

# RIVENDELL INTERSTATE SCHOOL DISTRICT



## Elementary Schools Handbook for Parents and Students

### *Our Mission*

*The mission of the Rivendell Interstate School District is to foster the intellectual, social, and personal development of its students. Our goal is that they will become productive lifelong learners, positive contributors to their communities, and productive, healthy adults.*

Samuel Morey Elementary  
Steven Lindemann, SME Principal  
214 School Street  
Fairlee, VT 05045  
802-333-9755

Westshire Elementary  
Sara Rose, WES Principal  
744 Route 113  
West Fairlee, VT 05083  
802-333-4668

[www.rivendellschool.org](http://www.rivendellschool.org)

## RIVENDELL INTERSTATE SCHOOL DISTRICT

### **Design Principles**

The design principles guiding the development of the Rivendell program are:

- Engaging team-taught curriculum that results in well-educated students who are able to meet high academic standards, problem solve across disciplines and contexts, and take leadership in their communities;
- Significant and ongoing connections between school and community;
- Structures and practices that support teaching and learning;
- Clear standards of accountability and excellence for our schools, our staff, and our students.

### **Rivendell: An Overview**

The Rivendell Interstate School District (RISD) was formed in 1998 by the towns of Fairlee, West Fairlee, and Vershire, Vermont and Orford, New Hampshire as a self-contained Pre-Kindergarten-12 public school district. It assumed responsibility for the education of children in these towns in July 2000. Rivendell operates Westshire Elementary School (Pre-K-5) in West Fairlee, Vermont, and Samuel Morey Elementary School (Pre-K-5) in Fairlee, Vermont and Rivendell Academy in Orford, New Hampshire, which educates grades 6-12. The Rivendell Interstate District is a Vermont Supervisory Union using Vermont standards and assessments. The RISD District Office is located in Orford, New Hampshire and houses the superintendent, business office and special education services.

### **Rivendell Commitment to Non-Discrimination**

The Rivendell Interstate School District shall not discriminate in its education programs, activities, or employment practices on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, religion, or handicap under the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964, the Age Discrimination Act of 1967, Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Any person having inquiries concerning the school district's compliance with the regulations implementing these laws may contact the Superintendent of Schools.

### **School District Policy**

As required by State Statutes in Vermont and New Hampshire, the Rivendell Interstate School District Board has adopted many policies. Where appropriate, reference has been made to specific policy. School district policy books are located in the Superintendent's office, the Academy office, each school library and on the District website at [www.rivendellschool.org](http://www.rivendellschool.org).

### **School District Handbooks**

The Rivendell Interstate School District publishes five (5) handbooks each year. They cover a variety of rules and procedures which are of interest to students, staff, parents/guardians and community members. A list of those handbooks follows: Student/Parent Handbook for Rivendell Elementary Schools (Grades K-5); Student/Parent Handbook for Rivendell Academy (Grades 6-12); Co-Curricular Handbook for Advisors/Coaches; Employee Handbook and Substitute Handbook. As a result of the pandemic, there is also a family COVID handbook and guidelines and the RISD COVID handbook for staff.

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- IV. Rivendell Interstate School District Board Policies may be found here;  
[https://www.rivendellschool.org/images/stories/districtinfo/policies/RivendellPolicies\\_02242017.pdf](https://www.rivendellschool.org/images/stories/districtinfo/policies/RivendellPolicies_02242017.pdf)

## I. Directory Information – Samuel Morey Elementary School

Please see our website - <https://www.rivendellschool.org/schools/samuel-morey-elementary-school/sme-staff-directory> for a list of all staff

**Main Office – 802-333-9755**

<b>Principal</b> Steven Lindemann x. 3123	<b>Administrative Assistant</b> Jane Prescott x. 3135
<b>School Nurse</b> Jessica Gould, x. 3121	<b>Student Support Specialist</b> Tom Buzzell, x. 3139
<b>Guidance Counselor</b> Ann O’Hearn, x. 3133	<b>Special Education Teachers</b> Tom Dubois and Jill Buffum

**Rivendell Interstate School District  
(603)353-2170**

Barrett Williams, Superintendent	Lisa Burbach, Director of Special Education
Brenda Gray, Human Resources Manager	Jamie Bourn, Director of Operations
Nancy Murphy, Business Administrator	Matt Joska, Director of Information Technology

## II. Calendars and Schedules

Date	Event
<b>Thursday, August 25</b>	First Day of School
<b>Monday, September 5</b>	Labor Day, No School
<b>Thurs. &amp; Fri. , Sept. 22-23</b>	No School for students, In service for faculty and staff
<b>Monday, October 10</b>	Indigenous People’s Day, No School
<b>Friday, November 11</b>	Veterans Day, No School
<b>Monday, November 14</b>	No School for students, Fall Conferences
<b>November 23-25</b>	Thanksgiving Break, No School
<b>December 23-30</b>	Winter Holiday Break, No School
<b>Thursday, January 12</b>	No School, In service for faculty and staff
<b>Monday, January 16</b>	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Holiday, No School
<b>February 27-March 3</b>	Winter Break, No School
<b>Monday, March 20</b>	No School for students, Spring Conferences
<b>Tuesday, March 21</b>	No School for students, In service for faculty and staff
<b>April 24-28</b>	Spring Break, No School
<b>Monday, May 29</b>	Memorial Day, No School
<b>Wednesday, June 14</b>	Anticipated Last Day of School, Pending Emergency Closings. Report cards will be distributed at dismissal.

## **School Hours**

**School day for students:** 8:00 a.m. – 2:50 p.m., Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday  
8:00 a.m. – 1:50 p.m., Thursdays

**No students should arrive prior to 7:45 a.m.** The school building opens at 7:45 a.m.

## **Meetings**

**School Board meetings:** School Board meetings are usually held on the first Tuesday of every month beginning at 6:30 p.m. (there may be exceptions). Special meetings will be called as necessary with appropriate public notification. The location for regular Board Meetings alternates between the District Office (DO) in Orford, NH and Westshire Elementary School (WES) in West Fairlee, VT or via Zoom.

**Friends of Rivendell meetings:** Our meetings are held on the Second Thursday of each month at 7:00 pm during the school year and alternate meeting locations between the two schools. We would love for you to join us and to share your ideas and your school spirit.  
(friendsofrivendell.org)

## **III. Policies & Procedures**

### **Accountability**

In December of 2015, the "Every Student Succeeds" Act (ESSA) was signed into law. ESSA updated the 2002 "No Child Left Behind" Federal law. In response to ESSA, and to the 2014 adoption of Vermont's Education Quality Standards (EQS), the Agency of Education has drafted a Vermont State Plan describing how the requirements of EQS and ESSA will translate into state education practice. As a part of this work, the state was largely driven by the core tenets of EQS: personalization, proficiency, and a commitment to providing high quality, equitable learning opportunities for all of Vermont's students.

### **Arrival at School**

Supervision is provided at 7:45 a.m. All students are eligible to have breakfast before the school day begins. Classroom instruction starts at 8:00 a.m.

### **Attendance**

RISD Elementary Schools require that all school-age children enrolled at school attend in accordance with all applicable state laws and policies. The educational program is predicated upon the presence of the students and requires continuity of instruction and classroom participation in order for students to achieve standards and consistent educational progress. Attendance shall be required of all students enrolled during the days and hours that school is in session. (Please see RISD Board Policy 32 for more information)

This year we have SME Absence/Tardy notepads and all families will receive one. For students who need to be absent or late to school, please fill out the SME Absence/Tardy note and send it to school before the absence/tardiness whenever possible.

