

# **RICHMOND CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL**

## **Student/Parent/Caregiver Handbook**

**2023-2024**



***Dr. Beth N. Choquette, Superintendent/Principal***  
***1831 State Road***  
***Richmond, MA 01254***  
***Phone: 413-698-2207 FAX: 413-698-3199***

*Richmond Consolidated School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, gender identity, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or homelessness.*

# Table of Contents

<b>Table of Contents</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Letter from Dr. Choquette</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Overview of the School</b>	<b>6</b>
Mission Statement	6
Our Vision	6
Guiding Beliefs	6
Department of Secondary and Elementary Education School Profile	7
<b>Richmond Consolidated School Faculty/Staff</b>	<b>7</b>
Administration	7
Faculty	7
Service Providers	8
Paraprofessionals	8
Staff	8
<b>School Calendar</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Nuts and Bolts</b>	<b>10</b>
School Office Hours	10
School Hours for Students	10
Automated Call System for School Families (Robo Call)	10
<b>Building Security Procedures</b>	<b>10</b>
Entering and Exiting Procedures	10
Cancellations and Delays	11
<b>School Admission</b>	<b>11</b>
Entrance Requirements	11
Admission and Transfer of Students	12
<b>PreKindergarten Program</b>	<b>13</b>
Admission and Lottery	13
Tuition	13
PreKindergarten Schedule	13
PreKindergarten Calendar	13
<b>Attendance</b>	<b>13</b>
Excused/Unexcused Absences	14
Unexcused absences include the following:	14
After School Functions	15
Truancy	15
Chronic Absences	15
Tardy	15

Early Dismissal	15
<b>Transportation</b>	<b>16</b>
Bus	16
Cars	16
<b>Visitors to the School</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Recess</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Cafeteria</b>	<b>18</b>
Lunch Prepayment Program	19
Free and Reduced Lunch Form	19
Weekly Menu	19
<b>Student Records</b>	<b>19</b>
Access of Student Records	20
By Non-Custodial Parents	20
Copy of Student Records (Chapter 71, Section 34D and 34E)	20
Release of Student Information	21
<b>Important Information</b>	<b>21</b>
Weekly Newsletter	21
Invitations	21
Solicitation	21
Money and Other Valuables	21
Lost and Found	21
State Smoking Regulations	22
<b>Health</b>	<b>22</b>
Emergency Cards	22
Examinations	22
Screenings	22
Guidelines for School Attendance and Illness	22
Illness and Injury	23
Immunizations	23
Medication Policy	24
<b>Academics</b>	<b>24</b>
Homework	25
Core Curriculum	25
Specials	26
Physical Education	26
Music	26
Art	26
Library/Technology	27
Creative Arts and STEAM Program, formerly known as CAP	27
School Adjustment Counselor (SAC)	27
<b>Essential Partners/Ways to Get Involved</b>	<b>27</b>

Parent/Teacher Association	27
Richmond Educational Enrichment Fund (REEF)	28
School Council	28
Special Education Parent Advisory Council	28
<b>Promotion and Retention</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Community Rights and Responsibilities</b>	<b>29</b>
Student Rights	29
Student Responsibilities	29
Parents/Caregivers/Guardians	30
Teachers	30
School Adjustment Counselor	30
Principal	31
Richmond School Committee	31
<b>Code of Conduct</b>	<b>31</b>
Dress Code	32
Cell Phones and Personal Electronic Devices	33
Technology	33
ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY AND GUIDELINES	34
Introduction	34
User Responsibilities	34
RCS Network Administrator Responsibilities	34
RCS Educator Responsibilities	34
RCS Network Student Responsibilities	35
Technologies Covered	35
Technology Educational Technology Tools (EdTech) being used this year at Richmond Consolidated School	35
Acceptable and Unacceptable Uses	36
No Expectation of Privacy	37
Passwords	37
Violations	38
Disclaimers	38
Prohibited Student Conduct	39
A. Disorderly Conduct. Examples of disorderly conduct include:	39
B. Insubordination. Examples of insubordinate conduct include:	39
C. Disruptive Behavior. Examples of disruptive conduct include:	39
D. Acts of Violence. Examples of violent conduct include:	39
E. Bullying:	40
G. Bus misconduct	42
H. Academic misconduct	42
I. Anti-Harassment Policy:	42
Disciplinary Consequences	44

Discipline Procedures	45
<b>DUE PROCESS FOR SUSPENSIONS</b>	<b>46</b>
Notice Of Proposed Suspension	46
General Requirements Prior To Suspension Under M.G.L. Chapter 71, §37h3/41/4	46
Short-Term Suspensions: Hearing And Principal Determination	47
Long-Term Suspensions: Hearing And Principal Determination	47
Appeal Of Long-Term Suspension	49
Emergency removal	49
In-School Suspension Under 603 Cmr 53:02(6) & 603 Cmr 53.10	50
Suspension Or Expulsion For Disciplinary Offenses Under M.G.L. 71 §§37h And 37h1/2	51
Possession Of A Dangerous Weapon, Possession Of A Controlled Substance, Or Assault Of Staff	51
Felony Complaint Or Issuance Of Felony Delinquency Complaint	51
Student Suspension And Expulsion Data Collection And Reporting	52
Corporal Punishment	52
<b>DISCIPLINE OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES</b>	<b>53</b>
Procedural Requirements Applied To Students Not Yet Determined To Be Eligible For Special Education	55
Alternative Instruction	56
Educational Services and Academic Progress During Suspensions and Expulsion	56
Public Conduct on School Property	57
Reporting Violations	57
Bullying Prevention Plan	58
Prevention and Intervention Plan	61
Reporting	61
Investigation Procedures	62
Problem Resolution System	63
Retaliation	63
Counseling and other Services	63
Training and Assessment	64
Publication and Notice	64
<b>HOUSELESS POLICY</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>CORI (STATEWIDE BACKGROUND CHECKS)</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>CIVIL RIGHTS SELF-EVALUATION</b>	<b>66</b>
Protection Against Discrimination	66
Rights Of Individuals With Disabilities	66
<b>APPENDIX</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>A. Incident Referral Form</b>	<b>67</b>
Incident Referral Form (Appendix A)	68
Playground Rules (Appendix B)	69

## Letter from Dr. Choquette

Dear RCS Families,

Welcome back to all of our returning students and families. To all of our new students and families, welcome to Richmond Consolidated School. It is such an honor and privilege to serve as your Superintendent/Principal. I am looking forward to a wonderful school year of learning together. It is the goal of everyone at RCS to create a safe and positive learning environment that will help all students to do their very best and reach their full academic potential.

This handbook will provide you with information about the policies and procedures in place for our school. It will be helpful if you can review this handbook with your child/ren and discuss any questions you may have. If you can't find answers in this handbook, please contact the school to get the information you need. You can also visit our school website at [www.richmondconsolidated.org](http://www.richmondconsolidated.org). There you will find complete policies, our school calendar and more. In addition, you will receive information throughout the school year. Classroom teachers communicate regularly and I publish a newsletter with timely information each week during the school year.

It is my belief that good open communication between home and school is important to the success of our students and our educational programs. Because you are the primary educators in your child's life, it is important that collaboration and cooperation exist between home and school. We welcome your input and encourage your participation and support during the year. We invite you to join our Parent Teacher Association and volunteer during the year. We know that if we work together, our students will achieve educational success!

I look forward to a successful year!

Beth N. Choquette, Ed.D  
Superintendent/Principal

# Overview of the School

## Mission Statement

In cooperation with parents and the community, Richmond Consolidated School will provide all students a safe environment in which:

- Personal and academic excellence is promoted and celebrated.
- Student responsibility for learning is developed and expected.
- All members value and exercise CARES, our core values: Cooperation, Assertion, Responsibility, Empathy, Self-Control.
- An enthusiasm for life-long learning and community service is instilled.
- We relish learning from differences and embrace diversity.
- We are committed to maintaining an educational environment free from all forms of harassing conduct.

## Our Vision

Our vision is to provide opportunities for everyone to become mindful, caring individuals, as well as academic achievers. As a community of learners, we are committed to creating a school climate that encourages positive self-esteem, critical thinking, responsibility, mutual respect, citizenship and a lifelong love of learning.

## Guiding Beliefs

Guiding beliefs identify the core values of the Richmond Consolidated School.

We Believe....

Every Child has the right and potential to learn.

In inspiring and nurturing children to care about and contribute to their world.

All children deserve to have high expectations set for them and the support to achieve them.

In commitment to professional growth for our faculty and staff.

Parents and community play a critical role in education.

All members of our school community need to feel safe.

It is important to have built-in systems that support, implement and evaluate innovations.

In respecting and fostering unique and diverse learning and teaching styles.

In a curriculum that is coordinated and consistent, flexible and challenging to meet the needs of every learner.

Mutual respect, honesty and responsibility are vital to a healthy learning environment.

It is the responsibility of the educational community to anticipate the changing needs in society and to evaluate and adopt the best educational practices.

Families and communities are critical partners to a school's success. Just as a student's report card shows how they are performing, the school report card shows how a school is performing in multiple areas. It shows the school's strengths and areas of growth that need to be addressed to ensure the school is meeting the needs of all students.

## Department of Secondary and Elementary Education School Profile

### Richmond Consolidated School Faculty/Staff

#### Administration

School Committee-Chair Ina Wilhelm, Kimmie Leeco  
Superintendent/Principal-Dr. Beth Choquette  
Special Education Director -Mary Shook  
Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent/Director Special Education-Amy Scott  
Administrative Assistant to the Principal-Natalie Gingras

#### Faculty

Grade 6-8 Science-Heather Ostrander  
Grade 6-8 English Language Arts-Rachel Kanz  
Grade 6-8 Mathematics-Roger Kohler  
Grade 8 Civics-Roger Kohler  
Grade 7 History-Rachel Kanz  
Grade 6 History-Heather Ostrander  
Grade 5-Lisa Callahan  
Grade 4-Gill Romano  
Grade 3-Beth Smith  
Grade 2-Julia Gregory  
Grade 1-Jeanne Jones  
Kindergarten-Michelle Smith  
Preschool-Deb Alibozek  
Spanish-David Heath  
Art and CAP-Anna O'Donnell  
Library Media-Ronna Zigmand  
Music-Joy Mullen  
Physical Education/Health-Haley Korte  
Reading Intervention-Kim Kuster  
Math Intervention-Geoff Bell-Devaney  
Reading/Math Intervention-Sharon Renfrew  
Special Education-Kim Hosley, Zachary Houle



## Service Providers

Nurse-Cristina Lenfest  
School Adjustment Counselor-Doug Wentworth  
School Psychologist-Michael Vecchia  
Speech-Tracy Holcomb  
Physical Therapy-Betsy Kellogg  
Occupational Therapy-Devin Lamke

## Paraprofessionals

Ellen Austin  
Megan Besse  
Cindy Bartlett  
Denise Dus  
David Housman  
Jessica Jezak  
Cheyanne Psutka  
Errin Roney  
Lisa Schwartz  
Erin Weeden  
Sandi Wojtkowski

## Staff

Kitchen - Tammy Jervas, Peggy Senter Keefner, Ryleigh Keating  
Building and Grounds-Tracey Bullet

# School Calendar

## 2023-2024 CALENDAR

28, 29 Staff PD Days 30 1st Day of Classes Grades 1-8 30, 31 PreK/K Orientation  2 Days	<b>AUGUST 2023</b> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr><th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>Th</th><th>F</th><th>S</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td></tr> <tr><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td></tr> <tr><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td></tr> <tr><td>27</td><td>PD</td><td>PD</td><td>30</td><td>31</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table>	S	M	T	W	Th	F	S			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	PD	PD	30	31			<b>FEBRUARY 2024</b> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr><th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>Th</th><th>F</th><th>S</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td></tr> <tr><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td></tr> <tr><td>18</td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td>24</td></tr> <tr><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table>	S	M	T	W	Th	F	S					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	X	X	X	X	X	24	25	26	27	28	29			19-23 February Break  16 Days														
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# Nuts and Bolts

## School Office Hours

The main office is open from 8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. Phone calls can be received between 8:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m. at 413-698-2207. Please notify the office with any changes of address or phone numbers, e-mail. Include cell phone numbers when available.

## School Hours for Students

The school day at the Richmond Consolidated School begins at 8:25 a.m. **Children should arrive at school no earlier than 8:10 a.m. Adult supervision for grades K-5 begins at 8:10 a.m. on the paved playground area. All 6-8 students should report to the cafeteria when they arrive. Preschool students should go into the gym for their morning recess.**

Half day dismissal is 11:45 a.m. for PreK and Kindergarten students and 11:55 a.m. for grades 1-8.

The school day ends for PreK and Kindergarten students at 2:45 p.m.  
The school day ends for Grades 1-8 at 2:55 p.m.

## Automated Call System for School Families (Robo Call)

Richmond Consolidated School uses a school-wide calling system for school emergencies and important announcements. In the event of an emergency, where normal radio & TV communication is not adequate, a system whereby each parent/guardian receives a phone call will be used. The system is computerized, and will call up to two (2) phone numbers provided for each student. If the first (1) number is reached (even if it is voicemail) it will not call the second number. **Parents are asked to keep their phone contact numbers up to date.**

# Building Security Procedures

## Entering and Exiting Procedures

All school entrance doors will remain locked all day. In the morning, the only door open for walkers/students drop-off will be the back door (at the Kiss and Ride Circle). This door will open at 8:10 for students to arrive and it will close at 8:25 a.m. when classroom instruction begins.

To enter the building visitors must be buzzed in by the Principal's Administrative Assistant or designee at the front entrance of the building.

All visitors must report to the main office to receive a visitors pass.

