

RIVER VALLEY SCHOOL GUIDE

STUDENT/PARENT INFORMATION
SEPTEMBER 2024

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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.

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/ Personal Mobile Devices (cellphones, smartwatches, tablets) -as per the new Ministerial Order**
 - *students are not able to use cellphones/personal mobile devices and social media during the school day, which includes recess, breaks, and field trips.
 - *personal devices must be stored out of view and be powered off before entering the building
 - *students may access devices after the last bell
 - *students will be responsible for personal devices that are brought to school, and staff will not be providing a secure in-class storage location
- **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 & there and so on. It can become a very ‘gray’ area to navigate. 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 & elaborate handshakes - A- Okay, but no hugs, hand holding 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. Much 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.