



STUDENT
SPONSOR
PARTNERS

Student Handbook



2026-2027
School Year

ABOUT US

OUR HISTORY

In 1986, Peter Flanigan, investment banker and former political advisor, founded Student Sponsor Partners (SSP) to address the New York City high school dropout crisis. He wanted to provide students with the opportunity to receive a quality education at private high schools. SSP was launched with 45 financially supported and mentored students attending two partner schools. The programs now serve more than 1,000 students attending high schools in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens, and Staten Island.

Flanigan believed the opportunity to attend a challenging and supportive high school is key to jump-starting a student's success later in life. Because of this belief, SSP has a community of thousands of high school graduates who have continued on to college and built careers in engaging fields.

WHO WE ARE

SSP students are given the opportunity to attend private high schools due to the generosity of our sponsors. In addition to being paired with financial sponsors, students are paired with dedicated mentors. SSP mentors are passionate, successful individuals who support their mentees. Through high school, students will get to know their mentors by attending events together and talking about their challenges and triumphs.

Many of our alumni are so inspired by their SSP experiences that they give back as mentors and sponsors themselves!

SSP STUDENT VALUES

At SSP, we encourage our students to embody a set of values to help them achieve their full potential.

SSP students are...

- *Open-Minded* – Always ready for new experiences.
- *Confident* – Have faith in yourself and your abilities.
- *Motivated* – Do your best and then challenge yourself to do better.
- *Optimistic* – Face challenges with a smile and don't give up.
- *Organized* – Manage your time, meet deadlines, never be late.
- *Proactive* – Don't wait around for help – ask for it!
- *Engaged* – Participate in class and after-school activities.
- *Respectful* – Treat others as you would like to be treated.
- *Team Players* – Go further and achieve more together.
- *Community Service-Oriented* – Help others by volunteering. Give back!
- *Leaders* – Take charge and inspire others.
- *Successful* – Work hard and reach your highest potential!

SSP SUPPORT SYSTEM

STUDENT

Students enter school every day with a positive mindset. They arrive both prepared and on time and set themselves up for success! Students ask questions, participate in class, and go for extra help when needed.

Teachers want to help students learn. The more students participate in and out of the classroom, the more they will achieve. SSP's most accomplished students stay after school to utilize their school's academic resources, such as asking for tutoring support.

PARENT/GUARDIAN

Parents/guardians can make a tremendous impact on students' high school experiences. SSP encourages parents/guardians to speak up and ask for help when working through any challenges their student is facing. SSP has resources to help students and their families on the road to high school graduation and college and career planning!

MENTOR

Students are assigned a mentor through the four years of high school who is there to support them, give advice, and help students thrive both in and out of school. To build relationships with their mentors, students and mentors must connect at least 1 - 2 times a month via text, call, and/or video chat. Students and mentors also participate in SSP events and their own in-person meetups about 4 - 6 times a year (with parent/guardian permission). The more students interact with their mentors, the more their mentors are able to support them.

Students should take advantage of every opportunity to meet with their mentor (virtually or in person). Once the mentor and student agree on a meet-up time, it is expected the student arrives on time and does not cancel at the last minute. Students may have the same mentor as fellow SSP students.

SSP SUPPORT SYSTEM

SSP STAFF

SSP is here to support students along the way by answering questions, responding to concerns, and offering additional programs to enhance their success. Students should attend all scheduled meetings with SSP and take advantage of numerous opportunities.

Each school has a designated Engagement Manager, the SSP point of contact for students and families. Engagement Managers monitor student progress in partnership with the school, share resources, and initiate action plans for students struggling academically. Students should immediately notify their Engagement Manager of changes, including contact information, challenges, and extracurricular experiences.

SPONSOR

Students are assigned sponsors who contribute financially to their private high school education (scholarship) for four years. In some cases, a sponsor may also be a mentor. Introduction meetings may be held in which a student/family is introduced to a sponsor. During such instances, students and their families are expected to attend.