## Cancellations and Delays

When school will not be in session, or there is a delay, there will be an announcement via the following:

Albany stations WNYT (channel 13) and WTEN (channel 10). Families will also be notified through the school's phone Robo Call system. In the event of a delayed opening of 1-2 hours (9:25 a.m. or 10:25 a.m.) we request that students not arrive any earlier than 9:10 a.m. or 10:10 a.m. as staff are not available for supervision.

## School Admission

### Entrance Requirements

Students entering Kindergarten must be five years old by September 1st preceding their entrance to Kindergarten.

Along with documentation of residency, we also require evidence of birth date (copy of birth certificate), DPT shots, immunization against polio, measles, rubella, and mumps, Hepatitis B, Varicella, Hib, lead screening and copy of most recent physical from the doctor's office. These are standard requirements for entrance into Kindergarten. We also need to receive information concerning health problems. In addition to filling out the registration forms, you will meet briefly either the school secretary and the school nurse along with a member of our speech and language department.

To the extent required by law, the Richmond Consolidated School will work with homeless students and their families to provide stability in school attendance and other services. Special attention will be given to ensuring the enrollment and attendance of homeless students not currently attending school. Homeless students will be provided district services for which they are eligible.

#### Residency

The Massachusetts Department of Education requires that we maintain accurate and current records of a child's residency. Residency is determined by where the child actually lives (where the child rests his/her head at night), irrespective of guardianship, custody, and domicile. Students must be residents of Richmond or South Hancock at the time of application. Proof of residency may include documentation of recent property purchase, rental agreement, phone or utility bill indicating the child resides within the Richmond school district.

## School Choice

It is the policy of Richmond Consolidated School District to admit non-resident students under the terms and conditions of the Inter-district School Choice Law (M.G.L. 76:12) and under the following local conditions:

1. Richmond Consolidated administration will determine the number of spaces available to Choice students for the upcoming school year.
2. A list of projected School Choice openings will be presented to the Richmond School Committee at the February meeting for consideration and discussion.
3. By June 1, if consideration is being given to withdraw from the provisions of the choice law, a public meeting will be held to review this decision.
4. The School Choice grade openings will be posted on the school website. The selection of non-resident students for admission will be in the form of a random drawing when the number of requests exceeds the number of available spaces. There may be two drawings for this purpose. The first drawing will take place between April 1st and April 14th. A waiting list will be established for those families that were not drawn for the open slots and each family will be notified of its placement on the waiting list. A second drawing may be conducted during the week immediately preceding the opening of the next school year if all openings are not filled from the waiting list or there are unexpected additional openings.
5. Any student who is accepted for admission under the provisions of this policy is entitled to remain in the District until graduation from eighth grade except if there is a lack of funding of the program at the state level.
6. The School Committee affirms its position that it shall not discriminate in the admission of any child on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, sexual orientation, ancestry, athletic performance, physical handicap, special need, academic performance or proficiency in the English language.
7. It is the practice of the Richmond School Committee not to accept so many Choice students so as to, in and of itself, drive the need for an additional section of students for any grade.

## Admission and Transfer of Students

All children entering the Richmond Consolidated School will register at the Principal's Office. Before entering, proof of immunization must be presented and reviewed by the school nurse. You will also need proof of residency.

Pupils will ordinarily be placed with other children of the same grade level.

If you are planning to move from Richmond, please notify the Principal by phone or by note. The school office needs to know your new address, school to be attending, and date of leaving. The Principal's secretary is in charge of sending school records to your child's new school and needs a parent's signature.

## PreKindergarten Program

### Admission and Lottery

Children must be 3 years old by September 1<sup>st</sup> of the school year. If more children apply than the number of available slots, then a lottery will be held.

### Tuition

The Richmond Consolidated Schools' School Committee sets tuition in the spring prior to the school year. The prekindergarten program is available at no cost for Richmond residents.

### PreKindergarten Schedule

Morning	8:25- 11:45
Full Day	8:25- 2:45

### PreKindergarten Calendar

Preschool runs five days a week. We follow the public school's calendar.

## Attendance

Students who attend school regularly are more likely to have success in school and careers. Research supports the connection between regular attendance and a student's personal, social, and emotional wellness and academic success. When students are not present in school, they miss out on opportunities for social development and are often not able to make adequate academic progress; they may disengage from learning as they get further off-track and may even drop out of school.

Attendance is an important factor for students to reach four key educational milestones as reported in the Massachusetts Early Warning Indicator System (EWIS):

(1) reading by 3rd grade as assessed on the grade 3 MCAS English Language Arts (ELA) test; (2) meeting grade level expectations as measured on the grade 6 MCAS ELA and Mathematics tests; (3) passing all grade 9 courses; and (4) graduating from high school.

Each day that your child is going to be absent or tardy, please call the school (698-2207) or email the school secretary between 8:00 a.m. and 8:40 a.m. If you have not called by this time, our office staff will be calling you as a precautionary measure. To leave a message before 8:00 a.m. call the school and access the appropriate mailbox. If your child visits the doctor or is triaged over the phone, please ask for a note for the school to excuse your child's absence.

## Excused/Unexcused Absences

Certain absences may be excused, meaning they will not be considered as it relates to a referral to truancy court by a Supervisor of Attendance under Massachusetts General Law (M.G.L. c.119). However, it is important to understand that all missed instructional time has the potential to negatively impact student outcomes. In addition, all absences are included as they relate to chronic absenteeism, regardless of whether the absence is excused or unexcused.

RCS recognizes that students will, at times, have a legitimate reason to be absent. The following absences will be excused with either a phone call to the office the day of or a note the day after the absence:

- Student illness or injury (more than 3 consecutive days requires a doctor's note)
- Death in the family
- Observance of a religious holiday
- Court Summons (student's name must appear on the summons)
- School approved activities
- Legal, immigration, military or other similar obligations

In addition, if your child is dismissed by the school nurse for medical reasons and she requests that you keep him or her home for an additional period of time, this will also count as an excused absence.

An absence is considered unexcused when a student misses school for reasons that are not accepted by the school, with or without parent/guardian permission.

## Unexcused absences include the following:

- Attending parent/guardian appointments
- Attending parent/guardian court summons
- Family travel/vacation
- Staying home to take care of or visit family members
- Missing the school bus
- Sleeping late
- Weather-related absences other than when the district has canceled school
- Undocumented illness/injury that exceeds more than three days

## After School Functions

Students who do not attend school during the day may not attend any school function that evening, unless absent for an excused appointment.

## Truancy

Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 76, Sections 1 and 2, mandates that students attend school and that the responsibility for proper attendance is placed on the parents. The schools are responsible for enforcing this statute and notifying parents/guardians of the recorded absences. Massachusetts state law (G.L. c. 119, § 21) defines as habitually truant “a school-aged child, not excused from attendance under the lawful and reasonable regulations of such child's school, who willfully fails to attend school for more than **8** school days in a quarter. In some cases, absences may not be "willful" and there are underlying barriers to attendance that can be addressed through services and support. Additionally, if your child accumulates **5** unexcused absences a letter will be sent home recommending a meeting to discuss ways to improve attendance. After more than **8** unexcused absences a meeting will be scheduled with administration and the classroom teacher. The solution could be as simple as notifying the parent/caregiver/guardian and working together to improve that student's attendance. However, in extreme cases, it may require the school to solicit assistance from the Court, by filing a Failure to Send or the Department of Children and Families, by filing a 51A (a report of suspected child abuse or neglect).

## Chronic Absences

Students who miss at least 10% of days enrolled (e.g., 18 days absent when enrolled for 180 school days) are considered chronically absent. National research shows that chronic absenteeism erodes the academic and social skills needed to succeed in school. Children living in poverty are more likely to be chronically absent due to life circumstances such as lack of access to health care, housing insecurity, and unreliable transportation.

## Tardy

School starts at 8:25 a.m. and students entering school after 8:25 a.m. will be considered tardy. If a student arrives after 8:25 a.m. the student and /or parent/caregiver should check in at the main office. Children are considered late if they arrive after 8:25 a.m. Please note that students are in classrooms preparing for the day before this time, so students should be arriving by 8:25 a.m. to get prepared for the day. Students who enter class tardy have a harder time settling into classroom routine, and may disrupt classroom instruction. Please make every attempt to schedule medical and other appointments after school hours whenever possible. We appreciate your efforts.



## Early Dismissal

If you need to have your child dismissed before the end of the school day, you must send a note with your child or email the administrative assistant. Include the date and time of the dismissal and the name of the person who will be picking them up if it is not the parent/caregiver/guardian. Adults must report to the office in order to sign out the child. Early dismissal should be for emergency use only. Office staff will call down and have the child sent to the office. Please do not go to the child's classroom to pick them up. Individuals unknown to the office staff will be requested to produce a proper form of identification prior to releasing the child(ren). *For the safety of our school community all visitors must use the front entrance and ring the bell to be let into the building. \*\*Please note: There will be no office dismissals after 2:40 due to changes in afternoon dismissal procedure.*

## Transportation

### Bus

Please note that children need to ride their assigned bus. In order to have a child use a means of different transportation, a parent/guardian will need to send a note or email to school. Please note no phone calls or emails will be taken after 2:00 p.m. regarding changes in transportation home, unless it is an emergency. \*\*If a child is accompanying another child home both parents/guardians need to acknowledge this change in dismissal.

Students are held to the same code of conduct standards on the bus as they are in school. Additionally, there is absolutely no food or drink on the bus. Riding the bus is a privilege and should not be abused. Failure to follow the rules may result in bus suspension for a specified number of days. Repeated offenses may result in bus suspension for the remainder of the year. It is important to recognize that inappropriate behavior jeopardizes the safety and well-being of all students.

Please note bus stop times can vary 10 minutes in either direction of stated bus pick up or drop off time.

If you have any questions about bus routes, please contact **Dufour Inc. at 413-637-0861.**

### Cars

Our car drop off and pick up is called "kiss and ride". Students are to be dropped off in the circle at the back of the school where staff is there to supervise. Students are to exit the car on the sidewalk side. If you want to get out with your child, you must park in the parking lot. Students are not to be dropped off in the parking lot for safety reasons.

The morning procedure will be followed during the afternoon as well. A staff member will be letting a few cars go at a time. Please do not pass a car dropping off or picking up unless instructed by a staff member. If your child is not out when you are next in line, please follow the staff member's instructions. Once again, there is no parking along the pick-up & drop off circle.

Handicap parking is for vehicles with Handicap designation only. Please do not block handicap access.

At 2:45 p.m. Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten car riders will be dismissed. They will use the back of the school. During this process please stay in your vehicles and be patient, waiting for the car in front of you to move through the line. Staff is there to help with this process.

At 2:55 p.m. Grades 1-8 car riders will be dismissed. If you are picking up students in grade 1-8 please do not get in the car line any earlier than 2:55 p.m. For safety reasons we ask that if the car line is backed up to RT 41 and you are entering from the South please go to the post office, turn around so that you are entering on the same side of the school.

If a child is accompanying another child home both parents/guardians need to acknowledge this change in dismissal.

## Visitors to the School

Since we do encourage community and parent participation in school activities, non-staff members may be present in the building on a daily basis. It will be necessary for visitors to ring the FRONT doorbell, be recognized, and then allowed into the building. Visitors are required to sign in and out at the office and take a visitor tag. Staff members generally know who these visitors are. Should any staff member not recognize a visitor, a polite inquiry or offer of assistance will help ascertain the legitimacy of the person's presence in our school.

Additionally, in order to minimize interruptions to classes, people wishing to speak with a teacher should call or email in advance and arrange a time with the teacher that is mutually convenient. Parents should also arrange in advance if they wish to visit the instructional program. There is a form in the school office.

If you are dropping off an item for your student, please leave it in the office and a staff member will take it to your student. If you are dropping your student off after school has begun, you will need to sign them in and we will get them to their classroom. Our full visitor's policy can be found on our website: [www.richmondconsolidatedschool.org](http://www.richmondconsolidatedschool.org)

## Recess

Middle school students (grades 6-8) have approximately forty-five minutes for recess/lunch and elementary school students have approximately forty-five minutes for recess/lunch. Additionally, all elementary students (K-5) arriving between 8:10 and 8:25 will have a morning recess on the pavement area behind the school and a ten-minute recess before snack. PreK will have their morning recess in the gym. During inclement weather the children have indoor recess. The Principal determines whether the children have outdoor play. Please dress your children in appropriate clothing for changes in weather conditions. We use a temperature above 15° (either ambient temperature or wind chill temperature) as the determinant as to whether recess will be outdoors.

It is important that children are dressed appropriately for school and recess each day. A warm jacket, snow pants, hat, gloves and boots in winter months; safe and appropriate shoes and clothing for the playground in other seasons. In warmer weather sunscreen should be applied in the morning before school to protect your child from the harmful effects of the sun.

Recess guidelines can be found in the Appendix.

## Cafeteria

We want to update you with exciting news about universal free school meals. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has decided to extend free school meals for all students through the 2023-2024 school year! This means that lunch will continue to be served at no cost to all students. Please note that even though meals will be free for all, it is very important for families to still complete the household Application for Free and Reduced Price Meals for the 2023-2024 school year. The application can be found on our website: [www.richmondconsolidated.org](http://www.richmondconsolidated.org). Please print and complete the application to be processed at the food service office. We strongly encourage families who have not received recent notification of Direct Certification qualification for the 2023-2024 school year to submit this form so that we can serve families most effectively. As always, we are grateful for the opportunity to provide nourishing and healthy meals to all our students so please reach out to us at (413) 698-2207 with any questions or concerns.

All students who were on free or reduced lunch last year will automatically be able to receive free or reduced lunch the first few weeks of school, until the verification process has been completed. Forms are sent home the first week of school. There is a regular hot lunch of the day or additional choices of a PB&J sandwich (except Wednesday which is PB&F) and Salad Bar. Snack is also available every morning with prices ranging from .40 to \$1.25. Snack is not part of the free or reduced lunch program.

