter schools do. Please listen to your local news stations, or go online to philadelphia.cbslocal.com or www.phila.k12.pa.us to check for school closings due to inclement weather or weather emergencies. The SLAMS school code is **2050**.