

# **Rhea Valley Elementary School**

## **Student Handbook 2023-2024**



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## **FROM THE PRINCIPAL**

On behalf of the faculty and staff at Rhea Valley Elementary School, I would like to welcome you to our school family. It is our goal to ensure that your child receives the best education by teaching them the important skills, knowledge, and values that are necessary to be a success in tomorrow's world.

We are a school that is dedicated and committed to the development of the individual child through a strong home/school/community partnership, which embraces the intellectual, physical, emotional, and social development of each student.

At RVES, we believe that the acquisition of strong academic and social skills along with good decision-making capabilities will enable our students to shape their futures, become self-disciplined citizens, and promote lifelong learning.

The purpose of this handbook is to communicate information pertaining to Rhea Valley Elementary School's procedures, policies, rules, and programs. However, this information is not comprehensive; please refer to the Washington County School System's Handbook/Calendar for further information on school policies and regulations. We encourage all parents to review and discuss with your child this important information.

We invite you to become part of our team at RVES! We welcome your ideas, feedback, and input at our school. Please consider becoming an active member of our educational program through volunteering, visiting, attendance of programs, and PTA membership.

Have a great school year! Mrs. Yarber

## **Motto**

Always be humble and kind.

## **THE SCHOOL DAY**

School begins at 8:15 and ends at 2:50. The **school doors will open at 7:30 A.M.** Buses will begin loading at 2:50. Car riders will be released beginning at 2:50.

## **ATTENDANCE/ABSENCE POLICY**

Students are expected to be in school every school day for the entire instructional day unless they are ill, have a legitimate family emergency, or have an extenuating circumstance that warrants the school principal's approval of the absence. A limit of up to 7 parent notes are excused.

The parent, guardian, or designee is expected to notify the school on the day when their child is absent. If contact is not made, an automated system will phone the parent, guardian, or designee.

A. Upon Fifth Absence Without Parental/Guardian Awareness and Support If (1) a student fails to report to school for a total of five scheduled school days for the school year, and (2) there is no indication that the student's parent/guardian is aware of and supports the absence; and (3) reasonable efforts to notify the parent/guardian of the absences have failed, then the principal or his/her designee or the attendance officer shall make a reasonable effort to ensure that direct contact is made with the parent/guardian either in person or through telephone conversation, to obtain an explanation for the pupil's absence and to explain to the parent/guardian the consequences of continued nonattendance. The school principal, the principal's designee or the attendance officer, the pupil, and the pupil's parent/guardian shall jointly develop a plan to resolve the pupil's nonattendance. Such plan shall include documentation of the reasons for the pupil's nonattendance.

B. Upon Sixth Absence Without Parental/Guardian Awareness and Support Washington County Public Schools 3  
If the pupil is absent an additional day after direct contact with the pupil's parent/guardian and the attendance officer has received no indication that the pupil's parent/guardian is aware of and supports the pupil's absence, the school principal, principal's designee or the attendance officer shall schedule a conference within ten school days, which must take place no later than the fifteenth school day after the sixth absence. At the conference, the pupil, his/her parent/guardian, and school personnel, shall meet to resolve issues related to the pupil's nonattendance. Other community service providers may also be included in the conference.

C. Upon Additional Absence Without Parental/Guardian Awareness and Support Upon the next absence after the conference without indication to the attendance officer that the pupil's parent/guardian is aware of and supports the pupil's absence, the principal or principal's designee shall notify the attendance officer or superintendent or superintendent's designee who shall enforce the compulsory attendance rules by either or both of the following: (i) filing a complaint with the juvenile and domestic relations court alleging the pupil is a child in need of supervision as defined in Va. Code § 16.1-228 or (ii) instituting proceedings against the parent/guardian pursuant to Va. Code §§ 18.2-371 or 22.1-262. In filing a complaint against the student, the attendance officer shall provide written documentation of the efforts already undertaken to resolve the pupil's absence. If the student's parents/guardians have joint physical custody of the student and the school has notice of the custody arrangement, then both parents/guardians shall be notified at their last known addresses. Chronic absenteeism is defined as any student who misses more than 10% of the school year. This translates to any student that missed 18 or more days during the 180 day school year. This not only includes unexcused absences, but also **all excused absences including parent notes, doctor notes, illnesses, and court notes.**

As a part of fostering good school attendance and meeting the state's chronic absenteeism goal, we will recognize those who miss two or less days every nine weeks with a celebration and drawings for prizes.