## Lunch Prepayment Program

Daily lunches **SHOULD BE PREPAID FOR** on a weekly or monthly basis. We encourage you to sign up at [my lunch bucks](#). You may also pay by check. Please make checks payable to the "Town of Richmond" (one check per family). Checks made out differently will be returned. On the check, indicate the child(s) name. You may also send cash in a sealed envelope labeled with the child(s) name. You may also pay online via the website at [www.richmondconsolidated.org](http://www.richmondconsolidated.org) by clicking on the *ONLINE PAYMENTS TAB*.

## Free and Reduced Lunch Form

The free and reduced lunch form can be found at [www.richmondconsolidated.org](http://www.richmondconsolidated.org) under the RCS Food Program heading. It is recommended that all families submit a form regardless of income status.

## Weekly Menu

The weekly menu can be found on our website [www.richmondconsolidated.org](http://www.richmondconsolidated.org) under the RCS Food Program heading and in the Weekly Newsletter.

## Student Records

Student records are kept in the Principal's office. Parents/caregivers/guardians are guaranteed the right to inspect as well as seek addition to or deletion from all records which are kept, or requested to be kept, by the school department concerning individual students. These records include the student's transcript and any other recorded information that is identified by the student's name.

Pursuant to General Law c. 71, s. 34D and 34F, and the regulations promulgated thereunder, no third party, other than an authorized school or DESE, shall have access to information in or from a student record without the specific written consent of the eligible student or the parent/guardian.

Upon receipt of a Court order or lawfully issued subpoena, or upon receipt of a request from a Court or the Department of Youth Services for information regarding a student, the school, prior to compliance, shall notify the eligible parent/guardian of the order, subpoena or request.

Except for certain limited and specifically defined individuals, i.e.: certain court officers, health officials, and authorized school personnel, no individual or agency may have access to school records of the students without the "specific informed written consent" of the student or his/her parent/guardian.

Authorized school personnel of the school to which a student is transferring may have access to the student's record without the consent of a parent/guardian. Complete copies of the state regulations concerning parents' and students' rights to records may be obtained in the building principal's office.

## Access of Student Records

You have the right to inspect and review your child's education records maintained by the school. You also have the right to request the school correct records that you believe are inaccurate or misleading. If the Richmond Consolidated School decides not to amend the record, you have the right to a formal hearing before the Principal. The Principal will inform you in writing of her decision. If you are not satisfied with the decision, you have the right to place a statement with the record setting forth your view about the contested information.

The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) applies to programs that receive funding from the U.S. Department of Education. It affords parents certain rights regarding the conduct of surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams.

Complete guidelines and information regarding these rights is available upon request in the Principal's office. Parents who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW,  
Washington, D.C. 20202-5901

## By Non-Custodial Parents

Massachusetts's law (Chapter 71, Section 34H) specifies detailed procedures that govern access to student records by parents who do not have physical custody of their children.

## Copy of Student Records (Chapter 71, Section 34D and 34E)

"The board of education shall adopt regulations relative to the maintenance, retention, duplication, storage and periodic destruction of student records by the public elementary and secondary schools of the commonwealth. Such rules and regulations shall provide that a parent or guardian of any pupil shall be allowed to inspect academic, scholastic, or any other records concerning such pupils which are kept or are required to be kept".

## Release of Student Information

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. As a parent, FERPA gives you certain rights with respect to your child's educational records.

## Important Information

### Weekly Newsletter

The staff at Richmond Consolidated School are committed to maintaining open home/school communication. Teachers often send communication home and parents/caregivers are encouraged to contact their child's teacher by note, phone, e-mail or conference when they have information to share or have questions. By maintaining the lines of communication, teachers and parents work as a team, supporting the success of each child. In addition, a weekly newsletter from the superintendent/principal is emailed every Friday with important information including upcoming events and the lunch menu. The weekly newsletter is the main source of information throughout the school year. If you are not receiving it, please contact the main office.

### Invitations

Students may not distribute invitations to birthdays, play dates, etc., at school. Since these are not school functions, and do not include all students. Invitations must be handled privately from home.

### Solicitation

Individuals in organizations wishing to post or distribute material must receive permission from the Principal. In general, information that does not pertain to a non-profit organization with relevance to elementary school-aged children is not approved.

### Money and Other Valuables

When children bring money to school we ask that parents place the money in an envelope, include a note inside stating the reason for the money being sent, and include both the child's name and the teacher's name on the envelope.

We ask that children not bring large amounts of money or other valuable objects to school or on field trips. We do not allow electronics without specific permission. We cannot assume responsibility for any damage or loss that may occur. Any objects

identified by the Principal as inappropriate for school grounds will be confiscated and brought to the Principal's office where parents may pick them up.

## Lost and Found

The lost and found area is in the cafeteria.

## State Smoking Regulations

Please be aware that smoking/vaping on school grounds is prohibited. This includes outside the school building on the sidewalks, playground, and the playing fields. Thank you for your cooperation.

# Health

## Emergency Cards

An emergency card is sent home the first week of school. It is vital that the form be completed properly and signed so that the child will be able to receive needed treatment. Emergency information must be as accurate and up to date as possible for student safety. Parents/caregivers/guardians must keep the school nurse informed of any changes to the emergency form. Changes can include alternate emergency contact people, phone numbers, street addresses, medications, new allergies or medical conditions.

## Examinations

All students entering PreK, Kindergarten, and 4<sup>th</sup> grade are required to provide an updated physical exam and immunization record.

## Screenings

Regular state mandated screenings are conducted in the following grades;

Hearing- K-3 grades, 6<sup>th</sup> grade

Vision- K-6 grades

Heights and weights with BMI calculation- K, 4<sup>th</sup> grade, 7<sup>th</sup> grade

Postural- 5<sup>th</sup> -8<sup>th</sup> grades

## Guidelines for School Attendance and Illness

Should my child be in school with this illness? Remember: Sick children belong at home. Well children belong in school. And the best way to prevent infections is frequent hand washing.

- Children with a fever over 100.4° should stay home until there is no fever for 24 hours without the use of fever-controlling medication. Call your doctor if your child has a fever with pain, rash, weakness, vomiting or diarrhea.
- If a child's eye is red with cloudy or yellow/green drainage, you should call the doctor during office hours. If an eye ointment is prescribed your child may return to school 24 hours after treatment begins. All family members should wash hands frequently.
- Children with one event of vomiting or diarrhea (watery loose bowel movement) should stay at home until at least 12 hours have passed without any further events. Call your doctor if the vomiting or diarrhea continues or if your child also has a fever, rash, or weakness. All family members should wash hands frequently. If there is more than one event of vomiting or diarrhea, then your child must be kept home for 24 hours after the last episode.
- Your child should stay home if he/she has head lice. Your child may return to school after their hair has been treated. In PreK, the student must also be nit free due to the closeness that can occur during this age demographic. Call your doctor or school nurse for more resources.
- If your child has a sore throat and a fever, or a severe sore throat without fever, he/she should stay home from school. If there is a diagnosis of strep throat, your child may return to school 24 hours after treatment has started and when fever is no longer present.
- If your child's cough is worse than you would expect with a cold, keep him/her at home. If he/she has a hard time breathing or has a fever, call your doctor.
- If your child complains of a stomach ache, especially if he/she says it hurts to move and he/she does not want to eat, he/she should stay home. Call your doctor.
- If your child has a staph infection, your child may return to school 24 hours after treatment has started. The sore must be covered with a dressing and the dressing must remain dry when the student is at school.

When there is doubt in your mind about sending your child to school, consult your child's doctor. Remember to make sure that we know how to reach you during the day. Please give the school all available numbers; cell, work, relatives, friends, etc.

## Illness and Injury

Parents/guardians, or those persons designated on the Emergency Forms, are notified by the school nurse, or a school staff member whenever illness or an emergency



occurs. In cases of life-threatening emergencies, students will be immediately transported to the hospital via ambulance with a staff member.

## Immunizations

It is Massachusetts state law that students who are not up to date with the immunization requirements for school entry are excluded from school. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to provide current immunization records in a timely fashion to avoid exclusion of their child. The school nurse is available to help parents/guardians in this area. Families whose religious beliefs preclude the students from being immunized are precluded from this exemption.

## Medication Policy

According to Massachusetts Department of Public Health regulations, no medication will be dispensed by Richmond school personnel to any student except upon written consent of both the physician and the parent/guardian, or legal guardian, in cases where the medication is needed for a particular health problem and must be given during school hours. By law, only a school nurse, RN, or trained staff member can administer medications in school.

All medications, prescription and over the counter (includes cough drops), may only be given by the school nurse with a doctor's order and a signed parent/guardian authorization. The school nurse has these forms. Antibiotics that are given for a limited time may be given without the MD order but the original prescription bottle must be given to the school nurse. Parents/guardians are required to bring in all medications and discuss the administration plan with the school nurse.

The only exceptions are made for asthma inhalers and epipens which may be self administered.

We thank you for helping in the protection of the other students and employees. Your child will be sent home if any of these symptoms, conditions, illnesses are found or suspected during the school day.

# Academics

## Homework

Homework expectations will be included with the information communicated by the teacher to parents/caregivers at the beginning of the school year. Parents/Caregivers should be encouraged to contact the teacher if their child is spending either too much or too little time than expected on their assignments.

The amount of homework should approximately average ten minutes per weeknight times the grade level of the student. On occasion, special projects might require additional time. **In addition to this regular homework**, children are expected to read for a certain amount of time a night. Each teacher will determine the amount of time.

Generally speaking, homework should reinforce what has been learned in school and not contain totally new material to the student.

## Core Curriculum

### **English Language Arts (ELA)**

K-5 Wonders 2023 (adopted May 2023)

K-3 Foundations (Phonics and Spelling)

K-Heggerty (Phonemic and Phonological Awareness),

K-2 Zaner Bloser (Handwriting)

3-4 Handwriting Without Tears

6-8 StudySync (adopted May 2023)

### **Math**

K-Math in Focus

1st and 2nd Grades-Go Math

3rd-5th Grade-Everyday Math

6-8 Illustrative Math

### **Science**

K-Scholastic

2-5 Grade-TCI Bring Science Alive

6-8 OpenSciEd, Kesler, Interactive Science by Prentice Hall and other materials

### **Social Studies/History/Civics**

K-2 Scholastic and other supplemental material

3rd Grade-Gibbs Smith Education, *Massachusetts, Our Home*

4th Grade-Harcourt States and Region and other supplemental material

Grades 5-7-Investigating History (adopted June 2023) Grades 3 and 4 available 2024

## **Specials**

### **Physical Education**

All students receive two periods of Physical Education a week. Children are expected to participate, unless a note from a physician is provided. In addition, students should always wear appropriate athletic footwear and clothing. Proper footwear is absolutely necessary for children's safety, as well as protection of the floor. We suggest that a pair of sneakers is sent in at the beginning of the year to be kept here at school. Our Physical Education program offers experiences for all students, with the goal of developing a healthy self-image and a wholesome, lifetime attitude towards exercise and fitness. Activities are carefully planned so that students obtain knowledge about the value of regular exercise, essential motor development, and the social characteristics which foster citizenship. A Health Program is offered to students (grades to be determined).

### **Music**

All students in grades PreK-8 receive one period of general music per week. Children in grades 4-8 have the option to participate in band with instrumental lessons as well as select choir in grades 6-8. All of the bands and the select choir are a full year commitment if a student chooses to join any of these performing groups. Instrumental lessons are held during the school day in consultation with the student's classroom teacher. Students in grades 5-8 will have the option to audition for the jazz band, which rehearses before school. Students in the band and/or choir are required to attend all performances. More information and details on the requirements for performing ensembles will come home with students.

### **Art**

All students in grades PrK-8 receive one period of art per week. Each grade level has lessons during the school year that are centered around the elements and principles of art and design. They also have lessons which are a reflection of our integrated curriculum in art and school based themes. Students learn to recognize and use the Elements of Art and Design in visual art making while developing the tools and the Artist Mindset and ability for exploratory, imaginative and creative problem solving and thinking. They learn not only to understand art theories but also how to apply the theories and techniques in their work in a way that can be clearly assessed. Many lessons are designed to use art to better understand the ideas, formulas, and concepts studied in other academic areas, engaging in a creative process which connects an art form and another subject area and meets evolving objectives in both.

## Library/Technology

The school Library/Technology program supports the RCS mission by encouraging “a love of lifelong learning” and supporting all areas of the RCS curriculum. Students in grades PK-4 will have a combined library and Technology class while grades 5-8 will only have Technology class but will have access to the library during Technology class and whenever needed. During Technology class students will learn computer fundamentals, keyboarding/typing, internet usage and communication, online safety/digital citizenship, word processing, presentation tools, spreadsheets and databases. Guidelines for the library include the following: Students in grades PK- 4 may take out a maximum of two books at any given time while students in grades 5-8 may take out 3 books at any given time. For any books that are overdue, a notice is sent to the child’s classroom teacher once a month. If a student has lost or damaged a book, students are requested to replace the book with a gently used copy or pay the replacement cost. Checks should be made out to the Richmond PTA.

## Creative Arts and STEAM Program, formerly known as CAP

The Creative Arts Program started out as a unique set of classes taught by local professional artists, designed for grades K-8 in which the Arts, Drama, Dance, Music, Design and the Visual Arts, were explored and experienced. The program has now expanded to include the other elements of STEAM education; including residencies with local scientists , technology educators, engineers and mathematicians, enriching students and building on the knowledge and skills they are learning in their core classes as well as with specialists.

## School Adjustment Counselor (SAC)

Our School Adjustment Counselor (SAC) works primarily with improving student’s social emotional health. Areas addressed are: anger management, stress and anxiety, social skills and conflict resolution...just to name a few. Our SAC provides small group and whole class lessons that reinforce our core beliefs (C.A.R.E.S.). If you would like him to meet with your child regarding a social-emotional concern, please email or call him. Our SAC is also the 504 Accommodation Plan coordinator.

