

Rincon Valley Charter School

Academic Year 2020-2021 Student & Parent Distance Learning Guide

Welcome to the 2020-2021 School Year!

We know this is not how we had hoped to start the year and realize that at this time remote learning with the potential of moving to a hybrid model is the safest for our students, our staff, and our families. This guide is designed to answer most of the questions you may have as we start the year. We will update this document and send updates through the RVUSD as we have them. You can download the app from the [Apple App Store](#) or [Google Play/Android App Store](#). Instructions for installing and using the RVUSD app can be found in [this video](#).

Our focus for the year

Middle school is a challenging, interesting, perplexing, and exciting time - for kids and parents alike! While academics are important to us, the staff of RVCS believes in helping students develop the skills that will help them be successful far into the future and to become better citizens and humans so that they make our world a better place for everyone. We think this starts with developing “GRIT”. To us, this means that students should show growth, resilience, integrity, and teamwork. Every teacher, every class, and every activity helps students develop the GRIT they need to be successful. These might be direct lessons related to GRIT during Advocacy or might be embedded in course work as students work on group projects or challenging new concepts. By the end of their 8th grade year, we expect students to show their GRIT and we think that is especially important this year!

Our commitments for this year:

- We will safeguard the health and safety of students and staff.
- We will comply with the State and County Health Department guidelines.
- We will remain flexible in adapting to the needs of our students and families.
- We will maintain a positive attitude and always assume positive intent.
- We will create a positive learning environment for our students.
- We will encourage risk taking and trying something new.
- We will ensure equitable access to teaching and learning:
 - Prioritize the needs of most vulnerable students and staff.
 - Anticipate the needs of our students and staff.
 - Provide consistent communication.
- We will leverage and adapt our resources to address the needs of our students.

We know that uncertainty is difficult, and that when it comes to your child’s education, it becomes even more important to have clarity and support. We are committed to making sure we communicate with you and your child as new information becomes available and as plans for the year change with that changing information. We hope that you will contact us early and often to communicate the needs, concerns, and successes for your family!

Sincerely,

Hannah Bates, Principal

Harmony Harvell, Assistant Principal, Matanzas & *Erin Conrad*, Assistant Principal, Sequoia

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New Students

We know that coming to a new school is challenging under the best of circumstances. Our staff will be working closely with your students to make sure that they understand every aspect to their schedule and classes. This will begin on Monday, August 17th when students pick up their materials from school and will continue on Tuesday, August 18th when the students meet with their Advocate teacher for the first time. See the “Advocacy” section for more details. We always encourage the students and their families to reach out with questions or concerns as soon as possible. During Distance Learning, email will be the most effective way to reach any staff member as many are not working on campus.

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Communication

It is important to us that we stay connected to you and your student(s). We provide a variety of ways for information to come to you. Please be sure to sign up for all forms of communication so you don't miss vital information.

- **PowerSchool Learning** - All RVCS teachers will use PowerSchool Learning to communicate with students. Each teacher will provide information, assignments, and other content related to the class through PowerSchool Learning. This is also where your student will turn in assignments and/or classwork. Additionally, teachers will use Zoom to provide live interaction. **It is strongly suggested that students check their SCHOOL EMAIL daily.**
- **Powerschool Learning** is where parents and students may view current grades. You should receive information on how to create your parent login before the first day of school. This information will be emailed to you directly.
- Don't miss our monthly **newsletter**. The newsletter is delivered monthly through the RVUSD app. You can download the app from the [Apple App Store](#) or [Google Play/Android App Store](#). (Instructions for installing and using the RVUSD app can be found in [this video](#).)
- General information about our school can be found on the [RVUSD Website](#) and Facebook pages for [Matanzas](#) and [Sequoia](#).
- Teachers and staff may use the messaging service Remind to communicate with you and your students about individual classes. Be on the lookout for announcements from your child's teachers about [signing up for notifications](#).

Has Your Information Changed?

If any of your contact information or address has changed please send an email to your office manager so that we can keep your student's information as up to date as possible and prevent you from missing out on important communication.

Matanzas - Colleen Ramirez:

cramirez@rvusd.org

Sequoia - Iris Lovelace:

ilovelace@rvusd.org

Distance Learning Schedule

All students are on a block schedule, participating twice a week in each class. Teachers will use these blocks of time in a variety of ways, holding class wide meetings, small group discussions, and one-on-one conversations with students. The students will be expected to be participating in their course work during the assigned blocks and remain available the entire time, even if they are not on a Zoom meeting. Teachers will publish assignments for each meeting on PowerSchool.

