

RIVER VALE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

PARENT-STUDENT HANDBOOK

Dear Parents and Students,

Sharing in the journey of a child's education is an important partnership between parents, teachers and school administrators. We collectively enjoy the opportunities and challenges that our students face with each new day and each new school year. The information provided to you in this Parent-Student Handbook will help you navigate your way through the school year. Please read the handbook in its entirety as our school policies and practices are sometimes modified from one year to the next. It is our intention to provide you with as much school information as possible in this format.

Wishing each of our students and their families a happy, healthy and successful school year!!

Sincerely,

Stephen Wren

Mr. Stephen Wren
Roberge School Principal

Justin Jasper

Mr. Justin Jasper
Woodside School Principal

Mission Statement

The River Vale School District is dedicated to providing each student with a comprehensive education based on the New Jersey Student Learning Standards in a safe, supportive environment. The Board of Education and staff join with both parents and the community-at-large in a commitment to promote self-discipline, motivation, and academic excellence in all children. We value our students' acquisition of knowledge as well as the development of their critical thinking and problem solving skills. Our ultimate goal is to help all children develop into independent, self-sufficient, and productive learners.

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Home-School Communication

The River Vale School District thrives on positive communication. One important avenue of communication is between parents and our school faculty. In addition to written communication, parents may leave messages for faculty members via the main office and email. Parents should call 201-358-4000 and follow the prompts. The easiest way to reach our staff is through email. All email addresses are listed on the staff page on each school's website. Please keep in mind if you require an immediate response it is best to reach out by telephone.

Report Cards

Report cards can be accessed via the Genesis Parent Portal three times throughout the year. Report cards are provided after the completion of each trimester. The link to the Parent Portal can be found on the River Vale website under the "Parents" tab. Should you encounter any difficulty accessing your child's report card from the Parent Portal, be sure to contact the office at 201-358-4000 for assistance.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parents need to be aware of the educational expectations and progress of their children. Likewise, teachers need to work collaboratively with their students' parents in sharing expectations, constructing goals, and building relationships. Parent-Teacher Conferences are scheduled for the fall and spring each year. Conferences serve as an ideal way for parents and teachers to communicate so that the best interests of the student are realized. Additional conferences may be scheduled before or after school as needed. Please do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher. Direct, purposeful, and timely communication works best.

Website Communication

The River Vale School District, by leveraging technology, has made a concerted effort to maximize school – home communication while "going green." The "Go Green" folder located on our school website is the best means to stay informed. This form of communication is more efficient and user-friendly than traditional means of communication. The District websites contain a host of information and are outstanding resources. The Roberge School and Woodside School websites post information germane to our school happenings. Please check our websites frequently to stay apprised of scheduled events, such as Back-to-School Night, Literacy Night, Math Night, and other offerings. Please note that principal email blasts will also be used to communicate key information. Making the school website your home page is a helpful way to stay connected. Other forms of communication to assist in keeping parents abreast of various school happenings will be made through social media. Please be sure to follow Roberge School on Facebook (@Roberge Elementary School) & Twitter (@RobergeES) and Woodside School on Facebook (@Woodside Elementary School & Twitter (@WoodsideES).

Building Security

The River Vale School District makes safety a top priority. The District abides by all state safety/security mandates and works in conjunction with the River Vale Police Department.

- All faculty and staff wear RVSD-issued photo I.D. badges.
- All visitors enter the school building through our main front door entrance only. A buzzer system controlled by staff allows entry. All other outside doors are kept locked during the school day.
- Visitors/volunteers must identify themselves prior to entry and state the purpose of their visit. Visitors must sign in, provide a photo I.D. and wear a visitor badge issued by the secretaries.
- Visitors/volunteers exiting the building must sign out in the main office and return the badge in exchange for their photo I.D.
- Fire drills and safety/emergency drills are conducted as required by state guidelines.
- Board of Education policy and signage aligned to safety protocols are enforced on school property.
- Electronic Surveillance: According to River Vale Board of Education Policy 7441: *Electronic Surveillance in the School Buildings and on School Grounds*, “The Board of Education authorizes the use of electronic surveillance in school buildings and on school grounds to enhance the safety and security for school District staff, students, community members, and other building occupants and to protect the school District’s buildings and grounds. The content produced by the surveillance system under certain circumstances may be considered a student record and if so it will be subject to the Board of Education policy and regulations regarding confidential student records.” *So you are aware, for privacy reasons, electronic surveillance equipment is not placed in certain areas of the school. If you have any questions about the District’s use of electronic surveillance equipment, please feel free to reach out directly to your child/children’s building principal.

