



Stone Valley Middle School: Frequently Asked Questions for New Families

Welcome to Stone Valley Middle School (SVMS)! SVMS's PTA and administrators have prepared the following questions and answers to hopefully make your transition to SVMS a bit easier. If you have any additional questions, please reach out to the PTA's new families chair at newfamilies@stonevalleypta.org.

For additional information, the [Student Handbook](https://tinyurl.com/StudentHandbookSVMS) (<https://tinyurl.com/StudentHandbookSVMS>) is a great resource.

FIRST DAY / WEEK CONCERNS + LOGISTICS

Any tips for 6th graders for that first week of school?

- Relax. Everyone is learning and figuring things out at the same time, so enjoy and go meet a new friend or two! SVMS will have 8th grade students called WEB (Where Everyone Belongs) Leaders who support students in learning how to navigate campus and how to get to class on time. SVMS does not issue tardy slips to students during this first week and a half of school to reduce any stress or anxiety they may have with their new surroundings. SVMS staff will be out supporting students throughout the first couple of weeks as well. Most students adjust much faster than parents/caregivers expect!
- Remember that it's normal for friendships to shift in middle school.
- Encourage students to stay organized from the start. Teachers expect more independence in middle school.

Are there lockers other than PE lockers?

- Unfortunately, no. Students typically carry heavy backpacks throughout the day. SVMS teachers are aware that students carry around a lot of materials and try to set up areas in their classrooms for students to store materials they don't need to take home each day.

How do the students manage heavy backpacks all day?

- Students handle backpacks in a variety of ways. Some carry their lunches (or other items) in a separate grocery-style tote or Lululemon-style bag. You can help your student by going through their backpack regularly with them, to ensure they only have what they need.

What about PE clothes?

- You can order PE uniforms during registration (shorts and a shirt), or you can bring your own uniform (meeting the color requirements of RED shorts and a solid GRAY shirt). You may want to have two sets of uniforms so that your student has a backup while one set is being washed.
- Please note that all uniform pieces (whether purchased from SVMS or brought from home) MUST BE CLEARLY LABELED with your student's name in the following manner: Last Name, First Initial.
- Students should bring their PE clothes home each week to be washed. Remind your student to bring them home each week, so you don't end up with clothes that haven't been washed all year!