If your child will not be attending school due to illness or other reason, please call the main office to report your child absent by 9:30 a.m.

Westshire - 802-333-4668

Samuel Morey - 802-333-9755

**We will call home to check on students if we have not heard from parents by 10:00 a.m.** If we are unable to speak with you or receive an email from you, we will mark your child with an unexcused absence for the day.

School Hours:

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday: 8:00 a.m.-2:50 p.m.

Thursday: 8:00-1:50 p.m.

Students arriving after 8:00 a.m. will be marked tardy. If your child is arriving to school after 8:00 a.m., please send your child in with a note explaining the reason for being late or come into school with your child and check in with the administrative assistant.

A buzzer system has been installed and is used daily for the safety and security of our buildings. School entrance doors are locked at 8:00 a.m. and late students will need to ring the bell to enter the building. We unlock doors for dismissal. We ask all parents to wait outside the building for their students to be dismissed.

### **Attendance and Truancy Policy**

Excused absences, tardies or early dismissals: An excused absence, tardy or early dismissal requires written or verbal communication from a parent or guardian that the student is not in school for a valid cause including illness, medical appointment, observance of a religious holiday, family emergency, a death in the family, or other circumstances which cause reasonable concern to parent/guardian regarding the health or safety of the student.

Please schedule family vacations during school breaks. If parents choose to schedule a family vacation when school is in session, the absences will be considered **unexcused** unless there is prior approval from the Principal. Parents are responsible for gathering work for students, and students are responsible for making up all work that can be made up outside of school.

The schools' policy regarding excessive lateness or absence requires the principal to contact students' parents or guardians by phone or letter when deemed necessary to explain the concern of the pattern of missing considerable school time. For more information, please refer to the RISD Board Policy F29 Truancy: Orange County Policy and F32: Student Attendance.

Staying in school is the first step to a good education. Students cannot learn if they are not in school. Absences from school for any reason (illness, vacation, religious holidays, family deaths and others) affect a student's ability to learn and succeed. Truancy is inappropriate absence from school, which is defined as unexcused or insufficient excuse for absence.

It is the policy of RISD to set high expectations for consistent student attendance in accordance with Vermont law in order to facilitate and enhance student learning. VT state law requires school attendance for students between the ages of 6 and 16 so a student may complete a course of study that will facilitate the transition to the responsibilities of adulthood. RISD believes consistent attendance is a prerequisite for ensuring the academic, social and emotional growth of students.

Truancy is defined as an accumulation of three or more days of unexcused absences from school in any marking period by a student who is subject to compulsory school attendance. If a child is truant, the principal will follow the process defined in the "Truancy Memorandum of Understanding" and VT Title 16 Section 1127. See Board Policy 29.

### **Bicycles**

Parents make decisions about how a student is transported to and from school. Students are allowed to ride their bicycles to school. Bicycles are allowed on school grounds subject to the following guidelines:

- Bicycles will remain in the bike parking area throughout school hours.
- Students riding bicycles leave school grounds after all busses and cars have departed.
- Students are to abide by bicycle safety rules, including wearing a helmet.

### **Birthdays and other Celebrations**

We enjoy the opportunity to celebrate together as a school community. We recognize students' birthdays with an announcement. Please let us know if you do NOT want us to recognize your child's birthday. We limit "sweet treats" to be served for celebrations in order to help our students make smart nutritional choices and follow our school nutrition policy. We will keep flowers or balloons in the main office and give them to your child at the end of the day. We do not allow students to distribute party invitations at school. See Board Policy F21.

### **Community Involvement and Visitors**

Parents and visitors are welcomed and encouraged to visit RISD Elementary Schools. If you would like to visit school, please call the office and the administrative assistant will coordinate a time with the teacher for a visit. All visitors must enter through the front door, sign in at the office, and wear a visitor badge. See Board Policy Code H1. Please refer to the RISD COVID-19 Handbook or contact your child's principal to see if the guidelines for parent and/or community visitors has changed for the current school year.

### **Concerns and Questions**

Rivendell staff and administration work hard to keep good lines of communication with families. If you have questions or concerns, it is important to communicate directly with the school as promptly as possible. Call or email the classroom teacher to schedule a time to talk about your



question or concern. For any questions/concerns about classroom activities, please speak first with the appropriate teacher(s). For any questions/concerns about school-wide practice and activities, please speak with the Principal.

If your question/concern is not answered or resolved at the first level, then please proceed to the next level in the communication flow charts below. If the established order of communication has not been followed, you will be directed back to the appropriate person.

Classroom question/concern:

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

School-wide question/concern:

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

### **Concussions**

A student can sustain a head bump in school, while participating in normal school activities, or, in a sport.

If a head bump occurs at school, the school nurse assesses the student. If no symptoms are present, a letter of instruction of what to watch for along with a note from the nurse will be sent home with the student.

Parents/Guardians are notified as soon as possible (ASAP) by phone if a symptom of concussion is present.

If a concussion is incurred and symptoms are emergent, an ambulance may be called, and parents/guardians will be notified ASAP.

Sections 39-41 of Act 58 (S.100) of 2011, which is codified in 16 V.S.A. § 1431, direct the Vermont Agency of Education (AOE) to develop guidelines to assist schools in taking reasonable steps to prevent, and to minimize the effects of, school athletic team-related concussions. In the creation of these guidelines, the AOE has consulted with the Vermont Department of Health, and with the Vermont Principals' Association.

**200:49 Head Injury Policies for Student Sports.** – Education is the key to identification and appropriate management of all concussions. The school board of each school district shall develop guidelines and other pertinent information and forms for student sports to inform and educate coaches, student-athletes, and student-athletes' parents or guardians of the nature and risk of concussion and head injury including continuing to play after concussion or head injury. On an annual basis, a school district or school shall distribute a concussion and head injury information sheet to all student-athletes. The Brain Injury Association of New Hampshire is available to educate and assist the public with implementing and/or updating concussion management protocols.

The law requires that schools educate their coaches, their youth athletes, and the youth athletes' parents and guardians regarding the prevention and mitigation of concussion-related injuries. Note that this is now a K-12 requirement.

### **Conferences and Report Cards**

Students conduct formal conferences with their parents to display their work and discuss their learning goals and strategies for meeting those goals. Students collect samples of their work throughout the term to showcase their learning and progress.

Our academic report cards are issued twice a year. Parent-teacher conferences are held two times each year. At these conferences, parents can expect to view samples of student work and see how an individual child's work compares to a model, or "benchmark" that shows what is expected of students at that grade level. We use an online scheduling system for scheduling conferences, or parents may call the school (WES 802-333-4668) (SME 802-333-9755) to schedule a conference. Parents are welcome to request an update or conference any time by contacting their child's teacher.

### **Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment**

The Common Core State Standards guide curriculum ([www.corestandards.org](http://www.corestandards.org)) is the framework for education in the Rivendell Elementary Schools. These standards are interpreted at the local level through the Rivendell Elementary School curriculum.

Vermont schools are guided by a Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP). Action planning is the key to continuous school improvement. The CIP ensures that our educational programs provide students with the content, knowledge and skills to meet rigorous academic standards. Using student performance results as a guide, action planning helps educators focus on measurable goals for improvement. The Board and Administration work with the community to develop the Rivendell Interstate School District's Action Plan. A hard copy of the SME CIP can be obtained by request from the Principal's office.