#### **MAKEUP WORK**

A student is expected to make up all work missed regardless of the reason for an absence. The time allowed for make-up work is two (2) days for one (1) day absence, and an additional one (1) day for each one (1) day missed beyond one (1) day to a maximum of five (5) days from when the student returns to school unless extenuating circumstances exist that are approved by the principal. At no time is a student to miss additional class time to make-up missed work. Failure to complete make-up work or to complete make-up work outside this time frame can result in lowering of a student's grade.

#### **TARDIES/EARLY DISMISSAL**

Students are expected to be at school on time (8:15) and to remain at school for the entire instructional day. Any tardy or early dismissal with a doctor's excuse, a death in the family, a required court appearance or an approved school-related activity will be excused. All other tardies or early dismissals will be unexcused. Students arriving after 8:15 will be considered tardy.

No student may leave school prior to dismissal in the company of anyone other than a school employee, parent, guardian, or designee.

Any work missed because of early dismissal must be made up according to the above procedure for make-up work.

Excessive tardies and/or early dismissals may be handled in the same manner as excessive absences.

#### **CUSTODY**

Virginia State Law gives certain rights to non-custodial parents. These rights may include the right to visit a child at school, eat lunch with the child, attend school programs/meetings, view school records, obtain copies of report cards/records, participate in volunteer programs, schedule teacher conferences and other rights extended to parents by the school. **Students will be released to legal parents and/or guardians unless we have ON FILE court documentation that directs us differently.** Although we wish to protect our students and work with custodial parents, we must adhere to the law. In order for us to be able to deny any privileges to non-custodial parents, we must have a copy of the court order that specifically denies these rights. If there is no court documentation on file, we are compelled to release a student to his/her legal parent and/or guardian. This file is kept strictly confidential and released only to personnel directly involved with the student. We hope to be able to work with all parents in an atmosphere of cooperation with focus on the good of the student.

#### **DELAYED SCHEDULE/CLOSING SCHOOL/EARLY DISMISSAL**

Delayed schedules are announced by the Washington County School Board Office because of threatening or unsafe weather. A snow schedule generally means that school will open and buses will operate two hours later than usual. Listen to your local radio or television stations or check on the website at [www.wcs.k12.va.us](http://www.wcs.k12.va.us) for this announcement. You can also sign up for the Keep-In-Contact automated email notification service at the WCPS web page. In the event of a snow schedule (2-hour delay), students can be dropped off at 9:30AM.

Please discuss with your child in advance and inform the school in writing what he/she should do in the event of early school closing. It also needs to be written on the student's white information card. We do not have telephone facilities to handle large numbers of phone calls. **Please do not call the school to ask if we are dismissing early.**

#### **VISITORS**

All visitors and volunteers must sign in at the office and wear a visitor/volunteer badge. Parents and/or visitors may NOT go to classrooms during instructional time unless an appointment has been arranged with the teacher or you are scheduled to volunteer. School-age visitors or younger siblings are prohibited from accompanying students to school or to spend the day. Family members are welcome to eat lunch with their child pending mitigation strategies.

#### **BUILDING ACCESS**

The doors to the school are locked at all times for the safety and security of students and faculty members. During the arrival of students, doors are monitored by staff members. Visitors MUST enter through the entrance at the front of the building, no entry will be permitted through any other door. The school office closes at 4:30 PM.

#### **TRANSPORTATION**

It is the expectation that students will follow their normal routine coming to and from school each day. A change in that routine can only be made BY WRITTEN STATEMENT by the parent/guardian. Notes should be sent to school and the change will be approved by the office. If a written note is not received the student will be sent home according to their normal routine, even if the child thinks they should go another way. **No changes will be made over the phone after 2:00 pm.**

#### **BUS RIDERS**

School bus transportation is provided throughout our attendance area. Riding the bus is considered a privilege. This privilege can be denied to those who do not exhibit proper behavior at bus stops or while being transported. (Please see WCPS code of conduct for specific bus rules.)

A parent who wishes to occasionally change bus arrangements for their child (ride a different bus, get off at a different stop, ride home with a friend, etc.) must bring a written note from parents giving permission and get approval from the office before boarding the bus (pending mitigation strategies). Please list the full 911 address of the location the student will be dropped off. **Due to our concern for the safety of our students, we will NOT accept telephone calls to change bus plans. Also, due to time constraints at the end of the day, no changes will be taken after 2:00 pm.**

## **CAR RIDERS**

Our school has a designated location for parents/guardians to drop off and pick up their students in their own vehicles. This area is separate from the school bus drop off/pick up zone—this helps us to create the safest environment for our students.

If all drivers cooperate, the adult supervisors will be able to provide an efficient and protected transfer of children. The following Car Rider information helps us work together to keep all Rhea Valley Elementary children, parents, and staff safe during arrival and dismissal from school.