Arrival at School

- Arrival time is between 8:25 and 8:45. Staff supervision in the school building is provided each day during this time frame.
- Students enter the school through the main front door entrance only and line up outside their classroom door. Only students may enter the building for morning line-up.
- A student is considered late and will be marked tardy after 8:45 a.m. **He/she must be signed in by the individual dropping off the child in the main office.** Excessive tardiness will be monitored by the District’s data reporting system.

Student Attendance

As we all know, consistent attendance is vitally important and significantly impacts student achievement. Your child’s success in school depends on regular school attendance. Children who miss a day of school miss a day of learning, and the positive impact of daily instruction and class discussions cannot be replaced with makeup assignments. To that end, whenever possible, please schedule appointments after school or on vacation days and refrain from scheduling vacation time when school is in session. Please be advised that students shall be recorded as either: (a) present; (b) absent; or (c) excused, which includes state-approved religious observances, “Take Your Child to Work Day,” and other rare exceptions approved by the state.

If your child is absent from school, please contact the school nurse via phone or email prior to 8:45 a.m. and provide a reason for the absence. The school nurse should also be called if your child will be late. Voicemail is available 24 hours per day. If a student does not report to school and we have not been notified by you, you will receive a phone call indicating that your child is absent.

As our District and school abide by BOE policy and closely monitor absences and tardiness, we sincerely thank you for your ongoing efforts to ensure your children are regularly attending school and look forward to a great school year together.

Excusing Students Early from School

- Students excused from school early are to be signed out in the main office by a parent/guardian. Only adults listed on the Student Dismissal Form are permitted to pick up students. Any changes to the dismissal plan must be presented to the child's teacher with proper advanced notice.
- Parents should notify the teacher and main office if a child needs to be excused from school early for an appointment or other obligation. Students will be called to the office upon parent arrival.
- Appropriate photo identification will be requested upon early pick-up at the main office.

School Closings

Unusual weather and/or occurrences may cause schools to close. School closings are determined by the Superintendent of Schools in consultation with other neighboring Districts. Announcements of the school closings will be made via our emergency contact system.

By using this contact system, parents can receive phone calls, text messages, and emails regarding emergency closings. The emergency contact system is tested prior to the school year to ensure contact information is correct. Please make sure your contact information in the Parent Portal is up to date and correct.

Student Dress Code

Student clothing should be comfortable, suitable to the weather/season, and allow for maximum learning. Parents are asked to use good judgment in dressing students appropriately for school. Students should be dressed in such a manner that they are safe and do not distract or offend others. Parents should also take weather conditions and temperature into consideration. The following guidelines will help clarify our expectations:

- Hats may not be worn in school except those worn for religious or medical purposes, unless there is a pre-announced special occasion permitting them.
- Sunglasses may not be worn in school unless they are worn for medical purposes or there is a pre-announced special occasion permitting them.
- Flip-flops and other such footwear should not be worn to school as they present a safety hazard for students at recess and in P.E. classes. There is a direct link between flip-flops on the playground and visits to the nurse. Please make safe decisions regarding the footwear your children wear to school. Clothing may not be adorned by slogans, symbols, or advertisements promoting inappropriate themes.
- Sneakers are mandatory during physical education classes.

Daily Schedule

Arrival Time: Grades K-5 (Bell)	8:45 a.m.
Arrival Time: Pre-K	8:55 a.m.

Dismissal Time: **Kindergarten** (Bell) 3:00 p.m.
Dismissal Time: **Grades 1-5** (Bell) 3:05 p.m.

Delayed Opening: 10:15 a.m.

Early Dismissal: 1:00 p.m.

