

# RIVER VALLEY SCHOOL

STUDENT/PARENT INFORMATION  
SEPTEMBER 2023

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## **PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE**

On behalf of the staff of River Valley School, I would like to welcome all of you. We hope that our time together this year is an exciting learning adventure for us all.

## **THE PRIMARY PURPOSE OF THE SCHOOL**

Our school strives to help students learn the knowledge and skills necessary for living in today's world. This includes the social skills necessary to build solid relationships with other students and adults. Such skills include co-operation, leadership, a strong concept of self, acceptance of responsibility, and an honest understanding of strengths and areas of challenge. We have a responsibility to help students learn respect for oneself, others and property and to become the citizens that will lead our community in the future.

We never want students to lose the sense of curiosity and wonder that drives us to learn, explore and discover. We wish to help students pursue excellence in order that they can take pride in accomplishments when best effort has been put forth. Each student should experience the pride that comes with having met challenges that are exciting and stimulating.

The following pages include a significant amount of information about River Valley School and the processes that make the school world go-round. Please do take time to read through the information when you are able. It is very important to us that key messages around behavior are clear and consistent for students, staff and families. Staff took significant time this fall to review and come to a consensus on key rules, routines and consequences in order to provide consistency for students. Below you will see a "coles notes" version of some of these aspects that we often find ourselves giving numerous reminders about. We appreciate your support as parents in also reminding your children about some of these expectations, noted on the following page.

**Please note that there will be a document capturing the most important components of school behavior sent home later this week, which requires a parent signature. This helps us work together as stakeholders committed to the success of all children - thank you.**

## RVS Rules/ Routines - Key Messages

- **Hats & Hoods**
  - \*Can be worn to & from your locker in the morning, and in & out for recess times
  - \*Cannot be worn in classrooms or at Middle School nickel breaks
  - \*Hats are stored in their locker, not in classrooms
- **Phones & Ear Buds**
  - \*Cannot be used in commons spaces: hallways, library, bathrooms
  - \*Can be used in classrooms with teacher permission
  - \*During class time phones are stored within the classroom or in lockers, not on students
  - \*Phones may be used outside at recess -staff may ask to see what students are accessing on their phones at recess
- **Energy Drinks** - should not be brought to, or consumed at school
- **Late to Class/ Wandering** - students are to be on time for class or consequences will be in place
- **Hands On/Off**
  - \*Hands off is generally the best rule...but sometimes with consent a “handshake, high 5, or hug” are good ways to physically connect. These options are often coached in primary grades. As we move into Middle School the idea of consent can be trickier to navigate, as often students are not comfortable with a hug etc. from peers but are not confident enough to say so. We have seen an increased desire for many students to connect physically at this age, but also discomfort for others. Hugs between some for example have become extra long, hands here and there and so on. So...at this time we are asking that in Middle School in particular we respect one another’s boundaries through generally a “hands off” approach. High 5s and elaborate handshakes - A-okay, but no hugs, handholding and so on. As we move further into the year we may be able to re-negotiate this, particularly after some consent teaching and a gauge on the level of maturity we are seeing amongst students.
  - \*Play fighting is a No - 80%+ of the time this ends up in a real fight
  - \*Deliberate physical aggression/ fighting has significant consequences
- **Vending machine** - no access for any grades during class time
- **Language** - clean, kind, appropriate. Swearing, crude or hurtful language will not be tolerated
- **Vaping** - is illegal, addictive and unhealthy. Significant consequences are in place for possession and/or use at school. This can be a challenging “without a reasonable doubt” offense, as students can find interesting places to conceal them. Continued reports of vaping connected to a student could result in suspension, even if there is no confiscation or admission of use.
- **Defiance & Disrespect** - Following the direction of all adults quickly and quietly helps teaching & learning move forward. If a student has a concern with an adult request they should ask for a quiet moment to speak to the adult to respectfully discuss their concern, recognizing that moment may not be able to happen immediately.
- **Consequences** - where possible we try to develop natural consequences. For example, using your phone when you shouldn’t results in your phone being taken for the remainder of the day, the never-off-your-head hat is stored at the office for the day, swearing = a cleaning duty, and so on. Repeat offenses result in increased consequences. At times, consequences need to be quite significant and can include in-school and out-of school suspensions, and in rare circumstances a move to expulsion. Good school-home communication and similar expectations generally help us avoid getting to serious levels of consequence.

