

LOWER SCHOOL

Parent-Student Handbook



2021-2022



LOWER SCHOOL PARENT - STUDENT HANDBOOK

2021-2022

**Lower School
(914) 925-4572 (Office)**

www.ryecountryday.org

The Rye Country Day School ("RCDS" or the "School") Parent-Student Handbook (the "Handbook") is published and distributed to members of the RCDS community for the purpose of providing information on aspects of student and campus life to help students gain as much as possible from their experience at the School. Students, parents, faculty, administration, and staff should all read and be familiar with the contents of the Handbook so that each member of the community knows and understands our community expectations. While policies in this Handbook will generally apply, the School may take actions that it determines to be in the best interests of the School, its employees, and its students. This Handbook does not limit the authority of the School to alter, interpret, and implement its rules, policies, and procedures before, during, and after the school year. This Handbook is for informational purposes only. It is not intended to create, nor does it create, a contract or part of a contract in any way, including, but not limited to, between RCDS and any parent, guardian, or student affiliated with or attending the School. RCDS may add, revise, and/or delete School policies before, during, and after the school year.

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**RYE COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL
2021-2022 GOVERNING STRUCTURE**

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Ms. Patty Perez
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Mr Jinhua Yan

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Scott Weiss '96 (2017) 2021-2023

Parents Association President

Victoria Maggard (2021) 2021-2023

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Frederick A. Klingenstein* (1968-1981) (TE 1990)
Carmen Ribera-Thain '75 (1998-2004) (TE 2004)
Edward B. Dunn (1979-1993) (TE 2014)
Michael C. Murr (1989-1997) (TE 2014)
Edgar Wachenheim III (1983-1993) (TE 2014)
*Deceased

RCDS PARENTS ASSOCIATION OFFICERS

Victoria Maggard, President
Rebecca Brown, President-Elect
Susan Cohen, Vice President
Vera Merrill, Treasurer
Kelly Mulderry, Secretary

LIAISON DIVISION COORDINATORS

Lynelle Chang, Lower School
Ellen-Jane Moss, Middle School
Allyson Kim, Upper School

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

Head of School

Scott A. Nelson, M.S., 1993

Assistant Head of School for Academic Programs

Meredith deChabert, Ph.D., 2005

Assistant Head of School for Finance and Operations

Pamela Goldman MacAffer '82, M.B.A., 2021

Interim Upper School Principal

Meredith deChabert, Ph.D., 2005

Middle School Principal

Ryan Song, M.S., 2020

Lower School Principal

Stacey Sotirhos, Ph.D., 2021

Director of Academic Technology

Katie O'Shaughnessey, M.A., 2016

Interim Director of Admissions and Enrollment Management

Courtney Doucette, M.A., 2012

Director of Advancement

Lynette Gioffre, M.A., 2014

Director of Athletics and Physical Education

Wendy Jo Haft, M.S., 1998

Director of Counseling Support Services

Kamauru Johnson, Ph.D., 2021

Director of College Counseling

Jeffrey Bates, M.A., 2007

Director of Diversity and Inclusion

Alikhan Morgan, M.S.Ed., 2013

Editorial Director

Dania Abu-Shaheen, M.Ed., 2019

Dean of Faculty and Employees

Jessica Flaxman, M.Ed., 2021

Director of Information Technology

Andrew Gillies, B.A., 2000

Director of Learning Support Services

Libby Jelliffe, M.Ed., 2013

Director of Marketing and Communications

Vanessa Odenbach, B.S., 2018

Director of Public Purpose

Rebecca Drago, M.Ed., 2018

Director of Sustainability

Kerry Linderth, M.A., 2012

Coordinator of Global Studies

Daniel Murray, M.A., 2013

Coordinator of STEAM

Catherine Bischoff, M.S., 2001

LOWER SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION AND SUPPORT PERSONNEL

Lower School Principal

Stacey Sotirhos, Ph.D. 2021

Lower School Assistant Principal

Nicole Leath, M.S.Ed., 2004

Administrative Assistant

Mary Staudmyer, B.S., 2015

Lower School Psychologist

Kelly Ann Barker, Psy.D. 2021

Learning Specialists

Alexandra Kerker, M.S. Special Ed. 2018

Jamie Radwan, M.Ed., 2016

Librarian

Kimberly Love, M.S. LIS, 2016

Nurses

Nancy Gordon, R.N., 2001 Head Nurse

Erielle De Jesus, R.N., 2020, R.N., 2019

Nicole Regan, R.N., 2020

Rebecca Tenney, R.N. 2019

LOWER SCHOOL EMPLOYEES

Pre-Kindergarten

Laura Festo, M.S., 2005
Marlana Moysak, B.A., 2019 Co-Teacher

Kindergarten

Monique Caterina, M.S.Ed., 2010
Emilie Johnson, B.A., B.S., 2020 Assistant Teacher
Francesca Davia, M.S., 2019
Charlotte Fleischman, B.S., 2020 Assistant Teacher

Grade 1

Heather Lentini, M.A.T., 2018
Kailyn Lazarus, B.S. 2020, Assistant Teacher
Amy Haff, M.S.Ed., 2006
Jourdan Layne, B.A., 2019 Co-Teacher

Grade 2

Sandra Castagna, M.S., 2001
Angela Guzman, B.A., 2020 Assistant Teacher
Karen Cosgrove, M.Ed., 2016
Caroline Weihs, B.A. 2020, Assistant Teacher

Grade 3

Joanne Aventuro, M.A., M.Ed., 2006
Elizabeth Chirls, B.S., 2021, Assistant Teacher
Jessica Hauben, M.Ed., 2018
Julianne Arcamone, B.S., 2020 Assistant Teacher

Grade 4

Andréa Catalano, M.P.S., 2018
Kristin Kassay, M.S., 2018
Nicole Leath, M.S. Ed., 2004
Stacy Kaufman, M.S.Ed., 2006
Caryn Olson, M.S.T., 2005

Math Coordinator

Sara Ingrassia, B.A., 2003

Math Support

Andrea Rackow, J.D., M.S., 2019

Art

Eric Drotch, Department Chair, M.F.A., 2017
Lauren Behar, M.S., 2018

Computer Science

Katie O'Shaughnessey, M.Ed., 2016, Dir. of Academic Technology
Whitney Turner, M.A., 2007

Drama & Dance

Rachel Schulte, B.F.A., 2021, Department Chair
Dani Bensky, 2021 Dance Teacher/ Choreographer

Global Studies

Daniel Murray, M.A. 2013, Coordinator of Global Studies

Lower School Language: French & Spanish

Maggie Parker, M.A., Ph.D., 2012, Department Chair
Lyvia Sage, 2011
Elvira Rebate, Degree, Elem. Ed. Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 2006

Music

Mary Marcell, M.M., 1992, Department Chair
Melissa Liebowitz, M.M.Ed., 2011

Physical Education

Wendy Jo Haft, M.S., 1998, Director of Athletics and Physical Education
Georgette Summers, B.S., 2000, Assistant Athletic Director
Jenny Smith, M.Ed., 2012, Coordinator of Physical Education K-12
Heidi Southard, B.S., 2011, Head Athletic Trainer
Giovanni D'Onza, M.S., 2019, Assistant Athletic Trainer
Alin Andrei, M.A., 2011
Elizabeth Bennett, B.A., 2016
John Calandros, M.S., 2007
Gil A. Castagna, Jr., B.S., 1979
Richard Knazik, M.A., 2003
Alex Langerhorst, B.S., 2011
Theodore J. Lawrence, M.S., 1996B
Ray McGhee, M.S., 2000
Uchechi Charles Ogbonna, M.A., 2011
Amanda Popoli, M.A., 2019
Jessica Zimmerman, M.A. 2020

Science

Tameka Farrell, Ed.M., 2015, Department Chair
Cathie Bischoff, M.S., 2001 Coordinator of Steam
Debra Simpson, M.S., 1998

IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

Switchboard

All divisions of the School can be reached through the RCDS switchboard at (914) 967-1417, which is open from 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Head of School's Office	(914) 921-4250
Assistant Head of School	(914) 925-4613
Health Office	(914) 925-4552
Director of Diversity and Inclusion	(914) 925-4595
Office of Financial Aid	(914) 925-4569
Director of Public Purpose	(914) 925-4792
Lower School Psychologist	(914) 925-4568
Lower School Office	(914) 925-4572
Middle School Office	(914) 925-4571
Upper School Office	(914) 925-4596
Advancement Office	(914) 925-4524
Business Office	(914) 925-4522
Admissions Office	(914) 925-4513
Athletic Department Office	(914) 925-4545
Summer School	(914) 925-4511

WELCOME FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Dear Lower School Families,

On behalf of the Lower School faculty and staff, welcome to the 2021-22 school year. An exciting academic year is about to unfold! Your child's teachers and I eagerly look forward to the engaging learning opportunities and fun community activities that characterize the excellence and joy of the RCDS Lower School years. Ensuring the health and safety of our students while they are in our care is also a top priority. At the heart of our work is a strong partnership with our families.

This Lower School Parent-Student Handbook, which includes essential information about the operations in our division, clearly defines the responsibilities of all RCDS community members. It contains the School's expectations, protocols, and policies for creating a safe environment. It is intended to set a positive tone for developing respectful and trusting relationships among peers and between students and teachers. This supports our goal of fostering meaningful connections and meeting students' developmental needs to belong, feel significant, and engage and thrive at RCDS.

In the Lower School, we promote strength of character, the acquisition of knowledge, the absorption of skills, and engaged citizenship. We provide experiences in age appropriate ways so that our students see their journey through RCDS as one continuous path. Our core philosophy empowers your children to make sound choices by giving them opportunities to learn from daily experiences. Maintaining consistency with rules and expectations from the classroom and playground to your home will have a positive impact. To promote this environment in earnest, students practice being respectful towards all members of the community. Students are also encouraged to uphold personal and academic integrity, behave in accordance with our community expectations, and accept the School's ground rules in both letter and spirit.

This Handbook sets forth policies and procedures that are specifically applicable to RCDS students and families. In the event that the School must continue to manage the COVID-19 environment or pandemic, there are also policies that are unique to and apply throughout the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic (the "COVID-19 Protocols"), which are included in the Appendix to this Handbook. If any other policy in the Handbook conflicts with the COVID-19 Protocols, the policies and procedures set forth in the COVID-19 Protocols shall control.

As you review this handbook, I encourage you to talk and reflect with your child about why many of these expectations, protocols, and policies exist. There is a meaningful opportunity here for discussing citizenship and what it means to be an active member of a community. As role models and practitioners, we teach productive citizenship, with the knowledge that the values learned at RCDS will benefit our students for a lifetime. I hope you will join in this conversation and continue it home.

Thank you for taking the time to review and sign the Lower School Parent-Student Handbook. I look forward to a wonderful academic year together.

Sincerely,

Stacey K. Sotirhos, Ph.D.
Lower School Principal

I. INTRODUCTION TO RYE COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL

Mission

Rye Country Day School is a coeducational, college preparatory school dedicated to providing students from Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 with an excellent education using both traditional and innovative approaches. In a nurturing and supportive environment, we offer a challenging program that stimulates individuals to achieve their maximum potential through academic, athletic, creative, and social endeavors. We are actively committed to diversity. We expect and promote moral responsibility and strive to develop strength of character within a respectful school community. Our goal is to foster a lifelong passion for learning, understanding, and service in an ever-changing world.

Public Purpose Mission Statement

Since 1869, RCDS's motto, *Not for Self, but for Service*, has been integral to the culture of the School. The School's philosophy states, "A superior education embraces the concept that to educate is to do more than to teach." Through service learning, we will provide transformative educational opportunities that prepare our students to be responsible citizens with an ethic of service and empathy for our shared human experience. We believe that meaningful and mutually beneficial partnerships emanate from a curriculum enhanced by community engagement. The School's sustained commitment to making a positive impact on the community and contributing to the common good defines our public purpose.

Sustainability Mission Statement

The RCDS community, in conjunction with the expressed mission of the School, exists to foster understanding of our world around us, to act in accord with our school motto, *Not for Self, but for Service*, and to promote moral responsibility as citizens of the planet. The long-term goals of the sustainability committee are to create a climate of environmental awareness and to help students understand that they can effect positive and lasting change in the world by becoming lifelong stewards of our planet.

RCDS Statement of Philosophy

A superior education embraces the concept that to educate is to do more than to teach. We regard the student as a whole person and seek to assist students in fulfilling their potential for personal growth. We do so by providing an environment that nourishes cultural, social, and physical needs, as well as moral and ethical sensitivities, thus helping our students to define an image of themselves that they can accept and respect.

Academically, the School offers a comprehensive program enabling our students to think independently, to write and speak with clarity, and to appreciate the values and joys of the humanities, the arts, and the sciences. We hope that our students will graduate from RCDS with a feeling of self-confidence and pride in their particular talents, capable of succeeding/thriving in the colleges of their choosing, and well prepared for what lies ahead.

It is our belief that the education of young people should encompass cultural, athletic, and communal experiences that stress the responsibility of each individual for the life and spirit of the whole community, promoting a graduate able to face the world with confidence, to compete effectively, and to contribute meaningfully to society.

RCDS's objectives are pursued by dealing with students as individuals, nurturing their abilities, challenging each to do their best, and offering a multitude of opportunities for academic, cultural, and personal growth.

RCDS strives to celebrate the individual and to provide a substantive, stimulating college preparatory education for a diverse group of intelligent young men and women in an atmosphere that cultivates and challenges the varied potential of all students.

Lower School Philosophy

The Lower School strives to instill within each child a balance between individual development and commitment to the community. Our invigorating and supportive environment stimulates and promotes ethical, social, emotional, physical, and intellectual growth in every student. In a program that recognizes each child's unique timetable and needs, the measure of success is in the ongoing process rather than the finished product.

Core Values

R – RESPECT AND RESPONSIBILITY

C – COMMITMENT TO PERSONAL & ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

D – DIVERSITY WITHIN AN INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY

S – SERVICE

History of School

RCDS's steadfast commitments to learning, understanding, and service have existed since its start in 1869, and each generation that has passed through RCDS has added its own distinct mark.