Lunch Procedures

Lunch/Recess Schedule

12:00-12:25 – Grades K-2 are at lunch / 12:30-1:00 – Grades K-2 are at recess

12:00-12:25 – Grades 3-5 are at recess / 12:30-1:00 – Grades 3-5 are at lunch

- Students remain in school for lunch unless signed out by a parent/guardian in the main office.
- There is a balance of time spent eating and at play.
- Due to a host of health-related issues, any “food-sharing” is prohibited.

Lunchroom Expectations

- Students should follow the guidelines provided by the lunchroom supervision to create a safe, orderly, and secure environment.
- Proper behavior and manners are expected.
- Student lunches can be dropped off in the basket/bins located in the front entrance vestibule. Lunches should be delivered no later than 15 minutes before your child’s lunch period. Lunch aides distribute delivered lunches to students.
- Please inform your child of what lunch he/she will receive daily to eliminate confusion.
- The lunchroom is an orderly, safe and comfortable environment. Students should respect teachers and lunch aides on duty.

Allergies

As students may have allergies (e.g., peanuts, milk, fruit, etc.), specific guidelines are followed in the lunchroom, classrooms, and during special occasions. If your child has any allergies, be absolutely sure to contact the school nurse and complete the appropriate medical forms. Communication between home and school is a key factor in keeping the school environment safe for all food-allergic students.

Please help us keep our classrooms safe and be respectful of children with dietary restrictions. Our nurse and teachers work to keep parents informed of our food allergic protocols. Should you require clarification about our food-allergic protocols, please consult with our nurse and/or the classroom teacher.

Classroom Parties

In the interest of student health and safety, class parties will not include food, but will instead revolve around crafts and activities that are theme based. Food allergies present challenges when it comes to providing snacks/food in classrooms. In addition, students should only eat food that has been packed by a parent/guardian while at school. Your cooperation and understanding in this area is greatly appreciated.

Student Birthdays

Many school Districts have instituted whole school “no birthday celebration” policies. All grades may recognize student birthdays, but should refrain from bringing food items to school. You may choose to bring in small items to recognize your child’s birthday, such as birthday pencils or stickers. Please check and coordinate with your child’s classroom teacher.

Students with summer birthdays should plan to celebrate “half birthdays” or a celebration in June. Please plan accordingly with your child’s classroom teacher to schedule your child’s birthday celebration.

We encourage everyone to join us in this health initiative. Thank you for your cooperation and support.

Student Health Services

The students of River Vale have the services of a full time school nurse. We encourage parents to speak with the school nurse about any health related questions and/or concerns. The school nurse handles all medical matters, such as issuing medications here at school.

Medications

1. School nurses can administer prescription and non-prescription medication only if they have written orders from the student’s physician indicating the name of the medication, dose and time the medication is to be administered. **The medication must be delivered by the parent directly to the nurse** in the original prescription package with the student’s name on it.
2. All medication prescriptions must be renewed by the child’s physician at the start of each school year. The form for medication administration is on the nurse’s website under “Forms.” Please make sure it is filled out completely and signed by both the physician and the parent.

Physicals & Immunizations

The State of New Jersey requires all students new to the District and all kindergarten students to submit a complete physical exam and immunization record upon entry to school.

Illness and Injury

Children with definite signs of illness such as colds, skin diseases, or childhood communicable diseases need to be kept at home. A child may not return to school until they have been symptom (fever, vomiting, and diarrhea)- free for at least 24 hours without the aid of medication. This policy is both for the health of the affected child as well as the entire school population who could become infected.

If a child is injured or becomes ill at school, he/she will be temporarily cared for in the nurse's office until a parent or designated person is able to take the child home. Parents must provide the school with emergency numbers where either parents or another designated adult can be reached to take responsibility for the ill or injured child. Be sure to keep all emergency contact information current.

Physical Education Restrictions

Any child coming to school with stitches, crutches, casts/immobilizers, or a head injury will be excused from physical education and recess. A physician's note stating the diagnosis, activity limitations, and when physical activity can be resumed is required.