## **ACADEMIC INFORMATION**

### **Report Cards**

Report cards are issued two times per year. Formal reports will be available on Feb 6/24 and June 27/24. For students in Gr 5-8 the opportunity to check Powerschool on an ongoing basis is available, and a similar system is planned for younger grades at some point in the future. There are numerous opportunities to check in with teachers about how things are going. Formal Parent Teacher interviews are scheduled for Nov 6 & 7 (also Book Fair time!) and March 25,26,27. Use the information on all assessments, including report cards to determine your strengths, and to identify what you want to improve on as you move throughout the school year.

### **Achievement Awards**

There are some very special awards for students in grades 6, 7 and 8 that are presented at the end of each term and at the end of the year for students who have distinguished themselves in the areas of academics, citizenship, band, leadership, and in extracurricular athletics. Eagle awards are based on a rubric completed each reporting period focused on behaviors that help ensure success in school.

### **Eagle Awards (Grade 1-4) / Caught You Doing Good Awards (Grade 5-8)**

Teachers nominate students who are deserving of immediate recognition for improved behaviour, attitude, good sportsmanship, academic and other criteria. Students' names are placed in the office and a treat is awarded every day.

### **Homework and Assignments**

In all academic subjects, students are expected to complete daily work and larger projects which may require some study and work at home. Generally we avoid large amounts of homework for students, and using classroom time well helps ensure homework is manageable.

## **SCHOOL SERVICES**

### **Telephone**

Telephones are located in each classroom and may be used by students with teacher permission. Please make after school plans before school each day when possible. Student calls that need to be made privately can occur at the office, with permission. Alternately students can use their cell phone at appropriate times/ spaces to connect with home.

### **Learning Commons: A whole school approach to building a participatory learning community**

As we move forward with the Learning Commons philosophy, the Library, as well as the Digital Lounge and Common Area will continue to house new activities and opportunities. As always, we need cooperation and respect to be shown while using these spaces, as many different groups may want to access resources or be engaged in various activities in these areas at the same time.

### **Locks and Lockers**

All students will be assigned to a locker. All lockers for Grade 6 to Grade 8 students must have school locks on them. At the start of each year, students will be called down to the office to either purchase a lock or to re-register your lock for your new locker. Lock payment may be done online.

Students are responsible for taking care of their own property. It is very important that students do not share their locker combination with anyone. Students - Please do not bring valuable items or large amounts of money to school. Lockers are not foolproof and the school accepts no responsibility for property stolen from them. Please remember that all lockers are the property of the school, and administration has access to them at all times.

### **Growly/ Vending Machine**

The Growly is our lunch counter, and it serves grade 7 and 8 students daily. Grade 2 to 6 students can use the Growly and the vending machine only on their designated day. We work hard to provide healthy options to students. To help the Growly operate smoothly, students please:

1. Follow directions of supervisors.
2. Stand patiently in single file while you wait your turn to order.

If the vending machine appears to be out of order, please go to the office and ask for assistance - this machine is very expensive and we need to treat it accordingly. The vending machine should not be accessed during class time.

## **EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT CONDUCT**

### **General**

River Valley School operates on the belief that each student is responsible for their behavior and all students have the right to learn. In order to be a productive learning environment, a school must be a safe place for students and without disruptive behavior. Home and school must share the responsibility for teaching children acceptable behavior.

Section 31 of the Alberta Education Act clearly lays out student responsibilities. It says you must:

- a) Attend school regularly and punctually,
- b) Be ready to learn and actively engage in and diligently pursue your education,
- c) Ensure that your conduct contributes to a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging,
- d) Respect the rights of others in the school,
- e) Refrain from, report and not tolerate bullying or bullying behavior directed toward others in the school, whether or not it occurs within the school building, during the school day or by electronic means,
- f) Comply with the rules of the school and the policies of the board,
- g) Cooperate with everyone authorized by the board to provide education programs and other services,
- h) Be accountable to your teachers and other school staff for your conduct, and
- i) Positively contribute to your school and community.

Consequences for misconduct will be natural and logical whenever possible. Each case will be considered on its own merit with consideration given to age and maturity level of the children. Whenever appropriate, parents will be informed of the consequences and misconduct. Discipline may include temporary removal from activities, assignment of alternate activities or detention. Students not considered "in good standing" may be unable to participate in a variety of school activities. For serious concerns and misbehavior, the school administration team, teachers and parents will meet to discuss the concerns and formulate a plan of action. Serious misconduct could include an in or out of school suspension or expulsion from school.