Wishing to improve the quality of education available for their daughters, a group of local parents contacted Mrs. Susan J. Life and her husband, the Reverend William Life, who ran a small school in Pennsylvania. The Lifes came to Rye and established The Rye Female Seminary under the direction of Mrs. Life. During its first year, 1869, 60 students (25 boarders and 35 day students) enrolled in The Seminary, which was located on the present school property on Grandview Avenue.

The Seminary was purchased by sisters Harriet and Mary Stowe, two members of the faculty. Upon assuming leadership, the Stowe sisters initiated significant changes in the curriculum. During this period, The Seminary was at the forefront of a national trend, namely the introduction of college preparatory programs for women. Conscious of the potential financial risk for a strictly proprietary institution, a group of parents bought The Seminary in 1917 and established it as a nonprofit day school under the direction of a board of trustees.

The Seminary merged with a boys' school from nearby Harrison, The Rye Country School, and together they became known as The Rye Country Day Schools. In 1928, the "s" was dropped from the word "Schools," signifying unification into a single, well-integrated institution. To accommodate the increased student population, the campus experienced a period of growth and development. At this time, the School offered a program for girls from kindergarten through grade twelve, and a program for boys from kindergarten through grade nine. In 1964, the Board of Trustees extended the enrollment for boys through grade twelve.

Additional property was acquired, buildings were constructed, and roads moved, all with the help of many generous friends, families, and alumni. The appearance of the campus today is not one that the Lifes or the Stowe sisters would have recognized. Each generation that has passed through has added its mark and improved the facility to meet its particular needs. From the construction of the Main Building in 1924, to the additions of the Pinkham Building and the La Grange Field House in the sixties; the Dunn Performing Arts Center in the eighties; the new Lower School classrooms, new dining center, and the Athletic Center in the early two-thousands; the turf athletic fields in 2006; the expansion of the Pinkham building to include Memorial Hall in 2010; and the most recent addition of the Cohen Center of the Creative Arts, the Rye Country Day campus has kept pace with the needs of its community.

Today, students in Pre-kindergarten through Grade 12 enjoy a state-of-the-art facility while remaining fully conversant with the traditions, values, and expectations of the School's founders.

Non-Discrimination Policy

RCDS seeks diversity in all aspects of school life. The School admits qualified students of any race, color, national or ethnic origin, ancestry, sex, religion, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, or any other status protected by applicable law, and extends to them all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the School. The School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, ancestry, sex, religion, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, or any other status protected by applicable law in the administration of its admissions, financial aid, and loans, and its educational, athletic, and other programs.

Diversity Mission Statement

RCDS seeks diversity in all aspects of school life. We believe that diversity is the existence of human variety and that each one of us is diverse in multiple ways and in a variety of contexts. We recognize diversity as including, but not limited to, differences in ability/disability, age, ethnicity, family structures, gender, geographic origin, life experiences, physical appearance, race, religion, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status.

We are proactive about teaching our students the importance of diversity and inclusion in an increasingly interconnected, multicultural, and ever-changing world. As we prepare our students for leadership in the world beyond RCDS, we are responsible for teaching them how to communicate with, and be respectful of, others -- beginning with those in our school community and extending to those who live beyond our nation's borders. Every global citizen should be able to thrive in a diverse and interconnected society.

As educators, we are committed to creating and sustaining a school community that is diverse and inclusive, one in which all members can participate fully and maximize their potential. Our commitment to inclusion enriches our community with diverse ideas and perspectives. Students grow and flourish in this type of environment, where they can safely explore their individual identity while developing and exercising strength of character, healthy self-esteem, and confidence.

Through our commitment to diversity and inclusion, we strive to be good role models for the individuals in our care so that their present and future actions and choices may positively impact the world.

Accreditation

The School is accredited by the New York State Association of Independent Schools (NYSAIS) and the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools (MSACS).

Governance

The School is a membership corporation of approximately 1,200 current parents, and it is governed by an elected Board of Trustees. It is the responsibility of this body to plan, develop, and establish policy and to assess the performance of the School consistent with the School's mission and philosophy. The Board of Trustees is responsible for the selection of the Head of School and works in close collaboration with the Head of School, though the Head of School is responsible for the implementation of policy and the day-to-day operations of the School.

Lower School Administrators

THE PRINCIPAL is responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operation of the Lower School. Specific areas of responsibility include, but are not limited to, the academic program, extracurricular programs, personal and academic counseling, discipline, the monitoring of students in academic difficulty and/or disciplinary or academic warning, faculty evaluation, calendar, and communication with students, faculty, and parents/guardians.

THE ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL assists the Principal with the management and supervision of the daily operations of the division. She is responsible for overseeing the academic program, for aiding the teachers in academic affairs, for addressing grade-level issues on a regular basis, for managing lower division events, programs and schedules, and for communicating directly with parents/guardians.

II. DAILY LIFE

School Day Schedule

8:15 a.m.-2:50 p.m. Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 2

8:15 a.m.-3:00 p.m. Grade 3 through Grade 4

School Meetings and Assemblies

Lower School Meetings are held bi-weekly. Many of these are devoted to the opportunity to watch other members of our community perform. As the Lower School leaders of the division, fourth graders take a prominent role in organizing and hosting these meetings. On occasion, we are also fortunate to be able to welcome visiting speakers and performers.

Religious and Cultural Observances

If a family celebrates a holiday for which a student will miss school for religious observance and worship, the family/student is asked to contact the teachers at least one week in advance to coordinate appropriate support for the student. As a general practice, teachers try to avoid scheduling major activities, assignments, or assessments on religious holidays. Long-term assignments (assignments scheduled before the day immediately preceding a holiday and due on a day other than the day immediately following a holiday) may be assigned.

Before and After School Care

The Lower School day begins at 8:15 a.m., and Lower School classrooms open at 8:00 a.m. Teachers arrive earlier and must be free to pursue their preparations for the day without interruption. Should a student need to arrive earlier, there is a supervised Morning Wait Room from 7:40 a.m.-8:00 a.m. in the PAC Theater. There is a supervised Afternoon Wait Room for Lower School Students with Middle School siblings from 2:50 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. in the Blackbox Theater.

Optional after-school clubs will be offered this year. The selections vary, and Lower School employees teach most of these programs. Information is sent home well in advance. Registration is done electronically, and it is on a first-come, first-served basis. More information will be made available.

School Delays/Cancellations

When circumstances such as snow, ice, or other emergencies make it necessary to cancel a school session or to shift to remote learning, families will be informed by an automated telephone call and text message. In addition, there will be a message posted on the RCDS website by 6:30 a.m. if school is closed or opening is delayed. Emergency information, and in particular inclement weather/school closings or delays, is also disseminated through the following local radio, television, and websites:

- WFAS Radio in White Plains (1230 AM and 103.9 FM)
- Cable News 12
- www.ryecountryday.org
- www.WHUD.com
- www.News12.com

Please do not call the Head of School or the Rye Police Department. If in doubt, parents/guardians should check the RCDS website for information. In the event that individual local public school districts are closed because of inclement weather, bus service from those districts to RCDS will not be available.

Early Dismissal and Departure Changes

Students should arrive at school knowing how they are going home. Play dates should be arranged the night before. It is very unsettling for a child to wonder throughout the day how, or with whom, he or she is going home. For the safety of children, parents must notify the School if there is a change in the pick-up routine. Only a student's parents/guardians can make a change in departure unless the parents have provided written authorization for another person to do so.

In case of a **planned** change of departure:

- Send your child in the morning with a completed RCDS Lower School Change of Departure slip, which will be given to the classroom teacher. (These pads are provided in September.)
- Do not send a daily email with your child's departure information. Please use the Change of Departure Pad.

In case of an **unplanned change** of departure **due to illness**:

- A student may need to leave school during the day because of illness. The School Nurse will notify the home, and the student will wait in the Health Office/Isolation Room until a parent or caregiver can come to campus.

In case of an **unforeseen change** of departure:

- For an early dismissal other than illness, a parent or legal guardian must request permission via a note, phone call, voicemail, or email to the Attendance Office at Mary_Staudmyer@ryecountryday.org, or (914) 925-4572. The request should state the date, time, and reason for the early dismissal. Students are not to miss school commitments. This request should be communicated to the Attendance Office and classroom teachers by 9:00 a.m. on the day of the early dismissal.
- DO NOT email a change in departure to the teacher directly, without copying the Lower School Office. Teachers might not retrieve the message before dismissal due to teaching responsibilities.

In case of a **last minute change** of departure due to an emergency:

- Please call the Lower School Office at (914) 925-4572

In case of a **change of departure from After-School Clubs**:

- Please call the Lower School Office until 4:00 p.m. at (914) 925-4572, after which time, please call the Principal's Office at (914) 925-4560.

Drop-Off and Pick-Up Procedures

Parents may drop off and pick up students in designated areas on school property only. There will be no drop-off or pick-up on Grandview Avenue. With our students' safety in mind, and because of fire laws and safety procedures, please park in designated parking spaces and along the Lower School Circle. Please do not park in areas designated as No Parking Zones. For safety, and in consideration of the School's neighbors, please drive slowly on School grounds and in the surrounding neighborhood and refrain from using cell phones while driving on campus.

Drop-Off and Pick-Up by Car

In the morning for arrivals and in the afternoon for dismissals, cars transporting children are to enter one of three parking lots to drop off or pick up children depending on the child's grade level. Pre-K children will arrive and be dismissed from the Pre-K/Admissions lot. Only Pre-K families may use the Admissions Building parking area for drop off in the mornings and pick-up. This is a safety factor for our youngest students; therefore, only those cars with Pre-K children and their siblings will be permitted in this area. Once the full day has begun, Pre-K students will be dismissed at 2:50 p.m.

Kindergartners and third graders will use the Upper Circle for both drop-off and pick-up. Once the full day has begun, kindergartners will be dismissed at 2:50 p.m. and third graders will be dismissed ten minutes later at 3:00 p.m.

First, second, and fourth graders will use the Main Circle. There will also be staggered times for dismissal with first and second graders leaving at 2:50 p.m. and fourth graders dismissing 10 minutes later at 3:00 p.m.

When there are one or more Lower School siblings, the older Lower School siblings will be dismissed at the youngest sibling's grade-level dismissal time and location.

Should your child arrive late for school, please call the Lower School Office for further instructions.

At dismissal please use the Lower School family name cards provided at the beginning of the year. They should be attached to the visors and will help teachers recognize your car and prepare your child for pick up. Teachers will escort students to the curb on the school side of the parking lots and dismiss the children to authorized drivers. Please do not exit your car. All cars at the curb must have drivers inside and must exit the loading area as soon as all riders are loaded. This will enable us to keep our dismissal procedure flowing smoothly.

Teachers have an important role at dismissal supervising all their students' safe departures. Therefore, parents are asked to refrain from informal conversations at the dismissal locations.

- If your child is carpooling with others and buckling them all safely into car seats will require time, please consider parking so that you do not hold up the car line.
- At no time should the driver leave his/her seat behind the wheel with the engine running.
- Should you be delayed in getting to school in time for dismissal, please call the Lower School Administrative Assistant, Mrs. Staudmyer, in the Lower School Office, at (914) 925-4572, who will advise the teacher.
- To ensure proper supervision between Lower School dismissal time at 2:50 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. and Middle School dismissal times (3:15 p.m.-grades 5 & 6; 3:20 p.m. - grades 7 & 8) students will wait in the Black Box Theater with Lower School teachers.

- Lower School students with siblings in the fifth or sixth grades should be picked up by their siblings from the Black Box Theater at 3:15; those Lower School students with siblings in the seventh or eighth grades should be picked up by their siblings at 3:20. Students must then proceed directly to the Middle School students' dismissal locations. In accordance with the Rye City Code, RCDS has a policy of "No Idling" for more than three minutes.
- The use of car/cell phones is not permitted while waiting for students. We require that your full attention be given to the pedestrian and car traffic around you.

SCHOOL POLICY PROHIBITS ANY RCDS EMPLOYEE FROM RELEASING A CHILD TO SOMEONE OTHER THAN A FAMILY MEMBER OR AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTIFICATION IN WRITING FROM A PARENT. As a courtesy to parents, the school provides "Change of Departure" note pads, which will be sent home in early September. *We recommend keeping one of these pads in your car for last minute changes.*

COVID-19 Daily Screening Procedure

In the event that the School needs to manage the COVID-19 pandemic, daily screenings may be necessary. (See Appendix)

Transportation To/From School

The School does not provide transportation for students to and from school, nor can it assume any responsibility for this function. Parents/guardians who use buses, carpools, or taxis in transporting their children to and from school are responsible for all arrangements and should exercise such supervision of the details as is necessary.

Parents/guardians who intend to use public school transportation for their children should remember that applications for such transportation must be filed in most cases with the local school districts no later than April 1 for the next school year. Because the School does not have a contractual relationship with bus companies, should a problem develop relating to bus transportation, the parent should contact the local Board of Education or the private transportation company directly. Only students registered in a district can avail themselves of the bus service. Students having plans with friends who take a bus cannot ride the bus if they are not a registered bus rider in that district.

It is expected that all students will conduct themselves in a safe and proper manner while riding on school buses to and from school, as well as on school trips. The School will cooperate with bus companies and local school districts to ensure safe conduct on these vehicles. A student who engages in inappropriate behavior may be suspended from riding the school bus for a period of time.

We urge all parents/guardians whose children ride bicycles to and from school to discuss carefully with their children the rules of traffic and the safe operation of bicycles. They should stress the fact that bicycle riders must obey the same rules and respect the same signs which apply to automobile drivers. When bicycles are at school, they should be securely locked.

Bus Transportation

Young children often find bus transportation to be stressful and intimidating. Parents of Pre-Kindergartners and Kindergartners may wish to drive their children, at least at the outset of the school year. Should your young child be riding a bus, instruct him/her to sit near the driver in the front of the bus. Often finding an older student as a "buddy" is a positive experience.

