Rivendell Interstate School District

Elementary Schools Handbook

2026–2027

Samuel Morey Elementary

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What Guides Our Schools

Scholarship, Community, Connection

- Structures and daily practices that support good teaching and learning.
- Strong, ongoing ties between the school and the community.
- Clear standards of excellence and accountability for our schools, our staff, and our students.

We believe that quality education is built on a supportive and safe learning environment for all students. We provide consistently high expectations for academic and social growth. We value caring and kind relationships both within the school and community at large.

About Rivendell Interstate School District

The Rivendell Interstate School District (RISD) was formed in 1998 by four towns: Fairlee, West Fairlee, Vermont, and Orford, New Hampshire. The district took over schooling for children in these towns in July 2000. Rivendell runs three schools:

- Westshire Elementary School (PreK–5) in West Fairlee, Vermont
- Samuel Morey Elementary School (PreK–5) in Fairlee, Vermont
- Rivendell Academy (grades 6–12) in Orford, New Hampshire

Rivendell is a Vermont school district. We use Vermont standards and assessments. The District Office is in Orford, New Hampshire. It houses the superintendent, the business office, human resources, and special education services.

About this Handbook

The information in this handbook has been developed over time. It is based on questions from families and students, input from staff and required rules of state and federal agencies. We can't fit everything in it that we want to share. More information about programs, forms, menus and bus routes is on our website: https://sme.rivendellschool.org/

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School Operations

Samuel Morey School Day, 7:45 am - 2:45 pm

The school day starts at 7:45. Students may be in the building at 7:40 for breakfast. **Classes start at 8 am**. Students arriving after 8 am will be considered tardy.

The school day ends at 2:45. Buses pick students up at 2:45, followed by other students at 2:50. **Thursday early release** bus picks students up at 1:45, followed by other students at 2:00.

Westshire School Day, 7:30 am – 3:00 pm

Morning recess starts at 7:30. Students may be in the building at 7:45 for breakfast. **Classes start at 8 am**. Students arriving after 8 am will be considered tardy.

The school day ends at 3:00. Walkers and pick up students are dismissed at 3:00, followed by bus students at 3:15. **Thursday early release** walkers and pick up students are dismissed at 2:00, followed by bus students at 2:15

School Closures & Delays

When Vermont weather makes it unsafe for our buses to travel, we close school. The Superintendent makes this call after talking with town road departments and the bus company.

Our School Messenger system calls the phone numbers at registration when school closes for weather. You can also check local media for closings.

Announcements will be made on radio stations WHDO (106.1 FM), WTSV (1230 AM), WNHV (910 AM), WTSL (1400 AM), WGXL (92.3 FM), 100.5 FM, WYKR (101.3fm), WTWN (1100AM), WLTN (96.7 FM & 98.5 FM 1400 AM), and WDEV Radio Vermont, as well as WMUR, WNNE, & WPTZ TV as soon as possible.

The delayed opening time is 10:00 for all Rivendell schools. If there is a delayed opening, announcements will also be made on the same radio and television stations.

Attendance

Students who attend school are more successful at school and feel good about their learning. Students are expected to be at school. Regular school attendance is required by law for children ages 6 to 16.

When your child is absent or late, please email or call the office and give a reason.

Acceptable (excused) absences, below. Other absences will be unexcused, including family vacations.

- Illness* A doctor's note may be requested for illnesses lasting longer than 3 days
- Family Emergency
- Appointments (doctor, dentist, etc.)
- Religious Holiday
- Court Appearance
- Approved extra-curricular extended learning (4H, etc.)

Teachers will not be able to provide new learning to students while they're out. Families should expect that students may need to make up missed assignments or may need to catch up to the rest of the class after they return. Expect the following when your child has the following absences:

5 excused 5 unexcused 10 excused	No action taken A letter sent as documentation Principal phone call
10 unexcused	Letter home and to the Superintendent of Schools Follow up phone call Meeting request from the principal Your child will be referred to the Educational Support Team to determine the impact on education A Truant Officer may be sent to the home

20 days excused and unexcused	The school is required to report the lack of school attendance to the Department of Children and Families (DCF)/ Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) Truancy may be filed with the State's Attorney's Office

Tardy

Patterns of tardiness (arrival after 8 am) will be documented in writing. The first 15 minutes of the school day are spent in morning meeting as a whole group. Missing this time with peers can make settling into the school day more difficult for some students.

Admission

Age Requirement A child entering Kindergarten must be 5 years old on or before September 1. There are no exceptions to this rule. A child entering Prekindgarten must be 3 years old on or before September 1.

Residency A child has to live in Fairlee or Orford to attend Samuel Morey Elementary School, or Vershire or West Fairlee to attend Westshire Elementary School.

Proof of Residency We must make sure that all students who come to our school live in the Rivendell Interstate District. When a student first enrolls, we will ask for proof of residency. We may also ask again if you move, or if we have questions about where you live.