We know that high quality instruction is based on ongoing, authentic assessment of individual student progress. Our teachers work together to use ongoing assessments and examine the data related to assessment results. Teachers use this information to differentiate instruction to meet students where they are and bring them to new levels of knowledge, skills, and understanding. Teachers at each grade level meet regularly to discuss curriculum and instruction and develop consistent standards and expectations for student work.

Under the 2015 Federal "Every Student Succeeds" Act, each school district must develop a system of standardized testing. Each year our students take various standardized tests that are a part of this accountability system. Please contact your child's Principal for a description of the standardized testing.

### **Discipline, Behavioral Expectations and Social Learning**

Our school vision is to create a community of caring, responsible, and respectful learners. We have worked to develop a consistent approach to supporting the social and emotional development of our students. Our expectations for student behavior are:

- Self-Respect
- Cooperate and Respect Others
- Academic and Personal Responsibility
- Health and Safety
- Respect of Property

In addition, we work to support the positive development of character through the principles of Responsive Classroom. Each classroom establishes classroom rules and routines to create a safe and orderly learning environment.

### Fostering Appropriate Behavior and Discipline

The primary goals of our approaches to behavior and discipline are the following:

- Establish a calm, orderly and safe environment for learning;
- Help children develop self-control and self-discipline;
- Teach children to be responsible contributing members of a democratic community;
- Promote respectful, kind and healthy teacher-student and student-student interactions.

The Rivendell Elementary Schools use the Responsive Classroom approach to teach appropriate school behavior and expectations. In classrooms and across our school we will use this approach to discipline. The rules are connected to students' and teachers' goals for social and academic learning. The rules are created collaboratively with students and teachers during the first few weeks of school.

All adults in the school community work with students to understand and practice the important social skills they have learned in their experiences. Students have opportunities to learn and practice these skills throughout the school day.

While there may be times when students don't like following the rules or choose not to follow them, students in our schools generally view rules in a positive light. Our students understand that the rules are there to keep them safe and help them achieve their goals in school.

The first priority is to stop the misbehavior as quickly as possible so the teacher can continue teaching and the children can continue learning. Often, simple cues such as a gesture or increased teacher proximity is all that is needed to stop the misbehavior and restore order. If the misbehavior continues or increases, the teacher or staff member will use logical consequences as an effective strategy for responding to the misbehavior. Logical consequences are relevant, realistic and respectful. There are 3 kinds of logical consequences:

- “You break it you fix it”
- Loss of privilege
- Time-out

For more information about our program, please refer to this link (<https://www.responsiveclassroom.org/information-parents-pdf-printable>)

### **Dismissal Procedures**

At the end of the school day, dismissal occurs in the following order; first bus riders (2:50 pm), then car riders (2:55 pm), and lastly bikers and walkers by 3:00 pm. If you are picking up your child from school, please wait outside the building. Teachers are busy trying to get all students ready for dismissal and to make sure they get home the right way.

### **Student Dress**

As part of our efforts to provide a safe, orderly learning environment, we ask our students and staff to conform to a reasonable code of attire. Clothing choices should be respectful of the school environment and should not create a distraction from teaching and learning.

The school supports parents in encouraging their children to wear boots, warm jackets, mittens/gloves, and hats during the cold months of the school year. Students are outside during recess times, Physical Education class, and other physical activities, unless the temperature or wind chill is below 0°F.

The Rivendell Elementary Schools dress code is;

- Hats may not be worn in the school building
- Students must wear sufficient clothing so that no bare skin or underwear is visible in the front or back of the torso from the upper chest to 4 inches below the buttocks. All tops must have straps.
- Clothing that promotes alcohol, drugs, racism, sex, tobacco and/or violence are not allowed.

Please consider weather, safety, the various settings (classroom, gym, playground) of student activities and age appropriateness when supervising student attire. The school reserves the right to request that a child make a different clothing choice in instances of inappropriate or inadequate attire. **Hats are not allowed to be worn inside the school building.** Shoes will be worn at all times for both health and safety reasons. While sandals and "flip flops" are permitted, they are not best for active playground use and increase the chance of injury. We recommend comfortable shoes/sneakers that allow your child to play actively during recess. These standards for appropriate dress apply to all students in our school.

If your child has lost clothing, ask him/her to check in the lost and found area.

Please label all belongings with your child’s name, including lunchboxes, sweatshirts, coats, snowpants, backpacks, boots, hats and mittens. Please send in an extra set of clothes for your child to keep at school. Students of all ages may need a change after a soggy recess or lunchtime spill. If they do not have a change of clothes, they may remain wet for the remainder of the day if we are unable to find spare, clean clothing that fits them.

Students should have both indoor and outdoor footwear. This allows them to get one pair wet/muddy at recess and still have a dry pair for inside. It is helpful if students have an extra pair of socks as well.

Students should wear shoes that are safe and do not limit physical activity indoors or outdoors. For PE, students need sneakers. They may keep sneakers at school.

### **Educational Support System**

Title 16 of the Vermont Statutes requires each public school to develop and maintain an educational support system (ESS) for students who require additional assistance in order to succeed in the general education environment.

Each school has an Education Support Team (EST) to assist classroom teachers in working together to support students' social, physical, intellectual, and emotional growth. Teams of teachers meet to explore student needs and develop plans if needed with specific strategies to support a student's. If you are concerned about your child's learning, please contact your child's teacher.

### **Electronic Devices and Student Acceptable Use of Printed and Electronic Resources and the Internet**

The Rivendell Interstate School District recognizes that Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) is integral to learning and educating today's children for success in the world community.

The Rivendell School district provides student access to computers, the Internet, and the internal network to support learning. With the privilege of access comes the expectation of responsible use. Responsible use includes using ICT resources in a way that does not harm equipment, the student, or others.

All students and their families in grades 2-5 are asked to complete an Acceptable Use Agreement. Rivendell's complete Acceptable Use Policy can be found in the Rivendell Interstate School District Board Policies under Instruction, #11.

Students may not bring any electronic devices to school, including cell phones. Cell phone use is prohibited during the school day. If a cell phone is brought to school, students will be required to keep their cell phones in their bags and turned off all day. Not following this rule will also result in the cell phone being taken away from the student. The school cannot be responsible for lost or misplaced devices.

Other electronic devices such as iPads and tablets are only allowed with permission from the classroom teacher and used for educational purposes. The school is not responsible for lost or damaged devices.

Classroom materials, computers, library books, and any other classroom equipment must be treated with respect at all times. If books or equipment are not returned in good condition, a

parent will need to pay to replace them. If school items are continually damaged, the student will not be able to take items home or be restricted from using them in class.

### **Emailing School Staff**

School staff check their email each day. During the school year, you should expect a response to your emails within 24-48 hours, excluding weekends and holidays. Teachers may acknowledge receipt of your email with information about when they will be able to provide resolution to your request, in the event that this will take more time. Because the day is busy, there may not be a chance during the day for teachers to check their email. If you need to reach a teacher during the day, please call school 802-333-9755 and leave a message for the teacher. Email can be used to schedule phone conferences or meetings.

Please avoid emailing teachers with conversations about your child or other children. Email often raises the odds of miscommunication and can raise significant issues relative to the FERPA. School staff cannot communicate anything that might be a student record via email, so we ask you to call or email to set up a time to talk rather than conduct a conversation electronically.