Each family who wishes to drive their child/children to or from school will receive a car rider sign. If you need more than one let us know. You will keep these for the entire year. This should be placed on the front dashboard of your car visible to the staff during each pickup. Students will wait in the building until their vehicle is called and the student will proceed to the car rider area.

### **AM Car Rider Procedures (line closes at 8:10)**

- Staff will begin unloading your children at 7:30 am when school personnel open the doors. Please pull ALL THE WAY AROUND TO THE NEXT SPOT in front of the sidewalk, Spots 1, 2, and 3. Do not wait until spot 1 is open. **Students must exit from the right side of your vehicle as soon as you stop. Students may not walk between vehicles.** Do not unload unless you are in a numbered spot.
- The line closes at 8:10 for teachers to go to class. If you arrive after 8:10 you will need to pull around to the front, park and walk your children inside the building through the front door.
- Please follow the line of traffic and observe safety rules to keep the flow of traffic moving.
- Please DO NOT ever pass another car in the Car Rider line, with children nearby, this is NEVER safe.
- Pull forward as far as possible into the designated Car Rider lane before loading or unloading, spots 1, 2, and 3. Please do not wait to pull up. If your vehicle is beside the sidewalk please let your student out.
- Keep "good-byes" brief and have their seat belt unfastened.
- Remain in the driver's seat.
- Do not park in the Car Rider lane and leave the car unattended.
- Exit the Car Rider lane promptly after loading or unloading children. There is a stop sign at the exit of the car rider lane. Buses and other cars have the right of way.
- The tardy bell rings at 8:15 and the children should be in their rooms before it rings. Encourage them to walk swiftly into the school and go straight to the cafeteria to get breakfast and then to their classroom.
- Students arriving after the bell must be accompanied to the office by an adult to sign them in. **Do not ever leave your child if teachers aren't outside and the doors are closed, as these doors are locked and children cannot enter.**

### **PM Car Rider Dismissal (Line doesn't open until 2:15 pm due to activities going on outside)**

- Vehicles will be directed to a NUMBER spot, please follow the direction of the calling staff members.
- Students will be called to your vehicle.
- Please encourage your children to walk down the sidewalk to enter vehicles as soon as possible. Children will enter cars three at a time. Please do not EVER pass a loading car to leave. All three cars will pull away together—this ensures that we maintain the safest environment for the students.
- **Children will only be permitted to enter a car on the right side in front of the sidewalk. Students may not walk between vehicles.**

- If you need to fasten your child's seat belt, please park in a parking spot or utilize the grass around the track, so that the roadway will remain clear.

**Do not use the front of the building to drop off or pick up students before or after school.** This area is very busy with buses, delivery trucks, and visitor/staff vehicles and poses a risk to children walking to and from cars. It is prohibited by state law to unload car riders and bus riders in the same area for safety reasons.

### **FRONT PARKING LOT**

A parking lot is located in the front of the building. Please do not block the entrance to the parking lot, double-park, block access to the gas tanks, or drive into the loading area behind the cafeteria. **Never** allow your child to walk unaccompanied in these areas.

### **CAFETERIA**

#### **BREAKFAST**

Breakfast is available to all students from 7:30-8:15. Breakfast is free of charge for all students.

#### **LUNCH**

Lunch is available to all students on a staggered schedule from 10:45-12:45. Lunches are free of charge for all students. **Fast food meals and sodas are not permitted in the cafeteria.**

### **BIRTHDAY TREATS**

In adherence to federal guidelines and in consideration of students with allergies, we have made the thoughtful decision to refrain from snacks as a means of celebrating birthdays. We will honor each student's birthday by calling their names to come to the office to get a birthday pencil and a free ice cream coupon from the school cafeteria.

### **SCHOOL ENTRANCE/OUT OF ZONE**

Students must reside inside the Rhea Valley Elementary School attendance zone in order to enroll unless special permission is granted by the Washington County School Board. It is a class-4 misdemeanor to knowingly give a false address in order to enroll in a school outside your attendance zone.

Students entering for the first time in Virginia must also present a physical examination, a certified copy of their birth certificate, and an immunization record.

Students transferring from other schools must also meet the above requirements. If these records are not forthcoming from the previous school, it becomes the responsibility of the parent to submit the needed documentation.