### **School Expectations**

1. You are responsible to the school for your actions when traveling to and from school.
2. You are expected to enter and exit the school through your designated doors.  
As your teachers are busy preparing for the day, you need to wait outside until 8:20 unless a supervisor instructs you to go inside because of extreme weather.
3. If you are dropped off in the loop at the front of the school, please go around the building and enter through the appropriate door. Following the first bell at 8:25 you may enter the front door.
4. Check in at the office if you are late or have to leave class or school for any reason before the end of the day so we don't go looking for you. You may not check out of the building without an adult signing you out at the office.
5. Stay on the school grounds at all times unless supervised by a staff member. We do not have students going home for lunch on a regular basis, or without parent permission communicated to the office by telephone.
6. You will learn better if you get some fresh air and exercise. Be sure to dress appropriately for the weather as all students are expected to be outside for recess periods.

### **Prohibited Activities**

The following activities are prohibited (this list is not an exhaustive list, but only provides samples):

1. possession and/or use of drugs, tobacco, vapes, or alcohol either at school or to and from school.
2. use of profanity, crude, or hurtful language.
3. defiance of school staff.
4. fighting.
5. possession or downloading of pornographic materials.
6. bullying, humiliating or harassing others, including through digital means
7. possession of matches, lighters or laser pointers.
8. possession of weapons or pretend weapons - this includes wearing accessories made from weapons
9. any of these issues that occur beyond the school day but which impact schooling or a student's emotional or physical well-being while at school may be addressed by the school.

## Care of School Property

Students are responsible for helping care for school property, including desks, books, material, equipment, other furnishings and the building. Any vandalism shall be regarded as a serious offence. Students will be held responsible for repairing the damage. Students are expected, as a matter of trust, to care for all materials loaned to them.

## Dress Code

### Dress Code Expectations

You need to be dressed appropriately for school. Clothing worn to school should be appropriate for an educational setting. Beachwear, short shorts/skirts, crop tops, low necklines and clothing with drug, alcohol, sexual or violent references are not appropriate in a school setting. Tops and bottoms should not leave undergarments exposed, other than waistbands or bra straps, which is acceptable. Further, accessories/ jewelry made of weapons are not acceptable at school. Hats and hoods should not be on when in classrooms, or during O'Canada.

Specific items that may not meet school dress code:

- ripped jeans where undergarments may show
- backless or mesh shirts that expose undergarments
- clothing with questionable slogans/ messaging
- any clothing that exposes an extreme amount of skin normally covered by clothing

The school administration reserves the right to make the final decision on what is or is not acceptable.

In the event that what you are wearing is considered unacceptable, you may be asked to go home and change, or to find more suitable attire. **River Valley School's clothing policy is conservative. If you believe the outfit is questionable - PLEASE DO NOT WEAR IT TO SCHOOL - thank you for your good judgment in this area.**

### Additional dress requirements:

Suitable gym clothing (including a school t-shirt for gr 6-8 students) is required for gym classes. For safety reasons you need to wear shoes in school. Students often require two pairs of shoes, one for indoors and a second for outdoors. To help keep our school clean and safe, outdoor shoes that are dirty or wet must be removed when you enter the school.

### Bicycles/Skateboards/Rollerblades/Scooters/Heelies/Wiggle or Hover Boards

If a bike is ridden to school, it is to be locked and in the bike racks. These racks are off-limits during school hours to help protect property. Bicycles, skateboards, scooters, hover boards, heelies and rollerblades cannot be ridden on the school grounds and parking areas during school hours. These items should not be utilized or worn in the building.

### Use of Personal Electronic Devices/ Digital Citizenship

We spend between 3 & 4 hours a day on our own devices...Between video games, movies, our phones, and computers at home and school kids could be spending close to 8 hours a day on a screen. Consider what it is they are NOT doing because they are on a screen...like spending time outside, visiting face to face with friends or family, and so on. There are specific rules for when and where personal tech may or may not be used. Generally **NO** personal devices should be in use in hallways, the library, or bathrooms - which includes headphones/ ear buds. They may be used in a classroom only with the permission of the teacher. They may be used outside at recess. **Students** are responsible for tech accounts - both personal and school, so are reminded to keep passwords secure - **DO NOT** share it with anyone. When using school tech, always be sure to logout properly and **NEVER** have it save the password. Using electronic equipment in a manner that disrupts learning or invades the privacy of others is also prohibited. **Due to FOIPP regulations students may not take pictures or videos of each other at school, even if the other student gives permission.**