PARTNER HIGH SCHOOL

SSP Students also have the support of teachers, counselors, and administrative staff available to help solve and work through any challenges. It is imperative students and families interact with their School to maintain their scholarship and stay updated on SSP news. **Students are expected to be responsive, attend meetings, and complete SSP assignments facilitated by their School and Engagement Manager.**

SSP POLICIES

ACADEMIC POLICY

Student Sponsor Partners (SSP) is confident we choose students who can succeed with the support of our partner schools and the SSP family! SSP holds students to academic standards to ensure they reach their potential.

Students will meet with their SSP Engagement Manager during the academic year for check-ins. These check-ins/school meetings will include one-on-one sessions and group sessions. This may look different based on what each child and school needs. Examples include fun team-building activities, focused sessions, social-emotional learning, academic monitoring, and action plans (as needed).

SSP students strive to commit to the following:

- Maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 75% during freshman year
- Maintain a year-to-date GPA of at least 79% during sophomore year
- Maintain a year-to-date GPA of at least 80% during junior and senior years

Academic Probation – 1st Warning

Students who fall below the GPA requirements after the first quarter or trimester of the academic year are required to do the following:

- Attend tutoring at least twice a week at their school until grades improve
- Ask for help from teachers who instruct challenging class(es)
- Meet with the SSP Engagement Manager at least twice per quarter in school
- Follow any suggestions or plans the student and Engagement Manager make
- Attend a parent/guardian meeting with SSP at least once per quarter (mandatory) – *If the parent/guardian and/or student miss(es) scheduled meetings that were agreed upon by both parties, with no explanation, the student may be subject to funding suspension and/or scholarship dismissal*

SSP POLICIES

Academic Probation – 2nd Warning

Inability to meet academic standards after the first warning may result in the following:

- Students must continue to attend tutoring at the school
- Students must meet with the SSP School Engagement Manager at least twice per quarter in school
- Students must speak with SSP at least twice per quarter
- Students must improve in all classes noted in discussion/on their agreement

Review Process

Students who are currently under Academic Probation (2nd Warning) and do not commit to utilizing the academic resources after the two performance agreements/conversations will be placed under academic review.

SSP will review the child's case and determine the outcome. SSP may decide to temporarily freeze funding for a quarter until the student improves or terminate funding and dismiss the student. If the student wishes to continue attending their high school, the tuition will be the responsibility of the student's family. SSP will not be responsible for contributing to the student's tuition bill if funding is frozen or terminated and, if terminated, the student will no longer be part of SSP.

Failed Courses

Students who fail a course must attend summer school and pass it to matriculate to the next grade as an SSP student. **Please note that summer school tuition is the responsibility of the student's family; therefore, SSP will not contribute to the cost of summer school expenses and fees under any circumstances.**

SSP POLICIES

Failed or Missed Regents Examinations

Students must pass all courses and Regents Examinations in accordance with their school's requirements. Students who fail their Regents must report to summer school at a cost to the parent/guardian and complete Regents prep or any program deemed necessary by the school. During the summer, students must also retake the examination(s) and pass with a minimum grade of 65%, with the exception of students with unique circumstances as related to the individual school's policy. Students who miss scheduled Regents examination dates place their scholarship in jeopardy. Students and their families must submit documentation explaining the reason for any missed Regents examinations.

Requesting Grades/Progress Reports/Transcripts

SSP reserves the right to request information from schools and access students' grades, progress reports, transcripts, and academic portals throughout the four years of high school.



SSP POLICIES

ATTENDANCE POLICY

SSP students are expected to arrive at school **on time** and maintain a **good attendance record**. Regular attendance is essential for academic success. Because delays in the transit system are inevitable, students are expected to plan for delays. If a student does not regularly arrive at school on time or maintain good attendance, SSP has the right to freeze the student's funding or dismiss the student from SSP. If a student is absent, please provide documentation to SSP so we can review and excuse. You can send this to your child's Engagement Manager.

High schools with four (4) quarters, SSP students are expected to have:

- No more than four (4) absences during each quarter
- No more than twelve (12) absences during the entire academic year
- No more than eight (8) late days per semester
- No more than sixteen (16) late days during the entire academic year

High schools with trimesters, SSP students are expected to have:

- No more than four (4) absences per trimester
- No more than twelve (12) absences during the entire academic year
- No more than eight (8) late days within half a year (Sept/Jan) (Feb/June)
- No more than sixteen (16) late days during the entire academic year

Students who exceed the accepted absences and late days will be subject to review. This could lead to funding suspension or dismissal from SSP.