### **School Nurse/Medication**

A registered nurse or designated trained staff member is available each day to dispense necessary medication. As per the WCS Medication Administration Policy, a "Medication Authorization Form" must be completed by a parent and a Physician before any *prescribed* medicine can be given to a student. Parents will provide the medication in its original container with the prescription label on the container. Medicine not in the original container **will not be given**. Some students take medicine as needed, (e.g. cough medicine, Tylenol, cough drops, etc.). This medicine will be given as the parent directs on the "Medication Permission Form", and not to exceed the manufacturer's dosing recommendations. A complete record of the medicine that is administered is kept in the nurse's office. **Please remember that all medication MUST be brought to school by an adult—children are not permitted to transport medication.**

The school nurse conducts mandated health screenings each fall for Kindergarten and third grade students to check hearing and vision. If any findings are made, parents are notified in writing. Mandated information is provided for parents/guardians on Scoliosis, Human Papillomavirus Vaccine (HPV), and Eating Disorders. This information can be accessed on the WCS website under Health and Wellness.

### **Health, Emergencies, Accidents, and Sickness**

All parents are required to complete a **Student Health Information** form each year. If your child has a medical condition or allergy that will affect his/her school day, contact the school nurse.

All parents are required to complete the emergency procedure section on the registration cards for their child, which will be filed in the office. Parents should inform the teacher and office of any changes that occur in this information during the school year. If a child is injured or becomes ill at school, every effort will be made to notify the parent or guardian. In the event that the parent or guardian cannot be reached, the child will receive proper medical attention. If the injury is severe, 911 will be called to treat and transport the child to the hospital. The parents will be notified, if possible, so they may meet their child at the Emergency Room. **If you have indicated that your child uses emergency medications** (e.g. inhaler, epi-pen, seizure medications, etc.) they need to be kept at school along with the doctor's order.

### **HOMEWORK**

Per WCPS policy, homework may be given daily, not to exceed 20-60 minutes total. Please help and encourage your child to practice good study habits at home as well as at school.

Some suggestions:

- Provide necessary tools (paper, pencils, etc.) and encourage and teach your child to keep and care for them. Help him/her to organize time and materials in an orderly fashion.
- Write down homework in their agenda, if given one.
- Set a regular time daily for homework. This should include a beginning and ending time.
- Provide a well-lit, quiet place away from TV or other distractions.
- If your child is having great difficulty with homework, or it is taking an exorbitant amount of time, please contact your child's teacher.

### **GRADES AND HONOR ROLL**

The grading system adopted by the Washington County School Board is as follows:

#### **Kindergarten**

S – Satisfactory

P – Progressing

N - Needs improvement

#### **Grades 1–2**

O = Outstanding (Demonstrated Mastery of Learning Objectives)

G = Good (Demonstrated Mastery of Most Learning Objectives)

S = Satisfactory (Demonstrated Mastery of Some Learning Objectives)

N = Needs Improvement (Demonstrated Limited Mastery of Learning Objectives)

#### **Grades 3–5**

A = 100-90 (Demonstrated Mastery of Learning Objectives)

B = 89-80 (Demonstrated Mastery of Most Learning Objectives)  
C = 79-70 (Demonstrated Mastery of Some Learning Objectives)  
D = 69-60 (Demonstrated Limited Mastery of Learning Objectives)  
F = 59-0 (Does not Demonstrate Mastery of Learning Objectives)

The honor roll for grades 3-5 is all A's or all A's and B's.

Mid-nine week interim reports are issued each quarter so that parents are made aware of their child's progress. Report cards are issued at the end of every nine weeks.

### **SCHOLASTIC RECORDS**

Cumulative records are kept in the office of Rhea Valley Elementary School. These records contain the following information: academic grades, promotion and retention, immediate family, birth certificate number, standardized test scores, Standards of Learning test scores, immunization, physical examination, physical fitness records, attendance, and resource class records. The office staff is responsible for keeping and updating all required information in these records. Records are reviewed periodically by the principal. Parents and students 18 years or older have the right to review these records. The request must be made, and a proper form completed in the office. After reviewing the records, questions or concerns should be directed to the principal. Student records are kept confidential. Records are only reviewed by persons involved directly with the education of the child.