# Essential Partners/Ways to Get Involved

## Parent/Teacher Association

Richmond PTA supports quality arts and humanities programs, educational field trips, and technology for all students at RCS. They also provide family night activities throughout the school year. They are always looking for new members to help support the various programs as well as to offer fresh ideas. Join them for monthly meetings at RCS, check the weekly updates in the Principal’s Weekly Newsletter.

## Richmond Educational Enrichment Fund (REEF)

The Richmond Educational Enrichment Fund (REEF) is an endowed fund whose purpose is to enhance and enrich the educational experience of the students and teachers in the Richmond Consolidated School (RCS). REEF wants to ensure the highest level of achievement for the students and enhance their capacity to achieve excellence both in school and in the community. Students, teachers, administrators and community members for projects that enhance and enrich the educational experience in the Richmond Consolidated School. Please note that grants from the fund will not replace public dollars for the school district. REEF seeks primarily to help cover the direct costs of projects (not salaries). Priority will be given to proposals that rely on volunteer efforts and that show additional means of support. Preference will be given to new programs.

Possible projects include, but are not limited to: independent study; new programs; extra-curricular activities; individual creative projects, in or outside the classroom; visiting speakers; artists in residence; professional development for teachers; scientific, athletic, or technical equipment; library resources; class field trips.

## School Council

School council is a committee composed of the principal, parents/caregivers, staff and community members. The school council is committed to improving the school by participating in the development of the school improvement plan as well as serves as a bridge between the school and community. Annual nominations/elections are held each fall, if you are interested in nominating yourself or somebody else, please contact the main office.

## Special Education Parent Advisory Council

Special education parent advisory councils (PACs) have tremendous potential to have a positive impact on special education programs in a school district. PACs can provide invaluable activities for parents, and add an important voice to a school district's dialogue and decision-making.

The following is the excerpt from Section 3 of Chapter 71B that pertains to PACs: "... The school committee of any city, town, or school district shall establish a parent advisory council on special education. Membership shall be offered to all parents of children with disabilities and other interested parties. The parent advisory council duties shall include but not be limited to: advising the school committee on matters that pertain to the education and safety of students with disabilities; meeting regularly with school officials to participate in the planning, development, and evaluation of the school committee's special education programs. The parent advisory council shall establish by-laws regarding officers and operational procedures. In the course of its duties under this section, the parent advisory council shall receive assistance from the school committee without charge, upon reasonable notice, and subject to the availability of staff and resources. ..."

If you are interested in participating in the PAC at RCS please contact Mary Shook, Director of Special Education at [mshook@richmondconsolidated.org](mailto:mshook@richmondconsolidated.org).

## Promotion and Retention

The decision to retain a child is a difficult one to make. It is generally agreed that the earlier the retention, the more effective it will be. If retention is considered, the best interest and long-range welfare of the child shall be the prime considerations.

The parents and Principal shall be responsible for making the final decision on promotion or retention, and the Principal will consult closely with teachers and parents before making any decision. In order for the retention to work, it is generally agreed that both the school and the home should be in agreement that it is the correct decision. The possibility of retention must be made known to parents well in advance so that the appropriate consultation can be achieved.

## Community Rights and Responsibilities

### Student Rights

All school students have the right to:

- Be treated with respect and dignity.
- Be safe in their school environment.
- Be an active member of a productive learning community.
- Be given the opportunity to present their version of events to school personnel.

### Student Responsibilities

All school students have the responsibility to:

- Contribute to maintaining a safe and orderly school environment that is conducive to learning and to show respect to other persons and property (treat others as you would like to be treated)
- Be familiar with and abide by all school policies, rules and regulations dealing with student conduct.
- Attend school every day unless they are legally excused (State Policy) and be in class, on time, and prepared to learn.
- Conduct themselves as representatives of the school when participating in or attending school-sponsored extracurricular events and to hold themselves to the highest standards of conduct, demeanor, and sportsmanship.

## Parents/Caregivers/Guardians

Are expected to:

- Recognize that the education of the child(ren) is a joint responsibility of the parents and the school community.
- Be familiar with all school policies, rules, regulations, and help their children understand that by signing the Policy and Procedure document they are actively participating in a safe, orderly environment.
- Ensure their child(ren) attend school regularly, on time, and all absences are excused.
- Build good relationships with teachers, other parents and their children's friends.
- Take an active role in supporting their child's social/emotional learning.
- Be courteous in speech and actions.
- Refrain from use of profanity and/or physical contact.
- Send their child(ren) to school ready to participate and learn.
- Send their child(ren) to school in a manner consistent with the school dress code.
- Inform school officials of changes in the home situation.

## Teachers

All school teachers are expected to:

- Be familiar with all school policies, rules, regulations, and help their students understand that they are actively participating in a safe, orderly environment.
- Be prepared to teach.
- Maintain a climate of mutual respect and dignity.
- Communicate to students and parents, preferably in writing:
  - Course objectives and requirements
  - Marking/grading procedures
  - Assignment deadlines
  - Expectations for students
  - Classroom discipline plan
- Communicate proactively with students, parents and other teachers concerning growth, achievement and behavior.
- Be courteous in speech and actions.
- Refrain from use of profanity and/or physical contact.
- Respect student privacy at all times.

## School Adjustment Counselor

The school adjustment counselor is expected to:

- Assist students in coping with peer pressure and emerging personal, social and emotional problems.
- Initiate teacher/student/counselor conferences and parent/teacher/student/counselor conferences, as necessary, as a way to prevent and resolve problems.
- Provide building wide instruction on conflict resolution, anger management, bullying, diversity and other student programs that encourage civility, safety and impulse control.
- Encourage students to benefit from the curriculum, extracurricular and community programs.

## Principal

Is expected to:

- Promote a safe, orderly and stimulating school environment, supporting active teaching and learning.
- Ensure that students and staff have the opportunity to communicate regularly with the principal and approach the principal for redress of grievances.
- Evaluate on a regular basis all instructional programs and work to minimize problems of misconduct and is sensitive to student and teacher needs.
- Support the development of and student participation in appropriate school and community activities.
- Be responsible for enforcing the Code of Conduct and ensuring that all cases are resolved promptly and fairly.
- Review with school administrators the policies of the Richmond Consolidated School and state and federal laws relating to school operations and management.
- Be on top of educational trends relating to student discipline.

## Richmond School Committee

Is expected to:

- Collaborate with student, teacher, administrator, and parent organizations, school safety personnel and other school personnel to develop a Code of Conduct that clearly defines expectations for the conduct of students, school personnel and visitors on school property and at school functions.
- Adopt and review at least annually the school's Code of Conduct to evaluate the Code's effectiveness and the fairness and consistency of its implementation.
- Evaluate the superintendent/principal on an annual basis.
- Lead by example by conducting school committee meetings in a professional, respectful, courteous manner.



# Code of Conduct

The Richmond Consolidated School is committed to providing a safe and orderly school environment where students may receive, and school personnel may deliver, quality educational services without disruption or interference. Responsible behavior by students, teachers, other school personnel, parents and other visitors is essential to achieving this goal. Unless otherwise indicated, this Code applies to all students, school personnel, parents and other visitors when on school property or attending school functions.

The following measures, although inclusive of grades PreK-8 are adjusted, as needed, according to grade level and prior discipline history.

## Dress Code

All students are expected to give proper attention to personal cleanliness and to dress appropriately for school and school functions. Students and their parents/caregivers have the primary responsibility for acceptable student dress and appearance. Teachers and all other school personnel should exemplify and reinforce acceptable student dress and help students develop an understanding of the dress code. The student dress code supports equitable educational access and is written in a manner that does not reinforce stereotypes, or increase marginalization or oppression of any group and is committed to safeguarding the rights given to all students under state and federal law. In addition, to promote a safe, healthy, orderly and civil school environment, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability or appearance in the school setting.

- Hats, including religious headwear, may be worn and must allow the face to be visible to staff and not interfere with the line of sight of any student or staff.
- Hoodie sweatshirts may not be worn during instructional time. When worn, they must allow the face to be visible to staff.
- Students will be asked to remove headwear if it prevents them or others from fully or safely participating in the learning experience.
- Attire must be clean, safe, appropriate and not disrupt or interfere with the educational process. Students must wear a shirt, bottom, and footwear.
- All tops, including dresses, must have fabric on the front, backs, and sides.
- Must have fabric covering all private parts and must not be see through.
- Must not depict hate speech targeting groups based on race, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or disability.
- May not depict, advertise, or advocate the use of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, or other controlled substances.
- Must not show undergarments, with the exception of straps.
- May not depict pornography, nudity, or sexual acts.
- Should not include pajamas (with the exception of lounge pants), unless on a designated special event day.

- 5th -8th grade students may not wear swimsuits. PreK-4th grade students may wear swimsuits for designated events such as field day.
- May not wear or have accessories that could be considered dangerous or could be used as a weapon, including sunglasses within the building.
- May not wear clothing with images or language that creates a hostile or intimidating environment based on any protected class.
- Footwear must be worn at all times and must be appropriate and safe for the learning activity (i.e. sneakers for P.E. classes).
- For safety reasons, students may not wear sandals that don't have straps to hold them on or open toe shoes during recess. Students in Prek-grade 5 may not wear crocs at recess. Students must have a change of shoes. Students in grades 6-8 may wear crocs.
- Snow boots may only be worn outside. Students must have a change of shoes.

The principal or his or her designee shall be responsible for informing all students and their parents/caregivers of the student dress code at the beginning of the school year and any revisions to the dress code made during the school year. Students who violate the student dress code shall be required to modify their appearance by covering or removing the offending item and, if necessary or practical, replacing it with an acceptable item.

## Cell Phones and Personal Electronic Devices

Students shall have the electronic devices turned off at all times during school hours, which includes recess, lunch and bus rides. Cell phones must be kept in your classroom/or school's holding system while attending school and school sponsored activities. All other electronic devices (earbuds, headphones, etc.) must be kept in the student's locker or backpack and turned off.

The school accepts no responsibility for students who lose or have their devices stolen.

Students found using an signaling device will have the following consequences:

- The device shall be confiscated and given to an administrator. The student may pick up the device at the end of the day in the principal's office.
- A second infraction shall result in the device being confiscated and the parent/caregiver will be required to meet with the principal in order to retrieve the device.
- A third infraction shall result in the student being denied consent to have a signaling device in school until the end of the trimester.

If a student needs to use a telephone, he/she is advised to come to the office and ask permission to use the school phone.

Electronic devices may be used on field trips with the permission of the chaperones. Phones will not be allowed in the students' rooms overnight.

# Technology

## ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY AND GUIDELINES

### Introduction

This document formalizes the policy for users of the Richmond Consolidated School (RCS) Network resources. All users, including but not limited to students, teachers, administrators, staff, guests and educational organizations are covered by this policy and are expected to be familiar with its provisions.

### User Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of any person using the RCS Network resources to read, understand, and to follow these guidelines. In addition, users are expected to exercise reasonable judgment in interpreting these guidelines and in making decisions about the appropriate use of the RCS Network resources. Any person with questions regarding the application or meaning of these guidelines should seek clarification from the RCS Network Administrator. Use of the RCS Network resources shall constitute acceptance of the terms of these guidelines. It is the responsibility of any person using the RCS devices such as teacher laptops and student Chromebooks to read, sign and submit the RCS Acceptable Use policy online document.

### RCS Network Administrator Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the person who has been designated as the RCS Network Administrator to ensure that only educators and students in his/her school are registered users of the RCS Network. The Administrator is responsible for making certain that the educators and students within the school understand and abide by the Acceptable and Unacceptable Uses as stated in this document (Paragraph 3). If the RCS Network Administrator has reason to believe that a user (educator or student) is misusing the system, the Administrator has the right to access the user's account in order to review the use of the RCS Network tools by the user. It is also the responsibility of the Administrator to report any misuse of the system to the Principal.

### RCS Educator Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of educators who are using the RCS Network resources with students to teach students about safe and responsible use of the Internet and the RCS Network. Educators are responsible for monitoring students' use of these resources, and to intervene if students are using them inappropriately. Educators should make sure that students understand and abide by the Acceptable and Unacceptable Uses as stated in this document (Paragraph 3). If an educator has reason to believe that a student is misusing the system, he or she has the right to request that the RCS Network Administrator review the use of the RCS Network tools by the student. It is

also the responsibility of the teacher to report any misuse of the system to his/her RCS Network Administrator or directly to the Principal.

### RCS Network Student Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of students who are using the RCS Network resources to learn about safe and responsible use of the Internet and RCS Network. They are responsible to use these resources responsibly and appropriately. They must abide by the Acceptable and Unacceptable Uses as stated in this document (Paragraph 4). If a student is misusing the system, RCS educators or the RCS Network Administrator must report it to the Principal and/or the RCS Network Administrator who have the right to discontinue his/her use of the system.

### Technologies Covered

RCS may provide the privilege of Internet access, desktop computers, mobile computers or devices, iPods, iPads, cell phones, videoconferencing capabilities, online collaboration capabilities, message boards, email and more. This Acceptable Use Policy applies to both school owned and privately owned devices accessing the RCS network, the RCS Internet connection, and/or private networks/Internet connections while on school property. The policies outlined in this document cover *all* available technologies now and into the future, not just those specifically listed or currently available.

### Technology Educational Technology Tools (EdTech) being used this year at Richmond Consolidated School

This year students will be using a variety of EdTech tools (websites/apps) during core class time as well as specialist classes.

We strive to review these websites and apps regularly to make sure they are following the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), which is a federal law enacted in 1974 that protects the privacy of student education records and Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) which requires that the federal trade commission to issue and enforce regulations concerning children's online privacy. We have adopted a process for reviewing these apps and websites and we now belong to the Student Data For Privacy Consortium (SDPC) along with other schools in Massachusetts. These schools all work together to stay updated on student data privacy laws and best practices.