PLEASE NOTE: Some high schools have a firmer policy; please review the high school's handbook. At these schools, students must observe the school policy. **Students at schools with more lenient policies must adhere to SSP's.**

SSP POLICIES

Attendance Probation – 1st Warning

Students who fail to meet the requirements after the first quarter or trimester of the academic year are required to do the following:

- Set multiple morning alarms
- Adjust their morning commute route to account for unexpected delays
- Meet with their SSP Engagement Manager two times a quarter to discuss progress

Attendance Probation – 2nd Warning

Students who fail to meet the attendance requirements at the end of the second quarter or trimester will be reviewed by SSP. The outcome of the review may result in suspension of funds or the loss of their SSP scholarship.

** Please ensure you are sending your Engagement Manager documentation of absences throughout the year. This includes doctor's notes, bereavement, mandated court dates, etc. We will not accept documentation for a vacation.

HEALTH POLICY

It is the responsibility of families to notify the high school and SSP right away if a student's mental or physical health changes or is at risk, thus affecting their ability to fully participate in academics and attend school consistently. Families must submit supporting documents.

SSP partners with Droste Mental Health services to provide free therapy for students. Offerings include both individual and group sessions that can be held in person or virtually based on availability and preference. Please reach out to your Engagement Manager if you are interested. As a note, if you sign up for Droste Mental Health services, you are required to attend all sessions or let your provider know that you cannot attend so they can reschedule. If you miss more than two sessions, you may be required to pay for your session.

BEHAVIOR POLICY

SSP students are expected to uphold the standards and expectations set forth in their high school's handbook. Students and families are expected to positively contribute to the school's educational and social environments. Harassment, intimidation, and bullying (online or in person), including written, verbal, and physical acts, will not be tolerated.

Students found in violation of the behavior policy will be dismissed from SSP. The following are general examples and not limited to the below:

- Racial slurs or derogatory language
- Demeaning comments or pranks
- Recording others without permission
- Physically harming other students or members of the high school
- Insistent negative behaviors that disrupt the educational environment and psychologically impede another student's ability to participate and feel safe

The following are examples of where incidents can occur:

- In-person: Anywhere on the school's grounds or near communities
- Online: Through email, direct messaging, texting, and social media

Any behavior that disrupts classroom instruction or school operations such as fighting, yelling, and inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated. ***If a student is dismissed from their school, they will automatically be dismissed from SSP.***

SSP POLICIES

ACTIVITIES POLICY

High school is a challenging and rewarding time. SSP provides resources to maximize student opportunities to achieve academic success. Students are expected to meet with their SSP Engagement Manager at least twice each marking period and attend periodic activities/events.

SSP students are required to attend at least **four activities/events per year:**

- Engage and participate in the SSP College and Career Success Program
- Attend academic workshops, college visits, counseling, mentorship events
- Meet with SSP staff during and after school

As an SSP scholar, you are required to take advantage of opportunities that come with this scholarship. The more you do, the more well-rounded and prepared you'll be. *There may be prizes for those who attend the most events!*

SSP School Engagement Managers will share information in person and/or via text messages, phone calls, and emails. Please ensure we have your most up-to-date contact information.

SPONSOR COMMUNICATION POLICY

Students doing their finest at school is the best way to thank SSP sponsors for supporting and believing in them and their education. Sponsors will receive periodic updates about their students' grades and extracurricular activities. Please remember to submit all updates about your experience in high school to your SSP School Coordinator and Engagement Manager.

On occasion, the SSP Development Team will reach out to students and

families to meet with their sponsor for dinner or an intro at an office. When this occurs, it is the responsibility of families to commit to an agreeable time.