Lice

Lice are transmitted through direct contact. Please remind your child not to share head apparel. Should you notice any indication of lice, please be sure to notify the school nurse so appropriate protocols may be followed. Further information can be found on the school nurse's website.

Health-Related Emergencies

The State Department of Education, in conjunction with the United States Secretary of Education, has requested that all school Districts address and incorporate a health-related response protocol into their safety and security plans. Influenza pandemic is an example of a health-related emergency. If and when such an emergency arises, pertinent information will be disseminated to parents, faculty, and community members via a variety of communication formats.

Keep in mind, limiting the spread of common colds and viruses is a goal shared by the entire school community. It is important that anyone presenting symptoms of illness remain at home and return only after symptoms resolve and students are physically able to return to school. We strongly encourage good hygiene (e.g., covering a cough/sneeze, using tissues, hand washing, etc.) and appreciate the efforts of parents in reinforcing appropriate hygiene practices.

Use of Technology Resources

The River Vale Public School District affords all students supervised access to a host of technology resources, including the internet. Educational technology is seamlessly infused into the classroom learning environment on a consistent basis. Students learn how to access information and communicate effectively as contributing members of our global society.

Proper student etiquette is the responsibility of each and every student where the use of technology resources is concerned. It is important to note that the use of such resources is a privilege, not a right. Students are to use technology resources only in productive ways in order to enhance the learning process. While in school, students must never post/share personal information about themselves (e.g., names, addresses, telephone numbers, or personal photographs) on the internet or send harassing messages electronically (i.e., cyber-bullying). The River Vale Board of Education prohibits acts of cyber-bullying at any time by pupils that may impede education through the use of any District owned, operated, and supervised technologies. The building principal or designee may report allegations of cyber-bullying to law enforcement authorities. (File Code: 5512.02)

The River Vale School District supports the use of technology resources within the context of the educational endeavor and appreciates the support of parents and faculty in promoting student

technology safety practices both at school and at home. An Acceptable Use Policy Agreement is electronically reviewed by students and parents acknowledging their compliance to abide by the rules and guidelines concerning the District's network policies.

Cell Phones, Smartwatches & Camera Use

Cell phone use in school is not permitted. Students whose parents permit them to carry a cell phone may do so; however, it must be stored and turned off for the duration of the school day with no exceptions. Violations such as receiving calls, placing calls, text messaging, or taking pictures/recording videos will be subject to disciplinary action. In addition, cell phones, video cameras, and any devices which record video images or voices used by students and/or parents must have prior approval for purposes such as school events, class trips, etc. The clear intention here is to respect privacy rights.

The use of smartwatches while at school is prohibited. To clarify, any watch that has smartphone capabilities (e.g., sending/receiving text messages, making phone calls, accessing the internet, etc.) falls under the District's rules for cell phone use. Smartwatches can be worn to and from school, but must be turned off and stored in the student's backpack for the duration of the day.

Special Programs & Services

1. Intervention and Referral Services Committee – The Intervention and Referral Services Committee is a resource for classroom teachers and/or parents who seek support with students who may be experiencing learning, behavioral or health difficulties. The I&RS Committee communicates with teachers and parents, in addition to utilizing a variety of resources to help students improve. Parents whose children will be discussed at these meetings will always be contacted prior to the meeting date. For further information regarding the District's I&RS process, please contact the school guidance counselor.
2. Basic Skills Instructional Program – Students who need additional support in reading, writing and mathematics will receive assistance through this program. Services may be provided either in class or as a pull-out program.
3. Special Education – Under very specific circumstances, which are outlined in the New Jersey Administrative Code 6A:14, a child may be eligible to receive special education and related services. The Child Study Team (CST), which is comprised of the School Psychologist, Learning Disabilities Teacher/Consultant, and Social Worker, will meet with the parents and teachers of the child who may be in need of services to develop a plan. The CST along with the child's parents and teachers develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for students who qualify for special education and related services. This plan is evaluated and revised annually. Identified student programs are designed to include as much of the regular school program in the least restrictive environment possible while meeting individual student's needs. For further information regarding our special education services, contact our Supervisor of Special Services.
4. English Language Learners (ELL) – The school, in compliance with State Law, maintains a program for students with limited English skills. The students speak a variety of native languages and are taught to develop the functional English language skills needed for classroom success. Entrance

into and exit from this program are determined through assessment and teacher recommendation. For further information regarding our ELL program, contact the District's ELL teacher.