Students riding the morning bus should ask the driver how to identify the bus in the afternoon (i.e. bus number, bus company name, driver's name.) A Lower School teacher greets students in the morning at the bus drop off as they arrive and escorts students to their classrooms. Lower School students who travel home by bus will also be supervised by Lower School teachers until 3:15 p.m., and then they will be brought to the Athletic Center from 3:15 p.m. until they board their bus. The older students will join Lower School students, and buses will depart at 3:30 p.m. following the Middle School dismissal time. Please note that even though the daily Lower School dismissal is at 2:50 p.m. for grades Pre-K through grade 2 and 3:00 p.m. for grades 3 and 4, there will be only one bus pick-up at 3:30 p.m.

First Days

- Morning bus service will be available beginning Monday, September 13, 2021.
- Most bus companies do not provide transportation for K - 4 students when students are dismissed earlier in the day. Please check with your district's bus company to confirm.

Train Transportation

Lower School students generally do not travel to school by train. In rare instances, a Lower School student might travel by train with a parent or older sibling. Regardless of whether students arrive from the North or South, they are to exit the station area from the school side, not the town side of the station. They are to walk through the underpass (of I-95), and immediately turn right on the sidewalk up the Cedar Street hill and cross Cedar Street at the crosswalk. At no time should students be climbing the hills around the train station or walking along the Boston Post Road. All students MUST travel directly from the train station to the School.

Rideshare Services

Parents should be aware that many rideshare companies, such as Uber, have policies that prohibit transporting unaccompanied minors. The School prohibits the use of these services by students without adult supervision, and will not take responsibility for calling car services for students.

School Supplies and Books

Rye Country Day School provides required classroom books and materials to Lower School students. However, each classroom may have some specific requests that will be sent home from the classroom teacher. Given that student progress is monitored and addressed individually, students may not use every book or piece of equipment; teachers decide what is appropriate to a specific student's needs.

Devices

Lower School teachers use a variety of tools to help their students develop the skills necessary in this current age of technology. The School provides access to mobile devices for students' use during the school day. This year, each student will have access to a Rye Country Day Lower School device: an iPad, a Chromebook, or a laptop. When necessary, students will be asked to transport these devices back and forth from home to school. These mobile devices serve as valuable tools for students, providing structured, monitored, and equitable access to resources that students will need to complete assigned work. All mobile devices are expected to be used for academic purposes only.

In the event that some students have a particular learning need not adequately supported by the School's computer resources, accommodations may be made to allow students to bring their own personal device to School. Accommodations will be made on a case-by-case basis, and will be informed by documented assessments of the individual student's learning needs. The School will not be held responsible for computer loss, theft, or damage that may occur. Mobile devices will be used to support learning needs, and must be stored securely when not in use.

We encourage parents to set guidelines for the appropriate use of the Internet, email, and social media among the various members of the community. In school, students are closely monitored and have supervised access to teacher-directed, pre-determined sites on the Internet on a very limited basis for specific research purposes. In the Lower School, we use the Responsible Use Policy to develop guidelines in teaching age-appropriate ways to foster responsibility and safety in using the computer both at home and at school.

RCDS Student Contract for Computer Usage

I will follow the guidelines below so that I can be safe, responsible, and respectful when using my RCDS student accounts and the Internet both at school and at home.

When logged on and using my RCDS student accounts:

- I will use my G Suite account for activities that are appropriate for school.
- I will keep my passwords private and not learn or use anyone else's password.
- I will be mindful that teachers are part of my audience and will have access to my work.
- I will not edit or erase other students' writing or other work.
- I will ask for help if I have questions.
- I will log off from my account when I am not at my computer.

I will be a good digital citizen by:

- Understanding that modeling respectful behavior on the computer is important both at home and at school.
- Using good manners and being positive.
- Using language appropriate for schoolwork.
- Only looking at someone else's work with permission.
- Being mindful about sharing personal information about myself or anyone else in my shared writings. This includes address, phone number, photographs, etc.
- Not adding anything to my work that belongs to someone else without permission or recognition.
- Telling an adult if I see something or read something that makes me uncomfortable.

Email

Students are given a Google account to access the Google Suite for Education. In second, third, and fourth grade, students can share their digital work with their teachers and with other students, when the teacher so chooses. The students do not have access to email of any form at this level. Nevertheless, our students are quickly learning about the advantages of communications online.

Food at School

Rye Country Day School is committed to providing a safe and healthy learning environment for all students and employees. In order to ensure that such an environment exists at school, it is imperative that RCDS be sensitive to various food allergies that are life threatening to some students and employees. Students, parents, and employees should not bring nut or nut-containing products on campus.

Lunch

Lower School children in Pre-Kindergarten through fourth grade may bring lunch or participate in the School's lunch program. Lower School children who bring lunch from home must bring nut-free lunches. From time to time, a student who normally brings lunch from home will have lost or forgotten his or her lunch. The School will, of course, see that the child is provided with a cafeteria lunch. Soda and candy are not permitted. For safety reasons, glass bottles are not allowed in the School. Flik does not use any nuts or nut by-products in its preparation of meals.

Snacks - Classroom

The School's food service provides nut-free snacks each day to children in grades Pre-K through fourth. If a child is allergic to the snack offered by the School, he or she may eat an alternate snack. Alternate snacks should be provided by the child's parent or guardian and must be individually prepackaged and free of nuts and nut products. The teacher will store alternate snacks in the classroom.

Snacks - After School

After-school snacks are provided for the children enrolled in the Extended Day Program or in After School Clubs. The cost of the snack is built into the price of these programs. If a child is allergic to the snack offered by the School, he or she may eat an alternate snack. Alternate snacks should be provided by the child's parent or guardian and must be individually prepackaged and free of nuts and nut products. Alternate snacks will be stored at the teacher's discretion in the classroom.

Snacks - Special Event/ Birthdays

No home baked items are allowed in the Lower School for sharing with classmates. At the beginning of every month, each grade level has determined a specific day of the week to celebrate ALL the children who have a birthday that month, and a special treat will be provided by Flik. The teacher and the "birthday children" will determine the treat, and those participating families will be billed accordingly. Appropriate substitutions to the selected birthday treat will be provided for children with allergies. For those children who have allergies, a parent or guardian may provide his or her allergic child with individually pre-packed cookies or a similar treat, free of nuts and nut products. These alternate treats would be stored in the classroom by the teacher for the child.

Student Lockers

Students in grades 2-4 are provided with individual lockers. All lockers are the property of the School and are subject to search and inspection. Personal materials are to be stored in lockers. All books and notebooks should be properly identified with the labels provided. A student should never open another student's locker. Lockers should be kept neat and organized. The area around lockers is students' responsibility and should be kept clean. With the exception of bottled water, food may not be kept in lockers.

Lost and Found

Please be sure to mark students' clothes with the student's name in indelible ink or with sewn-on labels. All unmarked clothing will be put into the lost and found box. Anything left unclaimed past a two-month period will be donated to charity or used at the staff's discretion.

Gift Giving

It is the School's policy that NO individual or group gifts from parents/guardians and/or students to employees, coaches, or administrators are allowed at any time.

Cards and notes from students or families are welcome and encouraged. In addition, the Board of Trustees and the RCDS Parents Association have established several venues for thanking all school employees each year for their dedicated service.

We ask for everyone's understanding and cooperation with these guidelines, which help to make our community a comfortable, warm, and welcoming one for everyone.

Gift giving among students at school can lead to both awkwardness and hurt feelings. We discourage students from exchanging gifts at school, and if students choose to do so, it should be done as privately as is possible.

III. ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Overview

The Lower School years at Rye Country Day School (Pre-Kindergarten – Grade 4) encompass a time of significant growth for students. Intellectually, socially, creatively, emotionally and physically, children acquire skills and knowledge that will contribute significantly to the quality of their lives, throughout their lives. For a student of this age, the most valuable skills and knowledge are not composed of isolated facts and repetitive drills but come from the child's ability to make meaning of the work by integrating it with prior knowledge and experience. This is why our program in the Lower School is based on active learning, learning by doing, learning by challenging oneself, and stretching in ways that promote growth in all developmental aspects.

Lower School classes are small, with homeroom instruction based in math, social studies, and language arts. The broad educational experience includes classes in music, visual art, science, physical education, computer science, library, and, beginning in second grade, French or Spanish. Many opportunities exist for various curricular areas to be integrated from time to time, thus deepening student understanding.

The personal and social skills acquired during the early years of school instill in a young student the importance of working and playing effectively with others. As with other areas of development, personal and social responsibilities are mastered over time, with opportunities for practice under the guidance of caring adults. During these formative years, children learn how to resolve conflicts, assert themselves appropriately, and care for their environment. A student's behavior has an impact on the community, and the community atmosphere has an impact on the development of the student's system of values. School and family share the responsibility for helping a child to develop into an honest, ethical, respectful, and responsible community member.

A successful community is one in which all constituents support the letter and spirit of common behavioral values. The guidelines for Lower School students clarify for our community the values espoused by Rye Country Day School so that all of us - teachers, parents, administrators, employees, and students - share an understanding of what the expectations are. The Lower School Parent-Student Handbook is designed to give clarity, consistency, and a structure for mutual support.

Curriculum

The Lower School Curriculum Guide, which can be found on the school's website, contains a complete description of the academic program of the Lower School, Pre-Kindergarten-Grade 4.

Study Habits

It is important that students develop a responsible approach toward their schoolwork, planning their time outside of school so that they complete their assignments to the best of their ability. The faculty ask that parents help in developing students' healthy study habits by encouraging students to study in a quiet room and by discouraging television viewing, recreational computer use, and telephone calls during the school week.

In the event of a student's absence from class, classroom teachers will coordinate with students to help them manage homework and classroom assignments.

Homework

A student's time in school is directed and productive. We provide a long school day so that Lower School students can complete most activities within the classroom environment under a teacher's supervision. There are times when a Lower School teacher assigns homework, but there is no expectation that Lower School students will have homework every evening. However, there is an expectation that all children will read for pleasure (or be read to) at home for a short period of time every day. Even children who can read love to be read to and benefit from hearing the fluency of a more seasoned reader and a more challenging book with rich vocabulary. As at school, children working at home will complete assignments in differing amounts of time. The general time parameters are indicated below; they are to be used as *rough guidelines only*.

- **Grade 1 (10 minutes) and Grade 2 (20 minutes):** The purpose of homework in Grades 1 and 2 is to develop responsibility and good learning routines. Each child is to obtain the assignment, take it home, complete the task, and return the work to school at the designated time.
- **Grade 3 (30 minutes) and Grade 4 (40 minutes):** Homework in the upper elementary grades may be assigned to reinforce and/or extend class work.
- NO homework will be assigned over vacations, weekends, or religious holidays that occur on school days.

Class Placement

In arranging class placement each year, administrators create class lists with careful consideration given to students' academic and behavioral strengths. We work to create class lists that are balanced in terms of gender, diversity, new/returning students, and academic and behavioral strengths.

It is School policy that the faculty and administration will make all class placement decisions and that we will not be able to accept parents' requests for class placement. All class placement decisions will be made with interest, care, and concern.

Progress Reports/Conferences

Regularly scheduled conferences with the homeroom teachers are held in December and March. Additional conferences may be initiated by parents or teachers and scheduled for a mutually convenient time. December, March, and June reports can be accessed on the Family Portal. Families will receive notification that the reports are available when the time comes.

Special area reports are sent home electronically twice a year, in January and in June. Although formal conferences are not scheduled with the special area teachers, we encourage parents to ask for a conference, as these teachers are very much a part of your children's education and have the added benefit of seeing them from year to year. Letter grades are not used in Lower School.

Learning Support

Learning specialists provide support to students and teachers through an inclusion and/or pull-out model. The teaching of basic skills in reading, writing, math, and spelling based on the student's individual needs is emphasized, as well as the organization of strategies for efficient learning. The teacher(s), the support team, and the Principal determine if students need support beyond what they receive in the classroom. Throughout the process, the teacher and the learning specialist provide parents or guardians information through regular updates. These students may be assigned to work with a learning specialist individually or

in a small group. The goal is to help a student with relatively minor learning issues to master the fundamental skills needed to function successfully in the classrooms of the Lower School. Students with greater difficulties may be referred for an outside evaluation and/or more intensive remediation.

When the school feels that more information is needed about a child's learning profile, the Lower School Psychologist works closely with the Learning Specialist, the Principal, the Assistant Principal, and the teacher. This team will meet with the family to ensure that the student's needs are being met by finding the right resources. The Lower School Psychologist has names of several evaluators who know RCDS, its standards and curriculum, and who are qualified to assess the student in order to help the teacher better support him or her. Should parents or guardians choose to pursue an independent evaluation, they are encouraged to discuss evaluators with the Lower School Psychologist before embarking on the process. Once the School receives the completed evaluation, the Support Team, which consists of the classroom teacher, the Learning Specialist, the Lower School Psychologist, the Assistant Principal, and the Principal, meet to discuss the report and the recommendations. After the Team reviews the evaluation, a meeting is set up with the Team, the parents or guardians, and sometimes the evaluator, to discuss the report and the educational plan. Several weeks after the plan is put in place, a follow-up meeting is held with the Team and the parents or guardians to assess how the student is doing.

Accommodations

RCDS aims to support students with disabilities while maintaining the School's high standards. The School offers reasonable accommodations to students with learning and other disabilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended (the "ADA") and New York State. While certain accommodations are possible, the School has limited capacities and resources. All requests for accommodations will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Accommodations Team (the "Team"). The Team generally consists of the Director of Learning Support Services, the Division Learning Specialist, and the Division Principal.

What is a Disability?

This Policy does not apply unless a student has a limitation that is defined as a "disability" in accordance with the ADA. Disabilities are physical or mental impairments that substantially limit one or more life activities of the student. The student must be qualified to meet school standards with or without reasonable accommodation.