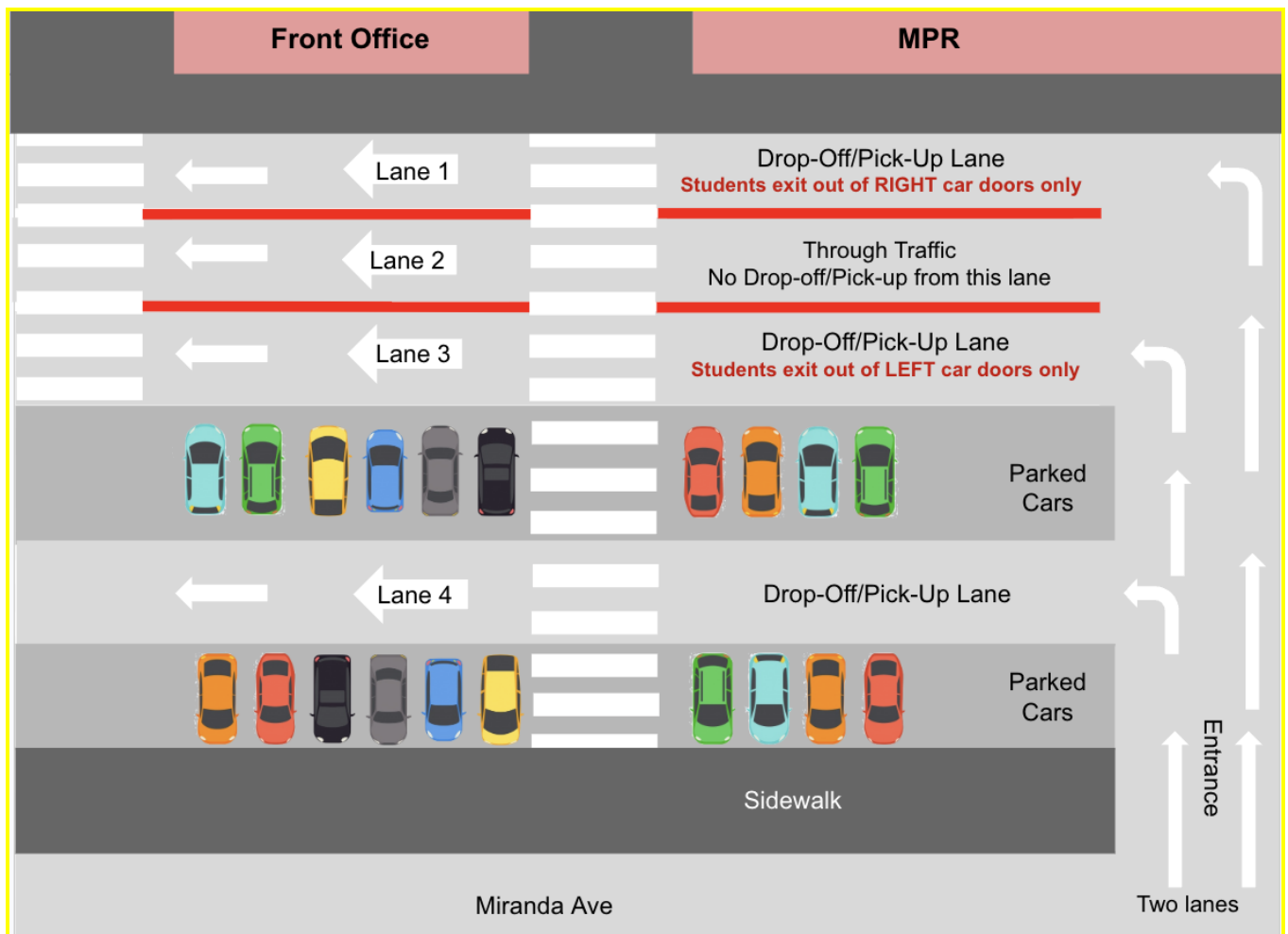
- If you need to order additional PE clothes during the school year, you can purchase them through the [SVMS Future Fund online store](http://sv.futurefund.com/store) (<http://sv.futurefund.com/store>). (Please note the online store opens during fall registration.)

How will my student get around such a big campus?

- Better than most families expect. During WEB Day (see below for more information), experienced students will show them around the school, and they will have a couple of days to adjust to moving between classes. In reality, the majority of classes are in one building, which is two stories. If they start at the wrong end one day, they will be unlikely to make that mistake the next day. Getting to class on time is typically not an issue after the first week.

How does drop-off and pick-up go?

- Similar to elementary, traffic can be an issue in middle school. Four lanes of traffic condense down to one to exit out of the one-way parking lot. Some drivers disregard the sign that **requires a right turn** out of the parking lot during drop-off and pick-up hours, which causes additional headaches and safety issues. Please help keep everyone safe by following the posted traffic directions.
- Students must **always** use the crosswalks and are not permitted to run across Miranda Avenue for any reason unless in a crosswalk. SVMS would rather a student be a little late than create a safety issue.
- Pro tips: Create a carpool—it makes things easier. Arriving on the earlier side of drop-off and on the later side of pick-up is also a lot quicker.



- **Lanes #1 & #3** are the main drop-off/pick-up lanes for families. Please have students exit **away** from the middle lane rather than into lane 2/oncoming traffic.
- **Lane #2** is a through-traffic lane only and is NOT for student drop-off or pick-up at any time.
- **Lane #4** is also a drop-off/pick-up lane but you are not allowed to block traffic.