If you have any questions regarding the websites/apps that students are using, please contact the school.

## Acceptable and Unacceptable Uses

The resources available to the RCS Network users are to be used for educational purposes. All RCS Network users are responsible for all activity on the RCS Network. Users should not use the RCS Network to store any files that are not educational.

It is acceptable for users to:

- Use school technologies for school-related activities.
- Follow the same guidelines for respectful, responsible behavior online that is expected offline.
- Treat school resources carefully, and alert staff if there is any problem with their operation.
- Encourage positive, constructive discussion if allowed to use communicative or collaborative technologies.
- Alert a teacher or other staff member if observing any threatening, inappropriate, or harmful content (images, messages, posts) online.
- Use school technologies at appropriate times, in approved places, for educational pursuits.
- Cite sources when using online sites and resources for research.
- Recognize that use of school technologies is a privilege and treat it as such.
- Be cautious to protect their own safety and the safety of others.
- Help to protect the security of school resources.

It is unacceptable for users to use these resources for:

- Furthering any political or religious purpose.
- Engaging in any personal, commercial or fundraising purpose.
- Sending threatening or harassing messages in accordance with the RCS Bully Prevention Plan.
- Gaining unauthorized access to computer or telecommunications networks.
- Interfering with the operations of technology resources, including placing a computer virus on any computer system, including the RCS Network system.
- Accessing or sharing sexually explicit, obscene, or otherwise inappropriate materials.
- Intercepting communications intended for other persons.
- Attempting to gain unauthorized access to the RCS Network system.
- Logging in through another person's account or attempting to access another user's password or files.
- Sending defamatory or libelous material concerning a person or group of people.
- Furthering any illegal act, including infringing on any intellectual property rights.
- Downloading, uploading, or distributing any files, software, or other

material that is not specifically related to an educational project.

- Downloading, uploading, or distributing any files, software, or other material in violation of federal copyright laws.

Mobile phones with cameras and screens create a new set of privacy issues for the school as images of people can be taken without their knowledge, images can be saved and then sent to other people, and it is possible to send these images to the Internet. This creates the potential for gross invasion of privacy in areas around the school such as rest rooms and on field trips.

In cases where there are gross invasions of privacy or where student images are used without permission (i.e., sent to another person or posted on the Internet) there will be serious consequences. In some cases, students could be suspended from school and in extreme circumstances they could be expelled from school.

**This is not intended to be an exhaustive list. The administration reserves the right to hold users accountable for any improper use. Users should use their own good judgment when using school technologies.**

As with any other form of communication, these systems may not be used to transmit or store messages or other data that are inappropriate under existing RCS Network, district or MA DOE policies, such as those prohibiting bullying and sexual harassment. Users may not create, send, or store messages or other data that are considered offensive, contain sexually explicit material, or otherwise offensively address the age, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religious or political beliefs, national origin, or disability of a person or a group of people. Users also may not create, send, or store messages pertaining to dangerous devices such as weaponry or explosive devices. Users should take all reasonable precautions against receiving or downloading messages, images, or other data of this sort.

## No Expectation of Privacy

The RCS Network resources are the property of the Richmond Consolidated School and are to be used in conformance with these guidelines. The RCS Principal and Network Administrator retain the right to inspect any user's data and communications. The RCS Principal and Network Administrator also have the right to give permission to the teachers, the school administrators, and the parents of any student to review the use of the RCS Network tools by a student who they think may be misusing the system. Users are advised that messages in discussion forums, including deleted messages, are regularly archived and can be retrieved. In addition, an Internet firewall automatically checks all data moving between the local area network and the Internet and logs the sending and receiving destinations. Use of the RCS Network resources constitutes consent for the RCS Network Administrator to monitor and/or inspect any files that users create, any messages they post or receive, and any websites they access. Any email communication between staff or staff and parents regarding students could

be considered part of a student's record. This must be preserved in accordance with student record laws.

## Passwords

Administrators and teachers shall be given a private login and password for access to teacher related resources on the RCS Network. This username and password is to be used to access the RCS Network and any resources that reside within the RCS Network that require password access. The users must take precautions to maintain the secrecy of their password so that other users will not be able to utilize that password for malicious purposes. If a user suspects that someone has discovered the user's password, the user should change the password immediately.

Students will have access only to student-related resources on the RCS Network. If any user (student, teacher, or administrator) suspects that someone has discovered a teacher or administrator password, the user must report such discovery to the RCS Network Administrator or the Principal. The RCS Network Administrator should make certain the password is changed immediately

## Violations

Failure to observe these guidelines may subject users to suspension and or termination of their use of the RCS Network. The RCS Network Administrator will notify the Principal of any inappropriate activities by the users. The Principal will advise law enforcement agencies of illegal activities conducted through the RCS Network and will cooperate fully with local, state, and/or federal officials in any investigation related to illegal activities conducted through the RCS Network.

## Disclaimers

The RCS Superintendent, Principal and Network Administrator make no warranties of any kind, either expressed or implied, for the RCS Network's services and resources. The RCS Superintendent, Principal and Network Administrator are not responsible for any damages incurred, including, but not limited to: loss of data resulting from delays or interruption of service, loss of data stored on the RCS

Network resources, or damage to personal property used to access the RCS Network resources; for the accuracy, nature, or quality of information stored on the RCS Network resources or gathered through the RCS Network or the Internet; for unauthorized financial obligations incurred through the RCS Network-provided access. Further, even though the RCS Network may use technical or manual means to limit student access, these limits do not provide a foolproof means for enforcing the provisions of this policy. All provisions of this agreement are subordinate to local, state and federal statutes.

## Prohibited Student Conduct

The Richmond Consolidated School expects all students to conduct themselves in an appropriate and civil manner, with proper regard for the rights and welfare of other students and school personnel, and for the care of school facilities and equipment. The Richmond Consolidated School recognizes the need to make its expectations for student conduct specific and clear. Students who will not accept responsibility for their own behavior may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including suspension from school, when they:

A. Disorderly Conduct. Examples of disorderly conduct include:

- Running in hallways.
- Making unreasonable noise.
- Using language or gestures that are profane, lewd, vulgar or abusive.
- Engaging in any willful act which disrupts the normal operation of the school community.
- Computer/electronic communications misuse as defined by RCS's acceptable use policy.
- Cell phone misuse as defined in the handbook.
- Dress Code violations as defined in the handbook.

B. Insubordination. Examples of insubordinate conduct include:

- Failing to comply with the reasonable directions of teachers, school administrators or other school employees in charge of students or otherwise demonstrating disrespect.
- Lateness for, missing or leaving school without permission.
- Skipping classes or not staying for detention.
- Rude or disrespectful behavior.

C. Disruptive Behavior. Examples of disruptive conduct include:

- Failing to comply with the reasonable directions of teachers, school administrators or other school employees in charge of students or otherwise demonstrating disrespect.
- Interfering with the educational process of children.

D. Acts of Violence. Examples of violent conduct include:

- Committing an act of violence, or attempting to do so, (such as hitting, kicking, punching, and scratching) upon another student, teacher, administrator or other school employee.
- Possessing a weapon.



- Displaying what appears to be a weapon.
- Threatening to use any weapon.
- Intentionally damaging or destroying the personal property of a student, teacher, administrator, other school employee or any person lawfully on school property, including graffiti or arson.
- Intentionally damaging or destroying school or school property.

E. Bullying:

**Bullying** is the repeated use by one or more students or by a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a victim that:

- causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim's property;
- places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his property;
- creates a hostile environment at school for the victim;
- infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or
- materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. For the purposes of this section, bullying shall include cyber-bullying.

**Perpetrator**, a student or a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional who engages in bullying or retaliation.

Bullying reports may include the name of the 'aggressor' or 'perpetrator' for both school staff and students.

A member of a school staff, including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional, shall immediately report any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member has witnessed or become aware of to the principal or to the school official identified in the plan as responsible for receiving such reports or both. Upon receipt of such a report, the school principal or a designee shall promptly conduct an investigation. If the school principal or a designee determines that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the school principal or designee shall:

- notify the local law enforcement agency if the school principal or designee believes that criminal charges may be pursued against a perpetrator;
- take appropriate disciplinary action;
- notify the parents or guardians of a perpetrator;

- notify the parents or guardians of the victim, and to the extent consistent with state and federal law, notify them of the action taken to prevent any further acts of bullying or retaliation; and
- inform the parents or guardians of the victim about the department's problem resolution system and the process for seeking assistance or filing a claim through the problem resolution system.

Bullying is prohibited on school grounds and any school-sponsored event or activity, whether on or off campus. Bullying is prohibited through the use of district computers while on or off campus and the use of personal digital devices either on campus or off-campus in a manner that causes a disruption on school grounds. Retaliation against students or school personnel who reported the incident(s) of bullying is prohibited. Bullying is any unwelcome written or verbal expressions, physical acts or gestures directed at a student or another member of the school community with the intent to intimidate, harass, frighten, ridicule, humiliate or cause physical or emotional harm to that person. It is repeated, intentional and creates an imbalance of power. Cyber-bullying is bullying by means including electronic mails, cellular phones, instant messages, text messages or websites. Examples of bullying include:

- Teasing
- Exclusion
- Taunting (verbal or physical intimidation)
- Cyber-bullying
- Pushing, kicking, hitting or spitting
- Non-verbal gestures
- Taking or damaging another person's personal property

F. Engage in any conduct that endangers the safety, morals, health or welfare of others.

Examples of such conduct include:

- Lying to school personnel.
- Stealing the property of others.
- Defamation, which includes making false statements or representations about an individual that harm the reputation of the person(s) by demeaning them.
- Discrimination, which includes the use of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability as a basis for treating another in a negative manner.
- Harassment, which includes a sufficiently severe action or a persistent, pervasive pattern of actions or statements directed at an identifiable individual or group which are intended to be or which a reasonable person would perceive as ridiculing or demeaning.
- Intimidation, which includes engaging in actions or statements, that put a reasonable individual in fear of bodily harm.
- Hazing, which includes any intentional or reckless act directed against

another for the purpose of initiation into, affiliating with or maintaining membership in any school sponsored activity, organization, club or team.

- Selling, using or possessing obscene material.
- Using vulgar or abusive language, cursing or swearing.
- Smoking a cigarette, cigar, pipe or using chewing or smokeless tobacco.
- Possessing, consuming, selling, distributing or exchanging alcoholic beverages or illegal substances, or being under the influence of either. (“Illegal substances” include, but are not limited to, inhalants, marijuana, cocaine, LSD, PCP, amphetamines, heroin, steroids, look-alike drugs, and any substances commonly referred to as “designer drugs.”)
- Inappropriately using or sharing prescription and over-the-counter drugs.
- Gambling.
- Indecent exposure, that is, exposure to sight of the private parts of the body in a lewd or indecent manner.
- Initiating a report warning of fire or other catastrophe without valid cause, misuse of 911, or discharging a fire extinguisher.

#### G. Bus misconduct

It is crucial for students to behave appropriately while riding on district buses to ensure their safety and that of other passengers and to avoid distracting the bus driver. Students are required to conduct themselves on the bus in a manner consistent with established standards for classroom behavior. Excessive noise, pushing, shoving and fighting will not be tolerated.

- Stay in your seat.
- Follow the driver's structure for seating assignments.
- Do not eat or litter on the bus.
- Follow the driver's instructions.
- Use acceptable language.
- Food/drink are not allowed on the bus.

#### H. Academic misconduct

- Plagiarism
- Cheating
- Copying
- Altering records
- Assisting another student in any of the above actions

#### I. Anti-Harassment Policy:

It is the policy of the Richmond Consolidated School to promote and maintain a working and educational environment that is free from all forms of harassment. The most productive and satisfying work environment is one in which work and work-related

activities are accomplished in a spirit of mutual trust and respect. Harassment is a form of discrimination that is offensive, impairs morale, undermines the integrity of employment relationships and causes serious harm to the productivity, efficiency and stability of our organization. Harassment includes but is not limited to such things as threats, unsolicited re- marks, gestures, physical contact, or the display or circulation of written materials or pictures derogatory to gender, racial, ethnic, religious, age or handicap groups.

All members of the RCS community have a right to work in an environment free from discrimination and harassing conduct, including sexual harassment. Harassment on the basis of an individual's race, color, creed, religion, sex, national origin, age, marital status, veteran status, sexual preference or disability is expressly prohibited under this policy. Harassment on any basis (race, sex, age, disability, etc.) exists whenever the conduct interferes with or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.

Sexual harassment violates state and federal law; and, therefore, the policies of the Richmond Consolidated School. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

- submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of an individual's employment, or success as a student;
- submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment or educational decisions affecting such individual, or;
- such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work or educational performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working or educational environment.

While it is not possible to list all those additional circumstances that may constitute sexual harassment, the following are some examples of conduct which, if unwelcome, may constitute sexual harassment depending upon the totality of the circumstances including the severity of the conduct and its pervasiveness:

- Unwelcome sexual advances – whether or not they involve physical touching;
- Sexual epithets, jokes, written or oral references to sexual conduct, gossip regarding one's sex life; comment on an individual's body, comment about an individual's sexual activity, deficiencies, or prowess, and sexually explicit e-mails or the use of social media to share such references, and
- Displays of sexually suggestive objects, pictures, and cartoons.
- Harassment on the basis of any other protected characteristic is also strictly prohibited. Such harassment can be defined as conduct that shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of his or her protected characteristic and that has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's performance or creating an

- intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.
- Each individual at Richmond Consolidated School is personally responsible for:
  - Ensuring that his/her conduct does not harass any student or employee or applicant for employment, or other individual in the workplace or school;
  - Cooperating in the investigation of informal reports or formal complaints of alleged harassment by providing any information she/he possesses concerning the matters being investigated; and
  - Otherwise cooperating with efforts to prevent and eliminate harassment and to maintain a working and learning environment free from such unlawful discrimination.