5. PoGStudio – The PoGStudio program offers challenging learning opportunities for students in diverse school settings. It is designed to enhance existing practices, such as higher order thinking skills, and provide enrichment experiences. For further information regarding our PoGStudio program, please visit the school website and/or contact the District's Supervisor of Curriculum & Instruction.
6. Guidance – Both elementary schools provide a guidance counselor and related services to all students. The guidance program includes classroom instruction, character education, social skills groupings, and individualized counseling, as needed. For further information regarding the guidance program, contact the school guidance counselor.
7. Media – Our elementary schools' media centers provides students and the school community with blended literacy and technology instruction, student-centered experiences, and quality resources. Students may borrow items from the library collection during visits, engage in the acclaimed Common Sense Media Curriculum, and develop literacy and technology skills that support learning. For further information regarding our media center, contact the school's media specialist.
8. Instrumental/Music – Instruction on standard band instruments is offered to all fourth and fifth grade students. Instrumental music lessons are scheduled as a pull-out program during the school day. Participants in this program are responsible for school work missed. A choral program is also part of our co-curricular offering for students. Choral groups generally meet before school. For further information regarding the music program, contact the school's music teacher.
9. LEAD Program – LEAD (Law Enforcement Against Drugs & Violence) is offered to fifth grade students during the school year. Classes are conducted by trained LEAD officers from the River Vale Police Department. The program seeks to educate students as to the dangers of substance abuse in an age- appropriate and relevant manner as well as to foster specific resistance skills to be utilized throughout life.
10. Project Child Find – The River Vale School District sponsors a Child Find public awareness campaign to locate and provide services for underserved youth, including migrant and homeless children with a delay or disability from birth through twenty-one years of age. Children may exhibit physical, mental, language, or emotional difficulties. The Child Study Team will provide screening, evaluation, guidance services and, if a child is found eligible, educational programs. If you are concerned your child is developing differently, contact the Child Study Team at 201-358-4000 ext. 4101.
11. Child Abuse Reporting – New Jersey law requires school District personnel to report to Child Protective Services and the local police department if they suspect a child may have suffered from abuse or neglect. All members of our school community should adhere to these same guidelines.

Homework Standards

Teachers and parents recognize that homework is tied to school success.

- Homework extends class work and provides reinforcement.

- Homework helps students synthesize and integrate what they have learned in the classroom.
- Homework provides a link between school and home, giving parents an opportunity to stay abreast of their child's progress.
- Homework encourages students' self-discipline, responsibility, and study habits.
- Time dedicated to independent student reading is invaluable and parents are encouraged to take an active interest in the development of solid reading habits.
- If you find your child struggling to complete homework in a reasonable amount of time, please communicate this to your child's teacher.
- Students may be excused from completing homework for observation of religious holidays. Please contact your child's teacher to make any necessary arrangements.

Character Education

Developing a strong sense of character in children is a responsibility of the school, parents, and community-at-large. To that end, both Roberge and Woodside Schools embrace a school-wide character education program. Through our guidance curriculum and with the support of the classroom teacher, your child will learn about various important character traits. We strongly encourage parents to discuss and reinforce character education at home.

Social/Emotional Learning: The RULER Approach

The RULER approach is designed to help students and staff develop a common language to understand the value of emotions, build skills of emotional intelligence and create and maintain a positive school climate. It is an evidence-based approach to social and emotional learning (SEL) developed at the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence. Schools that adopt RULER have positive shifts in school climate, enhanced academic performance, develop better quality relationships, and witness a decrease in bullying and aggressive behaviors. At the District's elementary schools, RULER is infused into daily learning routines and lessons in an effort to create a school culture that allows students and staff to more easily discuss and regulate their emotions.