### **Emergency School Closure**

If Vermont weather makes it unsafe for our busses to travel, schools will be closed. This determination is made by the Superintendent in consultation with town road departments and the bus company. Our "School Messenger" emergency phone system will call the numbers you have provided in the event of a weather-related school closing, or you may tune to local media to learn of school closings.

**If school is ever dismissed early due to an emergency, your child must know what to do if you are not at home. Please inform the school of where your child is to go in case of an early closing. It is crucially important to keep us updated in any changes in your phone numbers as we have an automating dialing system that will alert you to school closings.**

**Please keep the office informed of any changes of address, work or home telephone numbers, or names of persons whom parents/guardians designated as emergency contacts** for just this type of situation. Children should also be informed where to go in the event of an unexpected school closing.

### **Enrollment and Transfers**

Vermont State law requires a child to attend school in the town where one and/or both parents/guardians reside. Parents/guardians are asked to provide proof of residency. Parents/guardians who do not reside in the Rivendell Interstate School District may request tuition-based enrollment.

Every effort will be made to make new students feel welcome. New students will not attend classes the day they register. New students generally begin attending class a few days after registering. This gives the school time to make appropriate class placement and to prepare materials for the new student. In the case of students with very special needs, the school may

require additional time to ensure a successful start. **Please note that State law requires proof of immunization before students are allowed to begin attending school.**

Parents/guardians should notify the office when moving their child to another school. Necessary paperwork must be completed so your child's records can be forwarded to his/her new school. Parents/guardians may not hand carry student records to the new school. Your timely notification will enable us to expedite the transfer of records so your child's transition to his/her new school will be as smooth as possible.

### **Facility Information and Use**

The school building and grounds may be used by town residents. Dates and times can be arranged by contacting the Facilities Use Coordinator or school office to fill out the appropriate forms agreeing to the guidelines set by the School Board.

Please contact the school at least five days prior to the event. Certain uses may require the permission of the School Board. Please contact the Facilities Use Coordinator, Jamie Bourn (jbourn@rivendellschool.org), with any questions concerning use of school facilities. Refer to RISD Policy H3.

### **Family Involvement and Communication**

In schools where families are actively involved, student achievement soars. There are many ways for families to be involved in our school. We regularly publish email updates to inform families about current events in our school. We understand how busy today's families are and try to compile all school communication into a weekly email. Please take a few minutes each day to review your child's home/school folder. You can also check the website (<https://www.rivendellschool.org/schools/samuel-morey-elementary-school>) for school and district information. We also have a Samuel Morey Facebook page which is updated regularly. Teachers also use electronic communication platforms, including Google Classroom, SeeSaw and some teachers maintain a classroom "blog."

We encourage families and community members to visit the school when possible. Families should speak with their child's teacher to explore ways to volunteer and participate. When visiting a classroom, please let the teacher know in advance and always check in with the Administrative Assistant before visiting the classroom and/or child. All visitors must sign in at the Main Office. Visitors must pick up a "visitor badge" at the office. Please display the badge while you are visiting.

### **Family Rights and Responsibilities Act of 1974 regarding Student Records**

FERPA: Student educational records are protected under Federal Law. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.

FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students."

A cumulative record will be accurately maintained for every child enrolled. No one but authorized school personnel, parents or legal guardians shall have access to the student's cumulative records without permission of a parent or guardian. Confidentiality of student records is covered under the **Family Rights & Privileges Act (FERPA) of 1974**. The law is here; <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>.

- Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.

Parents or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records that they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.

Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):

- School officials with legitimate educational interest;
- Other schools to which a student is transferring;
- Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
- Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
- Accrediting organizations;
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
- Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
- State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

Schools may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. Schools must notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA. For additional information, you may call 1-800-USA-LEARN (1-800-872-5327) (voice). Individuals who use TDD may call 1-800-437-0833. If you believe this Act has been violated, contact the Family Policy Compliance Office of the U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, S.W., Washington D.C. 20202.



Protection of Pupil Rights Act (PPRA): Access to our students for the purposes of surveys, solicitation, or advertising is strictly limited. In the rare instance where the Superintendent may allow surveys or solicitation, parent rights are protected under the PPRA. This includes the right to be notified in advance of any survey, solicitation or screening; the right to inspect all surveys and associated materials; understand the mechanism for protecting your child's privacy; and the right to exclude your child from such activities.

### **Field Trips**

Field trips are an important extension of the Samuel Morey Elementary School curriculum. Field trips reinforce concepts and provide students with an opportunity to expand their school experience beyond the walls of the school. In addition, field study allows our students the opportunity to demonstrate and practice self-control and responsible behavior while off school grounds.

We require signed parent permission for any activity occurring off school grounds. We ask parents to sign permission for each field trip as it arises.

Field trips are funded through fees. If the fee requested for a field trip presents your family with financial hardship, please talk to the teacher. Some scholarships are available thanks to the generosity of our Friends of Rivendell.

### **Friends of Rivendell**

Friends of Rivendell (FOR) are a group of Samuel Morey and Westshire parents who get together once a month to discuss ways to enhance the education and opportunities for children in the district. We are working with the school board to improve communication between the administration and the families in our schools. Our goal is to have a school board member present at each FOR meeting to review current topics that affect our schools and to be available to answer any questions. We also hold several annual events to raise funds for different supplemental programs.

Our meetings are held on the Second Thursday of each month at 7:00 pm during the school year and alternate meeting locations between the two schools. We would love for you to join us and to share your ideas and your school spirit. ([friendsofrivendell.org](http://friendsofrivendell.org))

### **Fundraising**

Students are permitted to participate in fundraising for school activities or charitable causes in limited capacities. All fundraising activities must be approved by the Principal. School staff will provide coordination and direction on these projects. The decision to participate in all fundraising events always rests with parents and students. Please see RISD Board Policy F13 for more information.

### **Guidance Services**

Our school guidance program incorporates the teaching of social and emotional skills students will need to be successful and productive members of our community. Our school counselor works closely with classroom teachers to provide lessons in age-appropriate areas such as goal

setting; respect; making decisions; healthy choices; and problem-solving. Additionally, our school guidance program, administrators, and teachers work together to prevent and address issues of bullying, teasing, and harassment.

### **Harassment, Bullying and Hazing**

Our school is committed to providing all of its students with a safe and supportive school environment in which all members of the school community are treated with respect. It is the intent of the District to apply and enforce this policy in a manner that is consistent with student rights to free expression under the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. The purpose of this policy is to (1) prohibit conduct or communication that is directed at a person's protected characteristics as defined below and that has the purpose or effect of substantially disrupting the educational learning process and/or access to educational resources or creates a hostile learning environment; (2) prohibit conduct intended to ridicule, humiliate or intimidate students in a manner as defined under this policy.

“Bullying” means any overt act or combination of acts, including an act conducted by electronic means, directed against a student by another student or group of students and which: a.) *Is repeated over time*; b.) Is intended to ridicule, humiliate, or intimidate the student; and c.) (i) occurs during the school day on school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored activity, or before or after the school day on a school bus or at a school sponsored activity; or (ii) does not occur during the school day on school property, on a school bus or at a school sponsored activity but can be shown to pose a clear and substantial interference with another student's right to access educational programs.

“Harassment” means an incident or incidents of verbal, written, visual, or physical conduct, including any incident conducted by electronic means, based on or motivated by a student's or a student's family member's actual or perceived race, creed, color, national origin, marital status disability, sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity, that has the purpose or effect of objectively and substantially undermining and detracting from or interfering with a student's educational performance or access to school resources or creating an objectively intimidating hostile, or offensive environment.