For any alleged harassment violations, the Principal will serve as the Grievance Officer. He or she is vested with the authority and responsibility of processing or referring to an appropriate administrator. The Principal may be contacted at the School Administration Offices, telephone 413-698-2207, Superintendent, telephone 413-298-4017.

## Disciplinary Consequences

The Richmond Consolidated School Leadership Team and Special Education Team meet weekly to review discipline data of all students, including special populations and high needs students. The team consists of special education liaison, school adjustment counselor, principal, teachers and paraprofessionals. Students who receive Detention, In School Suspension or Out of School Suspension will be responsible for all class work missed and homework assignments.

Students who are found to have violated the school's Code of Conduct may be subject to the following consequences, either alone or in combination:

- Verbal warning
- Written minor referral filed with administration and/or team
- Written notification to parent (acknowledgement of receipt required via signature or email),
- Major referral filed with administration\* (situation may warrant an immediate major referral)
- Behavioral plan instituted. The behavior plan consequences may include:
  - Modified morning recess
  - Modified lunch recess
  - Lunch/After school detention
  - Suspension from transportation (if applicable to the situation)
  - Suspension from social or extracurricular activities
  - Suspension of other privileges
  - In-school suspension
  -

Students who are found to have violated the school's Code of Conduct may ALSO be subject to the following consequences, either alone or in combination:

- Temporary removal from situation
- Short-term (five days or less) suspension from school
- Long-term (more than five days) suspension from school
- Permanent suspension from school

\*A sample referral is located in the Appendix.

## Discipline Procedures

The school personnel who imposes a consequence must inform the student of the alleged misconduct and must investigate, to the extent necessary, the facts surrounding the alleged misconduct. All students will have an opportunity to present their version of the facts to the school personnel imposing the disciplinary consequence. The student and the student's parent will be provided with a reasonable opportunity for an informal conference with the building principal, the principal's designee or teacher to discuss the conduct and the consequences involved.

1. All minor referrals are written up and dealt with by the staff member who referred the student. 3 minor referrals equal a major referral.
2. A major referral is written up by the staff member who referred the student but is directed to the principal. Three minor referrals are equal to a major referral and will be directed to the principal.
3. Consequences such as detention will be imposed as a consequence only after the student's parent has been notified, preferably by phone, to confirm that there is no parental objection to the detention and the student has appropriate transportation home.
4. If a student does not conduct himself/herself properly on a bus, the bus driver is expected to bring such misconduct to the building principal's attention through a bus referral. Students who become a serious disciplinary problem may have their riding privileges suspended by the building principal or the superintendent.
5. Building principal and the superintendent are authorized to place students in in-school suspension in accordance with 603 CMR 53.02(6). The in-school suspension supervisor will be a teacher or paraprofessional.
6. Suspension from school is a severe penalty, which may be imposed in accordance with M.G.L. c. 71, §§37H, §37H3/4, 37H1/2 Richmond Consolidated School retains its authority to suspend students, but places primary responsibility for the suspension of students with the principal.

# DUE PROCESS FOR SUSPENSIONS

## Notice Of Proposed Suspension

Except in the case of an emergency removal or disciplinary offense defined under M.G.L. c. 71, §§37H or 37H1/2 or an in-school suspension as defined by 603 CMR 53.02(6), the school shall provide the student and parent/guardian with written and oral notice of the proposed out-of-school suspension, an opportunity to be heard at hearing, and the opportunity to participate at the hearing. Notice shall set forth in plain language:

- a) the disciplinary offense;
- b) the basis for the charge;
- c) the potential consequences, including the potential length of the student's suspension; d) the opportunity for the student to have a hearing with the principal concerning the proposed suspension, including the opportunity to dispute the charges and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, and for the parent/guardian to attend the hearing;
- e) the date, time, and location of the hearing;
- f) the right of the student and student's parent/guardian to interpreter services at the hearing if needed to participate;

The principal shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parent/guardian orally of the opportunity to attend the hearing. In order to conduct a hearing without the parent/guardian present, the principal must be able to document reasonable efforts to include the parent/guardian. Reasonable effort is presumed if the principal sent written notice and documented at least two attempts to contact the parent/guardian in the manner specified by the parent/guardian for emergency situations.

All written communications regarding notice of proposed suspension shall be either by hand delivery or delivered by first-class mail, certified mail, or email to address provided by the parent/guardian for school communications (or other method agreed to by the principal and parent/guardian) in English, and in the primary language in the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate.

## General Requirements Prior To Suspension Under M.G.L. Chapter 71, §37h3/41/4

A student may not be suspended under M.G.L. Chapter 71, §37H3/4, unless one or more of the following apply:

- A. Alternative remedies have been employed and their use and results

documented, following and in direct response to a specific incident or incidents.

B. There are documented specific reasons why alternative remedies are unsuitable or counterproductive.

C. The situation is such that the student's continued presence in school would pose a specific, documentable concern about the infliction of serious bodily injury or other serious harm upon another person while in school.

## Short-Term Suspensions: Hearing And Principal Determination

A short-term suspension is the removal of the student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for ten (10) consecutive days or less. Out-of-school short-term suspensions which do not cumulatively over the course of the school year exceed ten (10) days of suspension shall be conducted in accordance with this section.

Principal Hearing. The purpose of the hearing with the principal is to hear and consider information regarding the alleged incident for which the student may be suspended, provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident, determine if the student has committed the disciplinary offense, the basis for the charge, and any other pertinent information. The student shall have an opportunity to present information, including mitigating facts. A parent/guardian present at the hearing shall have the opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer information, including mitigating circumstances.

Based on the available information, including mitigating circumstances, the principal will make a determination whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and if so, the consequence. The principal will provide notification in writing of his/her determination in the form of an update to the student and parent/guardian, and provide reasons for the determination. If the student is suspended, the principal shall inform the parent/guardian of the type and duration of the suspension, and shall provide an opportunity for the student to make up assignments and other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of removal.

If the student is in grades pre-k through 3, the principal shall send his/her determination to the superintendent and explain the reasons prior to imposing an out-of-school suspension, before the short-term suspension takes effect.

All written communications regarding the hearing and principal determination shall be either hand delivery or delivered by first-class mail, certified mail, or email to the address provided by the parent/guardian for school communications (or other method agreed to by the principal and parent/guardian) in English, and in the primary language in the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate.

## Long-Term Suspensions: Hearing And Principal Determination

A long-term suspension is the removal of a student from the school premises and regular



classroom activities for more than ten (10) consecutive school days, or for more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple disciplinary offenses in any school year. The purpose of the hearing with the principal is to hear and consider information regarding the alleged incident for which the student may be suspended, provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident, determine if the student has committed the disciplinary offense, the basis for the charge, and any other pertinent information. The student shall have an opportunity to present information, including mitigating facts, that the principal will consider in determining whether alternatives to suspension such as loss of privileges, detention, an apology, a student contract, restitution, and/or probation are appropriate.

Additionally, the student shall have the following additional rights:

- in advance of the hearing, the opportunity to review the student's record and the documents upon which the principal may rely in making a determination to suspend the student or not;
- the right to be represented by counsel or a lay person of the student's choice, at the student's and
- or parent's/guardian's expense;
- the right to produce witnesses on his or her behalf and to present the student's explanation of the
- alleged incident, but the student may not be compelled to do so; and
- the right to cross-examine witnesses presented by the school district;
- the right to request that the hearing be recorded by the principal. All participants shall be informed
- that the hearing is being recorded by audio. A copy of the audio recording will be provided to the student or parent/guardian upon request.

Based on the evidence submitted at the hearing the principal shall make a determination as to whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, after considering mitigating circumstances and alternatives to suspension (the use of evidence-based strategies and programs, such as mediation, conflict resolution, restorative justice, and positive interventions and supports) what remedy or consequence will be imposed. If the principal decides to impose a long-term suspension, the written determination shall:

- Identify the disciplinary offense, the date on which the hearing took place, and the participants at
- the hearing;
- Set out key facts and conclusions reached by the principal;
- Identify the length and effective date of the suspension, as well as a date of return to school ;
- Include notice of the student's opportunity to receive a specific list of education services to make
- Inform the student of the right to appeal the principal's decision to the superintendent or his/her designee (only if a long-term suspension has been imposed) within five (5) calendar

days, which may be extended by parent/guardian request in writing an additional seven (7) calendar days.

The long-term suspension will remain in effect unless and until the superintendent decides to reverse the principal's determination on appeal.

If the student is in grades pre-k through grade 3, the principal shall send his/her determination to the superintendent and explain the reasons prior to imposing an out-of-school suspension, whether short-term or long-term, before the suspension takes effect.

All written communications regarding the hearing and principal determination shall be either hand delivery or delivered by first-class mail, certified mail, or email to the provided by the parent/guardian for school communications (*or* other method agreed to by the principal and parent/guardian) in English, and in the primary language in the home if other than English, or by other means of communication where appropriate.

## Appeal Of Long-Term Suspension

A student who is placed on a long-term suspension shall have the right to appeal the principal's decision to the superintendent if properly and timely filed. A good faith effort shall be made to include the parent/guardian at the hearing. The appeal shall be held within three (3) school days of the appeal, unless the student or parent/guardian requests an extension of up to seven (7) additional calendar days, which the superintendent shall grant.

The student and parent/guardian shall have the same rights afforded at the long-term suspension principal hearing. Within five (5) calendar days of the hearing the superintendent shall issue his/her written decision which meets the criteria required of the principal's determination. If the superintendent determines the student committed the disciplinary offense, the superintendent may impose the same or a lesser consequence than that of the principal. The superintendent's decision shall be final.

## Emergency removal

A student may be temporarily removed prior to notice and hearing when a student is charged with a disciplinary offense and the continued presence of the student poses a danger to persons or property, or materially and substantially disrupts the order of the school and, in the principal's judgment, there is no alternative available to alleviate the danger or disruption. A Principal may not remove a student from school on an emergency basis for a disciplinary offense until adequate provisions have been made for the student's safety and transportation. The temporary removal shall not exceed two (2) school days, following the day of the emergency removal.

During the emergency, removal the principal shall make immediate and reasonable efforts to

orally notify the student and student's parent/guardian of the emergency removal and the reason for the emergency removal. The principal shall also provide the due process requirements of written notice for suspensions and provide for a hearing which meets the due process requirements of a long-term suspension or short-term suspension, as applicable, within the two (2) school day time period, unless an extension of time for the hearing is otherwise agreed to by the principal, student, and parent/guardian.

A decision shall be rendered orally on the same day as the hearing, and in writing no later than the following school day. The decision shall meet all of the due process requirements of a principal's determination in a long-term suspension or short-term suspension, as applicable.

## In-School Suspension Under 603 Cmr 53:02(6) & 603 Cmr 53.10

In-school suspension is defined as the removal of a student from regular classroom activities, but not the school premises, for not more than ten (10) consecutive school days, or no more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple infractions over the course of the school year. A Principal may impose an in-school suspension as defined above according to the following procedures:

The principal shall inform the student of the disciplinary offense charged and the basis for the charge, and provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident. If the principal determines that the student committed the disciplinary offense, the principal shall inform the student of the length of the student's in-school suspension, which shall not exceed ten (10) days, cumulatively or consecutively, in a school year.

On the same day as the in-school suspension decision, the principal shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parent orally of the disciplinary offense, the reasons for concluding that the student committed the infraction, and the length of the in-school suspension. The principal shall also invite the parent to a meeting to discuss the student's academic performance and behavior, strategies for student engagement, and possible responses to the behavior. Such meeting shall be scheduled on the day of the suspension if possible, and if not, as soon thereafter as possible. If the principal is unable to reach the parent after making and documenting at least two (2) attempts to do so, such attempts shall constitute reasonable efforts for purposes of orally informing the parent of the in-school suspension.

The principal shall send written notice to the student and parent about the in-school suspension, including the reason and the length of the in-school suspension, and inviting the parent to a meeting with the principal for the purpose set forth above, if such meeting has not already occurred. The principal shall deliver such notice on the day of the suspension by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail, email to an address provided by the parent for school communications, or by other method of delivery agreed to by the principal and the parent.

## Suspension Or Expulsion For Disciplinary Offenses Under M.G.L. 71 §§37h And 37h1/2

The due process notification and hearing requirements in the preceding sections do not apply to the following disciplinary offenses:

### Possession Of A Dangerous Weapon, Possession Of A Controlled Substance, Or Assault Of Staff

A student may be subject to expulsion if found in possession of a dangerous weapon, possession of a controlled substance, or the student assaults a member of educational staff, and the principal determines the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.

The Principal shall notify the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) in writing of the opportunity for a hearing, and the right to have representation at the hearing, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses. After said hearing, a principal may, in his/her discretion, decide to levy a suspension rather than expulsion. A student expelled *for* such an infraction shall have the right to appeal the decision to the Superintendent. The expelled student shall have ten (10) days from the date of the expulsion in which to notify the Superintendent of his/her appeal. The student has the right to counsel at the hearing before the Superintendent. The subject matter of the appeal shall not be limited solely to a factual determination of whether the student was guilty of the alleged offense.

### Felony Complaint Or Issuance Of Felony Delinquency Complaint

Upon the issuance of a criminal complaint charging a student with a felony, or the issuance of a felony delinquency complaint against a student, the Principal may suspend a student for a period of time determined appropriate by the Principal if the Principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.

The Principal shall notify the student in writing of the charges, the reasons for the suspension (prior to such suspension taking effect), and the right to appeal. The Principal will also provide the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) the process for appealing the suspension to the Superintendent. The request for appeal must be made in writing within five (5) calendar days. The hearing shall be held within three (3) days of the request. The suspension shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing before the Superintendent. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony, and the right to counsel. The Superintendent has the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the Principal. The Superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five (5) calendar days of the hearing.