Please be aware that any bullying through digital means is taken very seriously, and this includes things that occur after school hours but that impact how we get along in the building - this is something the school will be involved in, so students need to think carefully about the use of technology both in and out of school. A few things to help students remember what is appropriate: If you wouldn't want your grandparent to see it, then it is probably not appropriate to post. If it is hurtful and not something you would say in person then it should not be shared digitally. **The penalties for misuse of digital equipment, including cameras and/or cell phones include warnings, confiscation, suspension or expulsion.**

Note that the *Chinook's Edge School Division Technology Responsible Use Terms and Conditions Document* applies to personal devices as well as school owned technology.

### **Student Involvement**

River Valley School offers numerous activities for students, particularly for Middle School, to get involved in. Fine Arts programs such as band, and after school sports, leadership activities and dances provide students with opportunities to have fun and be active. The emphasis in all these activities is on participation and all students are encouraged to come on out and have some fun!

### **Family School Wellness**

There are many people in RVS who you can talk to if you have trouble or are stressed about an issue. This list includes your current teacher, a past teacher or adult you trust, someone in the office or our Family School Wellness Worker. Our FSWW is Mrs. Darla Korver. Her office is upstairs in Rm 205. There are a lot of people who can help, but we can't help if we don't know you need it, so please come talk to us if you need support. Parents, you can also access the FSWW for support/ resources, and can connect with MRs. Korver by calling the office.

### **Commitment Statement**

To make River Valley School an outstanding school, we all need to commit to being our best. Students, parents and staff commit to:

- taking pride in myself, in my work, and in my school;
- being kind to all people by showing respect;
- finishing all assignments by trying my best;
- taking care of school property;
- having a positive attitude about learning;
- using respectful language;
- dressing appropriately for learning;
- making responsible digital citizenship choices;
- coming to school on time and prepared to learn; and
- sharing school information and assignment information with my family.

Student \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Initial \_\_\_\_\_

### **Important Parent Information**

#### **A safe and secure place to learn...**

We value your involvement in your child's education. As the world changes we continue to consider how to ensure a safe, caring and optimal learning environment for your children. We truly appreciate your understanding in regard to following the processes noted in our [RVS Safe & Secure](#) document.

**Volunteers** - please complete a school volunteer form, criminal record & vulnerable sector check, use ID lanyards when in the school, and follow the sign in/ sign out process at the main office - forms can be accessed at the office or found on the school website . **Thank you for your willingness to follow protocols that make RVS the safest, most productive learning environment for your child that it can be - we appreciate it!**

### **RVS Facebook Page**

The River Valley School Facebook page is a great way for our school to communicate with parents and our community. Its main purpose is to provide information, as well as to celebrate accomplishments within our school. We encourage people to join us in positive commentary, but concerns or specific questions should not be posted here, but rather addressed through a private message or a phone call to the school.

Administration will generally not be responding to comments on the RVS FB page, as we are busy with the day to day workings of the school and teaching kids of course - although we are very grateful for all the supportive comments - thanks! If there is an occasion where negative commentary is posted, it will be removed from the site, and that individual will lose access to the RVS FB page for the remainder of the school year ☹. Digital citizenship is something we continue to work on with our students, and we appreciate that parents model the way also - thank you.

### **Parents & The School Act**

The School Act (Section 16.2) also clarifies the role of parents in a school as follows:

- (a) to take an active role in the student's educational success, including assisting the student in complying with section 12,
- (b) to ensure that the parent's conduct contributes to a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment,
- (c) to cooperate and collaborate with school staff to support the delivery of supports and services to the student,
- (d) to encourage, foster and advance collaborative, positive and respectful relationships with teachers, principals, other school staff and professionals providing supports and services in the school, and RSA 2000 Section 17 Chapter S-3 SCHOOL ACT 26
- (e) to engage in the student's school community. 2015 c1 s3;2017 c28 s2

We cannot say thank you enough to the number of parents and community members who provide ongoing support through volunteerism, fundraising initiatives, getting that math homework done, or reading a favorite story. We truly appreciate your involvement in your child's education, and look forward to continuing to work together.

**Thank You!!**