“Hazing” means any intentional, knowing or reckless act committed by a student, whether individually or in concert with others, against another student: In connection with pledging, being initiated into, affiliating with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in any organization which is affiliated with the educational institution; and which is intended to have the effect of, or should reasonably be expected to have the effect of, endangering the mental or physical health of the student.

Designated Employees: The following employees of RISD Elementary Schools have been designated by the District to receive complaints of bullying and/or harassment pursuant to this policy and 16 V.S.A. § 570a(a)(7) and 16 V.S.A. §570c(7) and under federal anti-discrimination laws;

Steven Lindemann: SME Principal  
Sara Rose: WES Principal

**Student Reporting:** Any student who believes that s/he has been hazed, harassed and/or bullied under this policy, or who witnesses or has knowledge of conduct that s/he reasonably believes might constitute hazing, harassment, and or/bullying, should promptly report the conduct to a designated employee or any other school employee. The designated employee will follow the process outlined in the procedures.

The procedures for reporting and responding to a complaint of bullying, harassment and hazing are very specific. They include the following broad areas with specific guidelines outlined in the procedures portion of the policy:

Reporting Complaints of Hazing, Harassment and/or Bullying  
Responding to Notice of Possible Policy Violation(s)  
Investigating Hazing, Harassment and/or Bullying Complaints  
Responding to Substantiated Claims  
Post Investigative Reviews  
Confidentiality and Record Keeping  
Reporting to Other Agencies  
Disseminating Information, Training, and Data Reporting

**We understand and accept our responsibility to provide yearly training in the following areas:**

How to file a complaint,

Training for designated employees on how to conduct an investigation and follow proper procedures,

Educational programs and training to help to students and staff prevent, recognize, report, and respond to hazing, harassment and bullying.

For specifics and details review the entire policy and procedures. RISD Board Policy CODE F30

### **Health Services, Injury, Illness**

**Food Allergies or Food Related Health Issues:** If a student has a food allergy or a food related health issue, parents need to provide the school nurse with a physician's statement annually. If needed, the school nurse will facilitate the development of a plan for any accommodations that may be needed.

The school nurse handles routine illnesses and accidents occurring at school, maintains health and immunization records, and administers medication. In the event of severe illness or accident or the event of an emergency, parents and local paramedics will be contacted.

#### **Illness:**

A child should not attend school for any of the following:

- Sick before school
- Doctor's orders to stay home
- Excessively coughing/runny nose, blowing nose
- Too lethargic to participate

- Run a fever in the last 24 hours. (Temperature above 100.1)
- Vomited within the last 24 hours
- Diarrhea in the last 48 hours
- Strep throat and has not been on antibiotics for at least 24 hours

**Illness at School:** In the event a student becomes ill at school, a staff member will notify the parent/guardian to come to school and pick-up the sick child. In the event the parent/guardian cannot be reached, the emergency contact person listed will be contacted and we will ask them to come to school to pick-up the ill child. The parent/guardian is expected to transport the student from school as soon as possible. If this is not possible, a staff member may transport the student to a location where an adult capable of caring for the student is present.

School Activities: To be excused from a school activity, a student must present written authorization from a medical professional stating the condition and length of inactivity. Parental permission is not sufficient.

### **First Aid**

Minor Injuries: The school nurse, if available, will treat all minor injuries. In the event the nurse is not available, The Health Designee should render first aid in case of minor injuries.

Serious Injuries: In case of serious injury, the school nurse should be consulted. In the absence of the school nurse, the principal, or principal designee will make arrangements for medical treatment. This may include contacting a doctor or hospital, arranging for transportation and treatment, if necessary. The parents shall be notified as soon as possible and apprised of the situation.

Accident Report: In the event an accident occurs, the supervising staff member shall complete an accident report. One copy will be kept on file, one copy will be forwarded to the Office of the Superintendent, and one copy will be sent to the parent/guardian. The parent/guardian will sign the report and return it to the school nurse.

Prescription Medication: Whenever possible, prescribed medication should be administered at the home. However, **any student who is required to take prescribed medication during the regular school day may have it administered to him or her. In so doing, parent/guardian and students must comply with the following regulations:**

A student's medication **MUST** be brought to school by a parent, guardian or responsible adult.

The medication shall be in the original container, labeled by the physician or pharmacy.

**Written orders from a physician detailing the name of the student, the drug dosage, reason for drug administration, and time medication is to be given must be received by the nurse, school principal or designee before the medication can be given. A "renewal" of long-term medication order is required each year. Forms are available in the school office.**

**Written permission from the parent/guardian of the student, requesting the school district comply with the physician's order must be provided to the school.**

Students responsible for self-administration of medication shall have their medication kept in a locked cabinet in the nurse's office.

Unused medication will be returned to the parent/guardian for disposal.

In the event of a school-sponsored field trip, medications will be transported and administered by the responsible teacher.

A student's medication **MUST** be brought to school by a parent, guardian or responsible adult. The school nurse or designee will be notified if non-prescription medication is to be used during school hours or activities.

Non-prescription medication will be administered only after a permission form has been signed by the parent/guardian and received by the school. Medication will be secured in a locked cabinet.

**Parents/guardians signing the permission form shall agree to the procedure outlined above.**

**Health Screening:** Following the guidelines as set by the Vermont Board of Education Division of School Health Services, the school nurse shall screen for vision and hearing. If you have a concern, you may request that additional screenings be provided. If there is a concern with any of the recommended screenings, the student's parent or guardian will be notified.

**Immunizations:** Title 18 VSA SECTIONS 1120-1127: Students are required to be up to date on all immunizations according to the Vermont School Entry Immunization Requirements except for those students who are exempt for medical or religious reasons. Exemption forms are available through the school nurse. Questions can be addressed to the school nurse or the superintendent of schools.

An official immunization record must be presented to the school upon admission. If a student does not meet the vaccine requirements they may be admitted provisionally only after the school nurse approves a compliance plan for the child. Failure to meet requirements may result in exclusion.

[A complete list of required immunizations is available from the school or the or the Vermont Health Department Website at: http://healthvermont.gov/hc/imm/schoolentry.aspx](http://healthvermont.gov/hc/imm/schoolentry.aspx)

All exemption forms need to be completed, signed and returned to the school. Students who claim an exemption may be excluded from school during the course of a disease outbreak.

Exemption forms are available through the school nurse. Questions can be addressed to the school nurse or the Superintendent of Schools.

**Head lice:** If your child has active, crawling head lice, they will be expected to be picked up and brought home. They will be able to return to school after treatment for lice and once there is no sign of crawling lice. Nits (eggs) must be removed by hand or treated with a prescription treatment from the doctor's office. Over the counter treatments and home remedies do not kill nits (eggs) therefore the cycle can continue after those methods.

The school nurse will work with affected families/students to monitor progress for admittance to school. The school nurse can also offer advice on how to treat items at home to eliminate lice.

We do not notify classmates or families when there is a case of head lice in school. We do not do mass head checks. We do notify the affected individual's family whenever necessary and we work with that family to identify and treat lice.

If you are concerned that your child may have headlice, you may do a check at home. If you feel that you need help identifying if your child has lice or not, contact the school nurse who will be happy to help.