- The speed limit inside our parking lot is 5 mph.
- Please do not be on your cell phone while picking up and dropping off students.
- **All traffic exiting our parking lot must turn right** during drop off and pick up (7:45-8:15 AM Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday; 8:45-9:15 AM Wednesdays; 2:45-3:00 PM M-F).
- Students are required to use crosswalks at all times and must be continually **reminded to make eye contact with drivers** prior to crossing regardless of where the crosswalk is.
- Students biking/skateboarding/scooter to school must wear a helmet (and buckle it).
- Riders must get off of their bike/skateboard/scooter and walk it through the crosswalks.
- Please review the [current laws regarding electric bikes and scooters](https://tinyurl.com/EbikeScootersLaw) (<https://tinyurl.com/EbikeScootersLaw>). As e-scooter riders must have a driver's license, **students are not allowed to ride electric scooters to/from school. All E-bikes must be type 1 or 2.**

What school supplies should students bring to school on the first day?

- SVMS's PTA works with an [outside vendor](https://tinyurl.com/SchoolSuppliesSVMS) (<https://tinyurl.com/SchoolSuppliesSVMS>) that provides an option for parents/caregivers to purchase basic school supplies that are designated for each student's grade level. Once purchased online, your school supplies will get shipped directly to your home so your student is all set to go for the school year (and a portion of the proceeds support the PTA)! Or, you can use the list to pick up what you need locally!
- Since each class is different, students will learn more from each teacher about what additional school supplies they need to purchase on top of the basic school supplies. The good news is that the first day of school (or even the first couple of weeks!) is for everyone to iron out the kinks and get settled.
- Checklist for the first day of school:
 - Pencils, pens, highlighters, a folder, paper, etc.
 - Chromebook and charger
 - Snack (if they don't want the school-provided ones)
 - Water bottle (refill stations available on campus)

THE SCHOOL DAY

When should I drop off my student?

- Students should arrive at school no more than 15 minutes before the first bell. There is minimal on-campus supervision before 8:00 AM.

Is there recess?

- There isn't a traditional recess in middle school. There is a 10-minute break in the late morning for the students to take a break and recharge. Many students choose to have a snack during this break, and our cafeteria offers free brunch items to all students, or they can bring one from home. At lunch they can play on the blacktop and fields.

What about lunch?

- Students have 30 minutes for lunch each day.
- 6th grade students are expected to eat lunch in the cafeteria. 7th and 8th graders typically eat outside.
- SVMS provides sports equipment (about 40-50 pieces of sports equipment are checked out daily) to play games like soccer, basketball, volleyball, frisbee, kickball, Spikeball, etc.
- Students can also play ping pong, foosball, and board/card games at lunch (thanks to generous donations by the PTA!).

Can I have lunch delivered to school for my student?

- If your student will not be having the free, school-provided lunch, it's best to send them to school with a packed lunch. Bringing lunch to school for your student is allowed but not encouraged. If you do drop off lunch, it should be left at the front office and your student will need to get a slip to pick it up (SVMS will not interrupt classes for any deliveries like this). Delivery services (e.g., Doordash, Uber Eats, and any others) are NOT permitted at SVMS and will be turned away.

SCHEDULES

What does a “typical” schedule look like?

- 6th grade students are automatically registered for the following classes: Math, Science, PE, three periods of Core (Language Arts, Reading, and Social Studies), and one period of an elective, most likely “Wheel” or “Music.” (See the ELECTIVES section for more information on “Wheel.”)
- 7th and 8th grade students are automatically registered for the following classes: Math, Science, PE, two periods of Core (Language Arts and Social Studies), and two periods of electives.
- If your family chooses to opt out of taking an elective, your student will only attend school for six periods a day.
- Please click here (<https://tinyurl.com/BellScheduleSVMS>) for a more detailed view of the daily bell schedule.

What is Access, and how often does it happen?

- Two Access periods are provided each week so that students can schedule time with teachers who can provide additional help. Students who need extra support or reteaching will be invited by teachers to an Access period. Teachers also use this time for reassessment of essential standards and skills. Students who are not pulled into an Access class by a teacher will sign up on their own for a study hall or other support class.

What is a Block Period?

- SVMS is on a rotating block schedule (as shown above in the bell schedule link). Block schedule days provide students with close to double the time for learning with an extended class period of 83 minutes. This enables our staff to offer more project-based learning opportunities, as well as more engaging lessons, including labs, learning stations, and whole-class discussions and debates.

How/why do schedules change during the year?