Physical impairments include physiological disorders and conditions, cosmetic disfigurement, or anatomical loss. The physical impairment must affect one or more body systems such as neurological, musculoskeletal, special sense organs (e.g., vocal cords, soft palate, or tongue), respiratory, cardiovascular, reproductive, digestive, genitourinary, hematic, immune, circulatory, lymphatic, skin, and endocrine systems. Simple physical characteristics, such as left-handedness or the color of one's eyes, hair, or skin, are not physical impairments. Mental impairments include mental or psychological disorders, such as emotional or mental illness and organic brain syndrome. Specific learning differences or disorders, such as attention deficit disorder and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, only sometimes meet the definition of disability under this Policy. Disadvantages attributable to environmental, cultural, or economic disabilities that do not otherwise meet the definition of disability are not disabilities, nor are common personality traits such as poor judgment and quick temper.

A disability also must substantially limit a major life activity. Major life activities include such activities as caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, walking, standing, sitting, reaching, lifting, bending, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating, interacting with others, and working. A determination regarding the existence of a "substantial limitation" is made by comparing the person contended to be disabled to most people in the

general population. Disabilities are assessed by comparing to most people in the general population the condition under which the individual performs the major life activity; the manner in which the individual performs the major life activity; and/or the duration of time it takes the individual to perform the major life activity or for which the individual can perform the major life activity.

There are certain times in a child's development when learning disabilities tend to appear: when students are learning to read, when students are reading to learn, and in early adolescence when students encounter new challenges. It is less common for a learning disability to be diagnosed for the first time in high school. Also, please keep in mind that long-range studies reveal that extra time can work against some students who do not demonstrate a need for it.

How is an Accommodation Requested?

Students and parents or guardians may initiate the accommodations process by making an accommodation request to the Team. Requests made to teachers or administrators will be directed to the Team. No one except for the Team is authorized by the School to grant accommodation requests.

What is the Data Needed for an Accommodation?

To be entitled to an accommodation for a disability that is not readily apparent, the student, parent, or caregiver requesting the accommodation must provide the Team with medically certified proof of the disability and medically certified proof of the need for the accommodation. For learning disabilities, a complete psychoeducational or neuropsychological evaluation is required. The evaluation should include a diagnosis of a specific disability and demonstrate the need for any requested accommodation.

If parents are concerned about their child's learning and are considering having their child evaluated, we encourage the parents to set up a meeting with the Director of Learning Support Services to discuss the concerns and to learn about the process for determining accommodations. The School has a list of evaluators who understand the criteria that must be met, who are familiar with our School's curriculum, and who have been effective in investigating a student's learning difficulties. If a parent does not have a meeting with the Director of Learning Support Services ahead of time, in order to work together and best support the students, it would be helpful for the evaluator to speak to the Director of Learning Support Services before completing the evaluation to make sure that the evaluation will meet the criteria before any recommendations or accommodations are suggested.

What is the Process for Determining Appropriate Accommodations?

Once the School receives the required documentation and, as applicable, a completed evaluation, generally within two weeks, a meeting of the Accommodations Team will be scheduled to discuss the report. The Team may require additional information if necessary. Deciding what accommodations are reasonable and necessary is an interactive, collaborative process among the School, the student, and the student's parents/guardians. After the Team reviews the data and the recommendations, a meeting is set up with the Team, the parents/guardians, and often the evaluator to discuss the recommendations and accommodations. An educational plan is then created.

The Team considers many factors when deciding whether, and to what extent, the School can accommodate a disability. These considerations may include the appropriateness of the requested accommodation, available alternatives, whether the requested accommodation unduly burdens the School, whether the requested accommodation fundamentally alters the School's mission or program, and whether the requested accommodation presents a direct threat to the health and safety of the student or others in the school community.

Once a student receives an accommodation for a disability, it is the student and the student's parents/guardians' responsibility to follow up with the Accommodations Team about changes to the

student's disability status or need for additional or different accommodations. The Team reviews accommodations during the transition years from lower to middle and middle to upper schools and yearly, as needed and appropriate. The Team will notify parents/guardians if the accommodations remain appropriate and/or need to be updated.

Even after supportive services and accommodations have been put in place, a student may still not be able to satisfactorily fulfill the School's academic requirements. In such instances, the Team, the Head of School, and/or other support personnel may decide that the accommodations put into place may not suffice to ensure the student's success at the School. At that time, the Head of School, Lower School Principal and Lower School Psychologist will decide whether it is appropriate for the student to remain at the School.

Any questions regarding this Policy should be directed to the Director of Learning Support Services.

Toys/Fidgets

We do not permit the use of toys in Lower School, including toy weapons and any "superhero" action figures, which foster aggression. Electronic toys and equipment may *not* be brought to school other than for "show and tell." They may not be used at school.

Fidgets can be used as either toys or tools for learning depending upon a student's need. An occupational therapist may recommend any one of a variety of fidgets to help a student in the classroom. However, the same fidget can be used as a toy and increase the level of distraction for students and those around them. For this reason, the Lower School will rely on the occupational therapist, parent or guardian, and teacher to make the determination when a fidget is beneficial to a student's learning in the classroom.

Tutoring Philosophy and Policy Statement

Learning difficulties can be encountered in the classroom that cause student, teacher, and parent/guardian concern. The teacher is always the first line of remediation, and it is the teacher who offers suggestions to parents about home assistance or teacher help. The teacher has the kind of daily learning encounters that can best identify problems and suggest skill-building extra help.

Tutoring may be mandated or encouraged only for a defined period of time, until a student can return to working comfortably without assistance, so that the full extent of the program can be part of each student's daily routine. Students are expected to use tutoring infrequently and with specific goals that are temporary. The School's resources are designed to assist students individually when needed over the long term, so dependence on tutoring is neither desirable nor necessary.

- The teachers at our School seek to provide as much individual help that a student needs and that circumstances will permit. We would like to limit as much as possible tutoring for which a fee is charged.
- Tutoring will only be recommended by School personnel when it is needed. Additionally, if tutoring is recommended for a student who receives financial aid, the Dean of Financial Aid may work with the Principal and family to coordinate support for the tutoring.
- If a tutoring relationship is established, tutors should make contact with the classroom teacher and maintain this communication. This will help support the most effective results of the tutoring.
- The Lower School Principal and Lower School Psychologist should be made aware of the establishment of a tutoring relationship or other out-of-school academic work.

- The student should not stop receiving extra help from the classroom teacher. The classroom teacher will have the clearest view of the expectations of the course and where the student should seek to improve.
- While at times it is part of the learning process for students to receive assistance outside of school, such help is inappropriate and considered an academic integrity violation when the student cannot explain the terms, ideas, and concepts used and/or the student's writing is sufficiently different from other work by that student that he or she could not possibly duplicate it.
- Finally, RCDS faculty are expected to provide a reasonable amount of extra help for their students; however, they are not allowed to tutor their own students for financial compensation during the school year. In addition, RCDS faculty cannot tutor RCDS students whom they might teach during the next school year. Full-time employees who tutor RCDS students whom they do not teach may do so outside of the normal school hours. RCDS employees tutoring an RCDS student are expected to inform the student's teacher, the Lower School Principal, and the Lower School Psychologist.

Library

The Lower School Library serves students in the Lower School. We do not charge fines, and unless a title is in particular demand, books may be renewed by bringing them into the library and requesting renewal. The following procedures will be followed on books that are overdue:

- A notice is sent (within the school) to students when the book(s) are overdue. If the book(s) are not returned, a second notice in the form of a postcard is sent to the student's parent(s).
- Following the third notice (another postcard sent) there will be a non-refundable charge for the book(s). The charge for the book(s) will be billed, through the Business Office, to a family's RCDS account. The money is nonrefundable because at that point the library will have ordered a replacement. Although we are, of course, anxious to have our actual materials returned and often cannot find replacements of equal value, the book(s) that are paid for now belong to the student.

IV. COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS

Truthfulness and honesty in all personal and academic matters are fundamental expectations of the School. Courtesy is expected at all times. Respect for the rights and property of others is essential for the well-being of the community. Participation in formal occasions such as competitions, performances, dances, field trips, etc. requires that students maintain the School standard and that they be aware that their actions reflect on the reputation of their School community.

Honesty

Individuals are expected to be truthful in dealing with themselves, each other, and the School. Dishonesty of any sort will be treated very seriously by the School.

Academic Integrity

RCDS is dedicated to creating a community that fosters character development and intellectual growth. While it expects students and employees to support independent thought and the free exchange of ideas in order to develop and maintain a climate of inquiry, a lack of integrity, whether in academic or non-academic situations, erodes the trust so necessary for a fruitful and supportive learning environment.

Definitions

In all of the definitions listed below, *it is the action, not the intent of the student*, that will be considered.

Cheating

The act of wrongfully using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, study aids, ideas, or work of another in order to gain an unfair advantage. It includes, but is not limited to:

- Giving aid to another student on tests, quizzes, assignments, or examinations that is not permitted;
- Using or consulting materials that are not permitted (such as cheat sheets/crib notes);
- Using equipment or devices on tests, quizzes, assignments, or examinations that are not permitted (such as information stored in calculators);
- Failing to adhere to a teacher's specific directions with respect to the terms of academic integrity or academic honesty; and
- Collaborating with other students on assignments, tests, or essays outside the specific boundaries set by the teacher.

*The RCDS Academic Integrity Committee wishes to thank Duke University for allowing it to use sections of Duke's statement on cheating and related offenses in creating the Definitions Section above.

Plagiarism

Copying work in any medium and submitting it as one's own. (For example, handing in another student's work or purchasing/taking papers from the Internet.) Students must show appropriate documentation for:

- Any direct quotation from another source, including, but not limited to, the written or spoken word;
- Any statement of fact that is not common knowledge available to any reader;
- Any developed idea or plan of organization or concept derived from any other person or taken from another author or source; and
- Any diagram, image, data, equation, illustration, or audio/video clip copied from another source.

All students must acknowledge sources and references in their academic work. Their teachers will give clear instructions as to the proper method to acknowledge sources and references.

Inappropriate Tutorial Assistance

While at times it is part of the learning process for students to receive assistance outside of school, either from education professionals or other more experienced individuals, such help is inappropriate and an academic integrity violation when the student cannot explain the terms, ideas, and concepts used and/or the writing is sufficiently different from other work by that student that the student could not possibly duplicate it.

Respect for Property

As community members, we are expected to respect our own property, the property of others, and the buildings and grounds we share. All property, including coats and other outer garments worn to school, should be clearly marked with the student's name. The School cannot accept responsibility for the personal belongings of the students. Students are encouraged not to bring valuables to school with the exception of laptop computers, mobile phones, and mathematical calculators. Personal property of students cannot be insured by the School and is covered only through the family's household insurance policy, typically as "Items off the Premises." Students are expected to take care of their own possessions. The School endeavors to help students develop such responsibility. Students demonstrating a lack of respect for the personal property of others or the property of the School will not be tolerated.

Behavior and Safety

Every RCDS community member has the right to feel safe, valued, and respected while at school. We believe that an effective learning environment requires daily behavior rooted in kindness and empathy. Words and actions that demean or threaten the emotional or physical welfare of any individual or group will not be tolerated—this includes all slurs and epithets.

Any student whose behavior on or off campus jeopardizes the health, welfare, or safety of any individual at the School or the reputation of the School may be subject to immediate disciplinary action, which could include expulsion.

Speech and Respect for Community Members

The School seeks cultural competency for all community members and expects all community members to respect others, especially around race, gender, ethnicity, religious affiliation, ability, and other aspects of people's identity. We strive to combat prejudice in all forms, including in speech. We recognize that words have the power to negatively impact others, and we prohibit speech that discriminates, attacks, disparages, demeans, intimidates, or deliberately mischaracterizes an individual or group based on their identity. Offensive speech can take many forms, including, but not limited to, negatively biased categorical statements, stereotypes, and epithets.

The School invites sincere discussion and questions, and recognizes that there will be moments when insufficient information, erroneous belief, or faulty presentation will create opportunities to review statements and clarify impact. We encourage students to address those incidents directly when they occur, but we recognize that not all students may feel comfortable doing so. Students who have concerns about another's speech, whether in person or online, should contact the Dean of Students, the Principal, or the Head of School so that the School can respond appropriately.

Dress Code and Appearance

Lower School students are expected to dress in a manner that is respectful of the character and purpose of an educational community. Students are expected to come to school in clothing that is appropriate for work and play. Our dress code is established to instill discipline, *prevent distractions, avoid safety hazards*, and develop awareness that there are distinct occasions appropriate for formal and informal attire. Although the School recognizes that there are differences of opinion regarding what constitutes proper attire, the School must delineate and require that certain standards be met. *It is expected that students and parents will support the dress regulations both in letter and in spirit.*

In the Lower School, t-shirts with writing (phrases or messages) on them are not allowed. Other students might focus on the message, trying to read or pronounce it during instruction; that shirt becomes a distraction. These t-shirts in-and-of-themselves are not inappropriate, but since they are distracting to others, they are not appropriate in school. It is never too early to teach a child about perspective and have them be mindful of others. Any questionable clothing your child might have should be saved for after school or weekends.

Appropriate Dress Code

- Neat, clean and tailored
- All shirts must cover the midriff
- All pants/shorts/skirts must adequately cover a child, especially when the child is seated
- *Short* skirts and *short* dresses should be worn with leggings
- Images on t-shirts must be child-friendly
- Sneakers must be worn every day for physical education and recess
- Shoes and sneakers need to be fastened and secured safely to the foot (laces, Velcro or buckles)

Inappropriate Dress Code

- Clothes that are a safety concern
- Torn, ripped, or frayed clothing
- Underwear worn as clothing
- Excessively short or tight clothes, such as shorts, pants, skirts
- T-shirts that can be revealing
- Tank tops, shirts with spaghetti straps, or otherwise revealing attire
- Excessively baggy or oversized clothing
- T-shirts/sweatshirts with phrases or messages
- Writing/slogans on the seat of the pants
- Images that are not child-friendly (ex. skull and cross bones)
- Leggings, jeggings, or overly tight pants, unless they are worn with dresses or skirts
- Athletic clothes
 - Sweatpants or other pant outfits resembling exercise or athletic wear
 - Shirts, shorts, pants or any clothing made of mesh or similar material
- Shoes
 - Light-up sneakers are very distracting for all
 - Beach-type sandals, flip-flops and crocs are safety concerns
 - Platform shoes, “mules” or “slides,” or shoes with high heels should *not* be worn in Lower School
 - Jewelry should *not* be worn to school
 - Pierced earrings should be studs only, as hoops or dangling earrings can be dangerous in PE and/or at recess

- Hats may be worn to and from School, at recess, and on the playing fields, but are *not* to be worn inside at any time

All Lower School students are required to have an extra pair of suitable school clothing kept in the classroom in case a change of clothing is needed during the day.