### **DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES**

We have high expectations for our students. Each student is expected to follow the school rules and established rules of his or her classroom. In some cases, misbehavior is severe enough to warrant serious penalties involving the principal and the Discipline Committee. Examples of this more serious behavior include the following: possession of any drug, including tobacco; fighting, serious pushing or grabbing, physical threat; defiant behavior or refusal to follow the directions of a school division employee; cursing or unacceptable language; lying or cheating; leaving the class or school property without permission; failure to comply with a punishment for misbehavior. Failure to comply with the rules and regulations of the school could result in any of the following disciplinary actions (according to the severity of the offense):

- |                         |   |                          |
|-------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| * Removal of privileges | * Student conference with Principal                                   | * Involvement of parents |
| * Detention             | * Appearance with school-wide and or county-wide discipline committee |                          |
| * Suspension            | * Expulsion   |                          |

### **LOST AND FOUND**

Lost and found articles are to be taken to the office and then placed in our designated "lost and found" area. Items that are not claimed after a reasonable amount of time will be placed in the clothing center for the emergency needs of students or sent to a charity organization. The school cannot be responsible for personal valuables if they are stolen or misplaced at school. The school does not carry insurance on these items and parents should consider carrying insurance through their homeowner's insurance. We discourage students from bringing expensive personal items to school. Write your child's name inside sweatshirts, jackets, and coats.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

The school board allows limited field trips throughout the year. Teachers request and plan these trips to enhance the learning process and the objectives of the curriculum. In some cases, a nominal admission fee is required. No student is denied the opportunity to attend field trips because of the inability to pay. A form to request assistance may be obtained from the school office or your teacher.



## **RULES AND GUIDELINES**

### **DRESS CODE**

Washington County School Board has no wish to dictate style or fashion in dress. However, students will be expected to keep themselves well-groomed and neatly dressed at all times. Any form of dress or hairstyle which is considered contrary to good hygiene, safety, or which is distractive or disruptive to the teaching-learning process will not be permitted. This will, out of necessity, be a judgment of the teachers and administration. Items considered inappropriate for school *may include but are not limited to*: see-through shirts, halter tops, tube tops, painted skin, bare midriffs, pants worn below the waist, short shorts, and flimsy flip-flops. Clothing that promotes alcohol, tobacco or drugs or has inappropriate language will not be permitted. Hats and hoods can be worn at times that are not instructional as long as they are not a distraction and their faces are clearly visible. Students wearing clothing, attire, or any other appearance that is considered unacceptable by faculty will be asked to change.

### **CARE OF PROPERTY**

Each student is expected to give proper care to the school building, buses, furniture, and materials. If students are destructive to school property, parents will be notified of any damage incurred so that compensations can be made to the school.

### **USE OF TELEPHONE**

The office phone is for school business and should not be used otherwise. We request that people not call students at school. With the large number of students and varied schedules, we cannot get students to the phone. In addition, we are committed to the protection of students' instructional time.

NOTE: We will not allow students to take calls or visits from anyone other than a parent/guardian or those authorized in writing and appearing in person. Please be aware that these restrictions are for the protection of our students. We reserve the right to refuse those without proper identification.

### **PORTABLE COMMUNICATION DEVICES (CELL PHONE/ELECTRONIC READER)**

Elementary school students may have the privilege to bring a cellular phone/portable communication device into the school building if the parent files a request. The principal approves each request based on legitimate reasons, such as the safety or the well-being of the student. If the request is approved, students will keep their phones in their book bags turned off during regular school hours. This is a privilege that can be revoked.

### **MOMENT OF SILENCE**

As required by 22.1-203 of the Code of Virginia, one minute of silence will be observed each morning during announcements.

### **STATEMENT OF RESPECT**

Equal educational opportunities shall be available for all students, without regard to sex, sexual orientation, race, creed, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, ethnicity, religion, disability, ancestry, marital or parental status or any other unlawful basis. Educational programs shall be designed to meet the varying needs of all students.

### **GENERAL RULES**

- No selling of any items to other students at school
- Knives and other sharp objects, fireworks, tobacco, alcohol and drugs, water guns, toy guns, matches and other incendiary devices, pornographic materials, firearms, and other dangerous objects cannot be brought to school.

- No chewing gum, candy, soft drinks, fast food, and other similar food items are allowed in school or on the buses without prior approval.
- No cursing or obscene language/gestures will be tolerated.
- No running, pushing or shoving, horseplay, fighting, loud talking, or noise will be allowed in the school building or on the buses.
- Do not litter, mark or destroy school or private property.
- Students are expected to treat others with respect at all times.
- Glass containers, flower arrangements, balloons, and large bulky items are not allowed on school buses.

### **PARTIES/INVITATIONS**

Party invitations will **ONLY** be distributed if there is one included for every student in the homeroom. If you do not plan to invite all the students, you will need to deliver them separately. For privacy reasons, we cannot share student personal information.

**Rhea Valley Elementary**  
**Student Handbook**  
2023-24

Dear Parent/Guardian,

We ask that you review the Student Handbook with your child. Please complete the information below upon your review.

My child, \_\_\_\_\_ and I have reviewed and understand the Student Handbook for Rhea Valley Elementary School and the WCS Handbook/Calendar.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature