

Frequently Asked Questions—A guide for freshmen (and your parents)

What do I do if my locker doesn't work?

Tell your homeroom teacher and he/she will submit a “pink slip” to the Guidance Office. Maintenance staff will address all locker issues in the order of which they are received. Speak with your Guidance Counselor if your locker continues to be a problem.

Can I change my locker location?

No. Unless you have a medical condition, or other significant reason for needing a different locker, we do not accommodate locker change requests. Your locker is located near your homeroom during your freshman year, and you will be re-assigned a locker closer to your vocational placement as a sophomore. Speak to your Guidance Counselor if you don't believe you have enough time to use your locker during the day. You and your counselor can review your schedule, and come up with more convenient hallway routes to take in between the passing periods for classes.

Am I required to swim?

Yes. Unless you have a medical condition that prevents you from being able to swim, you are required to get into the pool. You may request that you stay in the shallow end, and you may wear a “cover-up” over your bathing suit if it makes you feel more comfortable. In addition, if you are unable to swim for personal reasons on any given day, please make arrangements with your Physical Education teacher to make up the class in the fitness center after school. Remember—swimming is only for one term!

Should I expect to have shop week homework?

Yes. The amount of homework varies for each teacher, but you should expect to have homework during shop week. In fact, on occasion you will have assignments that are actually due during shop week. Please refer to the class management plans for additional information, regarding homework policies.

What happens if I don't get the shop I want?

Unfortunately, we do have a small percentage of students who do not get placed into one of his/her top three choices. However small the percentage, we realize that doesn't matter to the student. We will work with you to find a vocational program that is an appropriate match, and if we cannot accommodate your interests we will discuss other options at that time.

Can I make changes to my Exploratory Schedule?

The easy answer is no, however, we review this on an individual basis. It is mathematically impossible to allow every student to explore 12 of his/her “favorite” shops, but we do guarantee that every student will have the opportunity to explore his/her top three most important vocational programs. Please be mindful that we created the exploratory schedules based off of the application that you completed. It is very rare not to have the top three shops on your schedule, and in many cases you will have as many as 5-10 top choices.

Can I re-explore a shop?

No. Unless, there is a validated medical issue, or emergency situation, we do not allow re-explore situations to occur. For this reason it is very important that you put your best foot forward in every cycle. You will not be allowed to re-explore any vocational program to improve a grade.

When is the selection/placement process? And, are the parents involved?

The process is ongoing throughout the year. The class of 2017 will complete three shop interest surveys that give us an indication of where the interest falls, and better prepares us to guide you through the decision-making process. Additional information about the selection and placement process will be provided as the year progresses.

Why do I need to do well in the shops that don't interest me?

Every grade matters. For example, many of the programs draw a large interest, but have a small capacity, therefore it is impossible for every student to get his/her first choice. The students who get the highest grades earn the seats; however, due to the competitive nature of the exploratory program even a perfect score of 100 does not guarantee placement into a number one shop choice. As difficult as it is to not get placed into a program, we understand it is even more disappointing to not get into your first choice after receiving a perfect score. For this reason **we cannot and do not guarantee placement into any program, regardless of grade.** If there are 25 seats and 30 perfect scores, we refer to our tie-breaker process thus requiring us to review all exploratory grades. An average of all exploratory grades gets calculated and the highest overall average "wins" the tie-breaker placement seat, therefore, it is critical to perform your best in every shop, regardless of interest.

How do I get involved with athletics or extra-curricular activities?

Your Guidance Counselor will direct you to the appropriate staff and/or offices. In addition, pay attention to the daily electronic announcements posted in the cafeteria and be observant of the bulletin boards throughout the building. Also, listen to announcements via the intercom system.

What is Career Cruising?

Career Cruising is a tool we use to help you discover hidden strengths and talents, as well as, recognize areas that may present some difficulty. You will complete interest inventories that assist you in the decision making process for a vocational program. All students have the opportunity to research career and educational opportunities in depth. Career Cruising complements our exploratory program because it allows you to learn about the careers you "explore" in greater detail. Every student is given a username and password, and may access the site from home. If you forget the log-in information, simply call and/or email your guidance counselor.

What is Naviance?

Naviance is also an educational tool that will be utilized as a valuable resource throughout your four years at SVTHS. You will complete a personality profile, download resumes, and conduct thorough searches of career and college opportunities.

To Whom do I go to if...

I am on an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP)?

Typically, your liaison is your Study Skills teacher, but not always. Please call the Support Services office to confirm who your liaison is. We advise you to work directly with the liaison to expedite your concerns. Of course, we will advocate for you as well, so always feel free to contact your guidance counselor. The Support Services office is located in room 299 (across from the student bathrooms).

Remember: If you are on an IEP you may not be in a World Cultures class because you are enrolled in Study Skills in lieu of World Cultures. Please speak with your guidance counselor prior to the end of freshman year if you wish to pursue a 4-year college.

To Whom do I go to if...

I am on a 504 Student Accommodation Plan?

If you are on a 504 Student Accommodation Plan and have concerns about the implementation of your accommodations please speak with your guidance counselor, immediately. All 504 Student Accommodation Plans will be distributed in the fall after the completion of an eligibility meeting. Your 504 from middle school does not automatically follow you into high school.

To Whom do I go to if...

I feel bullied.

We have a zero tolerance policy for bullying. If you experience any form of bullying notify the Dean and/or your Guidance Counselor, immediately.

To Whom do I go to if...

I am absent.

Attendance is taken very seriously at Shawsheen. If you miss school for an extended period of time please make arrangements with your guidance counselor to have work sent home. Please provide documentation to validate your absences. If you have questions/concerns about the attendance policy, or wish to discuss this matter further, please contact Mrs. Tobin at 978-671-3634, or speak with your guidance counselor.