Outdoor gear: Daily outdoor play is an important component of our Lower School program, and so children are to wear or bring clothing appropriate to the outside weather conditions. There may be times when snow pants, boots, hats, gloves, rain gear, etc., are called for; your child's health can be protected by having proper outdoor clothing. It is the goal of our Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten, and First Grade teachers to have the children dress themselves independently. Please support and encourage this goal at home.

Please label all clothing, shoes, outer gear, backpacks, lunch boxes, etc., with your child's name. Misplaced belongings can be returned to the rightful owners, if they are clearly marked with a name.

Physical Environment

It is expected that students will help assume responsibility for maintaining a clean and attractive environment. Students will be expected to help keep the classrooms, halls, student lounges, dining room, etc., in order by performing tasks that will achieve this goal. Towards this end, all community members must take special care to clean up after themselves at all times.

Attendance and Absences

For their own welfare as well as that of the group, it is very important that students meet all obligations promptly. Lateness, absences, and early dismissals are recorded.

Absence

Students are expected to be prepared and in school each day. In case of an absence, a parent or guardian must call the Lower School Office at 914-925-4572 before 8:30 a.m. on the morning of the absence, give the name of the person calling, the name of the student, the reason for the absence, and a contact telephone number. Students absent from school may not participate in any extracurricular activities on the days they are absent unless cleared well in advance by the Principal.

For authorized absences of more than three days, the Lower School Principal, in consultation with a student's teachers, will establish a schedule for making up the work. If a student is out of school for more than three consecutive school days for medical reasons, the School Nurse may contact the family directly.

In the case of unauthorized absences, teachers are under no obligation to allow students to make up the work or to give extra help. Unauthorized absences include, but are not limited to, extending the vacation period by leaving early or returning late from a vacation.

Notes for Absences

All notes for absences must be turned in by 9:00 a.m., and consistent with New York State law:

1. Be written, as well as signed by parents/guardians; and
2. State the specific reason for the lateness or early dismissal.

The question of the validity of an excuse remains the judgment of the administration.

Assemblies, Class Meetings, Field Trips, Activities

These are regular commitments which all students attend. No absences are allowed unless special permission is given by a member of the administrative staff.

Class Attendance and Unexcused Absences

Students are expected to attend all their assigned classes. The School has planned for ample time during which families may enjoy out-of-town vacations together. Students who are on vacation during normal school days are at risk of missing important instruction and activities. We expect parents to support their children by respecting the commitment to attend school when school is in session. Family vacations, while school is in session, are considered to be unexcused absences.

Assignments When Absent

Missed work is not sent home for Lower School children, except in the case of an unavoidable, prolonged absence. A sick child needs time to rest and relax, not be burdened with schoolwork. When the student returns to school healthy and fit, the teacher will help the student to make up needed work.

The School is not responsible for providing work for extended absences without a valid excuse.

Tardiness

Attendance is taken promptly at 8:20. All students who arrive at school after 8:20 a.m. are expected to:

- Check in with Mary Staudmyer in the Lower School Attendance Office to sign-in.
- Students will be directed to proceed to the classroom.

The Principal will monitor the attendance record of each student and address any concerns with students and their families.

Responsible Use Policy

RCDS students utilize a wide range of technology. As stated in the RCDS Mission Statement, “We expect and promote moral responsibility and strive to develop strength of character within a respectful school community.” All use of technology by RCDS students must be carried out with this in mind. The use of these technologies is a privilege, not a right. Students are responsible for using them legally, appropriately, responsibly, and kindly and in compliance with this Responsible Use Policy (“RUP”) and any other applicable policies and procedures or instructions from faculty or staff.

Personal Devices

The School prohibits students, parents, and School community members from using cell phones or other electronic devices to record (video, audio, or otherwise) the School environment without express permission from the School. This policy generally does not apply to recordings at School performances and events.

Digital Citizenship: In the World –On and Off Campus

All students are responsible for practicing positive digital citizenship on and off campus, as long as they are enrolled in the School. This includes engaging in appropriate behavior on websites, social media, discussion boards, media sharing sites, learning management systems, and all other electronic communications, including technology not specifically identified here. These expectations apply regardless of whether students are linked to the School's network from in school or a remote location, or not at all, or using their own personal computer or communication device. Students should remember that they are always representing the RCDS community.

Purpose of a Responsible Use Policy

This RUP outlines the appropriate use of the internet, computers, connected devices, and other school or personal technology and devices not listed here, on and off-campus. This RUP extends to all RCDS-associated email accounts, websites, platforms, and resources used by students.

Parents/Guardians grants permission for students to use Google Apps for Education, PowerSchool Learning, Adobe Creative Cloud, Microsoft Office 365, and all other technology services provided by RCDS. Students must be aware that all technology resources on campus are the School's property. RCDS recognizes its legal and ethical obligation to protect the well-being of its students. To this end, RCDS retains the following rights and recognizes the following obligations:

- To log Network use and to monitor fileserver space utilization by users, and assume no responsibility or liability for files deleted due to violation of fileserver space allotments.
- To remove a user account on the Network.
- To monitor the use of online activities. This may include real-time monitoring of Network activity and/or maintaining a log of Internet activity for later review.
- To provide internal and external controls as appropriate and feasible. Such controls shall include the right to determine who will have access to RCDS-technology and, specifically, to exclude those who do not abide by the RUP or any other policy in the Handbook. RCDS may restrict online destinations through software or other means.
- To use commercially reasonable efforts to secure the Network.
- To provide guidelines and make reasonable efforts to train students in acceptable use governing online communications.

Student Expectations

Class/School Use:

- I will stay on task in class when using RCDS-technology or a personal device, and will not use my device in class for anything other than for an academic purpose, such as messaging, social media, browsing the Internet, playing games, or entertainment.
- I will bring my laptop, charger, headphones, and any other required device(s) to class as instructed by my teacher.
- I will only use my headphones and earbuds at appropriate times when instructed by my teacher or a faculty member.
- I understand that teachers and faculty members have the right to see the screen of or access my laptop or device when requested.
- I understand that I may be asked to put my laptop or device away.
- I understand that cell phone use is not appropriate in class.
- I understand that Middle School students must keep their phones and other electronic devices in their backpacks or lockers from 8:05 am - 3:15 pm, unless the student is given permission by an administrator or teacher.

- I understand that Upper School students may only make phone calls when they have no school obligations. These calls should be made outside of school buildings in order to avoid disturbing others. If students need someone from the School to make a phone call on their behalf, they should ask one of the Deans, the Principal, or one of the Upper School Administrative Assistants.
- I understand that students are prohibited from using cell phones in restrooms or in the Athletic Center locker rooms.
- I understand that cell phones may be confiscated if seen being used without permission during school hours.
- I understand that if students listen to music during a free period, they must use headphones or earbuds. I also understand that students in Grades 5, 6, and 7 may not listen to music on their personal devices.
- I will only project my laptop or device to the classroom screen when approved by a faculty member.
- I will not use, touch, or in any way disrupt the technology equipment in the classroom without approval from a faculty member.

Cybersecurity & Privacy:

- I will only access content that belongs to me or that I am certain I have permission to use. I understand that any student caught accessing, or attempting to access, computer files belonging to other people will be treated in the same way as a student caught trying to break into or looking through a filing cabinet, desk, or locked room with private or confidential information.
- I will be aware of the privacy settings on the websites I visit.
- I will not use proxy servers or other tactics to circumvent the security filters in place at school and am aware that taking this action is also a cyber security risk and breach of the RUP.
- I will not take part in cyber attacks.
- I will not use my RCDS email account for personal use, to create online accounts, or to send chain letters, spam, anonymous emails, or solicitations.
- I understand I am responsible for keeping my password, access credentials, and personal information (e.g., home addresses, phone numbers, credit card numbers) private.
- I will not access or use another person's accounts under any circumstances.
- I will not access computer files, folders, or any data on the Network without proper authorization.
- I will log out of any personal accounts when I am finished using community devices.

Data Management and Backup:

- I understand that I am responsible for maintaining and backing up my data.
- I should seek help from the Technology Department or a faculty member if I do not know how to back up my data.
- I understand that RCDS is not responsible for lost student work.

Content, Communication, and Citizenship:

- I understand that I am a part of the greater RCDS community and my actions, including online and offline communications, can affect the rest of the School.
- I understand that certain websites or online services directed to children under the age of 13, and websites or online services that collect personal information online from children under 13, including social media platforms, are regulated by federal law, the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA).
- I understand that any form of bullying or harassment – online or offline – is inappropriate and will not be tolerated by the School.
- I will be an upstander and report any inappropriate or questionable behavior I see online that may be perceived as damaging to the RCDS community or any individual to a faculty member or parent.
- I will not create, access, or store inappropriate or questionable content (including, but not limited to, anything with hateful, discriminatory, sexually explicit, violent, or harassing language). Inappropriate or questionable content also includes slogans and images involving references, subtle or otherwise, to alcohol, drugs, tobacco, and sex. If I encounter such content, I will report it to a faculty member or parent.
- I understand that my words have power and live forever when posted online.
- I understand that online behavior has offline consequences.
- I will not provide personal information about myself or other members of the RCDS community in any electronic format.
- I will always exercise caution about the identity of any unknown individuals and remember that unknown individuals involved in email and/or social media communications may not always be who they claim to be.
- I will take care to follow all copyright laws, including using only legally purchased or licensed software on computers, and be thoughtful about citations when using online references. If I am not sure about copyright restrictions, I understand that I am expected to ask a teacher or librarian for assistance.
- I will not download, copy, duplicate, and/or distribute copyrighted materials without the specific written permission of the copyright owner, unless the duplication and/or distribution of materials is for educational purposes and is permitted under the Fair Use Doctrine of copyright law.
- I understand that plagiarizing is prohibited in all circumstances and agree to properly cite electronic sources in my school work.
- I understand that I contribute to the health of the Network. I understand that the websites I visit, the applications I use, the links I click on, the emails I open, and the files I download can adversely affect the Network and others' ability to use it. I will only use the Network for legitimate academic purposes, and will not download large files, updates, or applications on the Network. I will not use the Network for entertainment, gaming, commercial, product advertisement, political lobbying or for-profit purposes.
- I will keep my notifications turned off for any apps installed on my laptop or device(s) during the school day.
- I will only use Airdrop and other file sharing apps with the permission of a faculty member.
- I will check my email frequently and regularly, albeit not in class, unless instructed by a teacher. I will respond to all email with an educational purpose in a timely and appropriate manner.
- I understand that any communication that is shared or viewed by others is treated as an extension of the classroom; therefore, all RCDS rules and regulations apply. Any violation of RCDS rules and regulations may be referred to an administrator. I acknowledge that I am responsible for periodically reviewing the Handbook to ensure I understand the behavioral guidelines.

Photo, Video, and Audio Recording:

- I will use the camera and microphone recording features on my laptop or device(s) appropriately.
- I will only take photos or make audio or visual recordings during School and School-sponsored activities with the permission of a RCDS faculty member or administrator and that such photos or recordings will only for a specific educational purpose or assignment.
- I will ask for others' permission before taking a picture or recording of them (both audio and video).
- I will ask others' permission before posting or sharing any digital media that incorporates their image, voice, or likeness.
- I will not alter the images or videos of others without their consent, including adding filters or text.
- I will delete a picture or recording of someone else when requested (both audio and video).
- I understand that I am not permitted to have photos or recordings of individuals without their permission and consent.

Distance Learning:

- I will abide by the same rules and guidelines that apply to the physical classroom in the virtual classroom, and agree to approach distance learning as if I am attending class in-person (appear presentable, wear appropriate attire, do not interrupt others, etc.).
- I understand that I must follow the video conferencing guidelines outlined by my teacher, the Deans, and the Principal, with regard to virtual backgrounds, naming, logging in, etc. Backgrounds and physical spaces captured in online and remote learning should not have vulgar or profane words or images. Backgrounds should be appropriate. For example, students should not be sitting in a bed, but should be setup at a desk or table.
- I will use any chat functions in an appropriate and respectful manner.
- I understand that any behavior that would not be tolerated in the physical classroom will not be tolerated in the virtual classroom.
- I understand that under certain circumstances, distance learning sessions may be recorded. As a result, my image, likeness and/or voice may be recorded and shared within the RCDS community for educational purposes.

Enforcement

Any student who is aware of any problem with the Network or RCDS-technology or who knows of any misuse of the Network or RCDS-technology is expected to immediately report such information to the Technology Department, a Dean, or the Principal.

Access to the Network and RCDS-technology is a privilege, not a right. Violating the letter or spirit of the Handbook or this RUP may be cause to limit or deny a student's access to the Network and RCDS-technology, and may result, even on a first offense, in disciplinary action up to and including suspension or expulsion. In addition, students must understand that use of the Network or RCDS-technology involving illegal activity will be reported to the appropriate law enforcement authorities. For more information about disciplinary actions, please refer to the applicable section of the Handbook.

Disclaimer

Pursuant to the Electronic Communications Privacy Act of 1986, notice is hereby given that there are no facilities provided by the Network for sending or receiving private or confidential electronic communications. Network administrators have access to and the ability to monitor all communications.

Communications relating to, or in support of, illegal activities will be reported to the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

- RCDS cannot guarantee that all controversial information will be inaccessible to students, and is not responsible for materials acquired from the Network, RCDS-technology, personal devices, and the Internet.
- RCDS is not responsible for supervising students' use of RCDS-technology and the Internet outside of school.
- RCDS may access students' correspondence, files or other information stored on the Network or RCDS-technology.
- RCDS may revise this RUP at any time, and will endeavor to promptly notify students and parents/guardians of any such revisions.