Felony conviction or adjudication/admission in court of guilt for a felony or felony delinquency

The Principal may expel a student convicted of a felony, or has an adjudication or admission of guilt regarding a felony, if the Principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.

The student shall receive written notification of the charges and reasons for the proposed expulsion. The student shall also receive written notification of his right to appeal the decision to the Superintendent, as well as the appeal process. The expulsion shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the Superintendent.

The student shall notify the Superintendent in writing of his/her request for an appeal the decision no later than five (5) calendar days following the date of the expulsion. The Superintendent hearing shall be held with the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) within three (3) calendar days of the expulsion. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony, and shall have the right to counsel. The Superintendent has the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the Principal. The Superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five (5) calendar days of the hearing.

Any student expelled from school for such an offense shall be afforded an opportunity to receive educational services and make academic progress.

## Student Suspension And Expulsion Data Collection And Reporting

The District shall collect and annually report data to the Department regarding in-school suspensions, short-term and long-term suspensions, expulsions, emergency removals under 603 CMR 53.07, access to education services under 603 CMR 53.13, and such other information as may be required by the Department. Such data shall be reported in a manner and form directed by the Department.

The principal of each school shall periodically review discipline data by selected student populations, including but not limited to race and ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, English language learner status, and student with a disability status. In reviewing the data, the principal shall assess the extent of in-school suspensions, short- and long-term suspensions, expulsions, and emergency removals under 603 CMR 53.07, and the impact of such disciplinary action on selected student populations. The principal shall further determine whether it is necessary or appropriate to modify disciplinary practices due to over-reliance on expulsion, or in-school or out-of-school suspension, or emergency removals, or the impact of such suspensions, removals, and expulsions on selected student populations compared with other students.

## Corporal Punishment

Corporal punishment is any act of physical force upon a student for the purpose of punishing that student. Corporal punishment of any student by any school employee is strictly forbidden. However, in situations where alternative procedures and methods

that do not involve the use of physical force cannot reasonably be used, reasonable physical force may be used to:

1. Protect oneself, another student, teacher or any person from physical injury.
2. Restrain or remove a student whose behavior interferes with the orderly exercise and performance of school district functions, powers and duties, if that student has refused to refrain from further disruptive acts.

The school will file all complaints about the use of corporal punishment with the Commissioner of Education in accordance with the Commissioner's regulations.

## DISCIPLINE OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

While students with disabilities are disciplined by the same criteria applied to all students in the Richmond School, students who have been identified as having special needs based on a disability may have procedural protections in addition to those provided to other students in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). In general, students may be excluded from their programs, just as any other student can be, for up to ten school days per year. However, when a student is excluded from his/her program for more than ten school days in the school year, school staff may be required to provide alternative educational services for the student. In addition, in many instances, the student's IEP Team must convene to determine whether the student's behavior was caused by or had a direct and substantial relationship to his/her disability (a "manifestation determination"). If the Team determines the behavior was not caused by the disability, the school may discipline the student according to the school's code of student conduct except that the district must continue to provide the student with educational services during the period of suspension or expulsion. However, if the Team determines that the behavior was caused by the disability, the student may not be excluded from the current educational placement (except in the case of weapons, drugs, or serious bodily injury) until the Team develops, and the parent/ guardian consents, to a new Individualized Education Program. The Team must also conduct a functional behavioral assessment and develop or revise a behavioral plan for the student. In the event a student possesses, uses, sells or solicits a controlled substance or possesses a weapon, or seriously injures an individual at school or a school function, the school may place a student in an interim alternative education setting for up to 45 days. Hearing officers may also order the placement of a student in an appropriate interim setting for up to 45 days upon determination that the current placement is substantially likely to result in injury to the student or to others. When a parent/guardian disagrees with the Team's decision on the "manifestation determination" or with a decision regarding placement, the parent/guardian has a right to request an expedited due process hearing from the Bureau of Special Education Appeals. Similar procedures apply to students with accommodation plans under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and students

who are in the process of evaluation under special education for whom eligibility has not yet been determined. If the school district has no knowledge that a student is an eligible student under the IDEA before taking disciplinary measures against the student, the student may be disciplined just as any other student may be. If, however, a request is made for an evaluation to determine eligibility while the student is subject to disciplinary measures, the district must conduct the evaluation in an expedited manner. Pending the results of the evaluation, the student must remain in the educational placement determined by school authorities, which may include suspension or expulsion without services. If the student is determined eligible 21 for an IEP as a result of the evaluation, the school district must provide the student with special education and related services in accordance with the IDEA.

In accordance with Richmond Policy JKA, Section 1415 of the individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) sets forth the following procedures with respect to the suspension of students with special needs and protections for those children not yet eligible for special education and related services: School personnel may order a change in placement of a child with a disability to an appropriate interim alternative setting, another setting, or suspension, for not more than ten (10) school days (to the extent such alternatives would be applied to children without disabilities). 34 If a child with disabilities carries a weapon to school or to a school function, knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance while at school or a school function, school personnel may order a change in placement to an appropriate interim alternative educational setting for the same amount of time that a child without a disability would be subject to discipline, but not for more than forty-five 45 days. When a child with a disability or suspected disability has been suspended or placed in an alternative setting for ten (10) days (cumulative), the Individual Education Plan team will be convened to conduct a Functional Behavioral Assessment, including a Manifestation Determination, and will develop a Behavioral Intervention Plan that will be accepted by the IEP team. If the child has an existing Behavioral Intervention Plan, the IEP team will review the plan and modify it if necessary. If an alternative educational setting is warranted, the placement will be determined by the IEP team. The placement will be selected so as to enable the child to continue to participate in the general curriculum in another setting and will ensure the provision of those services and modifications described in a child's IEP that will enable the child to meet the goals set forth in the IEP.

All students are expected to meet the requirements for behaviors as set forth in this handbook. Chapter 71B of the Massachusetts General Laws, known as 603 CMR 28.00 and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 20 U.S.C. Section 1400 and 34 CFR Section 300, require that additional provisions be made for students who have been found by an evaluation team to have a disability and whose program is described in an Individualized Educational Program (I.E.P.) or a 504 Accommodation Plan. The following additional requirements apply to the disciplining of students with special needs and students with 504 Accommodation Plans:

1. Any modifications of the discipline code will be identified in the student's IEP or

#### 504 Accommodations Plan.

2. The Principal (or designee) will notify the Special Education Director of the suspendable offense of 45 students with a disability and a record will be kept of such notices.

3. When it is known that the suspension(s) of a student with a disability will accumulate beyond 10 days in a school year, a review of the IEP/Accommodation Plan will be held to determine the appropriateness of the student's placement or program. The team will make a finding as to the relationship between the student's misconduct and:

- Develop or review a functional behavior assessment
- Determine if the misconduct is a manifestation of the disability
- Consider a modified program or alternate placement for the student
- Consider an amendment to provide for the delivery of services during the suspension and any needed modification of the IEP/504 Accommodation Plan.

In addition, the Department of Education will be notified when required by law, and the procedures promulgated by the Department of Education for requesting the approval of the alternative plan will be followed.

Parents will be notified with written notice of their rights under special education regulations.

### Procedural Requirements Applied To Students Not Yet Determined To Be Eligible For Special Education

- If, prior to the disciplinary action, a district had knowledge that the student may be a student with a disability, then the district makes all protections available to the student until and unless the student is subsequently determined not to be eligible. The district may be considered to have prior knowledge if:
  - The parent had expressed concern in writing; or
  - The parent had requested an evaluation; or
  - District staff had expressed directly to the special education director or other supervisory personnel specific concerns about a pattern of behavior demonstrated by the student.
- The district may not be considered to have had prior knowledge if the parent has not consented to evaluation of the student or has refused special education services, or if an evaluation of the student has resulted in a determination of ineligibility.
- If the district had no reason to consider the student disabled, and the parent requests an evaluation subsequent to the disciplinary action, the district must have procedures consistent with federal requirements to conduct an expedited evaluation to determine eligibility.
- If the student is found eligible, then he/she receives all procedural protections subsequent to the finding of eligibility.



**State Requirements:** This criterion is related to State Performance Plan Indicator 4. (See <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/spp/>.)  
Federal Requirements (IDEA-97)  
34 CFR 300.534

Richmond Consolidated School recognizes that it may be necessary to suspend, remove or otherwise discipline students with disabilities to address disruptive or problem behavior. Richmond Consolidated School also recognizes that students with disabilities enjoy certain procedural protections whenever school authorities intend to impose discipline upon them. Richmond Consolidated School is committed to ensuring that the procedures followed for suspending, removing or otherwise disciplining students with disabilities are consistent with the procedural safeguards required by applicable laws and regulations. This Code of Conduct affords students with disabilities subject to disciplinary action no greater or lesser rights than those expressly afforded by applicable federal and state law and regulations.

The Special Education Director will be notified when it is necessary to suspend, remove or otherwise discipline students with disabilities to address disruptive or problem behavior.

## Alternative Instruction

Students removed from class due to a suspension must be provided with alternative instruction, school wide education plan.

## Educational Services and Academic Progress During Suspensions and Expulsion

Students removed from class due to a suspension must be provided with alternative instruction.

- Any student who is serving an in-school suspension, short-term suspension, long-term-suspension, or expulsion shall have the opportunity to earn credits, as applicable, make up assignments, tests, papers, and other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of his or her removal from the classroom or school. The principal shall inform the student and parent of this opportunity in writing when such suspension or expulsion is imposed. Opportunities to earn credits are 1-1 tutoring of content covered during the missed time, work sent home to complete during suspension, after school drop in, and assigned virtual projects or portfolios.
- Any student who is expelled or suspended from school for more than ten consecutive days, whether in school or out of school, shall have an opportunity to receive education services and to make academic progress toward meeting state and local requirements, through the school-wide education service plan.

Opportunities to receive education services are 1-1 tutoring of content covered during the missed time, work sent home to complete during suspension, after school drop in, and assigned virtual projects or portfolios. Please contact the Principal 413-698-2207 if you would like more detailed information.

- The principal shall notify the parent and student of the opportunity to receive education services at the time the student is expelled or placed on long-term suspension. Notice shall be provided in English and in the primary language spoken in the student's home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate. The notice shall include a list of the specific education services that are available to the student and contact information for a school district staff member who can provide more detailed information.
- For each student expelled or suspended from school for more than ten consecutive days, whether in school or out of school, the school district shall document the student's enrollment in education services. For data reporting purposes, the school shall track and report attendance, academic progress, and such other data as directed by the Department.

## Public Conduct on School Property

The school is committed to providing an orderly, respectful environment that is conducive to learning. To create and maintain this kind of environment, it is necessary to regulate public conduct on school property and at school functions. For purposes of this section of the Code, "public" shall mean all persons when on school property or attending a school function including students, teachers and school personnel. The restrictions on public conduct are not intended to limit freedom of speech or peaceful assembly. All persons on school property or attending a school function shall conduct themselves in a respectful and orderly manner.

## Reporting Violations

All students are expected to promptly report violations of the Code of Conduct to a teacher, guidance counselor, the building principal or his or her designee. All school staff that

is authorized to impose disciplinary sanctions and is expected to do so in a prompt, fair and lawful manner.

Any weapon, alcohol or illegal substance found shall be confiscated immediately, if possible, followed by notification to the parent of the student involved and the appropriate disciplinary sanction, if warranted, which may include permanent suspension and referral for prosecution.

The principal or his or her designee must notify the appropriate local law enforcement agency of those Code violations that constitute a crime and substantially affect the order or security of a school as soon as practical. The notification may be made by telephone, followed by a letter. The notification must identify the student and explain the conduct.

School personnel who interact with students are expected to use disciplinary action only when necessary and to place emphasis on the student's ability to grow in self-discipline. Disciplinary action, when necessary, will be firm, fair and consistent so as to be the most effective in changing student behavior. In determining the appropriate disciplinary action, school personnel will consider the following:

1. The student's age.
2. The nature of the offense and the circumstances that led to the offense.
3. The student's prior disciplinary record.
4. The effectiveness of other forms of discipline.
5. Information from parents, teachers and/or others, as appropriate.
6. Other extenuating circumstances.

As a general rule, discipline will be progressive. This means that a student's first violation will usually merit a lighter consequence than subsequent violations. A student identified as having a disability shall not be disciplined for behavior related to his/her disability.

## Bullying Prevention Plan

The Richmond Consolidated School is committed to providing a safe, positive and productive educational environment where students can achieve the highest academic standards. No student shall be subjected to harassment, intimidation, bullying, or cyber-bullying. We recognize that certain students may be more vulnerable to become targets of bullying, harassment, or teasing based on actual or perceived characteristics, including race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, or sensory disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics. The school/district will identify specific steps it will take to create a safe, supportive environment for vulnerable populations in the school community, and provide all students with the skills, knowledge, and strategies to prevent or respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.

"Bullying" is the repeated use by one or more students/staff [aggressor(s)] of a written, verbal, or electronic expression, or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:

- causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property;
- places the target in reasonable fear or harm to him/herself, or of damage to his/her property;
- creates a hostile environment at school for the target;
- infringes on the rights of the target at school; or
- materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Aggressor is a student/staff who engages in bullying, cyber bullying, or retaliation.

Hostile environment, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, is a situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule, or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of a student's education.

Retaliation is any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a student who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.

Staff includes, but is not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, support staff, or paraprofessionals.

Target is a student against whom bullying, cyber bullying, or retaliation has been perpetrated.

Examples of bullying include:

1. Teasing
2. Exclusion
3. Taunting (verbal or physical intimidation)
4. Cyber-bullying
5. Pushing, kicking, hitting or spitting
6. Non-verbal gestures
7. Taking or damaging another person's personal property

"Cyber-bullying" means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a:

- wire
- radio
- electromagnetic
- photo-electronic or photo-optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications.