A student is a legal resident if they live with their parent(s) and the parents can show one of these:

- Current town property tax bill
- Current mortgage/closing papers showing a West Fairlee, Fairlee, Vershire, VT or Orford, NH address and the name of the parent or legal guardian or custodian
- Formal lease showing the name, address, and telephone number of the landlord, address in West Fairlee, Fairlee, Vershire, VT or Orford, NH and name of lessee
- A notarized letter from the landlord stating the address of the residence being leased and name of the lessee, along with the landlord's address and telephone number

AND

Proof of West Fairlee, Fairlee, Vershire, VT or Orford, NH residency from one of the following:

- Valid Vermont identification card with a Fairlee, West Fairlee, Vershire address or New Hampshire identification card with Orford address
- Valid Vermont vehicle registration card with a Fairlee, West Fairlee, Vershire address or New Hampshire vehicle registration card with Orford address
- Current utility bill with your name and Fairlee, West Fairlee, Vershire address or Orford address
- Valid Vermont or New Hampshire driver's license showing Fairlee, West Fairlee, Vershire address or Orford address
- Bank statement for last or current month with name and Fairlee, West Fairlee, Vershire address or Orford address. Financial information should be blacked out

If a student doesn't live with both parents, we will need a copy of the court custody agreement. At least one parent must live in town and show proof of residency.

If a student lives with a guardian, the guardian must show proof of residency and a copy of the court order that explains the type of guardianship, what the guardian is responsible for, and any rights the parents still have.

Transfers

We work to make new students feel welcome. New students usually do not go to class the day they register. They start a few days later.

That gives us time to put them in the right class and get their materials ready. A student with

If you are moving your child to another school, tell the office. We need to fill out paperwork so your child's records can go to the new school.

Families may not carry student records by hand to the new school. Telling us early helps us move records fast and makes the change easier on your child.

School Nutrition Program

Breakfast and lunch are available to all students, along with milk and juice. Children must arrive on time to eat breakfast at school.

There is a morning snack period each day. Please send a nutritious snack from home, and a lunch if your child is not taking part in the lunch program.

Glass bottles or containers, soda, and candy do not belong in a child's snack or lunch. Please note: gum is not allowed, unless it is part of a child's Section 504 plan or Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Free and Reduced-Price Meals All students in Vermont eat breakfast and lunch for free. The Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines are part of the registration each year. Please complete the application. It helps us describe the make-up of our school population. If we have a certain level of families who are considered low income, we can access additional funding and supports such as grants for Hood and Montshire Museums.

Transportation

hires a bus company to transport students. These services are a privilege, not a right. State law does not require school districts to provide transportation.

Common sense rules apply:

- No moving between seats while the bus is moving
- Follow bus driver instructions
- Quiet voice and no swearing
- No throwing things

Students are expected to follow these rules. Students who break these safety rules may have consequences that include not being allowed to ride the bus.

Visitors and Volunteers

Visitors We welcome families and community members. All visitors enter through the front door, sign in at the office, and wear a visitor badge. Visitors must be with a school employee at all times while in the building.

Visitor guidelines can change from year to year. Contact your child's principal to check the current rules.

Volunteers make a difference at our schools. Volunteers who may be alone with children will need both a background check and fingerprints. Volunteers who will not be alone with children will need a just the background check. Volunteers who remain active within a 12-month period do not have to renew their

paperwork. Volunteers who are not active within a 12-month period will need to renew their application. Thank you for your understanding!

School Communications

If you have a question or concern, tell us as soon as you can. Regular, clear communication is important for a strong home-school partnership. Expect regular communication from the school. Classrooms send newsletters and emails. Teachers will also call home. School wide communications are regularly sent to emails. You may also get “robo” calls. The contact information you gave at the start of the year.

We also use School Messenger to notify you of school delays or cancellations due to inclement weather, as well as early releases, after-school or sports programs cancellations, etc. Please let us know if email or phone numbers change.

We work hard to keep good lines of communication with families. Start by calling or emailing the classroom teacher to set up a time to talk.

Who to talk to, in order

About something in the classroom:

Teacher → Principal → Superintendent → School Board (if law or policy allows further action)

About something school-wide:

Principal → Superintendent → School Board (if law or policy allows further action)

If your question is not answered at the first step, move to the next one. If you skip a step, we will send you back to the right person.

Emailing School Staff

Staff check email each day between 7:45 a.m. and 3:15 p.m. During the school year, expect a reply within 24 to 48 hours, not counting weekends and holidays. If a request will take longer, a teacher may write back to say they got your email and when they can answer fully.

The school day is busy, so teachers may not get to their email during the day. If you need to reach a teacher during the day, call the school and leave a message with the Administrative Assistant.

Please do not use email to discuss your child or other children. Email raises the chance of misunderstanding, and it can raise serious issues under FERPA, the federal student privacy law. Staff cannot send anything that might be part of a student record by email. Please call or email to set up a time to talk instead.

Student Dress

We ask students and staff to dress in a way that fits a safe, orderly place to learn. Clothing should respect the school setting and should not distract from teaching and learning.

The dress code

Clothing must cover the front and back of the torso, from the upper chest to four inches below the buttocks. No bare skin or underwear should show in that area. All tops must have straps.

Clothing that promotes alcohol, drugs, racism, sex, tobacco, or violence is not allowed.

Please think about weather, safety, the setting (classroom, gym, playground), and your child’s age when you help them choose clothes. The school may ask a child to make a different clothing choice when their clothing is not appropriate or not adequate. Hats are usually not worn inside the building.

