



Dear Families of RVS,

Thank you for recognizing the importance of the safe & secure processes in the building, and continuing to work with us in this regard. Change is never easy! I continue to connect with a few folks regarding questions and concerns, and wanted to provide an update on how things continue to evolve. I appreciate your patience, and ask for your understanding as we continue to go down this road together. If you are a parent losing sleep over something, please do give me a call and we can arrange an opportunity to talk it through. Thanks again for trusting us to do the best we can for your children.

Yours in learning,

Leslie Cooper-Shand  
Principal, RVS



## Our Learning and Some Changes...

- ❖ Pre-Kindergarten & Kindergarten may need a bit more time next Fall to get their bearings where parents are accompanying kids into the building in the morning. Most likely the month of September would have relaxed processes where families enter through boot rooms in the morning with any of our littlest folks who may be struggling with the transition. Pick up at the end of the day would remain the same as it is this year with students being delivered to their boot room at the end of the day.
- ❖ Lineups outside boot rooms are eliminating much chaos in these tight spaces. We have moved to a staggered entry process on some of our most crowded doors (primary west door in particular) so that various grades of students move into the boot room as they begin to form lines, rather than only one grade at a time. This has sped up entry times, as well as not having a crowd at only one boot rack.
- ❖ Front doors are open from after school until the end of all sports games as well as practices. This allows parents to pick up early from practices if necessary.
- ❖ Outside observation and extra supervision has shown that students are not necessarily using good cross walk behavior. We have responded by adding a supervisor to the lighted crosswalk on the east side of the school, who is coaching kids about safe behaviors. We would encourage all families to use the crosswalk rather than making the mad dash across the street between bouts of traffic –not only is it good modelling for kids, but may also save you from a jaywalking ticket!
- ❖ Our smallest RVS folks sometimes require the most connection between parents and teachers. To help with this, in PreK – Gr 2 teachers are now taking their classes to the boot rooms at the end of the day, and will be in that space generally until kids have vacated, providing extra supervision, but also making themselves available for the quick “thumbs up/thumbs down” signal to a parent, or a brief dialogue about a concern. As always, if you need a longer conversation connect with your teacher via email or phone to set up an appointment, or stop by the office to see if they are available to chat at the end of the day. For parents of older students, please do connect via email, phone, classroom app, or by stopping by the front office to see if a teacher is available, as we know all kids need solid parent-teacher communication in place.
- ❖ We continue to have early Parent-Teacher Interviews which enables us to meet and begin building those connections to families early on. Other start-up processes for next year are being considered to facilitate this as well. In years gone by staff would stand outside with a sign indicating who they were/ their class # and students would gather there and come into their new classroom together. This could also be a great moment for families to connect or at the very least have a visual of their child’s teacher. There may an opportunity for an early open house during the Welcome Back BBQ as well. We will continue to think about these ideas, and ask you to stay tuned!
- ❖ To facilitate parents seeing student art on bulletin boards, we have revisited our past practice of posting art on FB and on the school website. As well, we would encourage you to take a look around the building when you are in for things like Parent-Teacher Interviews, as well as the many opportunities noted below.
- ❖ We want parents be a part of their child’s education . The following are opportunities to do that: help with School Fair, work Growly, Nutrition for Learning, do the class placement parent form, walk KM Club, attend Awards/ Remembrance Day Assemblies, volunteer to help in a classroom, participate in Terry Fox, join us for Carol Sing, attend sporting events, visit the Book Fair, attend PTI, come to the Welcome Back BBQ, do the parent survey, Christmas Concerts, coach a sport/ help with a club, attend Parent Council, come to parent PD sessions like Connect, go on field trips, volunteer on Pizza Days, come to the band concerts, cheer on kids at the Spelling Bee, or help to supervise a school dance. We would love to see you!