In summary, by signing the Student Handbook, I am acknowledging that:

- I read and understand the requirements of this RUP.
- I will be considerate and kind – on and offline.
- I will be aware that my digital footprint stays with me.
- I will be responsible for my own technology and data.

E-Safety Policy

The School incorporates online and remote learning programs in its curriculum and program. Online and remote learning sessions and communications should not be considered confidential and **may** be recorded. Recordings are made for the benefit of absent students and will be made available when appropriate to other members of the RCDS Community. Students are prohibited from (a) recording any part of any online and remote learning program, and (b) sharing, broadcasting, and/or making public any materials created or recorded by the School, its employees, or anyone else in relation to the School's online and remote learning programs.

School faculty, advisors, counselors, coaches, private lesson instructors, and administrators may provide virtual one-on-one meetings with students as appropriate. The School may seek to limit one-on-one interactions to those necessary to support the academic and social well-being of students and families.

All members of the School community are responsible for maintaining a safe online and remote learning environment. In that spirit, while the School will strive to support and ensure students' safety in the online and remote learning environment, students and their families are also expected to employ appropriate safeguards and manage risks appropriately.

Social Media

The School understands the desire of students to use social networking websites, Internet bulletin boards, blogs, chat rooms, and other online resources or websites (e.g., TikTok, YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, SnapChat) (collectively referred to as “Social Media”). Whether or not a student chooses to use Social Media is a decision the student should make in consultation with the student’s parents. However, to the extent that students, parents, or members of the School community represent the School to each other and to the wider community, participation in such Social Media should be done responsibly with a mind toward how both the forum where one chooses to participate and the content posted reflect on that person individually and on the School. Moreover, issues concerning respect for the privacy of students, copyrights, trademarks, and confidentiality of sensitive information are all important to understand *before* participating in Social Media. With the foregoing in mind, the School encourages students and parents to create an atmosphere of trust and individual accountability when accessing Social Media and the School’s network. Students are expected to comply with the policies outlined in the School’s Responsible Use Policy regardless of whether they are using School-provided equipment or their own personal devices.

Rollerblading and Skateboarding

Rollerblading and skateboarding are prohibited on campus.

Inappropriate Items/Weapons

Possession or use of explosive devices (including fireworks and firecrackers), a firearm, a pellet gun, a knife/pocketknife/penknife, or any other dangerous weapon, or toy that looks like a weapon (including any air or CO₂-cartridge BB gun) is prohibited. Certain types of weapons and fireworks are illegal in New York. Propelling any projectile at a motor vehicle, an unwilling or unsuspecting person, or a building, so as to endanger another, is considered reckless behavior and is also prohibited by the School.

V. EXPECTATIONS FOR INTERPERSONAL STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS

Commitment To Respectful and Healthy Relationships

The School is committed to providing a safe and healthy learning environment for all members of its community. Such an environment precludes behaviors that are disrespectful of, and physically and/or emotionally harmful to, others. All members of the School community play important roles in maintaining these standards and intervening, as appropriate, when they witness or otherwise become aware of behavior that conflicts with community standards.

Awareness and acceptance of individual identity are central tenets of the School. The School expects all members of the School community to treat others with civility, respect, and dignity and to interact (whether in person or electronically) politely and appropriately. Before acting, students should give careful consideration to how their communications – whether through words, appearances, actions, or otherwise – may negatively impact others.

All students are valued members of the School’s community, which presents unique opportunities to develop lasting partnerships with peers, faculty, and staff. The School strives to help students develop such close connections. However, the School expects these relationships to be appropriate and healthy. The School endeavors to promote this through education and intervention.

With these goals and interests in mind, as well as the legal requirements of the State of New York, the School has established policies to help students manage these interpersonal relationships safely and appropriately. Students and parents/guardians are encouraged to communicate with the Principal, the Assistant Principal, one of the Upper School Psychologists, or one of the Deans with any questions or concerns regarding these policies. The School believes that open communication about these sensitive topics is integral to preventing serious misconduct from occurring and essential to fostering a culture of personal responsibility, mutual accountability, and positive peer leadership.

Bullying, Harassment, Discrimination, and Sexual Harassment

The School does not tolerate verbal or physical behavior that constitutes bullying (including cyber-bullying), harassment or discrimination, hazing, and sexual harassment (collectively referred to as “interpersonal misconduct”). The School is dedicated to preventing interpersonal misconduct by fostering a positive school culture and providing a curriculum that encourages social skills development. We work to enhance students’ abilities to develop healthy relationships and to take positive action when they witness or experience any form of interpersonal misconduct. The School is also committed to promptly addressing any behavior that impedes the learning of any student or interferes with the experience of any other member of the School community.

Interpersonal misconduct is prohibited on the School’s campus and the property immediately adjacent to School grounds, on School vehicles and at School-sponsored events, activities, athletic contests, and off-campus trips. School-owned technology may not be used to intimidate, harass, threaten, or bully another student. In addition, interpersonal misconduct is prohibited at a location, activity, function, or program that is not School-related or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by the School, if such conduct: (a) creates a hostile environment at school for a student, (b) infringes on the rights of a student at school, or (c) substantially disrupts the educational process or the School’s orderly operations. Though interpersonal misconduct that occurs outside of the above locations may be outside of the School’s disciplinary reach, we still encourage families and

students to share potential incidents with a trusted staff member (as discussed in more detail below) if the School may need to have a heightened awareness of protecting students' safety while at school.

Definitions

Aggressor

A student, faculty/staff member, or other member of the community who engages in bullying (including cyber-bullying), harassment, discrimination, hazing, sexual assault, sexual harassment, or retaliation towards another person.

Bullying

Bullying is the creation of a hostile environment for a student at school by conduct or threats (whether verbal, written, or electronic expressions), intimidation or abuse that has or would have the effect of unreasonably and substantially interfering with a student's educational performance, opportunities or benefits, or mental, or emotional, or physical well-being. Bullying also includes conduct, verbal threats, intimidation, or abuse that reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause a student to fear for the student's physical safety or materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operations of the School.

Bullying, may include, but is not limited to:

- Epithets, slurs, quips, or negative stereotyping that relate to any of the categories below;
- Physical threats such as hitting, shoving, spitting or punching;
- Verbal bullying such as name calling, put-downs, threats, spreading rumors or lies;
- Social shunning that purposely leaves someone out of school activities or team sports;
- Hazing;
- Cyberbullying, including electronic comments posted in emails or instant messages, or on social networking sites such as Facebook or Twitter, or in blogs, etc.

The School recognizes that certain students may be more vulnerable to becoming targets of bullying or harassment based on actual or perceived differentiating characteristics, including race, color, weight, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, sexual orientation, mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics.

Bias

A bias-related incident occurs when language or behavior conveys prejudice against a target because of a dimension of the target's identity (race, color, national or ethnic origin, ancestry, gender, religion, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, or mental or physical disability, or any other applicable legally protected status).

Cyber-Bullying

Cyber-bullying is bullying through the use of technology or electronic communication. Cyber-bullying includes, but is not limited to: (a) the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person, and (b) the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation constitutes bullying conduct as defined above.

Cyber-bullying includes, but is not limited to, the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person, or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions included in the definition of bullying.

Harassment or Discrimination

Harassment or discrimination is behavior that is pervasive or severe and has the purpose or effect of: (a) creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment; (b) interfering unreasonably with a student's academic performance; or (c) creating a situation where academic decisions of a student depend on the student submitting to and/or not objecting to the behavior.

Harassment and discrimination can take many forms. Examples include, but are not limited to, limiting opportunities to participate in certain clubs, teams, or activities based on certain characteristics, as well as slurs, jokes, statements, remarks, questions, gestures, pictures, emails, texts, or cartoons regarding a legally-protected status that are derogatory or demeaning to an individual's or group's characteristics or that promote stereotypes. Harassment also includes sexual harassment (as defined below).

Hostile Environment

A hostile environment refers to a situation in which certain misconduct causes the School environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule, or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive so as to alter the conditions of a student's education.

Racial Discrimination

Racial discrimination is a type of discrimination (as defined above). Racial discrimination involves treating a target unfavorably because the target is of a certain race or because of personal characteristics associated with race (such as hair texture, skin color, or certain facial features). Racial discrimination can occur when the target and the person who inflicted the discrimination are the same race or color.

Retaliation

Retaliation is any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a student who reports misconduct (including, but not limited to, bullying, harassment, discrimination, or sexual harassment), provides information during an investigation, or witnesses and/or has reliable information about such misconduct.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is a type of harassment (as defined above). Sexual harassment includes unwilling and unwanted sexual attention, regardless of gender, from anyone with whom a person may interact in the course of attending the School or being present at School-sponsored activities.

Examples of behavior that may constitute sexual harassment include (regardless of whether the intent or consequence of such behavior is to make the target feel uncomfortable): (a) offensive body language (staring and/or leering at a person's body or standing/brushing too close); (b) offensive or unwanted sexual comments, abuse, jokes, or insults, delivered verbally or in writing; (c) derogatory or pornographic posters, cartoons, or drawings; (d) pressure for sexual activity (such as hazing or threats, as well as repeated requests after rejections); (e) offering favors or benefits in exchange for sexual acts, or

threatening mistreatment if one does not engage in sexual acts; and (f) offensive or unwelcome physical advances (including kissing, hugging, pinching, grabbing, groping, “playful” slapping, etc.).

Target

Any student against whom interpersonal misconduct or retaliation has been perpetrated.

Legal Definitions and School Policies

In accordance with the School’s mission, values, and standards of conduct, the School has supplemented and/or provided broader protections against bullying, discrimination, harassment, and other inappropriate conduct than may be required under applicable laws. In essence, the School’s standards may be stricter than the law, and the School may impose discipline accordingly. The School’s efforts to enhance its protection of students in no way expand an individual’s rights under applicable laws. Further, the School may modify and amplify the standards set forth above and use its discretion in the interpretative enforcement of all ideals and standards of conduct.

Reporting Complaints

The School encourages members of the community to be upstanders and report any behavior that is perceived as inappropriate. A student who is the target of interpersonal misconduct, or who has witnessed such an incident or any incident of retaliation, or who otherwise has relevant information about conduct prohibited by the School, is expected to report the matter promptly. This applies to in-person conduct that occurs on and off of School grounds, including locations such as field trips, athletic activities, and events for School clubs, as well as conduct that occurs through electronic communications, including social media, email, texts, phone and video conference. Even misconduct that occurs outside of School, during “personal time,” could have continuing effects in the School, and therefore is covered by the school’s policies.

Parents/guardians of a student who is the target of interpersonal misconduct, or of a student who has witnessed or otherwise has relevant information about such conduct, are urged to immediately to report the matter. Furthermore, any parent/guardian who has witnessed interpersonal misconduct, or has relevant information concerning such an incident or any incident of retaliation, is strongly encouraged to report it.

A complaint may be reported in a number of ways:

- The Complaint Form on the School Website (under Quicklinks);
- To any member of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee (DEIAC) via email or telephone (names and contact information of DEIAC members are available from the Director of Diversity and Inclusion);
- To the Complaints Management Officer (CMO) via email or telephone; or
- To any School Employee via email or telephone.

Any individual who receives a complaint will acknowledge receipt of the complaint, prepare a written summary of the complaint and promptly submit it to the Complaints Management Officer, and record the complaint in the Complaint Tracking System. The CMO will refer it to a Complaint Lead for follow-up and, if needed, investigation.

For more information, please refer to the Complaints Management Process as outlined on the RCDS website.

Protection from Retaliation

Individuals who bring complaints or concerns to the School's attention in good faith should do so without fear of reprisal. RCDS strictly prohibits retaliation against any individual who makes a complaint under the Policy, or who provides information or otherwise participates in an investigation relating to such complaints or reports. All individuals should promptly report any acts of perceived retaliation directly to their Division Principal, supervisor, supervising administrator, Assistant Heads of School, or the Head of School.

All complaints must be made in good faith (i.e., the complaint is a sincere and honest complaint of a suspected policy violation or misconduct). Complaints should never be filed in an attempt to harm or retaliate against others. If an investigation reveals that a student or parent/guardian knowingly or maliciously made a false complaint, the School will take all appropriate action, including disciplinary action.

Anonymous Complaints

Complaints can be made anonymously via the online Complaint form. Individuals leaving an anonymous complaint should be aware that failure to disclose identifying information about the identities of the parties involved or the facts and circumstances regarding the complained of conduct, issue, or incident (including the names of any witnesses) severely limits the School's ability to respond and remedy the effects of the misconduct. Anonymous reports that provide enough information to constitute suspected ongoing abuse or neglect of a minor will still be reported to child protective services and/or local law enforcement.

Requests for Confidentiality

Complainants may request that the School shield their identity from the individual they are accusing of misconduct. If an individual requests this type of confidentiality, the School will weigh the request against the School's obligation to provide a safe, non-discriminatory environment for all members of its community. The School will try to honor these requests, but it is not always possible to do so. Regardless of whether an individual requests confidentiality, the School will make every effort to prevent disclosure of the names of all the parties involved – the reporting individual, the Complainant, the witnesses, and the Respondent – except to the extent necessary to carry out an investigation.

Mandatory Reporting and Law Enforcement Notification

All employees of the School are required to immediately report any complaints which allege incidents of child abuse or neglect to Child Protective Services in accordance with the School's mandatory reporting policy. Therefore, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed when an individual makes a complaint to a School employee, including school counselors and the school nurse. Employees must report suspected abuse of both current students and former students or employees, no matter when they become aware of such concerns or allegations.

The School strongly encourages all individuals to seek assistance from a medical provider and/or law enforcement immediately after an incident involving violence, including sexual assault. The procedures under this Policy may run concurrently with any criminal justice or child protection investigation, and will only be subject to temporary delays at the specific request of law enforcement. Criminal investigations or reports or determinations made by child protection officials are not determinative of whether a violation of School policy has occurred.