Shoes

Students wear shoes at all times, for health and safety. Sandals and flip-flops are allowed, but they are not good for active play and raise the chance of injury. We recommend comfortable shoes or sneakers so your child can play hard at recess.

Students should have both indoor and outdoor shoes. That way one pair can get wet or muddy at recess and a dry pair is ready for inside. An extra pair of socks helps too. Students need sneakers for PE, and they may keep a pair at school.

Cold weather

Students go outside for recess, PE, and other activities unless the temperature or wind chill is below 10°F. Please send boots, a warm coat, mittens or gloves, and a hat during the cold months.

Extra clothes

Please send in a spare set of clothes for your child to keep at school. Students of any age may need a change after a wet recess or a lunchtime spill. Without spare clothes, a child may stay wet all day if we cannot find clean clothes that fit.

Labels

Please put your child's name on everything — lunch boxes, sweatshirts, coats, snow pants, backpacks, boots, hats, and mittens. If your child loses clothing, have them check the lost and found.

Birthdays and Other Celebrations

We celebrate together as a school community. We announce student birthdays. Tell us if you would rather we did not announce your child's.

We limit sweet treats at celebrations. This helps students make good food choices and follows our school nutrition policy.

Students may not hand out party invitations at school.

Parking

Our parking lots are busy places. Please pay close attention and extend courtesy at all times.

Please respect the spaces reserved for people with disabilities. Those who park in violation of the accessible parking designation are subject to law enforcement.

Library

Our school libraries have many books available to students and faculty. Library hours are set and posted at the beginning of the year. When the library is not being used for instruction during those hours, students may use it for reading, research, or studying, with a teacher's permission.

Each student has a library number for checking out books. Most books may be borrowed for two weeks. Bring items to the library to renew them.

Lost and Found

Let us know if you have lost an item. At the December break and at the end of the school year, we donate any remaining lost and found items to charity.

Please label all clothing, backpacks, lunch bags, shoes, boots, hats, and

Physical Education

Physical education is an important part of the educational process. The program emphasizes participation, team building, and fitness skills that last a lifetime.

Students are required to wear sneakers for physical education class.

Playground

During school hours, use of the playground is limited to Rivendell elementary students and staff. To keep recess safe and enjoyable, these rules apply:

- Treat each other with respect
- Respect the space of others
- Use equipment safely

After school hours and on weekends, the facility is open to community members. Rivendell assumes no responsibility for injury during non-school use of the facilities. We recommend adult supervision at all times.

Recycling and Composting

We use single-stream recycling, which means we do not have to sort recyclables. We compost food waste, as Vermont law requires. At the beginning of the school year, students learn what is recyclable and what is compost

Telephone

At certain times of the day our phone lines are very busy. Each line has voicemail set up. If no one answers during school hours, please leave a message. If your message is urgent, call back to be sure we received it.

Please communicate any change to your child's after-school plans before 2:00 p.m. We do not answer the phone during dismissal, because we are busy making sure every student's dismissal plan is organized.

The best times to call teachers are before and after school hours. Only emergency calls are put through to classrooms. Every staff member has a voicemail extension for messages that are not urgent.

Students may use the school telephone only for emergencies. Please do not call the school to speak with your child unless it is an emergency.

We adhere to Vermont's "Bell to Bell" cell phone ban. No student or staff may use cell phones during the school day.

Technology

Technology is part of teaching in every subject. Students get comfortable with computers and learn to see them as tools that make their work easier. We use Chromebooks, laptops, and iPads.

We have clear rules for how students use technology, and we send the rules home each year. We use filtering software on the internet so students can only access safe sites. We also use monitoring software on school issued devices to assure students are using the device appropriately.

Under the district's Acceptable Use Policy, all students may use the internet. A parent may block their child's access by sending a written request to the principal.

All students in grades 2–5 have a school Google account. They learn to use Google Docs to create shared documents and presentations. School Google accounts are to be used only for school purposes. Students may not use their school email account or Google Docs for private purposes.

A student who breaks the Acceptable Use Agreement loses computer and internet privileges. The administration decides for how long.

Personal Belongings

We discourage students from bringing personal belongings to school, unless it is for a specific assignment or show and tell. This includes toys, personal music players, sports equipment, and trading cards.

We are not responsible for loss or theft of personal items. See "Electronic Devices" for specific rules about cell phones and other devices.

Pets

We follow the Vermont Department of Health's recommendations about animals in school or on school grounds during school hours. No animals of any kind are allowed. Exceptions include service animals, law enforcement animals, fish in an aquarium, and specialty presentations by certified speakers, such as the Vermont Institute of Natural Science.

Fundraising

Students may take part in fundraising for school activities or charitable causes, in limited ways. The Principal must approve all fundraising activities. School staff coordinate and guide these projects.

Electronic Devices and Acceptable Use of the Internet

Rivendell knows that computers and the internet are now a key part of learning. They also help get children ready for the world.

The district gives students access to computers, the internet, and the school network to support learning. With that access comes a duty to use it well.

Using it well means using these tools in a way that does not harm the equipment, the student, or anyone else.

Students in grades 2–5 and their families sign an Acceptable Use Agreement. You can read the full Acceptable Use Policy in the RISD Board Policies under Instruction, #11.