Monday Blocks 1, 2, 3	Tuesday Blocks 4, 5, 6	Wednesday	Thursday Blocks 1, 2, 3	Friday Blocks 4, 5, 6
8:15-8:45 Teacher Office Hours	8:15-8:45 Teacher Office Hours	8:15-8:45 Teacher Office Hours	8:15-8:45 Teacher Office Hours	8:15-8:45 Teacher Office Hours
8:45-10:45 1st Block	8:45-10:45 4th Block	8:45 Advocacy Group Meetings	8:45-10:45 1st Block	8:45-10:45 4th Block
10:45-11:00 Break	10:45-11:00 Break	9:45 - 3:00 Independent work such as PE activities and extension classes; Student services meetings	10:45-11:00 Break	10:45-11:00 Break
11:00-1:00 2nd Block	11:00-1:00 5th Block		11:00-1:00 2nd Block	11:00-1:00 5th Block
1:00-2:00 Break	1:00-2:00 Break		1:00-2:00 Break	1:00-2:00 Break
2:00-3:00 3rd Block	2:00-3:00 6th Block		2:00-3:00 3rd Block	2:00-3:00 6th Block

How to Start the Year

How Do I Get My Schedule?

You will receive information about your child's schedule on the first day of school, during the drive through materials pick up opportunity. These schedules will apply for the entire first trimester.

How Do I Get My Chromebook and Supplies?

Students and parents will come to school during an assigned time block on **Monday, August 17th**. At this time, they will receive a copy of their schedule, their Chromebook and login instructions, basic school supplies, handouts from the teachers for the first few weeks of instruction, information about their teachers, and some other items.

Distribution schedule is as follows:

7th Grade Students - 9 am until 11 am

8th Grade Students - 12 pm until 2 pm

Please remain in your vehicle throughout the drive through process. Various stations will be set up to pick up different supplies. **Please wear masks while you are in the drive through line.** Staff will be wearing masks and gloves for everyone's protection.

- Matanzas families will pick up their supplies by forming a line along southbound Yulupa Ave.
- Sequoia families will pick up their supplies by entering the parking lot on the corner of DuPont Drive and Calistoga Road (*not* the Sequoia Elementary parking lot).

How Do I Attend the First Day of Classes?

Instructions for the first day of school will be provided on Friday, August 14th via email. The first day of school will be dedicated to picking up materials. There will not be any Zoom classes that day, but your child should log into [PowerSchool](#) (sign in with their Google account) and check their school [email](#) for links to the Zoom classes for the rest of the week. Students will also need to email each of their teachers following the instructions provided in the supplies kit packet. There may be additional instructions from individual teachers on how to prepare materials for the first class meetings.

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Advocacy

All students will be assigned to a teacher advocate for the 20-21 school year. While this teacher may also be your child's teacher for another subject, for this group, the teacher is an adult that can help guide students through the school year. Advocacy groups will meet every Wednesday on Zoom at 8:45 am, even if we return to hybrid learning later in the year. These will be mixed grade level groups and will be an opportunity for students to build community connections outside their regular class cohorts. These meetings will be a combination of fun, engaging activities as well as practical tips for navigating middle school. The teacher advocate can also help students with difficult conversations and get help from their other teachers.

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How to Navigate the Day & Organize the Week

Making a schedule is essential for success in school, *especially* during distance learning. Please feel free to make a copy of our [Weekly Planner](#) sheet to use with your student. Students can use this to fill in information about what's due when for each class, as well as keep track of questions they may have. It includes lots of tips for success, and ideas about how to best spend break and enrichment times.

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Resources, Textbooks, & Materials

Chromebooks

All RVCS students will be issued a Chromebook to use for their school work. The Chromebook issued is the preferred device for access to school work. The Acceptable Use Agreement is part of the First Day packet that is completed online through the Synergy system. Chromebooks will not be issued until this form is completed. Results are automatically reported to the school. Insurance is available (as indicated on the form) for \$35 to protect against damage, loss, and/or theft for two years of coverage. If returning families paid for insurance last year, they will not need to pay again.

Please bring a check or money order (no cash) made out to RVCS on August 17th.

Textbooks

All RVCS Students will be issued Carnegie Math Workbooks and an History Alive interactive journals. Students are expected to have these books with them when they attend classes. Books are consumable and portions may be collected throughout the school year for assessment by the teachers.

Other classes will use either composition books, notebooks, or binders as directed to keep track of materials. Students are expected to bring these materials to every class meeting.