Cyber-bullying shall also include the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or knowingly impersonates another person as author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.

Cyber-bullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.

Bullying and cyber-bullying may occur in and out of school, during and after school hours, at home and in locations outside of the home. When bullying and cyber-bullying are alleged, the full cooperation and assistance of parents and families are expected.

Our school expects that all members of the school community will treat each other in a civil manner and with respect for differences. Our school is committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment that is free from bullying and cyber-bullying. This commitment is an integral part of our comprehensive efforts to promote learning, and to prevent and eliminate all forms of bullying and other harmful and disruptive behavior that can impede the learning process.

We will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation, in our school buildings, on school grounds, or in school-related activities. We will promptly investigate all reports and complaints of bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation, and take prompt action to end that behavior and restore the target's sense of safety.

For the purpose of this policy, whenever the term bullying is used it is to denote either bullying, or cyber-bullying.

Bullying is prohibited:

- On school grounds;
- On property immediately adjacent to school grounds;
- At school-sponsored or school-related activities;
- At functions or programs whether on or off school grounds;
- At school bus stops;
- On school buses or other vehicles owned, leased, or used by the school district; or,
- Through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by the Richmond Consolidated School.

Bullying and cyber-bullying are prohibited at a location, activity, function or program that is not school-related or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by the Richmond Consolidated School if the act or acts in question:

- create a hostile environment at school for the target;
- infringe on the rights of the target at school; and/or
- materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

## Prevention and Intervention Plan

The Principal and/or his/her designee shall oversee the development of a prevention and intervention plan, in consultation with all school stakeholders, which may include teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents and guardians, consistent with the requirements of this policy, as well as state and federal laws. The bullying prevention and intervention Plan shall be reviewed and updated at least biennially.

The Principal is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the bullying prevention and implementation Plan within his or her school. The Plan will include steps to be taken by the principal or designee to follow upon receipt of a report of bullying or retaliation, staff responsibilities, and nature of training staff and students.

Our school will provide all staff with an annual written notice of the Plan by publishing information about it, including sections related to staff duties, in the school or district employee handbook and the code of conduct.

## Reporting

Anyone, including a parent, guardian, student or school staff member, can report bullying or retaliation. Reports can be made in writing or orally. Oral reports made by or to a staff member shall be recorded in writing. Persons other than school or district staff can make reports anonymously. Anonymous reports may limit further investigation if the parties involved cannot be identified. Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor **solely** on the basis of an anonymous report. Students who have been, or parents of students who have been bullied, or who observe incidents of bullying are encouraged to report this behavior to a staff member or school administrator. The target shall, however, not be subject to discipline for failing to report bullying. Our school will make a variety of reporting resources available to the school community including, but not limited to, an Incident Reporting Form,<sup>1</sup> voicemail, a dedicated mailing address, and an email address

Staff must immediately report bullying and/or peer harassment to the building principal if they either witness or become aware of bullying or retaliation in another manner. Staff members responsible for reporting acts of bullying include, but are not limited to, the following: educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to an extracurricular activity, or paraprofessionals. Acts of reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an incident of bullying and/or peer harassment are prohibited. Any student who is determined to have falsely accused another of bullying and/or peer harassment shall be subject to disciplinary consequences.

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix for Sample Incident Reporting Form.

The principal or designee will implement appropriate strategies for protecting from bullying or retaliation a student who has reported bullying or retaliation, a student who has witnessed bullying or retaliation, a student who provides information during an investigation, or a student who has reliable information about a reported act of bullying or retaliation.

## Investigation Procedures

The Principal or his/her designee, upon receipt of a viable report, shall promptly contact the parents or guardians of a student who has been the alleged target or alleged perpetrator of bullying. The actions being taken to prevent further acts or bullying shall be discussed. The principal or designee conducting the investigation will remind the alleged aggressor, target, and witnesses that retaliation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the principal or designee will take steps to assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged target and/or to protect the alleged target from possible further incidents. Responses to promote safety may include, but not be limited to, creating a personal safety plan; pre-determining seating arrangements for the target and/or the aggressor in the classroom, at lunch, or on the bus; identifying a staff member who will act as a “safe person” for the target; and altering the aggressor’s schedule and access to the target.

The school principal or a designee shall promptly investigate the report of bullying, using a ***Bullying/Cyber-bullying Report Form***, which may include interviewing the alleged target, alleged perpetrator, staff members, students and/or witnesses.

Support staff shall assess an alleged target’s needs for protection and create and implement a safety plan that shall restore a sense of safety for that student.

Confidentiality shall be used to protect a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or is witness to or has reliable information about an act of bullying.

If the school principal or a designee determines that bullying has occurred he/she shall take appropriate disciplinary action and if it is believed that criminal charges may be pursued against the perpetrator, the principal shall consult with the Superintendent to determine if criminal charges are warranted. If it is determined that criminal charges are warranted, the local law enforcement agency shall be notified.

The investigation shall be completed within fourteen school days from the date of the report. The parents or guardians shall be contacted upon completion of the investigation and informed of the results, including whether the allegations were found to be factual, whether a violation of this policy was found, and whether disciplinary action has or shall be taken. At a minimum the Principal or his/her designee shall

contact the parents or guardians as to the status of the investigation on a weekly basis. The principal or designee will maintain a written record of the investigation.

The school shall document any incident of bullying that is reported per this policy and the Principal or designee shall maintain a file. A monthly report shall be provided to the Superintendent.

Disciplinary actions for students who have committed an act of bullying or retaliation shall be in accordance with school disciplinary policies.

The principal or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor about the results of the investigation and, if bullying or retaliation is found, what action is being taken to prevent further acts of bullying or retaliation. All notice to parents must comply with applicable state and federal privacy laws and regulations. Because of the legal requirements regarding the confidentiality of student records, the principal or designee cannot report specific information to the target's parent or guardian about the disciplinary action taken unless it involves a "stay away" order or other directive that the target must be aware of in order to report violations.

Confidentiality shall be maintained to the extent consistent with the school's obligations under law.

### Problem Resolution System

Any parent wishing to file a claim/concern or seeking assistance outside of the district may do so with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Program Resolution System (PRS). That information can be found at: <https://www.doe.mass.edu/prs/>, emails can be sent to [compliance@doe.mass.edu](mailto:compliance@doe.mass.edu) or individuals can call 781-338-3700. Hard copies of this information are also available at the Superintendent's office.

### Retaliation

Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying shall be prohibited.

### Counseling and other Services

The Richmond Consolidated School shall provide counseling or referral to appropriate services, including guidance, academic intervention, and protection to students, both targets and perpetrators and to appropriate family members of involved students, affected by bullying as necessary. The school's School Adjustment Counselor and Psychologist can assist with identifying staff and service providers who assist schools in developing safety plans for students who have been targets of bullying or retaliation, providing social skills programs to prevent bullying, and offering education and/or intervention services for students exhibiting bullying behaviors.



## Training and Assessment

Annual training shall be provided for all school staff and volunteers on the Plan to include: staff duties under the Plan, an overview of the steps that the principal or designee will follow upon receipt of a report of bullying, steps to prevent retaliation, and an overview of the bullying prevention curricula to be offered at all grades throughout the school or district.

As required by M.G.L. c. 71, 37O, the content of school-wide professional development will be informed by research and will include information on:

- Age-appropriate, evidence-based instruction on bullying prevention that is incorporated into the curriculum for all Pre-K through eighth grade students at Richmond Consolidated School.
- Age-appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents;
- Information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target, and witnesses to the bullying;
- Research findings on bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment;
- Information on the incidence and nature of cyber-bullying; and
- Internet safety issues as they relate to cyber-bullying.

## Publication and Notice

Annual written notice of the relevant sections of the bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be provided to students and their parents or guardians, in age-appropriate terms.

Annual written notice of the bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be provided to all school staff. The faculty and staff of the school shall be trained annually on the bullying prevention and intervention plan applicable to the school.

At the beginning of each school year, the school will provide the school community, including administrators, staff, students, and parents or guardians, with written notice of its policies for reporting acts of bullying and retaliation. A description of the reporting procedures and resources, including the name and contact information of the principal or designee, will be incorporated in student and staff handbooks, on the school or district website, and in information about the Plan that is made available to parents or guardians. Parents will receive information about (a) the school's bullying prevention curricula, (b) ways to help reinforce prevention at home, (c) the broader social dynamics of bullying and (d) computer/ electronic safety and cyber-bullying.

The bullying prevention and intervention Plan shall be posted on the Richmond Consolidated School website [[www.richmondconsolidated.org](http://www.richmondconsolidated.org)].

REFERENCES: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's  
Model Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

LEGAL REFS.: Title VII, Section 703, Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended  
Federal Regulation 74676 issued by EEO Commission  
Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972  
603 CMR 26.00  
M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O  
MGL 91:370  
MGL 265:43, 43A  
MGL 268:13B  
MGL 269:14A  
MGL Chapter 71, section 370

CROSS REFS.: AC, Nondiscrimination  
ACAB, Sexual Harassment  
JBA, Student-to-Student Harassment  
JICFA, Prohibition of Hazing  
JF, Student Discipline Regulations

## HOUSELESS POLICY

Families who find themselves houseless have rights under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act. This program works to ensure the enrollment, attendance and the opportunity to succeed in school for houseless children and youth. This program collaborates with other state agencies and community providers to support homeless families and their students. Please contact the school office for further assistance.

## CORI (STATEWIDE BACKGROUND CHECKS)

Massachusetts law provides for state and federal criminal background checks for individuals working or volunteering in public schools. (Massachusetts General Laws chapter 71, section 38R). Conducting, interpreting, and utilizing criminal background checks in a manner consistent with the law will help protect the children our schools serve and enhance the environment in which they learn. Cori forms are available in the main office and on our website.

Chaperones for school activities may require a CORI check. Activities including, but not limited to, field trips.

# CIVIL RIGHTS SELF-EVALUATION

Richmond has a comprehensive evaluation process to examine and remedy policies and programs that discriminate or limit educational access due to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, and homelessness.

The process practiced is based upon the on-going multi-year review of all past district policies by the School Committee to check for legal changes/updates, requirements, new DESE regulations, and for discrimination and bias in the existing policies.

Richmond Consolidated School uses the legally accurate and updated policies recommended by MASC (MA Association of School Committees). This process of on-going review and reevaluation is a regular topic on the School Committee Agenda entitled Policy Review. Any complaints or inquiries concerning this policy should be directed to the Principal, 413 698-2207.

## Protection Against Discrimination

In accordance with Title IX of the Education Acts of 1972, Title VI of the Civil rights Act of 1964, and Chapter 622 of the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the Richmond Consolidated School affirm that no person shall, on the basis of race, color, sex, age, creed, national origin, or sexual orientation be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination in any education program or activity it operates, including employment therein, and admission thereto. Any complaints or inquiries concerning this policy should be directed to the Principal, 413 698-2207.

## Rights Of Individuals With Disabilities

In compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Richmond Consolidated School affirm that no otherwise qualified person with a disability (as defined in section 705(20) of said title) shall, solely on the basis of his or her disability, be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity sponsored by the Richmond Consolidated School. Any complaints or inquiries concerning this policy should be directed to the Principal, 413 698-2207.

# APPENDIX

- A. Incident Referral Form
- B. Playground Rules

# Incident Referral Form (Appendix A)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Staff Referring: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Grade: K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8  
 Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

INCIDENT: Major or Minor (Circle One)

\_\_\_ Playground      \_\_\_ Cafeteria      \_\_\_ Arrival/Dismissal      \_\_\_ Classroom  
 \_\_\_ Hallway      \_\_\_ Bathroom      \_\_\_ Bus  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

Problem Behavior	Possible Motivation	Administrative Decision
Circle Specific Problem Behavior: 1. Inappropriate Language 2. Physical Contact/Fighting 3. Disrespect/Non-Compliance 4. Teasing/Harassment 5. Tobacco/Drugs/Weapons 6. Property Damage/Theft 7. Other _____	Circle Motivation: 1. Obtain Peer Attention 2. Obtain Adult Attention 3. Obtain Items/Activities 4. Avoid Peers/Adults 5. Avoid Task or Activity 6. Don't Know 7. Other _____	Administrator Section: <b>MAJOR</b> Circle one or more 1. Loss of Privilege 2. Conference with Student 3. Parent Contact 4. In-School Suspension Hours _____ / Days _____ 5. Out of School Suspension Days _____ 6. Other _____

Minor:  
 Explanation of incident: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Teacher Consequence: \_\_\_\_\_

Major:  
 Explanation of incident: \_\_\_\_\_

All minors are filed with the classroom teacher/team. Three minors equal a major. All majors require administrative consequence, parent contact and signature.

## Playground Rules (Appendix B)

### Slides

- One person on the slide at a time.
- The only direction is down.
- No jumping off.

### Monkey Bars

- One person at a time.
- Use monkey bars in the same direction each time.
- No student is allowed to be on top of the bars.
- Monkey bars are for grades 1-8.

### Green Bars (three sizes)

- One student on the bar at a time.
- Always have at least one hand on bars.
- No flipping.
- No sitting upside down or on top of bars.

### Swings

- One student for each swing.
- Do not stand in front of the students swinging.
- When entering a swing go around the equipment for safety.
- No twisting swing.
- No underdogs.

### Tire

- The tire may be used for climbing. Please do not stand on top of the tire and jump to the ground.

### Rock Climbing Wall

- Rock Climbing Wall is designed for grades 2-8.
- Only two on the wall at a time.
- Must use the pole to get down.
- Must have an adult near the wall at all times.

### Bongo Jungle Walker

- Line up at one end.
- Kids swing from pod to pod.
- Use steps at either end.

- 
- If a ball is in play, stay away.
  - Hands to yourself at all times.
  - NO SNOWBALLS!
  - Tag to be played in the field.
  - Be prepared for winter.