Cell phones and personal devices

Students may not bring electronic devices to school, including cell phones. Cell phone use is not allowed during the school day.

If a student brings a cell phone, it must stay in their bag, turned off, all day. If a student does not follow this rule, we will put the cell phone in the office and return it at the end of the day. If it happens a second time, it will be returned to a parent or guardian during school hours.. The school is not responsible for lost or misplaced devices.

Caring for school property

Students must treat classroom materials, computers, library books, and other equipment with respect at all times. If a book or piece of equipment is not returned in good condition, a parent will need to pay to replace it. If a student keeps damaging school items, they may lose the right to take items home or to use them in class.

Academics and Social Emotional Learning

Home-School Compact

The Home-School Compact is an agreement between families and the school. It spells out what each of us promises to do.

It supports our mission: to give every student what they need to learn on their own, contribute to the community, and be a responsible citizen. When home and school work as a team, students do better.

Title I funding requires the compact. Title I is federal money given to schools to help students learn more. It comes with rules about involving families, and the compact is one of them.

Please share your thoughts, suggestions, questions, and ideas about this compact. We hope it helps families and teachers talk about how to support better student performance.

Students, for your success you are encouraged to:

- Come to school every day
- Do your best
- Follow school rules
- Come prepared
- Take responsibility for your behavior and actions

Families, for your child’s success you are encouraged to:

- Hold high expectations for your child’s behavior, schoolwork, and homework
- Keep open lines of communication between home and school
- Make sure your child gets plenty of sleep, eats a good breakfast, and dresses for the weather
- Take part in school activities, including family-teacher conferences

- Talk about school with your child regularly. For example: “Tell me about a book you read, or that someone read to you today.” “What special did you have — art, music, or PE — and what did you do?” “What did you do at recess?” “Tell me about a math problem you worked on.”
- Make sure your child attends school regularly
- Help your child take responsibility for their behavior and actions

School staff, for our students’ success we will:

- Provide a safe and effective place to learn
- Keep open lines of communication between home and school
- Comply with district and state policies and regulations
- Hold high expectations for student behavior and academic achievement
- Give every student opportunities to succeed
- Help students take responsibility for their behavior and actions
- Model the behavior described in this handbook
- gloves. Check each week that your child brought home everything they took to school.

Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

The Common Core State Standards (www.corestandards.org) provide the framework for what we teach. Our teachers use these standards to inform and follow the elementary curriculum.

Vermont schools follow a Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP). Planning is the key to getting better over time. The CIP makes sure our programs give students what they need to meet high standards. We use student results to set clear goals we can measure. The Board and Administration build the district’s action plan with the community.

Good teaching depends on knowing where each student is. Our teachers check student progress often and study the results together every two weeks.

They use what they learn to adjust their teaching, meet students where they are, and move them forward. Teachers at each grade level meet often to talk about what they teach and to agree on what good student work looks like.

Under ESSA, every district must have a system of annual testing. Our Grade 3-5 students take Vermont Comprehensive Assessment Program in Math and English Language Arts in the spring. Individual student results are available to families the families in the fall of the following year.

All students are screening in literacy and math three times a year to monitor growth and catch, and intervene in, any lagging skills.

Proficiency-Based Learning

In proficiency-based learning, students show that they have learned what they were expected to learn. Teaching, testing, grading, and reporting are all built around what a student is expected to know by the end of the school year.

It uses state standards to set academic expectations and to define what proficiency means in each subject and grade level.

The general goal is to make sure students gain the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in school, in careers, and in adult life. A student who does not meet the standard gets more teaching, more practice time, and more support until they do.

Conferences and Report Cards

Report cards come out three times a year, once each trimester. Family-teacher conferences happen twice a year. At conferences you can look at samples of your child’s work and how it compares to what students at that grade level are expected to do. Conferences are an excellent time to strengthen the home-school connection.

We use an online system to schedule conferences. You may ask for an update or a conference at any time. Contact your child’s teacher.

Behavior Expectations and Social Learning

Student Relationships

We work to build good friendships all through the elementary years. Children who enter kindergarten are still in early childhood. By the spring of fifth grade, most have entered puberty and are young teens.

We have clear guidelines about how student relationships develop. We encourage our students to treat one another in a kind and friendly manner. As we guide students in these matters, our emphasis is on teaching healthy peer relationships rather than punishing students.

Our vision is a community of caring, responsible, respectful learners. We use one consistent approach across our schools to support students' social and emotional growth.

We expect students to show:

- Self-respect
- Cooperation and respect for others
- Academic and personal responsibility
- Attention to health and safety
- Respect for property

We build character through the principles of Responsive Classroom. Each classroom sets its own rules and routines to create a safe, orderly place to learn.

Supporting good behavior

- Our goals for behavior and discipline are to:
- Create a calm, orderly, and safe place to learn
- Help children build self-control and self-discipline
- Teach children to be responsible, contributing members of a community
- Build respectful, kind interactions between adults and students, and among students

We use the Responsive Classroom approach to teach school behavior and expectations. The rules connect to students' and teachers' goals for social and academic learning. Students and teachers write the rules together during the first few weeks of school.