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Student and Parent Expectations

In the Distance Learning Model, we have adopted the following expectations for students and parents.

Expectations	
Student	Parent
<p>Attendance</p> <p>Unlike the spring, the state of California has given us specific requirements for attendance. Students are required to have live interaction with their teacher each day or each class period, based on their schedule which may be Zoom meetings, phone calls, or collaboration on documents or discussion boards. Attendance will be recorded for each class period and unexcused absences may result in truancy meetings.</p> <p>Students are expected to check the teacher's PowerSchool Learning page and district Gmail and complete assignments as directed by the due date given.</p>	<p>Attendance:</p> <p>The parent is responsible for reporting a student absence in a timely manner. COVID-19 related absences are excused. All other absences will be reported in the normal school procedures. To report an absence please call your office manager or use the form link below: Matanzas - (707) 308-3600 or Report An Absence Sequoia - (707) 537-8640 or Report An Absence</p> <p>Even though classes are being held virtually, students are expected to attend their classes for the full block of time. Please schedule any appointments outside of the regular school day (8:45 am - 3:00 pm).</p>

If you are absent from class, you are expected to complete the work as assigned and turn in any work that was due during your absence. Check PowerSchool for newly assigned work and email your teacher for clarification or help. If you feel that you need a deadline extension, you must contact your teacher to discuss the new due dates.

Behavior

Students are expected to behave appropriately when on a Zoom connection with other students and teachers. This includes keeping the camera on so the teacher and other students can see the student's image, using an appropriate name for identification, keeping the microphone on mute other than when directed, using appropriate images that DO NOT include racial slurs, drugs, alcohol, nudity, or other offensive images. In accordance with California Education Code, district policies, and guidelines, disciplinary action may be taken for any violation.

Work Effort

Grades will be given for work during Distance Learning. Missing assignments or low quality work will result in poor grades. Students are expected to put forth their best learning effort, including turning in projects, assignments, quizzes, and tests on time. The student is asked to communicate with the teacher if he/she is experiencing difficulty in completing the work.

Technology

Students are expected to be prepared with their device so as to actively engage in online learning, including lessons and assignments. This includes having the device fully charged or have the device plugged in, using headphones during Zoom meetings to minimize distracting background noise, and reporting malfunctioning or damaged equipment to school staff right away.

Help at Home

The parent/guardian is encouraged to assume the role of the learning coach. The parent is not expected to be the teacher but rather assists his/her student in developing study habits, establishing a place to learn, and a schedule. See the [Learning Coach Tip Sheet](#)

Communication

The parent/guardian is expected to communicate early with the teacher, counselor, or site administration if he/she notices a change in the student's learning, behavior, and/or demeanor. RVUSD will be sending periodic surveys to facilitate communication about your current situation and your student's status but please feel free to reach out to the staff at any time to communicate any needs or concerns you have. We can best help you and your student by fully understanding your situation.

Academic Honesty

The RVCS community expects a full commitment to academic honesty from each student. Academic Honesty means:

- Your work on each assignment will be completely your own.
- Your collaboration with another classmate(s) on any assignment will be in accordance with your instructor.
- You will not practice plagiarism of any form. Plagiarism is defined as follows:
 - *Copying or using ideas or words from another online classmate, or an Internet or print source and presenting them as your own.*
- If an instructor confirms that a student has plagiarized work, the student will be subject to consequences determined by their instructor and/or RVCS administration.

Discipline

We know that being a middle school student is difficult under the best of circumstances and that many factors contribute to behavior in class. Our staff will use every tool in our toolbox to help students understand the expectations, norms, and procedures of the class and school. Teachers will use respectful interventions to remind students of the expectations of the class. Students may be asked to “Refocus” privately, using a form to reflect on what is contributing to their behavior. Teachers will attempt to resolve the situation privately with the student and may call the family to follow up. If you do receive a phone call or email from a teacher, please address the situation with your student knowing that the teacher has the best interests of your student and the class in mind and that in many cases, this is an opportunity to learn what is appropriate and to reflect on how individual actions can impact others. During distance learning, the usual consequences will not be available to us, so we are asking you to support our teaching team in enforcing the expectations of the class from your end as we enforce them from our end.

All students are subject to the rules related to threats, intimidation, harassment and use of profanity or vulgarity, which exist under section 48900 of the California Education Code. If you feel you are being harassed in your course environment, it is important to report it immediately to your teacher, advocate, or RVCS administration. Harassment comes in many forms, including Spam (unsolicited e-mails not pertaining to the course), threatening communications; offensive ecommunications or any other kind of communication that makes you feel uncomfortable.