### **Comments from Students, Staff, RCMP, Parents:**

Students are demonstrating their ability to be independent - it starts with small things like putting away your own backpack and coat, but it builds confidence, and in the long run I think they will be more confident, better problem solvers, and more resilient – all things kids need to succeed in life. **Teacher**

We just moved into the area, and I chose this school because of its safety policies – we came from a home with domestic violence and I like that only teachers and staff are in the hallways – it makes me feel that my daughter will be safe at school. **Parent**

I have gained close to an hour a day of learning time with my students – before kids were coming in late, with parents alongside putting their stuff away and chatting with others, and they weren't getting into class on time or settled and ready for the day. At the end of the day the halls were starting to fill up as early as 2:30- parents/strollers/toddlers outside the door, which in effect ended the learning for students. I feel like the gain of an hour a day of learning is amazing! **Teacher**

My mom showed me how to get to the car on my own and we practiced for a few days, then yesterday I tried on my own – at first I was nervous, but when I got there I felt really proud! **Student – Grade 2**

I've heard that parents are upset about not being in hallways, and being able to talk to a teacher when they want, but I think about what it must be like if every parent wants to do that at the beginning or end of every day. We have parent-teacher interviews, or you can email or call them. Teachers generally provide lots of ways to communicate. Beyond that, I sometimes wonder if my child is getting the learning time they need with so many adults taking up the teacher's time? **Parent**

We tend to think of school violence as an issue in the States or only in large cities, but it happens in small rural communities and in Canada too – think about Taber, and more recently La Loche. Communities like Sundre have lots of access to firearms. We would hate to see a tragedy happen in our community, and the processes put in place by the school are a good thing. **RCMP**

At last count we had 108 students from combined/ single parent families – each one of these comes with the potential for custodial challenges, and we have had some difficult situations to navigate in the past when things changed rapidly from amicable to not. The new processes provide the office with time to determine what can and should be happening in these situations. **Principal**

It may seem like a small thing, but our school is significantly cleaner - without all the extra foot traffic, strollers etc, there is way less mud and so on. As well, we can see which student dropped something, or came in muddy and coach them on it – before it was like a hurricane went through at the end of the day – now caretakers can spend more time on getting things really clean, so we all stay healthy when flu season hits! **Teacher**

A school is a school and meant for student learning –the times I have been in it has felt like a coffee shop in the common area, and kids obviously can't use the space then either. In fact I have seen EAs have to leave the space when they were working with a child because of it. If you want to see your doctor or banker or anything else, you make an appointment, and I think all the drop-ins were getting in the way of the teaching and learning. I think the changes are long overdue. **Parent**

I really love all the extra adults outside at the beginning and end of the day – it makes me feel like there are lots of eyes and ears looking out for my son – and his teacher is in the boot room at the end of the day if I need to check in about anything. I think this is really good for the youngest kids in the building. I want to say thanks to the staff – I have seen other parents be incredibly rude and difficult, which doesn't help anything – and it is a pretty poor example for kids. **Parent**

At first I missed having my mom there to help unpack my bag, but I have figured out how to do it by myself- no problem ☺.

**Student – Grade 1**

Sure, the office knows you so why can't you head down the hallway –but how does that work for the parent standing behind you that the office doesn't know – that doesn't seem fair and I would have an issue with that if it were me – there is a saying something along the lines of, if it works for one then it should work for all – in this case, we all need to respect that we are no more special than anyone else and follow the process – you might not like it, but it keeps kids safe, and that's worth a little discomfort in my mind.

**Parent**

In some ways I miss the informal interaction with parents, but on the other hand, I have had many conversations with parents over the years that have either been rushed because the day is starting or ending, or that should have been held in private rather than in a hallway. I hope parents can see that what we are doing is to keep kids safe and to improve learning. There are a lot of ugly situations out there that many people have no idea about. As well, I would much rather set up an appointment to talk about things where I can give a parent the attention they deserve rather than having a rushed conversation where things can be misconstrued. I think all staff probably feel this way. Most importantly, students are getting what they need: a safe environment with more opportunities to learn and grow –I think that's what we - parents, students, and staff – all want. **Teacher**