Every adult in the building helps students understand and practice important social skills. Students get chances to use these skills all day long.

Students do not always like the rules, and sometimes they choose not to follow them. Even so, our students generally see the rules in a positive light. They understand the rules keep them safe and help them reach their goals in school.

Our first job is to stop misbehavior quickly, so teaching and learning can continue. Often a small cue is enough — a gesture, or a teacher standing closer. If the behavior continues or gets worse, the staff member uses a logical consequence. Logical consequences are relevant, realistic, and respectful.

The Responsive Classroom

Our teachers train in the ideas and practice of Responsive Classroom. It helps children learn cooperation, responsibility, empathy, and self-discipline.

These goals sit behind our daily habits, like greeting each other every day and sharing at morning meeting.

Each class writes its own rules and consequences, and each child learns the language of friendship.

The result is a caring school for children. It is a safe place to take risks and make mistakes. It is a place to take responsibility for yourself and for others. And it is a community where fun, friendship, and learning happen together.

The foundation

- Knowledge of child development
- Explicit teaching of social skills as well as academic skills

- Building positive membership in a community

The guiding principles

- The social curriculum is as important as the academic curriculum.
- How children learn is as important as what they learn. Process and content go hand in hand.
- The greatest cognitive growth happens through social interaction.
- Children need a set of social skills to do well in school and with friends. We call them CARES: cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, and self-control.
- Knowing the children we teach matters as much as the content we teach. That means knowing each child, their culture, and where they are in their growth.
- Children learn best when we know their families and invite them in.
- How the adults at school work together is as important as any one person’s competence. Lasting change begins with the adult community.

The teaching practices

- Rules and Logical Consequences. A clear, steady approach to discipline that builds responsibility and self-control.
- Classroom Organization. Ways to arrange materials, furniture, and displays that build independence, promote caring, and help students learn.
- Guided Discovery. A format for introducing materials that encourages inquiry, heightens interest, and teaches care of the school environment.
- Academic Choice. An approach that gives children choices in their learning so they become invested, self-motivated learners.
- Family Communication. Ways to bring families in as true partners in their children’s learning.

The desired outcomes

- Establishes a positive classroom climate
- Increases learner investment and independence
- Enhances academic and social competence
- Decreases problem behavior

Educational Support System

Vermont law (Title 16) requires every public school to have an educational support system (ESS). It helps students who need extra support to do well in the regular classroom.

Educational Support Team (EST). The EST helps teachers support how students grow — socially, physically, mentally, and emotionally.

Teachers and a parent or guardian meet as a team. They look at what the student needs based on data (tests, absences, scores, behavior referrals) and build a plan to support the student and improve outcomes. A plan is run for 4-6 weeks, reassessed by the team to see how well it worked.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a civil rights law. Congress passed it to end discrimination based on disability. It covers any program or activity that gets federal money.

A student qualifies for protection under Section 504 when both of these are true:

- The student has a documented disability that substantially limits one or more major life activities.
- The student needs specific accommodations or services to access the educational program.

A documented disability does not automatically qualify a student for a 504 plan. The school team meets to review the relevant information and consider whether a 504 plan is warranted.

Student Support

Rivendell's policy is to find, locate, and evaluate every child with a disability who needs special education and related services. This covers children from birth to age 21 who live in the district.

A student who is out of school for 18 days, or who has missed 10% of school days during a school year will not be evaluated by Student Services for a specific learning disability. Attendance is essential to determine whether a student lacks skill and exposure to school or has a disability.

The Board and its employees will not discriminate on the basis of disability against anyone the law protects. That includes students, employees, parents, guardians, other community members, and people applying for a job or for admission.

This covers admission, access, treatment, and jobs. It applies to all school programs, activities, policies, and practices, as far as the law provides.

Do you think your child may have a disability and need extra support? Talk with your child’s teacher about your concerns.

If you have concerns about any violation of your child’s rights or protections under these policies, contact:

Director of Special Education
Rivendell Interstate School District
10 School Drive, PO Box 271
Orford, NH 03777
(603) 353-2170

Health Services, Injury, and Illness

Food allergies and food-related health issues

If your child has a food allergy or a food-related health issue, give the school nurse a statement from your child’s physician each year. If needed, the nurse will help develop a plan for any accommodations.

The school nurse

The school nurse handles everyday illnesses and accidents at school. The nurse also keeps health and shot records, and gives out medication. Our school nurse is shared across both elementary schools.

In a severe illness, an accident, or an emergency, we call families and local paramedics.

When to keep your child home

Keep your child home if they:

- Are sick before school
- Have a doctor’s order to stay home
- Are coughing a lot, or have a heavy runny nose
- Are too tired or unwell to take part
- Have had a fever in the last 24 hours (temperature above 100.1°F)
- Have vomited in the last 24 hours
- Have had diarrhea in the last 48 hours
- Have strep throat and have been on antibiotics less than 24 hours

If your child gets sick at school

A staff member will call you to come pick up your child. If we cannot reach you, we will call the emergency contact you listed and ask them to come. We expect the child to be picked up as soon as possible.

Being excused from a school activity

To be excused from a school activity, a student needs written authorization from a medical professional stating the condition and how long the student should not take part. A note from a parent is not enough.