If the School receives a complaint involving students from another school, the School may notify the appropriate administrator of the other school so that both may take appropriate action.

VI. DISCIPLINE GUIDELINES

Behavior and Student Responsibilities

All students at Rye Country Day School are expected to be **courteous, respectful, and responsible** in ways that are appropriate to the age level. We encourage the development of patience, empathy, and understanding in everyday interactions. We expect children to exhibit respect for every person with whom they come in contact, both at school and in the community.

Our basic guidelines are:

We show respect for and sensitivity to the needs and feelings of others.

Written or verbal put-downs, verbal or physical abuse, inappropriate language and email comments, bullying, talking back, and rudeness are examples of unacceptable behaviors.

We show respect for learning.

Students are expected to be respectful and courteous to all members of the RCDS community and its visitors and to contribute to a positive environment within the classroom.

We show respect for our environment.

Students are expected to use and enjoy the facilities and equipment in the ways that they are intended to be used. Classroom and recess equipment is readily available for all students, and they are responsible for returning those items for others to use.

We act in ways that promote safety for others and ourselves.

Students should be considerate of others at all times. Unsuitable and unsafe activities before and during school, at recess or dismissal, or on field trips and buses, will not be accepted. Behavior such as pushing, shoving, hitting, scratching, wrestling, and snowball throwing, as well as games such as DodgeBall, are forbidden. Running around and ball playing by the curb at dismissal time will be strictly prohibited. Weapons of any kind (as well as toys of any kind that resemble weapons) may not be brought to school at any time. All students are covered by Rye Country Day School's interpersonal misconduct policy. Behavior that endangers others, involves teasing or bullying, or is otherwise harassing in nature, will not be tolerated.

Disciplinary Procedures

As a Lower School, we embrace the Responsive Classroom philosophy, which uses the notion of "logical consequences" when responding to misbehavior. Students in the Lower School are learning not only academic subjects, but also appropriate behaviors for school. *Consequences are typically meant for the student responsible for violating the guidelines, and the School will respect the privacy of the student involved in disciplinary situations. Therefore, it will not always be obvious to the community at large what the School's response has been to a specific event.*

Consequences may include:

- Removal from the classroom, lunchroom, gymnasium, playing field or outside play area.
- Rescinding of privileges or restriction from special events.
- Mandatory meetings of parents and student with the teacher(s) and/or the Principal, and where appropriate, the school psychologist or other school personnel.
- Children being sent home.

Repeated, disrespectful behavior will be addressed in a most serious manner, which could include suspension, dismissal, or a decision not to re-enroll the student in the next year.

More Serious Disciplinary Cases

In more serious disciplinary cases, the Lower School Principal will recommend the student's case be placed before the Head of School and put through a more serious disciplinary process as determined by the Head of School, the Director of Counseling Support Services, the Lower School Principal, and the Lower School Psychologist.

VII. EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND SPECIAL EVENTS

Clubs

Optional after-school clubs will be offered later this year. The selections vary, and Lower School employees teach most of these programs. Information is sent home well in advance. Registration is done electronically and is on a first-come, first-served basis.

Extended Day Program

The Extended Day Program is open to students in K-Grade 4 of dual full-time working parents, single full-time working parents, and employees. This program is available from Monday-Friday, 2:50 - 6:00 p.m. once the full school day has begun. Our Extended Day program provides a safe and secure environment for our students after the school day has ended. Indoor and outdoor play are staples of the program, as well as the completion of homework with teacher support. A healthy snack is always provided. Students travel to classrooms to participate in special activities such as arts and crafts, science experiments, board games, robotics, yoga and more.

Private Music Lessons

- Private music lessons are offered in voice, piano, woodwinds, brass and percussion for students in Grade 4.
- Students in Grades K through Grade 3 who would like to take piano or voice lessons will be considered.
- Private voice instruction is primarily encouraged for older students and should be discussed with the private music teacher prior to registering.
- This year lessons will be offered virtually, and they will be scheduled outside of school hours.
- For more information, please contact John Ragusa, Private Lesson Coordinator at John_Ragusa@ryecountryday.org or (914) 925-4580

School Trips

In order for a student to participate in a School-sponsored trip, a parent must sign the permission and release forms provided by the School.

Parents/guardians should be aware that, on occasion, an employee may plan a trip for children that is not sponsored by the School but is a privately-run activity of the employee (e.g. by employees who are also parents and who are acting in that capacity). We cannot be responsible for activities that are not sponsored by the School. If there is any question about the School's responsibility for any particular trip, parents/guardians are invited to contact the Principal's Office or the Head of School's Office.

For some club or extracurricular trips, students either walk or take public transportation, and parents/guardians will be informed when this is the plan.

Concerts and Performances

Although the Lower School curriculum is not designed to be performance-oriented, from time to time, parents and guardians are invited to a musical concert, dramatic play, poetry reading, research demonstration, or other type of student presentation. The Lower School is committed to using these events as learning opportunities where students participate in ways that are appropriate to their experience and developmental level. Some of these events take place in the classroom; others occur in the Performing Arts Center, the PAC Foyer, Memorial Hall, or the Black Box Theater.

VIII. PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Lower School Physical Education

The goal of the Lower School Physical Education Program is for children to feel positive about themselves and their participation in physical activity, thus encouraging them to try new and varied activities. With clear safety practices set forth by the teachers, the students practice specific patterned movement skills to enhance their manipulative skills, develop spatial awareness, and broaden their movement repertoire.

Lifetime sports are also taught and include tennis, yoga, ice-skating, bowling, and fitness. During the winter months, students ice skate as part of the curriculum. In Grade 4, students have the option to play ice hockey. Throughout all activities, safety, cooperation, teamwork, and sportsmanship are emphasized. In addition to skill development, students participate in community events such as the American Heart Association's "Kids' Heart Challenge," the "Fun Run" that kicks off Wildcat Weekend in the fall, and the Lower School Field Day in May.

Sports Clothing and Equipment

Each Lower School student is to have *sneakers* at school for daily physical education classes. It is easiest if the student wears athletic-type shoes to school and does not have to take time to change shoes before and after physical education classes.

During the winter months, all students should bring ice skates and helmets with face masks on the days when they are scheduled to skate. These items are required to participate in our skating program. (Parents will be notified in November as to their child's scheduled times in the rink). It is prudent for Kindergarten or first-grade students to have helmets that have facemasks. Any fourth grader who plays hockey must have a hockey stick, a helmet with a facemask, and hockey gloves. There is some equipment at the school for students who do not have their own.

Head Injury/Concussion Policy

A "concussion" is a complex disturbance in brain function, due to direct or indirect trauma to the head, related to neurometabolic dysfunction, rather than structural injury. Most individuals who experience a concussion can recover completely as long as they do not return to play or return to learn prematurely. The effects of repeated concussions can be cumulative, and after a concussion, there is a period in which the brain is particularly vulnerable to further injury. If the individual sustains a second concussion during this period, the risk of permanent brain injury increases significantly.

As such, if you believe your child has suffered a concussion or has been diagnosed with a concussion, please contact the Health Office to follow appropriate protocols.

Medical and Other Excuses

Any student who is to be excused from physical education must bring in a medical excuse signed by a doctor and present it to the School Nurse. For the first day of an excused absence from physical education, a parent note is acceptable. For excused absences from physical education for more than one day, a doctor's note is necessary. Doctor's notes also must specify the date when the student can return to physical education; otherwise, a new doctor's note will be required.

IX. STUDENT HEALTH AND SUPPORT

School Nurses and Illness

There are two full-time School Nurses on campus. The School Nurses evaluate students who become ill during the school day and contact their parents as appropriate. Nursing services are provided during the school day from 7:45 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. The School Nurses are responsible for ensuring that all student medical forms are current and on file.

Diagnosis or treatment of health conditions is not the School's responsibility. If a student is injured during a school program, first aid will be administered, and if necessary, the student will be taken to the emergency room at a local hospital. Following emergency first aid, the student will be placed under the parents'/guardians' care, and the responsibility for subsequent treatment rests with them.

If a student becomes ill during the day, the School Nurse will call the student's parents to have the student picked up. If the student is exhibiting any symptoms which may be related to COVID-19, the student must be picked up promptly within one (1) hour from the call. If a student is ill at home with COVID-19, parents and guardians should expect routine phone calls from the Health Office to assess the student's level of wellness and to plan for a safe return to school. The School Nurse will also inform parents as to any required quarantine or isolation period. The School Nurse will review what documentation is needed for a safe return and what the projected date of return will be.

If a student is absent for more than a week for other non-COVID-19 related illnesses, such as a surgery, the student will need a doctor's note to return to school. A doctor's note is also required for a student to participate in athletics and physical education, if that student has sustained an injury or if the student's physical education program is to be restricted for more than several days. Physicians' notes should be forwarded to the Health Office.

Health Records and Forms

An Authorization To Treat And Share Health Information must be on file for every student. The School also requires proof of an annual physical examination from a licensed physician and proof of up-to-date immunizations for every student (please see below for a more detailed policy on immunizations).

Families are asked to provide the School with information about the student's physical and emotional health. In part, this information is obtained to comply with state law; it is also needed to keep the School well-informed of the health of all students. The School is sensitive to the privacy of this information. Please refer to the "Confidentiality" policy in this Handbook for more information about how this information is used.

- Before the start of the school year, parents are responsible for checking their child's Magnus account to confirm whether any health forms are due. All health forms are submitted to Magnus annually by parents/guardians. Each form may be printed by clicking on the "form icon" in each section. Please note that students' Magnus account also contains forms that are completed electronically once a year by the parent/guardian.
- Families may access Magnus either through a link on the Family Portal or via the MagnusMobileV2 phone app.
- All students in Grades PreK through 12 must have an up-to-date and completed Health Report and vaccine record. Students must also have an updated Health Report and vaccine record in order to try out for the interscholastic sports program and to participate in PreSeason. Students

may not participate in physical education or field trips without an updated Health Report and vaccine record on file.

- Parents/guardians of students in Grades 9 through 12 must submit Interval Health reports online, before the Fall, Winter, and Spring athletic season. Magnus will contact parents/guardians about the deadline concerning this New York State requirement.
- During the pandemic and for the 2021-2022 school year, New York State has suspended the testing of vision and hearing in schools. The responsibility for being informed as to the condition of students' vision and hearing will rest with parents/guardians and students' health care providers. Screening for scoliosis students' pediatrician is required for girls in Grades 5 and 7 and for boys in Grade 9, as noted on the RCDS health form.

Immunizations

In accordance with New York State law, the School requires all students to provide proof of up-to-date immunizations or a certificate of exemption before attending school. Proof of immunization should be recorded on a vaccine record or on the health forms submitted annually and signed by a medical professional. A student with a qualified medical exemption must provide the School with a Medical Immunization Exemption Certification signed by a medical professional, attesting that the student is exempt from a specific vaccine(s) because of medical reasons. Students who do not provide proof of up-to-date immunizations or qualify for an exemption will not be permitted to attend the School or participate in any School activities.

If there is a risk of a vaccine-preventable disease impacting campus or the School community, the School may exclude non-immunized students, including those with valid religious or medical exemptions, from school and all School activities. Excluded students will not be permitted to return until (1) the danger of the outbreak has passed; (2) the student becomes ill with the disease and completely recovers; or (3) the student is immunized. In determining whether there is a risk of a vaccine-preventable disease, the School may consult with appropriate medical professionals and/or the New York State Department of Health.

Communicable Illnesses

All contagious diseases must be reported to the Health Office by the parent/guardian as soon as a diagnosis is made. Please see the School's COVID-19 policy for additional requirements for suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 and exposures. If a student develops a strep or staph infection, conjunctivitis, fifth's disease, mono, coxsackie, or other infectious illnesses, please notify the School Nurse immediately. Please be aware that students must be on medication for 24 hours for conjunctivitis or a strep or staph infection and must also be fever-free for 24 hours before returning to school. A doctor's note will be required before the student returns to school.

For COVID-19, a PCR based COVID-19 negative test and a medical provider's note may be required for the student's to return to school, depending on the student's symptoms. If your child has a non-COVID-19-related illness, your child will need to stay home for 24 hours after any episodes of fever, diarrhea, or vomiting. The school nurse will call you to discuss your child's illness and a return-to-school date.

The School may exclude any student who (a) has a communicable illness, (b) has been exposed to an infected person, and/or (c) has traveled to an area impacted by a communicable illness, if the School determines, in its sole discretion, that such exclusion is appropriate for the welfare of the student or the School community. The School may also screen students or require students to be screened by appropriate medical professionals to determine whether they pose a risk to the community. The School's decisions shall be based on current and well-informed medical judgments concerning the illness, the risks of

transmitting the illness to others, the symptoms and special circumstances of each individual who has a communicable illness, and an analysis of the identified risks and available alternatives for responding to an individual with a communicable illness.

If and when appropriate, the School will disseminate information to students and families regarding campus health and safety issues through regular internal communication channels. For example, the School may provide families with information about the nature and spread of communicable illnesses, including symptoms and signs to watch for, as well as required steps to be taken in the event of an epidemic or outbreak. We encourage all parents and guardians to contact medical professionals with any questions or concerns about communicable illnesses or immunization issues.

COVID-19 Symptom Management Procedures

Illness at Home

Students exhibiting any of the following symptoms at home will require absence from school.

- Fever of 100.0°F or above via oral thermometer/temporal scanner at home or school
- Chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Sore throat
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Headache
- Congestion or runny nose
- New loss of taste or smell

Illness at School

If a student presents to the Health Office with COVID-19 symptoms (listed above), the student's parent/guardian will be contacted and asked to promptly pick up the student and their siblings. Parents/guardians are expected to make arrangements to have their students picked up within one (1) hour or as soon as possible.

The students will be separated from the rest of the student body in the School's isolation room until parent/guardian pick-up. Other household contacts attending RCDS will also be required to be picked up. The parent/guardian will pick up the student at the exterior door of the isolation room in the Lower School/PAC parking lot.