### **Homework**

The Rivendell Elementary Schools believe that the goal of homework is to increase student learning. Meaningful homework assignments are flexible and based on students' needs. Homework will not be assigned over vacations. We have general homework guidelines that ask students to complete about 10 minutes of homework for each grade level. Thus, third grade students should expect 30 minutes of homework each day, fourth graders should expect about 40 minutes, while fifth grade students may be asked to complete up to 50 minutes most evenings. Homework is intended to reinforce skills already taught in the classroom. Your child should be able to understand any homework assignment. Our goal for homework is to increase learning, not to create family stress! If you have struggles getting homework completed, please talk to your child's teacher.

Loss of recess, staying after school or detention will not be used as a consequence for incomplete homework. We will work with students who have chronic difficulties with homework completion.

### **Home-School Communication**

All teachers will communicate with families about curriculum, events in the classroom, and field trips. For some students, the Educational Support Team (EST) may collaborate with parents to establish a plan for additional home/school communication to support a student's success in school. If a student's success depends on regular communication between the teacher and home more often than once a week, there will be a team meeting in which parents and teachers can assess the student's needs and determine the best level of communication that will support the student's success.

### **Home/School Compact**

The Samuel Morey Elementary Home and School Compact is an agreement between the home and school regarding the commitments to successful learning. This is necessary to fulfill our educational purpose and mission to provide each student with the knowledge and skills necessary to become an independent learner, a contributing member of the community, and a responsible citizen. Sharing responsibilities and becoming a Home-School Team can make the winning difference in student success.

The Samuel Morey Elementary Home and School Compact is a requirement of Title 1 funding (federal funds awarded to eligible schools to enhance academic achievement). The Title 1 program has strengthened involvement policies, which include a parent and guardian/school compact involving parents and guardians as partners in student success.

Please share your thoughts, suggestions, questions, and/or ideas regarding this compact. It is hoped that this compact will be helpful for discussions between teachers and parents/guardians about how better student performance can be encouraged and achieved.

**Rivendell Elementary Students:**

For your success you are encouraged to:

- Attend school daily
- Strive to do your best
- Follow school rules
- Be prepared
- Accept responsibility for your behaviors and actions

**Rivendell Elementary Families:**

For your child's success you are encouraged to:

- Promote high expectations for your child's behavior, school achievement, and homework
- Establish and maintain open lines of communication between home and school
- Ensure that your child gets plenty of sleep, eats a good breakfast, and is dressed appropriately
- Participate in school activities including parent/teacher conferences
- Regularly discuss school with your child (e.g., "Tell me about a book that you read or was ready to you at school today." "What special (Art, Music, Physical Education) did you have today and what did you do? "What did you do at recess?" "Tell me about a math problem you worked on")
- See that your child attends school regularly
- Assist your child in being responsible for his/her behavior and actions

**Rivendell Elementary Personnel:**

For our students' success we will:

- Provide a safe and effective learning environment
- Establish and maintain lines of communication between home and school
- Comply with district and state policies and regulations
- Promote high expectations for student behavior and academic achievement
- Provide opportunities for every student to be successful
- Promote student's responsibility for behavior and actions
- Model the behaviors set forth in the student handbook

**Library**

The Rivendell Elementary School libraries have many books available for student and faculty use. Library hours will be determined and posted at the beginning of the year. When the library is not being used for instruction during these posted hours, with teacher permission, students are welcome to use the library for reading, research, or studying.

Each student has a library number for checking out books. Most books may be borrowed for two weeks and may be renewed by bringing the items to the library.

**Lost and Found**

Lost clothing, lunch boxes, etc. will be kept in the cubbies outside the gymnasium at SME. Small items, such as jewelry, glasses, etc., are kept in the office. At the December break and at

the end of the school year, any remaining lost and found items will be donated to charity. In order to help us locate the proper owner, **please label all clothing, backpacks, lunch bags, shoes, boots, hats, gloves, etc.** and check weekly to see that your child has returned home with all the items he/she brought to school that week.

### **Mandatory Reporting of Suspected Abuse or Neglect**

As educators and mandated reporters, it is our duty to help protect students from abuse and neglect. Act 60 of 2015 provides that any mandated reporter who reasonably suspects abuse or neglect of a child shall report in accordance with the provisions of Section 4914 of this Title within 24 hours of the time information regarding the suspected abuse or neglect was first received or observed. 33 V.S.A. § 4913(c). Review the joint memo from VDH and AOE; regarding Mandated Reporting (<http://bit.ly/VTmandatedreporting>).

Along with other social services providers, such as doctors and nurses, public school and day care employees, who are considered mandated reporters, are required by law to report suspected instances of abuse and neglect to the VT Department of Children and Families or the NH Department of Children, Youth and Families. Mandated reporters are not allowed to make judgments about what is or is not abuse. By law, they must report any suspected instances to trained screeners who will make that determination. See RISD Board Policy CODE F8.

### **Meals and Snacks**

Breakfast and lunch are available for all students, as well as milk and juice. Children must arrive at school on time if they wish to eat breakfast at school. A morning snack period is scheduled each day. Please send a nutritious snack (and lunch if your child is not participating in the lunch program) from home and reinforce with your child the value of eating nutritious foods. Glass bottles or containers, soda, gum, and candy are not to be included in a child's snack or lunch.

We ask that food from home be packaged in reusable containers when possible. This may include lunch boxes, cloth bags and small reusable containers. By helping to educate our children and by practicing that which we learn in our daily lives, we can begin to have a positive impact on protecting our environment.

#### Universal School Meals in School Year 2022-2023

In School Year 2022-2023, all students will receive free breakfast and lunch at school. The State of Vermont has provided money to do this for one year through the Universal School Meals Act.

Schools still need your help to keep providing free meals to all students in future years. If many families fill out and return the meal application, schools will get more money from the federal government for free school meals now and in the future. They will also get more money for other school programs. Filling out the meal application also helps your community provide free summer meals to all kids, and free meals to kids in childcare.

At the beginning of each school year all students receive a school information packet that includes the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines for meals and an application for free or reduced meals. We encourage all parents to complete the application and return it to school.



Also, should your income change during the year, you may become eligible for free or reduced priced meals. Please contact the school administrative assistant for a new form to complete. *New forms must be completed each year.*

Please note; gum is not allowed at school unless it is a part of a child's Section 504 or Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

### **Notice of Non-Discrimination**

The RISD Board will not unlawfully discriminate in its programs and activities against any person or group on any basis prohibited by federal or state law.

The Rivendell Interstate School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), ancestry, national origin, place of birth, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age, political affiliation, or marital status in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs and activities.

### **Parking**

Our parking lots are busy places and we ask that you pay close attention and extend courtesy at all times. Please show respect for the spots reserved for those with handicapping conditions. Those parking in violation of the handicapped designation are subject to law enforcement.

### **Personal Belongings**

We discourage students from bringing personal belongings to school unless for a specific assignment or "show and tell." This includes toys, personal music players, cell phones, or trading cards. We are not responsible for loss or theft of personal items. Please see "electronic devices" for specific guidelines regarding cell phones and other electronic devices.

### **Pets**

Rivendell Elementary Schools follows the recommendations of the Vermont Department of Health regarding animals in school or on school grounds during school hours. NO ANIMALS of any kind are allowed. Students who wish to share the excitement of a new family pet may bring in pictures. Exceptions include service or law enforcement animals; fish in an aquarium; or specialty presentations by certified speakers, such as the Vermont Institute of Natural Science. Please see RISD Board Policy CODE G2.

### **Physical Education**

Physical Education is an important part of the educational process. Participation, team building, and lifetime fitness skills are emphasized in the program. Students are required to wear sneakers for physical education class.