Netiquette

A high sense of mutual respect, self-respect and integrity is expected for RVCS students at school and in online settings. All students are expected to conduct their communications in a professional, respectful manner. The use of proper Internet etiquette is expected at all times. Inappropriate language, behavior, or use of other’s images/likeness without permission will result in disciplinary action. [Video Conferencing Etiquette](#).

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Best Ways to Support Your Student

Learning from home is difficult, for the students and parents alike. The following resources are available to help you navigate the challenges of distance learning:

- [Zoom Directions for Students](#) - help students understand how to connect with teachers via Zoom
- [Common Sense Media](#) - navigate the world of devices and electronics as a parent
- [Parent as a Learning Coach](#) - it is not the parent's responsibility to teach his/her student. And it's helpful to learn how to provide support in the home as your student learns. Take some time to learn a little more about Blended Learning and the [Blended Learning Models](#). By understanding how a teacher is setting up lessons so your student can access information you become an advocate for your student and are able to navigate the lesson with your student
- [Calm Meditations](#) - short audios that calm the nerves
- [Audible Stories](#) - audio version of novels students may be assigned

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Grading and Report Cards

Grades for Fall 2020

Coursework will be graded based assignments and assessments given during Zoom classes and/or posted on PowerSchool. English/Language Arts, History, Math, and Science courses will all be graded on a traditional grading system (A, B, C, D, F). 50% of the grade is based on content mastery as determined by assessments including quizzes, tests, and projects. 50% of the grade is based on scholarly attributes, including producing quality work, submitting work on time, coming to class prepared to learn, and having behavior that is conducive to learning (during live class meetings or while interacting in collaborative forums such as discussion boards or shared documents)

PE and Elective Classes

PE and elective classes will be graded on a credit/no credit system. The credit/no credit grade will not be factored into the students GPA. PE and elective class meetings are shorter than class meetings for other subjects so students will be expected to continue their work outside of school hours and on Wednesdays. Teachers will publish activities and assignments on PowerSchool to supplement the work done during the regular class meetings.

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Student Supports

Academic Supports

RVCS is committed to supporting struggling students during Distance Learning. The best way to get help is to contact the teacher directly via email or attend Teacher Office Hours. Your Advocate can help facilitate these conversations as well.

If your student has an IEP or 504 plan, additional supports will be provided as outlined in their individual plan. Resource teachers may “push into” classes, joining the live Zoom class to support students, and provide additional supports appropriate to each child’s IEP.

Social-Emotional Supports

School Counselors and Counseling Interns will be available by appointment throughout the week. They are available to help students work through the challenges of middle school, including social, emotional, or academic situations. Counselors will have regular Q and A sessions for parents and will be available to assist with student needs as requested by teachers or other staff. If you have questions or would like to speak with the school counselor, please contact the school office.

Mental Health

If you need support outside of school hours, please contact one of the following agencies:

- [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#) 1-800-273-8255
- [Crisis Text Line](#) Text HOME to 741741 to reach a Crisis Counselor
- [Teen Line](#) 1-310-855-4673; Text Teen to 839863

For emergencies, call 9-1-1.

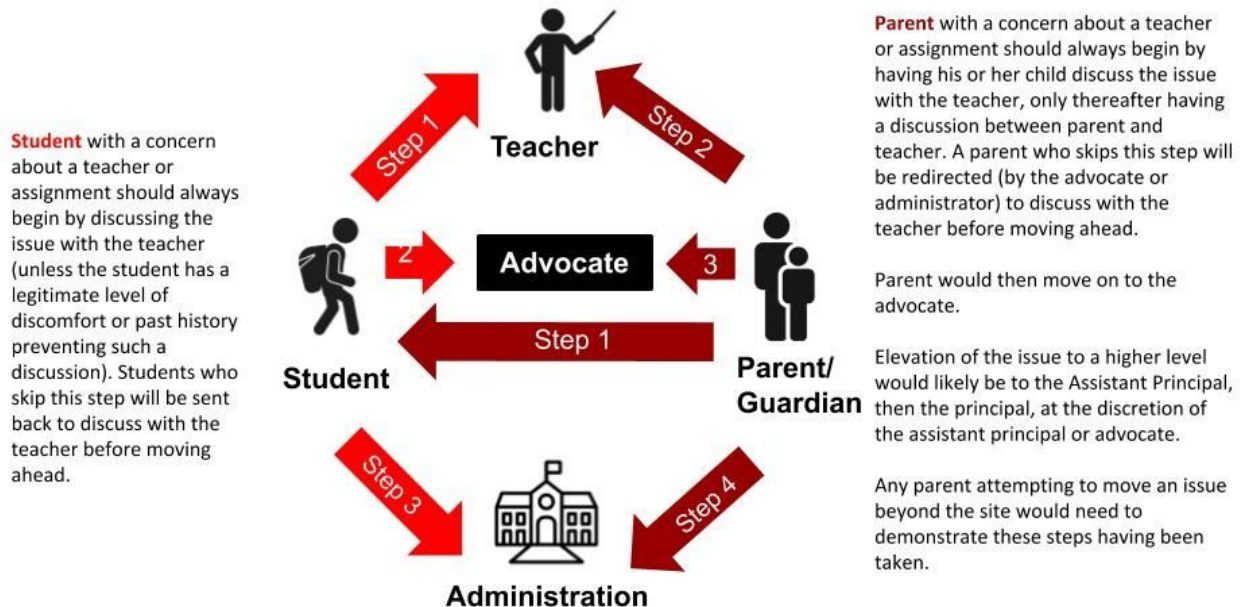
To learn about other local mental health resources, call 2-1-1.