- Some elective classes only last one semester, so students will take one class first semester and a different elective the second semester.

What do we do if my student wants to change classes?

- There is a small window to change classes, usually during the first week of the term. There are no guarantees for transfers. Typically, schedule changes only occur if there is a missing course or a duplicate course.
- Schedule change requests based on social concerns or teacher choice requests are not accepted.

ACADEMICS & SUPPORT

How much homework is assigned?

- SVMS follows the [district-wide homework policy](https://tinyurl.com/HomeworkPolicySRVUSD) (<https://tinyurl.com/HomeworkPolicySRVUSD>). Homework often consists of completing work that wasn't finished in class. Independent reading is usually a homework component as well.

What is Infinite Campus? What is ParentSquare? What is Google Classroom?

- **Infinite Campus** (<https://tinyurl.com/InfiniteCampusSRVUSD>):
 - This is our Campus Portal for the district, through which parents/caregivers are able to view important information about their students (grades, assessments, GPA, etc.) as well as make updates/changes to their own household/emergency contact information.
 - Some of our teachers also post their class and course materials, reports of student progress, and grades on Infinite Campus.
 - Progress report, quarter, and semester grades will be posted by all teachers to Infinite Campus.
- **ParentSquare** (<https://www.parentsquare.com/>):
 - ParentSquare is designed to keep parents/caregivers informed and facilitate participation at school. It provides a safe way for the school principal, teachers, staff, and parents/caregivers to:
 - Stay up to date on news and events
 - Send and receive messages with staff

- Sign up for volunteer opportunities (if shared by staff)
- View school calendar items
- **Google Classroom** (<https://classroom.google.com/>): This tool is used by some teachers to post class and course materials, curriculum, and student progress and current grades.
- In their course syllabi, teachers will specify which platform is used for class and course materials, as well as for posting grades.

How can I see my student's assignments and grades?

- Parents/caregivers can monitor student progress and view official quarter and semester grades on Infinite Campus. An Infinite Campus mobile app is also available. Parents/caregivers and students can set up notifications about grades and missing assignments.

Will my student bring home a report card? When are report cards issued?

- Students do not bring home a hard copy of a report card since you are able to access your student's report card directly in the Infinite Campus portal.
- Digital report cards will be issued at the end of each semester – one in January and one in June.

Does taking a language in middle school count toward high school credit? What about high school-level math?

- Students who are interested in taking a language are encouraged to take two full years (in 7th and 8th grades) of the same language so that it is transferable to high school as one year of foreign language credit.
- Students who advance into high school-level math classes (Algebra and Geometry) also earn high school credits.
- Grades received in any high school-level class are reflected on high school transcripts.

What is "testing out" of 6th grade math?

- In the spring of 5th grade, students have the opportunity to "test out" of 6th grade math (officially called Course 1 math). If they meet district requirements, they can choose to take 7th grade math (known as Course 2) during 6th grade. For more information on math pathways and instruction in SRVUSD, please visit the [district's math webpage](https://tinyurl.com/MathSRVUSD) (<https://tinyurl.com/MathSRVUSD>).

STUDENT SUPPORT

What do SVMS counselors do?

- Counselors support SVMS students in developing educational and career plans by interpreting assessments and providing guidance in academic achievement and college and career planning. They also foster students' personal and social development, helping navigate peer dynamics, including friend groups, through discussion and restorative practices. Please check the school website to find out which counselor is assigned to your student.

How do conferences work?

- At SVMS, conference week works a little differently from elementary school. Your student will not have a conference with their teachers unless:
 - Teachers identify the need for a conference.
 - Parents/caregivers request a conference with the teachers.
- There are two conference weeks in a school year, one in October and one in March. Please note that parents/caregivers can always request a conference with their student's teachers if they have concerns to discuss.

How do I communicate with the teachers?

- Parents/caregivers and students are encouraged to communicate with teachers via email. Teachers can also be emailed directly from the SVMS staff directory found on the school's website.

What types of support are offered to students?

- For academic support, **begin by contacting your student's teachers and discussing your concerns**. Access periods are built into every week so students can schedule time with teachers who can provide additional help. Students who need extra support or reteaching will be invited by teachers to an Access period. Teachers also use this time for reassessment of essential standards and skills.
- SVMS offers **social-emotional support** in a few different ways:
 - Counselors provide occasional check-ins for both academic and social-emotional support. If your student needs additional support, SVMS has an assigned School Counseling and Intervention Program (SCIP) counselor through the Discovery Counseling Center. Please reach out to your student counselor for more information.
 -

Is there a mentorship program with an older student?

- WEB, which stands for "Where Everybody Belongs" is a middle school orientation and transition program that welcomes all incoming 6th graders, as well as students who are new to 7th or 8th grade, and makes them feel comfortable throughout the first year of their SVMS experience. Built on the belief that students can help students succeed, the program trains mentors from the 8th grade class to be WEB Leaders. As positive role models, WEB Leaders are mentors and student leaders who guide new SVMS students to discover what it takes to be successful during the transition to middle school and help facilitate success.

TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM (CHROMEBOOKS)

How are Chromebooks used at school and in class?

- Chromebooks are generally used in classes throughout the day, so students should always have their charged Chromebook and power cord with them.
- As part of our ongoing commitment to fostering a safe, respectful, and effective learning environment, SVMS also has a **Responsible Use Plan (RUP)** (<https://tinyurl.com/RUPolicySVMS>) for student Chromebooks. This plan is designed to help students develop responsible digital habits, ensure online safety, and minimize distractions during the school day. The plan is an extension of SRVUSD's **Middle School Responsible Use Agreement** (<https://tinyurl.com/RUAgreementSVMS>) that is part of the Annual Update.

Why do we need the Responsible Use Plan?

- With technology playing an increasingly important role in education, it is crucial that students use their school-issued Chromebooks in a way that supports learning and upholds our values of **safety, respect, and responsibility**. This plan establishes clear guidelines to help students stay focused, protect their privacy, and engage with digital tools in a positive and meaningful way.

Key Goals of the Responsible Use Plan:

- Promote **safe and respectful** online behavior.
- Reduce **off-task Chromebook use** that interferes with learning.
- Encourage students to take responsibility for their digital actions.
- Prevent **cyberbullying, inappropriate content, and security breaches**.
- Ensure Chromebooks are used **only for educational purposes** during school hours.

How This Affects Chromebook Use:

- **During class**, Chromebooks will only be used when explicitly directed by the teacher.
- **During breaks and lunch**, Chromebooks must remain stored in zipped backpack pockets unless a staff member gives permission.
- Students are expected to **charge their devices at home** and **handle them with care**.
- Inappropriate use, including visiting non-educational websites, playing games, or disrespectful online behavior, will result in **progressive disciplinary actions**, which may include loss of Chromebook privileges.

Why do the students have to bring their Chromebooks home?

- Students are encouraged to bring their Chromebooks home to charge overnight so they are ready for the next day. Also, if students do not complete their assignments in class or have homework, they will need their

Chromebooks to complete the work. Per our Responsible Use Plan, school-issued Chromebooks should only be used for school-related activities, whether at home or at school.

ELECTIVES

How does my student sign up for electives?

- Electives are selected towards the end of the school year for the next school year.
- Depending on your student's grade level, they can select 1-2 electives for the school year; some electives are one semester and others are for the entire school year.

What is the Wheel?

- The Wheel is our 6th grade elective program that provides students with a sampling of the elective pathways available in 7th and 8th grade. The program consists of the following subjects: Team Sports, Speech, Art, Foods, and Music. Students start in one of these five classes and rotate every six weeks.

What different performing arts opportunities are there?

- The following courses make up our performing arts program:
 - Cadet Band (6th grade)
 - Choir (6th - 8th grades)
 - String Orchestra (6th - 8th grades)
 - Symphonic Band (7th & 8th grades)
 - Drama (7th & 8th grades)
 - Jazz Band (requires tryout and is an after-school club)

Does the band really go to Disneyland?

- In years past, the band has typically taken a trip to Disneyland in February. This trip is only for 7th and 8th grade band members, as the trip occurs every other year. The next trip will be in 2028 (subject to change).

SCHOOL PROCEDURES & RULES

Who do I call when my student will be absent?

- Call the Attendance line for SVMS and leave a message as instructed: (925) 855-5899.
- For additional information, visit the [attendance webpage \(https://tinyurl.com/AttendanceSVMS\)](https://tinyurl.com/AttendanceSVMS).

What is the process to check your student in and out of school if they're leaving before the end of school or arriving after school starts? How do I pick my student up early for an appointment?

- Go to the school office to sign out and sign in your student if leaving before the end of school or arriving after school starts. If you are signing your student out early, the office appreciates advance notice; please call the attendance line and leave a message or send an email to our attendance secretary, Bonnie Brors (bbrors@svusd.net), the day before.
- When checking out your student for an appointment, make sure to sign out from the office and provide a doctor's note to the office if missing school for a doctor/dental appointment.

Is there a dress code?

- Students and parents/caregivers need to be aware of the importance of appropriate dress and its effect upon the learning environment. Appearance and dress must be within the limits of safety, cleanliness, decency, and appropriateness for school and shall not interfere with any aspect of the total school program. The following dress and grooming requirements are to be followed:
 - The law requires that appropriate and safe footwear be worn at all times.
 - Undergarments shall not be worn as outerwear. Clothing must conceal undergarments at all times.
 - Tank top style shirts may be worn only if they have shoulder straps and no undergarments are showing. No bare midriff can be showing.

- Clothing, hats, and jewelry shall be free of writing, pictures or any other insignia which are crude, vulgar, profane, or sexually suggestive or which advocate racial, ethnic or religious prejudice, gang identity, or the use of drugs or alcohol.
- A student whose dress/attire is not appropriate for school will be asked to change their clothes. Repeated violations of the dress code will result in a parent, student, and administrator meeting. Further violations may lead to suspension.

What are the rules for cell phones (and earbuds)?

- SVMS's Cell Phone Policy can be found [here](https://tinyurl.com/CellPolicySVMS) (<https://tinyurl.com/CellPolicySVMS>).
- Per the policy, student cell phones are to be turned off and put away in a zipped pocket in their backpacks during school hours (8:15 AM to 2:45 PM).
- **Use of personal devices in class is based on teacher discretion and is only allowed with teacher permission.**
- Students are not allowed to call/text their parents/caregivers using their cell phones and instead must go to the office to use the office phone.
- If a student is caught using their phone, it will be taken to the office staff and the student can pick it up at the end of the day. On a second offense, the parent/caregiver will need to pick it up.

Communication During School Hours

- Students: In the event of an emergency, students may use the office phone to notify parents/caregivers. Examples include illness or a schedule change of a school-sponsored activity.
- Parents/caregivers: If you have an emergency and need to reach your student, please call the main office number (925) 855-5800 and every effort will be made to get your emergency message to your student as soon as possible.

AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Are there after-school sports?

- Throughout the year, there are rotating after-school sports opportunities where students are able to stay after school and participate in the selected sport for that quarter. In the past, a teacher has offered after-school badminton, volleyball, and even dodgeball. Parent/caregiver permission slips and waivers need to be completed ahead of each sport. Notice will go out in the weekly ROAR newsletter and possibly emails from the administration.

Are there after-school clubs?

- SVMS staff offers the after-school sports activities noted above.
- Other after-school clubs/activities include: Math Counts, Jazz Band, and peer tutoring.
- The SVMS Ed Fund offers an after-school class program! Classes are taught by current SV teachers and outside vendors. Past offerings have included art, creative writing, board games/chess, run & get moving club and Girls on Purpose: Leader Labs. Look for starting dates, cost and registration links in the ROAR newsletter once school begins.
- Students can submit a proposal to SVMS Administration for a new club provided they have an SVMS staff member as the club supervisor.

SPECIAL EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

Will there be any school dances?

- SVMS traditionally has a dance or two during the course of the year. Dances give the students an opportunity to let loose and socialize with their peers in a different environment. The Leadership class typically plans, organizes, and decorates for the event.

Is there a Washington, D.C. trip for 8th graders?

- This is an optional program for 8th grade students, and families pay out of pocket. A teacher organizes a trip to the East Coast (Washington, D.C., or multiple cities) with a student travel company during spring break. **This trip is not sponsored by the school or the district.** The trip is a busy one from start to finish. Students walk many miles a day and don't get enough sleep, but it's a wonderful opportunity to gain some independence and make learning come to life.

Is there a calendar of activities to look forward to (e.g., PTA's Multicultural Fair, Red Ribbon Week, Reflections, Words Matter Week, Band Concerts, Drama Performances, etc.)?

- For the most up-to-date calendar of all the happenings at SVMS, please check out the [school's website](https://svms.srvusd.net/index.html) (<https://svms.srvusd.net/index.html>).
- The district calendar is located on the [San Ramon Valley Unified School District website](https://www.srvusd.net/index.html) (<https://www.srvusd.net/index.html>) and is where you can see Bell Schedules, Instructional Calendars, and additional district-wide information.

PARENT/CAREGIVER ORGANIZATIONS, VOLUNTEERING & STAYING CONNECTED

What is PTA and what do they do?

- PTA (Parent Teacher Association) is the community-building organization on campus. PTA works to build bridges between families, the SVMS teachers/staff, and our students. PTA supports a variety of activities throughout the year, including 6th Grade Movie Afternoon, a Multicultural Fair, Red Ribbon Week, a Reflections Art Program, Words Matter Week, Staff Appreciation events like Stock the Staff Room, and Field Day. PTA also organizes parent/caregiver community-building gatherings and educational seminars.

What is the Stone Valley Education Fund (SVEF) and what do they do?

- The Stone Valley Education Fund is the fundraising arm of Stone Valley Middle School whose mission is to maintain and enhance the quality of education at SVMS.
- At the middle school level, your donations directly fund critical staffing & help to bridge the funding gap required to sustain smaller class sizes, lower staff:student ratio and provide an exceptional education for our students.
- You can make a donation during fall registration or any time this school year in the future fund store.

What caregiver volunteer opportunities exist at middle school?

- Not as many as we'd like! Many middle school students are becoming more independent and may not want caregivers volunteering in their classrooms as often. PTA sponsors a Holiday Bake and other Staff Appreciation events where adults are needed to collect and organize donations. Volunteering for Field Day and chaperoning dances are additional opportunities for caregivers to help out and to see your students in action. Parents/caregivers can also host booths at the Multicultural Fair.
- That said, there are opportunities in some classes (like Band) that do ask for volunteers to help drive and chaperone students. Please make sure you are registered and cleared via the [volunteer system](https://tinyurl.com/VolunteerSVMS) (<https://tinyurl.com/VolunteerSVMS>) so that when the volunteer opportunities arise, you will be ready!
- Another way to get involved is to be active in SVMS's PTA. Start by attending the WEB Day parent/caregiver coffee and/or in-person coffee with the principal meeting in September. Both are a chance to meet other parents/caregivers, and you'll learn about ways to participate throughout the year. You can email president@stonevalleypta.org to learn more.
- The Stone Valley Education Fund board is also in need of volunteers. Contact stonevalley.edfund@srvef.org to see how to get involved.

What is the weekly newsletter, and how do I get it?

- The ROAR weekly e-newsletter is the best way to keep informed about what is going on at SVMS: upcoming minimum days, notes from the principal and counselors, volunteer opportunities, special events, etc. **You will not be automatically signed up for the ROAR newsletter;** you must [sign up here](https://tinyurl.com/RoarSVMS) (<https://tinyurl.com/RoarSVMS>). You can also sign up by visiting PTA's page on the SVMS website. The signup page allows you to choose to receive newsletters from each of your students' schools.

Does the Stone Valley Middle School PTA have social media accounts?

- You can follow SVMS on Facebook [here](https://www.facebook.com/stonevalleymiddleschoolpta) (<https://www.facebook.com/stonevalleymiddleschoolpta>)
- You can follow SVMS on Instagram [here](https://www.instagram.com/stonevalleymiddleschool/) (<https://www.instagram.com/stonevalleymiddleschool/>)