Rights & Freedoms

Goal: To create and sustain a positive, respectful, and effective learning environment for all. Each individual at Roberge and Woodside Schools are entitled to:

- An education
- Being treated fairly
- Freedom from being set apart because of individual differences
- Having personal information handled respectfully
- Having personal and school property respected

Students are taught conflict resolution in the classroom and via guidance lessons during the school year. The basic strategies are:

1. Take time to cool off.
2. Use "I Messages" to state feelings – no blaming, no name calling, no interrupting.
3. Each person states the problem as the other person sees it.

4. Each person says how they are responsible for the problem.
5. Brainstorm solutions together – choose a solution that satisfies both.
6. Affirm, forgive, or thank each other.

The use of conflict resolution strategies outside of school is highly encouraged as well. Learning to handle conflict in a consistent manner will help students to utilize what is learned at school to real life conflict scenarios. (Source: New Jersey State Bar Foundation)

Student Code of Conduct

The River Vale School District strives to maintain a positive and engaging learning environment for all students. In order to promote a healthy school climate conducive to student growth and development, it is critical that students exercise proper regard for the rights and welfare of other students, for school personnel, for the educational purpose underlying school activities, and for the care of school facilities and equipment. It is important to note that New Jersey State Mandates and Board of Education Policy # 5131 prohibit harassment, intimidation and bullying on school property or at any school-sponsored function. The District maintains policies and regulations to govern student behavioral expectations and developmentally appropriate consequences which include preventative and/or corrective action plans. (Expectations for Pupil Conduct P5600)

CHART OF DISCIPLINE

Minor Infractions

Infraction	First Offense	Second Offense	Third Offense
<i>Cheating/Plagiarizing</i>	Warning	Meeting with Guidance or Principal	Lunch & Recess Detention
<i>Cell Phone Use</i>	Warning	Lunch or Recess Detention	Lunch & Recess Detention
<i>Disobedience/Noncooperation</i>	Meeting with Guidance or Principal	Lunch or Recess Detention	Lunch & Recess Detention
<i>Disruption in Class/Cafeteria</i>	Meeting with Guidance or Principal	Lunch or Recess Detention	Lunch & Recess Detention

Moderate Infractions

Infraction	First Offense	Second Offense	Third Offense
<i>Direct/Willful Disrespect to Authority</i>	Lunch or Recess Detention	Lunch & Recess Detention	2 Lunch & Recess Detentions
<i>Language Misuse</i>	Meeting with Guidance or Principal	Lunch & Recess Detention	2 Lunch & Recess Detentions
<i>Recklessness/Pushing/Shoving</i>	Meeting with Guidance or Principal	Lunch & Recess Detention	2 Lunch & Recess Detentions
<i>Mistreatment of Peers</i>	Meeting with Guidance or Principal	Lunch & Recess Detention	2 Lunch & Recess Detentions
<i>Misuse of Technology</i>	Meeting with Guidance or Principal	Lunch & Recess Detention	2 Lunch & Recess Detentions

Major Infractions

Infraction	First Offense	Second Offense	Third Offense
<i>Obscene/Provocative Gestures or Actions</i>	Lunch & Recess Detention	2 Lunch & Recess Detentions	In-School Suspension
<i>Use of Force/Making Threats to Others</i>	In-School Suspension	In-School Suspension	Out-of-School Suspension
<i>Theft/Damage/Vandalism</i>	In-School Suspension	In-School Suspension	Out-of-School Suspension
<i>Creating a Dangerous Environment</i> <small>(e.g., falsifying an alarm, possessing a weapon, etc.)</small>	Out-of-School Suspension	Out-of-School Suspension	Out-of-School Suspension

*The administration reserves the right to assign and alter consequences whenever necessary.

**Multiple or egregious violations of the code of conduct may result in the loss of privileges, including, but not limited to, class trips, extracurricular activities, and participation in end-of-year celebrations/activities.

Parental Support

The District appreciates the continued support of parents in promoting positive attitudes and respectful behaviors. We value the important school-home partnership we establish each year. Thank you for taking the time to read through our handbook. We hope you find it to be helpful and informative. Please contact our schools should you have any additional questions or concerns. Have a great year!