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Teacher Communication

If you have questions about particular classes or assignments, please contact teachers directly. You can find all teacher emails on the [Matanzas](#) or [Sequoia](#) Faculty and Staff pages. Refer to our [Communication Flow Chart](#) for more information.

Communication Flow Chart: To create and foster a transparent and inclusive system, please use the following steps in sharing any concerns. We value your voice.



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Administrative Items & Business

Reporting an Absence

If a student is absent, the school must be notified of the reason for the absence. Parents are requested to call the office manager at their site to explain a student's absence. Parents may also use the reporting forms for [RVCS-Matanzas](#) and [RVCS-Sequoia](#) to report the absences.

Absences which are not cleared or excused through the Attendance Office within 10 days are considered cuts. After a student reaches (10) days of medical absences, medical verification will be required such as notes from medical offices or on their letterhead. Please email any medical notes to the office manager at their site.

Students are still responsible for work assigned or due during their absences. Students should check PowerSchool for the latest information about assignments and email teachers for questions or clarifications. If students feel that they need additional time to complete the work, they must contact the teacher to arrange for an extension on the due dates.

Photos

Due to current COVID restrictions, student photos will be scheduled for when hybrid model is activated or when it is deemed safe for students to come to campus for pictures. Additional information will be provided when it is available.

PowerSchool Learning (Parent/Student Portal)

Students and parents will both have access to PowerSchool, which will be the main source of information about classes and assignments.

Students will visit the [RVCS PowerSchool](#) page and use the Google sign in button to sign into PowerSchool. Students will be added to classes by the teachers and all content will reflect the classes that they are enrolled in.

Parent portal information will be emailed to the email addresses on file by the office managers. Parents will be able to see the same content as the students, including assignment due dates. Teachers will post all assignments and learning expectations on these pages.

If there are questions about assignments, visit PowerSchool first to see if the information is available there. If there are still questions, please encourage your student to contact the teacher via Google email to ask for clarification.

Synergy Parent Portal

RVUSD uses Synergy for our student information system. Through this system you will be able to complete the “First Day” packet, including emergency contact information and agreeing to the Acceptable Use document for technology. This is also where you will be able to see final trimester grades.

Meals

Food service will be available to students during distance learning. Additional information about food service, including menus, payment information, or free-or-reduced-price options for qualified students can be found at the [district food service website](#).

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Athletics

At this time, no athletic events have been scheduled. If that changes, you will be notified via the RVUSD App and newsletter.

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Student Activities

Community connections are very important, more so now than ever. The staff of RVCS will use class time to help build community relationships and may be offering additional virtual activities throughout the school year. Be on the lookout for announcements about clubs and upcoming events as posted through the RVUSD App, newsletters, and Facebook pages.

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Campus and Facility Access

For the safety of the staff working on campus, all our facilities are closed to any outside visitors. We ask that students and parents call or email with questions and we will return your calls or emails as quickly as possible. We can also schedule virtual meetings as needed to assist you.

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RVCS Parent Association

The RVCS Parents Association is proud to continue to support the unique and exciting programs offered at both campuses of RVCS. While our fundraising and volunteer efforts may look different this year, we will continue to support the staff and students of RVCS. Please keep an eye out for information on how to participate in the RVCS Parents Association and support our campuses!

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