MENTOR COMMUNICATION POLICY

Students are expected to maintain an active and productive relationship with their SSP mentor throughout the four years. Students must:

- Attend intro/kick-off sessions to meet their mentor (scheduled by SSP)
- Communicate at least 1 - 2 times a month with their mentor via text, phone call, FaceTime, and other video chat
- Respond to a mentor's outreach within 24 hours
- Connect in person about 4 - 6 times a year (with parent/guardian permission)
- Share highlights in academics, extracurriculars, and other school events
- Notify the School Mentor Engagement Manager if unable to reach their mentor or if their mentor is inconsistent with outreach
- Notify the School Mentor Engagement Manager, and mentor if the student's contact information changes

PHOTO/VIDEO RELEASE POLICY

The SSP Communications Team takes individual/group photos during events hosted and sponsored by SSP and publishes them in media that are in direct association with SSP including, but not limited to, the website, social media, newsletters, brochures, annual report, and other marketing materials. SSP has permission to use images and videos of students taken at events, seminars, workshops, trainings, and photoshoots hosted by SSP and its partner organizations.

PLEASE NOTE: Once students are eligible to become mentors with SSP (over 21 years old), they are expected to sign up and volunteer their time to give back. There are additional ways to get involved and a growing alumni network!

SSP POLICIES

TRANSFER POLICY

SSP aims to provide the best learning experience for each student – one in which students perform to their full potential in a sound, uninterrupted environment. It is due to this that SSP follows the policy of no transferring between schools with the exception of the following reasons:

- School closing
- Safety concerns
- Distance due to family relocation
- Academic fit – Student needs additional resources (i.e. IEP services)

If you fall into one of these categories, you are required to reach out to your Engagement Manager, and they will process this request on your behalf. Please do not reach out to the school on your own as there is a process when handling SSP transfers.

The SSP scholarship will only transfer to an existing SSP partner high school. If the student and family decide to transfer to a non-SSP affiliated school, they forfeit the SSP scholarship.

Transfer Request Process

If a student and family believe a transfer is absolutely necessary, they should contact an SSP Engagement Manager. Supporting documents submitted by the family and school will be reviewed by SSP and a decision will be made. SSP will take all transfer requests seriously, including the family's preference in transfer SSP partner school. All decisions made by SSP will be final. Students who are approved for transfers must have a \$0 tuition and fee balance at their current school and be in good academic/behavior standing before the transfer.

SSP POLICIES

School Expulsion – Scholarship Termination

In certain circumstances, a school will decide to dismiss a student due to a serious disciplinary, academic, or attendance infraction. When this occurs, the student is dismissed from SSP as well. Students cannot be transferred from one school to another after they have been dismissed from their high school. As a result of the student's dismissal, the SSP scholarship will be terminated.

SSP POLICIES

FINANCIAL POLICY

Family Obligation

Families contribute \$800 toward school tuition costs each academic year. Along with tuition, high schools have fees such as summer readiness, tech, activities, lab, annual events, and fundraising. Along with the direct fees from the school, there are indirect fees that SSP families are responsible for (i.e. uniform and books). These fees can amount to a yearly cost of over \$1,000 at certain high schools. It is the responsibility of families to pay the \$800 tuition expense, direct fees, and indirect fees. **The remainder of the tuition is covered by SSP and the partnered school.** Please note that school fees may change as students matriculate to the next grade.

Payment Submission

Payments are made per the school's policies and any questions regarding payments should be directed to the school's finance office. Families must make timely payments. SSP reserves the right to inquire about the families' monthly payments to the high school. Failure to submit tuition payments impedes students' access to their grades, school participation, and, in some cases, their attendance. Please be aware that high schools will not release report cards, transcripts, and diplomas to students with outstanding bills, which places their college matriculation in jeopardy.

Financial Hardship – Need-Based Assistance

SSP understands families can experience hard and unexpected financial challenges. In **extreme** circumstances, families can request additional financial support by completing a financial hardship request with their Engagement Manager if it relates to food, shelter or clothing insecurities.

SSP requires supporting documents with the request. It can only be given once a year. **Due to limited funding, it is not guaranteed that you will receive hardship support.**

SSP CONTACTS

ENGAGEMENT MANAGERS

You'll receive notice from SSP if your Engagement Manager changes.

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

SSP WEBSITE

sspny.org/current

SSP OFFICE

212-986-9575

ONE PAGER

[One pager](#) with all information

Review this Student Guidebook thoroughly for information.

Contact your Engagement Manager and/or School for additional support.

Follow us on social!

@sspnewyork