First Aid

Minor injuries. The school nurse treats minor injuries. If the nurse is not available, the Health Designee gives first aid.

Serious injuries. In case of serious injury, staff consult the school nurse. If the nurse is not there, the Principal or their designee arranges medical treatment. That may include contacting a doctor or hospital and arranging transportation and treatment. We notify families as soon as possible and tell them what happened.

Accident reports. When an accident occurs, the supervising staff member completes an accident report. One copy stays on file, one goes to the Superintendent's office, and one goes to the family. Please sign the report and return it to the school nurse.

Medication at School

Prescription medication

Whenever possible, give prescribed medication at home. If a student must take prescribed medication during the school day, we can administer it, as long as these rules are followed:

- A parent, guardian, or responsible adult must bring the medication to school.
- The medication must be in the container it came in, with the label from the doctor or pharmacy.

Before we can give any medication, the nurse, school principal, or designee must receive written orders from a physician. The orders must list the student's name, the drug dosage, the reason for the medication, and the time it is to be given.

- Long-term medication orders must be renewed each year. Forms are available in the school office.

- You must give the school written permission asking the district to comply with the physician's order.

We return unused medication to the family for disposal.

On a school field trip, the teacher in charge carries the medication and gives it out.

Non-prescription medication

A parent, guardian, or responsible adult must bring the medication to school. Notify the school nurse or designee if non-prescription medication will be used during school hours or activities.

We give non-prescription medication only after the school has received a permission form signed by a parent or guardian. We keep the medication in a locked cabinet. Families who sign the permission form agree to the process above.

Health Screening

The school nurse screens students for vision and hearing, following guidelines set by the Vermont Board of Education Division of School Health Services.

If you have a concern, you may request additional screenings. If a screening raises a concern, we will notify you.

Immunizations

Vermont law (Title 18 V.S.A. Sections 1120–1127) requires students to be up to date on all immunizations under the Vermont School Entry Immunization Requirements. Students who are exempt for medical or religious reasons are excused. Exemption forms are available from the school nurse.

You must give the school an official immunization record when your child is admitted. A student who does not meet the vaccine requirements may be admitted provisionally, but only after the school nurse approves a compliance plan for the child. Failing to meet the requirements may result in exclusion from school.

Complete all exemption forms, sign them, and return them to the school. Students with an exemption may be excluded from school during a disease outbreak.

You can get the full list of required immunizations from the school or from the Vermont Department of Health website at healthvermont.gov. Questions can go to the school nurse or the Superintendent of Schools.

Student Safety

Keeping students safe is one of our most important jobs.

- Our doors are locked daily at 8 am.
- Everyone enters through the main doors.
- No child may be released to an adult other than those designated at registration without written permission
- Unfamiliar adults may be asked for identification.
- Our premises is monitored by cameras inside and outside the building
- We hold at least 10 drills each year to get ready for a fire or other emergency.
- We have a Harassment, Hazing and Bullying policy that we follow very closely

Families can help us reach our goal of student safety.

- Please: Notify us no later than 9:30 a.m. if your child will not be at school.
- Stop at the front desk to sign in and get a visitor’s badge if you will be on the playground, in the lunchroom, or visiting a classroom.
- Keep your home, work, and emergency numbers current. Notify the office immediately when a number changes.
- Follow the parking guidelines above and use caution when driving in our lots.
- Provide the office with written notice from the court if there are legal restrictions against a spouse or family member having contact with your child.

- Notify the office if someone other than a parent or guardian will pick up your child from school.

Students are not allowed in certain areas of the building without an adult. These include food preparation and storage areas, boiler rooms, custodial rooms, storage closets, and any other area not designed for student use.

Weapons and Harmful Items

District policy and federal law say students may not have weapons or harmful objects at school. This applies on the school bus, on school grounds, school activities, and in school buildings.

A teacher who thinks a child has a weapon must talk to the building principal right away. This includes toy weapons. It also includes harmful objects such as lighters and small pen knives.

Administrators notify the family and keep the object in the office until a responsible adult can pick it up.

Taping, Filming, and Photographing Students

Many times during the year, someone records or interviews students or staff for educational reasons. This may be a teacher, an administrator, a local news outlet, or another approved person. The record may be sound, video, or photos.

Educational purposes include keeping a record of what we teach. They also include telling families and neighbors about what happens at school.

The school or a media organization may keep these recordings and photos for a long time. They may review or replay them later.

Our schools strive to limit this documentation to educational purposes. The final decision regarding your child’s participation rests with you. You may sign the “opt out” form at any time during the school year.

Student Records and Family Rights (FERPA)

Federal law protects student education records. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, or FERPA (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99), protects the privacy of those records. It applies to every school that receives funding under a program of the U.S. Department of Education.

FERPA gives parents certain rights over their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student at age 18, or when the student attends a school beyond high school.

We keep an accurate cumulative record for every enrolled child. The cumulative record contains

- Identifying information (name, date of birth, address, legal parent or guardian, birth certificate)
- Court orders or other documents that establish educational rights, should biological parents be divorced
- Enrollment and attendance information
- Report cards with official and final grades
- Special education or 504 plans

Disciplinary records are not kept in a permanent student file.

Your rights under FERPA

You may inspect and review your child's education records. Schools do not have to provide copies unless it is impossible for you to come review them, for example because you live far away. Schools may charge a fee for copies.

You may ask the school to correct records you believe are inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to change the record, you have the right to a formal hearing. If the school still decides not to change it after the hearing, you may add a statement to the record giving your view.

When schools may share records without permission

Generally, schools need written permission from a parent or eligible student to release information from an education record. FERPA allows some exceptions (34 CFR § 99.31). Schools may share records without consent with:

- School officials with a legitimate educational interest
- Specified officials for evaluation purposes
- Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school
- Anyone named in a court order or a lawfully issued subpoena
- Appropriate officials during a health or safety emergency
- State and local authorities within a juvenile justice system, as state law allows

Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)

We strictly limit access to our students for surveys, solicitation, or advertising. In the rare case that the Superintendent allows a survey or solicitation, PPRA protects your rights. You have the right to:

- Be notified in advance of any survey, solicitation, or screening
- Inspect all surveys and related materials
- Understand how your child's privacy is protected
- Keep your child out of these activities

Mandatory Reporting of Suspected Abuse or Neglect

Public school and daycare staff are mandated reporters. So are doctors, nurses, and other social service workers. As educators, we are mandated reporters. It is our duty to help protect students from abuse and neglect.

Vermont's Act 60 of 2015 provides that any mandated reporter who reasonably suspects child abuse or neglect must report it within 24 hours of first receiving or observing the information (33 V.S.A. § 4913(c), following the provisions of Section 4914).

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The law requires us to report suspected abuse and neglect. In Vermont we report to the Department for Children and Families. In New Hampshire we report to the Division for Children, Youth and Families.

Mandated reporters are not allowed to make judgments about what is or is not abuse. By law, we must report any suspected instance to trained screeners, who make that determination.

See RISD Board Policy Code F8. You can read the joint memo from the Vermont Department of Health and the Agency of Education at bit.ly/VTmandatedreporting.

Notice of Non-Discrimination

The RISD Board will not discriminate against any person or group in its programs and activities. This covers every basis that federal or state law protects.

The Rivendell Interstate School District does not discriminate on any of these bases:

- Race or color
- Religion or creed
- Ancestry, national origin, or place of birth
- Sex or sexual orientation
- Disability
- Age
- Political affiliation
- Marital status

This applies to admission, access, treatment, and employment in all of our programs and activities.

Harassment, Bullying, and Hazing

Our schools work to give every student a safe place to learn. Everyone in our school community deserves respect.

The district applies and enforces this Harassment, Bullying and Hazing policy in a way that respects students' free expression rights under the First Amendment. The policy has two purposes:

- To stop conduct or communication aimed at a person's protected characteristics. This applies when it substantially disrupts learning, blocks access to educational resources or creates a hostile learning environment.

- To stop conduct meant to ridicule, humiliate, or intimidate students. The definitions below explain what that means.

What these words mean

Bullying is an act, or a set of acts, that one student or a group of students aims at another student. This includes acts done electronically. To count as bullying, all three of these must be true:

- The act is repeated over time.
- The act is meant to ridicule, humiliate, or intimidate the student.
- The act happens during the school day on school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored activity. It also counts before or after the school day on a school bus or at a school-sponsored activity. An act somewhere else can also count. It counts when it can be shown to clearly and substantially interfere with another student's right to access educational programs.

Harassment is conduct aimed at a student because of who they are, or who a family member is. The conduct can be verbal, written, visual, physical, or electronic.

It is based on, or motivated by, a student's or a family member's actual or perceived race, creed, color, national origin, marital status, disability, sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

To count as harassment, the conduct must do one of two things:

- Objectively and substantially undermine or interfere with a student's school performance or access to school resources

- Create an objectively intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment

Hazing is an act one student commits against another student. The student may act alone or with others. To count as hazing, all of these must be true:

- The act is intentional, knowing, or reckless.
- The act is connected to pledging, being initiated into, joining, holding office in, or keeping membership in an organization tied to the school.
- The act is meant to endanger the other student's mental or physical health. It also counts when a reasonable person would expect it to.

Who to tell

The district has designated these employees to receive complaints of bullying or harassment under this policy, under Vermont law (16 V.S.A. § 570a(a)(7) and § 570c(7)), and under federal anti-discrimination laws:

- Marla Ianello, Samuel Morey Principal
- Loretta Cruz, Westshire Principal

How to report

Any student who believes they have been hazed, harassed, or bullied should report it promptly. So should any student who witnesses or knows about conduct they reasonably believe might be hazing, harassment, or bullying. Report it to a designated employee or to any other school employee. The designated employee then follows the process in the policy's procedures.

The procedures for reporting and responding are very specific. They cover:

1. Employees are responsible for reporting complaints of hazing, harassment, or bullying to the designated employee (usually the principal)
2. The designated employee responds to the report by gathering any additional information and assessing whether if might be a policy violation AND assuring supports and safety steps are in place if needed.

3. Investigating complaints, if assessment indicates a possible policy violation
4. Responding to substantiated claims
5. Post-investigation reviews
6. Confidentiality and record keeping
7. Reporting to other agencies, if warranted
8. Sharing information, training, and reporting data, when and if warranted.

Our training responsibility

We understand and accept our responsibility to train staff each year in:

- How to file a complaint
- How designated employees conduct an investigation and follow proper procedure
- Programs and training that help students and staff spot, stop, report, and respond to hazing, harassment, and bullying

For full details, read the entire policy and its procedures: RISD Board Policy Code F30.

Please do not wait to communicate with the principal or teacher if you have concerns about your child's treatment by or of others. We want students to feel safe, whether or not there has been a policy violation.

Other

Sports at the Elementary Schools

Rivendell Rec runs all sports outside of class at our elementary schools. They offer soccer, basketball, baseball or softball. Email rivendellrec@gmail.com to learn more about your student taking part in sports.

Facility Information and Use

Town residents may use the school building and grounds. To arrange a date and time, contact the school office and fill out the forms agreeing to the guidelines set by the School Board.

Please contact the school at least five days before your event. Some uses require School Board approval.

Questions about using school facilities go to the district Facilities Use Coordinator. See RISD Policy H3.

Rivendell School District Policies

Our school district policies are provided by the Vermont School Board Association (VSBA). VSBA reviews state and federal laws, develops the policies that uphold the laws, and uses a legal team to review the policies before making them available to school boards. Some policies are required, and others are recommended. Policies are reviewed and approved by the Rivendell School Board.

You can read the full Rivendell Interstate School District Board Policies on the district website at www.rivendellschool.org.

Printed policy books are at the Superintendent’s office, the Academy office, and each school library.

District Handbooks

Rivendell publishes five handbooks each year. They cover rules and procedures including those based on approved policies

- Student and Family Handbook for Rivendell Elementary Schools (PreK–5)
- Student and Family Handbook for Rivendell Academy (grades 6–12)
- Co-Curricular Handbook for Advisors and Coaches
- Employee Handbook
- Substitute Handbook

District Directory

	Samuel Morey Elementary	Westshire Elementary
Principal	Marla Ianello	Loretta Cruz
Main office	802-333-9755	802-333-4668
Address	214 School Street Fairlee, VT 05045	744 Route 113 West Fairlee, VT 05083
Administrative Assistant	Miranda Piper	Maria Young
School Nurse	Kara Beloin	Kara Beloin
School Counselor	Ann O'Hearn	Karen Ward
Special Education, K–5	Kaylyn Kiess	Delilah Burns
Special Education, PreK	Amy Fahey	Amy Fahey
Physical Education	Kristina Claflin	Kristina Claflin
Art Education	Casey Ghio	Casey Ghio
Library Media Specialist	Courtney Wise	Courtney Wise
Music Education	Karen Chase	Karen Chase
Technology	Kristina DiSimone	Kristina DiSimone
Intervention	Miranda Lamberton	Barbara Griffen
Food Service	Sue Ricker	Devan Waters

Custodial	David Cook	Ryan Hatch
Classroom Teachers	Ashley Bean	Ethan Michaels
	Sarah Burkhart	Heidi Nichols
	Laura Cavazos	Angelica Pellerin
	Jennifer Colneri	Elizabeth Thames
	Danyelle DiGuardia	Jasmine Tremblay
	Gayle Justynski	Emily Waterman
	Kiersten Lippman	Kaity Weber
	Andrew Stevenson	
Special Education Paraeducator	Jean Daley	Denise Barker
	Iris Johnson	Nancy Cushman
	Matt Junger	Amy Kosakowski
	Jody Mace	Judy Ofchus
PK Paraeducator/ Special Ed Para	Lilia Tse	Patty Swahn
	Marrissa Garrow	
PK Paraeducator	Wendy Pushee	Sarah Wright
	Mandy Tillitson	Cole McKinnon

Rivendell Interstate School District Office

10 School Drive, PO Box 271, Orford, NH 03777 • (603) 353-2170

Role	Name
Superintendent	Randall Gawel
Director of Special Education	Lisa Burbach
Human Resources Manager	Brenda Gray
Director of Operations	Bruce Taylor
Business Administrator	Nancy Murphy
Director of Information Technology	Lee Holmes

Rivendell Interstate School District Board of Education

10 School Drive, PO Box 271, Orford, NH 03777 • (603) 353-2170

Representing	Name	Email
Orford	Charles Newton, Chair Mark Adamczyk Terry Martin	cnewton@rivendellschool.org madamczyk@rivendellschool.org tmartin@rivendellschool.org
Vershire	George Osgood Nate Thames	gosgood@rivendellschool.org nthames@rivendellschool.org

West Fairlee	Rebekah Cadwell Kayla Broyles (appointed)	rcadwell@rivendellschool.org kbroyles@rivendellschool.org
Fairlee	Clement Powers, Vice Chair Edward Bouquillon Moriah Ludwig	cpowers@rivendellschool.org eboquillion@rivendellschool.org mludwig@rivendellschool.org
At-Large	Lillian Gahagan	lgahagan@rivendellschool.org

School Board Meetings

The School Board usually meets on the second Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. There are sometimes exceptions. Special meetings are called as needed, with public notice.

Regular meetings rotate between the District Office in Orford, NH, Westshire Elementary School in West Fairlee, VT, and Zoom.