## Physical Restraint and Seclusion

In very rare instances, student behavior may make them unsafe to themselves and/or others. While Rivendell Elementary Schools are considered "hands off", there may be times where restraint or seclusion is necessary, but only as a last resort. Were this to happen, any restraint would be done by trained members of the school Crisis Team, pursuant to State Board Rule 4500. Parents/guardians would be notified of the incident, and the school would follow Rule 4500 Restraint and Seclusion Procedure:

(<https://education.vermont.gov/sites/aoe/files/documents/edu-guidelines-regarding-seclusion-in-vermont-schools-and-faqs.pdf>). Frequently asked questions about Rule 4500.(<https://education.vermont.gov/sites/aoe/files/documents/edu-rule-4500-questions-answers-rebranded.pdf>) are available online.

## Playground

During school hours, the use of the facilities is restricted to Rivendell Elementary students and staff. In order to provide a safe and enjoyable experience, when students are outside for recess, the following rules are in place:

- 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. RISD Elementary Schools assumes no responsibility for injury during non-school use of facilities. Adult supervision is recommended at all times.

## Proficiency Based Learning

**Proficiency Based Learning** refers to instruction, assessment, grading, and academic reporting that are based on students demonstrating that they have learned the knowledge and skills they are expected to learn.

- Proficiency-based learning uses state standards to determine academic expectations and define “proficiency” in subject areas, and grade levels.
- The general **goal** of proficiency-based learning is to ensure that students are acquiring the knowledge and skills that are deemed to be essential to success in school, careers, and adult life.
- If a student fails to meet the expected standards, the student receives additional instruction, practice time, and/or academic support to achieve proficiency or meet the expected standards.

## **Recycling and Composting**

We use single stream recycling, which means we do not need to sort recyclables. We compost food waste in accordance with Vermont law. Students will be taught about what is recyclable and what is compost at the beginning of the school year, and are encouraged to sort their waste in the cafe and classrooms.

## **The Responsive Classroom**

Teachers train in the philosophy and the practice of the Responsive Classroom to help children learn cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, and self-discipline. These goals are behind the practices of greeting each other every day and sharing at morning meeting. Each class establishes its own rules and consequences while each child learns the language of friendship. The results are a nurturing and empowering “home” for children—a safe place to take risks and to make mistakes, a place to take responsibility for yourself and others, a community where fun, fellowship, and learning take place. \

The foundation of the Responsive Classroom is:

- Knowledge of child development
- Explicit teaching of social as well as academic skills
- Facilitation of positive community membership

The guiding principles of the Responsive Classroom are:

- 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 occurs through social interaction.
- There is a set of social skills children need in order to be successful academically and socially: cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, and self-control (CARES).
- Knowing the children we teach—individually, culturally, and developmentally is as important as the content we teach.
- Knowing the families of the children we teach and inviting their participation is essential to children’s education.
- How the adults at school work together is as important an individual competence: lasting change begins with the adult community.

Teaching practices of the Responsive Classroom:

- **Rules and Logical Consequences:** A clear and consistent approach to discipline that fosters responsibility and self-control.
- **Classroom Organization:** Strategies for arranging materials, furniture, and displays encourage independence, promote caring, and maximize learning.
- **Guided Discovery:** A format for introducing materials that encourages inquiry, heightens interest, and teaches care of the school environment.

- Academic Choice: An approach to giving children choices in their learning that help them become invested, self-motivated learners.
- Family Communication Strategies: Ideas for involving families as true partners in their children's education.

Desired Outcomes of the Responsive Classroom are:

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

### **School Safety Drills**

Emergency drills incorporating the Emergency Protocols are required by state statute to be held monthly. The type and time of the drills are held at the direction of the principal.

### **School Security**

Rivendell Elementary Schools take student and staff safety very seriously. In an attempt to provide a safe learning environment for everyone, the following protocols are in place:

- Exterior doors are locked while school is in session.
- Doors will not be blocked open at any time.
- Visitors must enter through the front doors and check in at the office.
- Visitors must display a visitor badge.
- School safety drills, including lockdowns, are practiced periodically.
- Students should not arrive prior to 7:45 a.m.
- Students must leave the school grounds at 3:00 p.m. unless they are involved in a school sponsored activity, extracurricular activity or an extra help session.

### **Section 504**

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a civil rights statute that was enacted to eliminate discrimination on the basis of disabilities in any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. For a student to qualify for protection under Section 504, he/she must have a documented disability that substantially limits one or more "major life activities" and needs specific accommodations and/or services that will allow the student access to the educational program. A documented disability does not automatically qualify a student for a 504 Plan. The school team will meet to review relevant information and consider whether a 504 plan is warranted. The Samuel Morey School explanation of Section 504 parental rights includes what parents and guardians need to know about their rights and grievance procedure related to Section 504 protections.

### **Sports at the Elementary School**

Rivendell Rec coordinates all extra-curricular sports at the elementary schools. The sports offered include soccer, basketball and baseball/softball. Please email [rivendellrec@gmail.com](mailto:rivendellrec@gmail.com) to learn more about your student and their participation in sports.

### **Student Relationships**

We work to build positive peer relationships throughout the important elementary school years at Rivendell Elementary Schools. When our students enter Kindergarten, they are still in the developmental stage of early childhood. When they leave us in the spring of fifth grade, most have entered puberty and are young adolescents. We have strict guidelines about how student relationships develop. Our students are encouraged to treat one another in a kind and friendly manner. Although we are aware that many of our students are ready to explore romantic relationships, many others are not. We do not support any discussions of "dating" or "going out" during school hours. Further, we do not support the establishment of exclusive "clubs," as this leads to negative peer interactions, possible hazing, hurt feelings, and disruptions to the educational program. As we guide students in these matters, our emphasis will be on teaching healthy peer relationships rather than punishing students. In some instances, the District's harassment or hazing policies may apply.

### **Student Safety**

One of our most important responsibilities is to ensure the safety of our students. We conduct at least 10 drills per school year to prepare for the event of a fire or other emergency. Parents can help us with our goal of student safety. Please be sure to:

- Notify us no later than 9:30 a.m. if your child is not going to be in school.
- Stop at the front desk to sign in and get a visitor's badge if you are going to be on the playground, in the lunchroom, or visiting the classroom.
- Keep your home, work, and emergency numbers current. Notify the office immediately of any changes in these numbers.
- Follow the guidelines above for parking and use caution when driving in our parking 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 be picking up your child from school.

Students are not allowed to access certain areas within the building unless accompanied by an adult: food preparation and storage areas, boiler rooms, custodial rooms, storage closets, or any other area not specifically designed for student use.

## Student Support

It is the policy of the Rivendell Interstate School District to ensure that all children with disabilities, aged birth - 21, residing in the District, and who are in need of special education and related services are identified, located and evaluated. Further, it is the intent of the Rivendell Interstate School District that the Board and its employees will not discriminate against any intended beneficiaries of statutory protection (including, but not limited to, students, employees, parents, guardians, other members of the community or applicants for employment or admission) on the basis of disability in admission and access to, or treatment and employment in, any of the school's programs and activities, policies, procedures and practices to the extent provided by law. If you believe your child may have a disability requiring a need for accommodations or support, contact your child's teacher to discuss your concerns. If you have concerns about any violation of your child's rights or protections under these policies, contact:

Lisa Burbach, Director of Special Education  
10 School Drive, PO Box 271  
Orford, NH 03777  
lburbach@rivendellschool.org  
(603)353-2170

## Taping/Filming/Photographing of Students

There are many times during the school year when teachers, administrators, local media organizations, or other authorized individuals record or interview students or staff for educational purposes. This recording may be audio, video, or photographs. Educational purposes include documenting instructional programs and informing parents/guardians and other members of the community of school-related activities. Tapes and photographs may be retained indefinitely by the school or media organizations for future review or replay. Samuel Morey Elementary School strives to limit documentation to educational purposes. However, the final decision regarding participation rests with parents/guardians.

## Telephone

At certain times of the day our phone lines are very busy. We have an answering service on each line; if you do not receive an answer during school hours, please leave a message. If your message is urgent, you should call back to be sure we did receive the message. Please make sure that you have communicated any changes to your students after school plans before 2:30 pm. **We do not answer the phone during dismissal (2:30 p.m. to 2:50 p.m.) as we are busy ensuring that we have all students' dismissal plans organized.**

Calls to teachers are best made before and after school hours. Only emergency phone calls will be put through to the classroom. Each staff member also has a voice mail extension where you may leave messages that are not of an urgent nature.

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

Students are not permitted to receive or send messages on a cell phone during the school day. Any cell phones brought to school must be left in a backpack and be turned off during the school day. The school is not responsible for lost or damaged cell phones. If a student attempts to use his/her cell phone during the school day, an administrator will keep the phone in the main office until a parent or guardian can pick it up.

### **Technology**

Technology is integrated into instructional areas. Students become familiar with computers and learn to view them as tools that can make their lives easier and more productive. We use Chromebooks, laptops, or iPads. We have developed specific guidelines for student use of technology, which are sent home annually. We employ filtering software when accessing the Internet. Under the Rivendell Interstate School District Acceptable Use Policy, all students are allowed to use the Internet unless a parent restricts access by sending a request in writing to the principal. All students in grades 2 - 5 have a school Google account, and will learn to use Google docs to create shared documents and presentations. The school Google account are to be used ONLY for school purposes. Students may NOT use their school email account or access Google docs for private purposes. Students who violate the Acceptable Use Agreement will lose computer and Internet privileges for a period determined by the administration.

### **Transportation**

Bus transportation to and from school is available for all students. If a student is in Grade 3 or lower, an adult must be at the bus stop in the afternoon, otherwise, the bus driver will not allow the student to exit the bus, and the student will be returned to school for parent pick-up. Buses are also used for field trips. Each student is required to sign the School Bus Rider Agreement form and abide by the rules for riding school buses. Failure to abide by the rules will result in loss of the privilege to ride the bus. See RISD Board Policy Code F12.

### **SCHOOL BUS RIDER RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. The use of profanity, vulgar, obscene, or abusive language will not be tolerated.
2. Fighting, shoving, or bullying others on the bus, or while waiting for the bus is prohibited. Please report any incidents immediately.
3. Throwing anything on the bus is prohibited.
4. Talking should be carried on in conversational tones.
5. Smoking, or other use of tobacco, is prohibited on the bus at all times and is a violation of policy.
6. Students must obey immediately any request or suggestion from the bus driver pertaining to safe pupil transportation.
7. Defacement or destruction to the bus is prohibited. Any vandalism of the bus or bus seats will be billed to the person responsible for the damage.
8. Aisles are to be left free of books, lunch boxes, coats, and other objects at all times. Students should sit in their seats, and not put their arms, legs, etc., into the aisles, except when inadequate space makes this impossible.
9. Students must remain seated until their stop; arms and heads, etc. must be inside the bus at all times.

10. Students must be ready to board the bus at least five minutes prior to its scheduled stop. Drivers are not to wait for pupils who are late. Pupils should not crowd onto the street or road when waiting for the bus; instead, they should line up and enter the bus in an orderly fashion when it arrives.
11. Students must board the bus in an orderly and courteous manner, and go immediately to their assigned seat.
12. Students loading and departing from the bus will do so from the front door of the bus. If the road must be crossed, students will cross at least 10 feet in FRONT of the bus, and use caution, even though the flashing lights are on.
13. All school rules are in effect on the school bus for transportation to and from school or any school event. Riders and drivers will treat others with courtesy and respect. The bus is an extension of the classroom.
14. Any student wishing to get off at a spot other than their designated stop, must have a signed note from a parent/guardian, and “sign-off” from the office. The bus will only stop at designated stops.
15. Drivers have the authority to assign students to specific seats.
16. No eating or drinking on the bus.

## SCHOOL BUS DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES

Discipline will be handled according to the following procedures:

- a. For unacceptable behavior in the judgment of the driver, the driver will complete a Bus Conduct Report form, which notifies the site administrator of the problem.
- b. The site administrator will speak to the student(s) and, if appropriate, speak to or send a letter home to the parents. The site administrator will advise the bus contractor of action taken on each conduct report submitted by drivers.
- c. A serious offense, or behavior which creates a safety hazard, may result in a suspension of up to two weeks, at the discretion of the site administrator. The driver may insist on a suspension for a student whose behavior creates a safety hazard.
- d. Unusually serious offenses may result in permanent suspension from the bus. If this action becomes necessary, the site administrator will notify the parents and the Superintendent in writing. The actual suspension will be made by the Superintendent, with the right of appeal to the School Board.
- e. If a student is suspended from the bus as a consequence of a bus conduct report, or of reported poor behavior on the bus, the punishment will take effect the following morning. However, if at the discretion of the school administration the safety of other children is in question, the student may be suspended from the bus immediately. In that case, an attempt will be made to contact parents to make other transportation arrangements for the suspended student. Thereafter, it is the responsibility of the parents to arrange for their student’s transportation to and from school.

**School Bus Notification:** To promote the wellbeing and safety of students, audio and/or visual recordings of the interior of the bus may occur.



Changes in transportation need to be in writing. Students wishing to be left off at a stop different from their regular stop, or take a different bus, must have written permission from a parent or guardian. Please send a written note with your child/ren for him or her to give to the teacher in the morning in order that the proper arrangements can be made. The slip will be kept on file for verification. Please call the school only in cases of emergency.

**School Sponsored Trips:** Classroom teachers will request written parental permission for students to leave school grounds on class trips, field trips, museum classes, and so on.

### **Volunteers**

The Rivendell Interstate School District Board recognizes the valuable contributions made to the school by volunteers. It further recognizes that appropriate supervision of volunteers will enhance their contributions as well as fulfill the responsibility that the Rivendell District has for the education and safety of its students.

The building principal is authorized to solicit and approve volunteers to help in school. Please see RISD Board Policy CODE D7 for more information.

We enjoy having parents and community members volunteer in our school.

An adult must be on the Approved Volunteer List in order to:

- Chaperone a field trip
- Ride the school bus on a school-sponsored trip
- Work with students (e.g. read with children)

An adult does not need to be on the Approved Volunteer List in order to:

- Eat lunch with your child
- Make a one-time presentation to a classroom or large group of students
- Attend a class party

All volunteers/visitors are expected to sign in and out of the building and to wear a visitor badge.

### **Weapons or Harmful Items**

According to School District policy and Federal law, students are not allowed to have weapons or harmful objects in their possession on the school bus, on the school grounds, at school activities or in school facilities. Any teacher suspecting a child has or may be in possession of a weapon (even toy weapons) or harmful objects (lighters, small pen knives) will consult the building principal immediately. Administrators will notify parents and keep the object in the office until a responsible adult can pick it up.