The parent/guardian will be advised by the Health Office to follow-up with a medical provider for evaluation and guidance and the need for COVID-19 testing (the same Health Office follow-up described in this section will take place in the case of a student staying home from school sick with COVID-19 symptoms).

The parent/guardian must inform the RCDS Health Office of any positive COVID-19 diagnosis. The Health Office is mandated to report diagnosed cases of COVID-19 to the Westchester County Department

of Health. The Health Office will follow NYSDOH guidelines and inform the parent/guardian of a projected date of the student's return.

For Return-to-School

The Health Office will advise the parent on an appropriate return-to-school plan. Depending on the clinical circumstances, the Health Office will require that parents/students submit various required documents. If your student has any symptoms which may be related to COVID-19, your student will be required to be evaluated by their health care provider. If they are determined not to have COVID-19, the parent/student will need to submit documentation of this visit, a PCR-based negative COVID-19 test result and be asymptomatic for 24 hours before returning to school. If your student tests COVID-19 positive, they may return to school once released from isolation per CDC and NYSDOH guidelines (this is generally a 10 day period, if your student's symptoms resolve) AND once approved by the Health Office. The Health Office will remain in close contact via phone/email with the student's parents/guardians to coordinate the student's date of return.

Exposure

If a student has had close or proximate contact with someone who has COVID-19 symptoms or who tests positive for COVID-19, the student will be required to quarantine for 10-14 days. The New York State Department of Health defines "close contact" as being within six feet of an infected person for at least 10 minutes during the period beginning 48 hours before the individual's onset of illness or positive COVID-19 test. The RCDS nurses will contact you to assess your student's level of wellness while they are quarantining and inform you of a projected date of return to school. Generally, the School follows the CDC and NYS travel testing and quarantining guidelines. The CDC and NYS travel guidelines are often subject to change. Please check with the Health Office regarding questions about these travel guidelines.

Medications at School

The School Nurse must be informed whenever a student is on medication. Parents are expected to attend to students' medication needs outside of school whenever possible; however, if a student must take a daily prescription medication, parents are expected to provide the School with a Permission to Medicate Form signed by the student's doctor and parent(s). The School Nurse, in collaboration with the parent/guardian and the student's physician, will establish an individualized medication administration plan for any students who must take medications at school.

Students may not bring, and will not be permitted to maintain, medicine of any kind (including cough drops) with their personal belongings. Students who use an inhaler and have written permission by the parent/guardian, physician, and School Nurse to self-administer it, may carry and use their inhaler independently at school. All other medications are administered to students by the Health Office.

All medications, including nonprescription drugs, given in school shall be prescribed by a licensed prescriber and given to the School Nurse in a properly-labeled original container accompanied by a doctor's note. A responsible adult should deliver medications to the School in a pharmacy or manufacturer-labeled container. The pharmacy should provide separate bottles for School and home. Medications should be picked up at the end of the school year. A duplicate dose of life-saving medication provided by the parent/guardian will be stored in the Health Office.

It is the sole responsibility of the parent/guardian to notify the School Nurse in order to update the student's medication administration plan with respect to any medication(s), dosing revisions, and health

status changes. The School will not assume any responsibility for students not in compliance with this medication policy.

Counseling Support Services

The School has a counseling office dedicated to supporting students' educational, social, and emotional needs while at school. This office includes the Director of Counseling Support Services and the School Psychologists and Counselors (collectively referred to as the School Counselors). In the Lower School, the Lower School Psychologist oversees and liaises with all Lower School Counseling Support Services. In certain situations, the School may require a Lower School student to see the Lower School Psychologist.

The goal of the counseling office is to fully support the community and to create a space where students can share their thoughts and feelings in a safe environment. The Lower School Psychologist's responsibilities include seeing individual students, making referrals for ongoing care and support, and advising the administration and employees when needed. In addition, the Lower School Psychologist leads whole class activities and discussions, small group discussions, and provides opportunities to discuss child development issues with parents or guardians. The psychologist organizes ongoing friendship groups at all grade levels. That direct work with students provides the psychologist with insights to the issues or topics that are important to the students at the various grade and developmental levels.

The Lower School Psychologist is part of a team of faculty members and administrators who collaborate with respect to students' educational experience at the School. As part of this collaborative effort, the Lower School Psychologist may share information obtained from parents and students on a "need-to-know" basis with other employees of the School and a student's parents. The Lower School Psychologist is not engaged as any student's private therapist. The Lower School Psychologist also works closely with the Learning Specialists, classroom teachers, and the Director of Diversity and Inclusion to make sure that all students' needs are being met. Please refer to the Confidentiality policy in this Handbook for more information.

Should the School determine, in its sole discretion, that it is in the best interest of a student to obtain services of a psychologist or other mental health professional not employed by the School, the Lower School Psychologist may assist in a referral for such services.

The Lower School Psychologist is also available to talk with parents on issues regarding their children and holds monthly parent discussion groups on various topics.

Other Counseling

The School maintains a list of referrals for educational, intellectual, psychological, or speech and language evaluations, should parents/guardians wish to consult with the School regarding such an evaluation. Parents who need guidance in this area are encouraged to consult the Head of School or the Lower School Psychologist. It is recommended that the results of such evaluations be shared with School personnel so that appropriate recommendations can be implemented.

Medical Leave

A medical leave from school may be appropriate in case of serious illness, bodily injury, or mental health condition, as determined in accordance with this policy. Decisions about granting or requiring a medical leave, or reinstating a student who has been on leave, rest with the senior administrators, the School

Nurse, the Director of Health & Wellness, and the School Counselor. They will be guided by the principal goal of a medical leave: to give the student the opportunity to regain health and thereby function consistently, productively, and safely at school. In the absence of a treatment plan that, in the School's opinion, meets these needs, the School may decline to grant a medical leave request, and instead require the student to withdraw.

A student's family may request medical leave. The School requires that any request for medical leave be accompanied by sufficient supporting documentation (as determined by the School) to allow the School to evaluate the leave request, including, but not limited to, at least the following information: (a) a recommendation from the student's treating medical professionals that the student would benefit from taking a medical leave; (b) a description of how the student's medical condition limits the student's ability to participate in required academic or extracurricular activities; (c) the plan for treatment of the student's medical condition; and (d) an anticipated date for the student's return.

Additionally, in certain situations, the School may require that the student be evaluated and subsequently placed on medical leave. The School may initiate a discussion of a leave of absence in circumstances including, but not limited to:

- When mental health or physical symptoms are or may be impeding a student from functioning appropriately academically;
- When a physical or mental health condition interferes with a student's attendance at school;
- When a student behaves in ways that may be self-destructive or dangerous to others;
- When a student is not engaged in treatment that the School has made a condition of attendance, after the student has been evaluated by medical and/or mental health professionals, who have deemed such treatment appropriate; or
- When a student exhibits symptoms or behavior that is of concern to the School.

This initial discussion may include senior administrators, the School Nurse, the Director of Health & Wellness, the School Counselor, the student's advisor, the parents, and the student, as deemed appropriate by the School. The purpose of this initial discussion is to establish the steps that the family is taking to ensure that the student is well enough to participate fully in life at school; and the further steps that the School may require if the situation does not improve.

The School may require the family (parents and student) to enter into a medical leave agreement detailing the parameters of any leave. The agreement may include conditions and requirements for the student's return to school. While a student on leave is excused from attending class, the student must make arrangements to make up missed work either while on leave (if possible) or upon return. While the School will strive to minimize academic disruption, the School may require that a student drop a course or courses if a prolonged absence will make it difficult for the student to satisfactorily complete the requirements of the course. To return to school from a medical leave, a student must provide a thorough, written professional evaluation of the student's current mental health and/or medical condition from the physician, psychiatrist, or other professional who treated the student during the medical leave. The School may require additional evaluation by a physician or mental health consultant of its choosing. The guiding principle of re-admission from a medical leave is the School's confidence that the student can return safely; and that the student's return will not compromise the student's continued recovery, interfere with the School's ability to serve other students' needs, or place an undue burden on the School. The decision regarding any student's return to the School from a medical leave rests with the School. As a corollary to this principle, a student whom the School determines can safely participate in the regular school day may nevertheless be restricted from participation in overnight field trips or other residential-style School activities.

Food Allergies

RCDS is committed to providing a safe and healthy learning environment for all students. In order to ensure that such an environment exists at school, it is imperative that the RCDS community be aware of and sensitive to various food allergies that are life-threatening to some students and employees. Parents of students who have severe allergies with the potential for developing anaphylaxis are encouraged to discuss their student's health needs with the School Nurse to develop an Action Plan *prior to the start of the school year*. Classroom management will be discussed at that time. This plan must be reviewed prior to the start of each school year.

In consideration of the number of students with food allergies, the School has the following guidelines for management of these allergies:

- Products containing nuts and peanuts may not be brought onto the School campus;
- Food prepared by the dining commons staff is nut and peanut free;
- Food prepared by the dining commons staff will be labeled regarding allergens;
- Sharing of food is prohibited;
- Frequent and appropriate hand washing will be encouraged;
- Surfaces will be cleaned to prevent cross-contamination;
- Snacks provided for the entire class will be prepackaged, commercially prepared, unopened, and have an ingredient label indicating there are no nuts or peanuts; and
- For students with severe allergies, the School will be provided with an Emergency Care Plan written by a primary care provider or allergist with parental input.

Successful management of food allergies is the jointly-held responsibility of the School, families, and students. Education encompasses the entire School community including employees, parents, and students. It focuses on preventive strategies, the symptoms of anaphylaxis in individual students, and emergency care. We recognize that the management of food allergies is a developmental process, and we strive to take reasonable measures to protect our youngest students, while recognizing that students should learn to assume increasing responsibility for their own health and safety as they mature.

Asthma Management

Parents of students with asthma should contact the School Nurse prior to the start of school to discuss an asthma management plan.

Health Emergencies

Diagnosis or treatment of health conditions and injuries that occur on non-school time is not the School's responsibility. If a student is injured during a school program, first aid will be administered, and if necessary, the student will be taken to the emergency room at a local hospital. Following emergency first aid, the student will be placed under the parents'/guardians' care, and the responsibility for subsequent treatment rests with them.

In the event of a serious emergency, an ambulance may be called and the student may be taken to the nearest hospital emergency room. Emergency situations arising on campus will generally be referred to White Plains Hospital or Greenwich Hospital.

Please remember, it is most important that the School have current home, work, and mobile phone numbers for parents/guardians, day care providers, or others (relatives, friends, or neighbors) who routinely assume temporary care of the student if the student's parent(s) cannot be reached.

X. GENERAL SCHOOL POLICIES

Student Media Information

In order to portray its program accurately and vibrantly, the School makes a concerted effort to highlight the accomplishments of our students and faculty, as well as to publicize the strength of the entire program offered by the School, in a variety of media formats. Student Media Information—including student names, photographic images (for example, portrait, picture, video, or other reproductions), audio recordings of students’ voices, video recordings of students, and/or reproductions of students’ work and likenesses—may be used for educational and/or promotional purposes in print and electronic media. Outlets for publication of Student Media Information may include, but not be limited to, the School magazine, marketing materials, the School website, press releases, social media outlets (including, but not limited to, Facebook and Twitter), newsletters, and local newspapers.

While the School strives to abide by parent/guardian wishes, we do not guarantee use of a student’s name or image will never occur. Parents are asked to contact the School if they would like to opt out of the use of Student Media Information.

School Directory

The School has a directory of class lists and contact information for families, faculty and staff, and other members of the community. The Directory is updated each September and made available to families in print and online. The Directory may only be used for School purposes, and not for personal or commercial purposes. Failure to properly use the Directory may result in restricted use and other consequences, as determined appropriate by the School.

Confidentiality

The School seeks to provide students with a safe environment in which they feel comfortable and to create an atmosphere of trust. Members of the School community commit themselves to maintaining appropriate professional tact and discretion with regard to confidential information they receive. However, confidential information may be disclosed to the Head of School; appropriate administrators, faculty, and staff; outside professionals; law enforcement officers; parents/guardians; and others when there is a compelling reason for doing so, including, without limitation, in cases of health and safety emergencies (when students or others are in imminent danger of harm); when there is concern about a student’s ability to function academically, emotionally, physically, and/or mentally within the School environment; or when legal requirements demand that confidential information be revealed.

Visitors to Campus

For the safety of our students, our Visitor Pass policy includes parents, family members, alumni, and visitors from outside of the School community. Upon arrival, all visitors are requested to check in with the Main Office to obtain a Visitor’s Pass. Special events for an entire class and all School meetings are exceptions to this policy.

Pets on Campus

Family pets need to be left at home at all times for health and safety reasons. They should not be in attendance during the school day or at special occasions. No matter how gentle and beloved, we do not want a dog, cat, ferret, bird, or any other pet introduced into a classroom, hallway, or play area where a student may have severe allergies or fears that can be triggered by the presence of animals.

Background Checks

With student safety as a priority at the School, the School conducts fingerprint-based state and national criminal history and sex offender registry checks on all current and prospective employees who may have direct and unmonitored access to children, including any individual who regularly provides school-related transportation to students.

The School requires any volunteers who will work independently/unsupervised with students to undergo a state and national criminal history and sex offender registry checks. It is also School policy to require that volunteers with direct and unmonitored access to students undergo a fingerprint-based check, which is run through the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and provides access to national criminal history databases. Examples of the types of volunteer activities requiring a background check include, but are not limited to, field trips and tutoring students one-on-one. A background check is typically not necessary for parent volunteers involved with larger School functions at which many adults are typically present or in instances where there is only the potential for incidental unsupervised contact with students in commonly used areas of the School grounds.

These background checks require the completion of a brief application form and verification of a government-issued photographic identification, and are only conducted with the consent of an individual employee or volunteer. A volunteer's service, and an individual's employment, is contingent upon successful completion of the checks, which may take several days or weeks to process.

Completed background check forms must be returned to the Business Office at least two weeks in advance of volunteering.

Appropriate Boundaries Between Students and Employees

The following guidance is designed to ensure that appropriate boundaries between students and employees are maintained. This guidance supplements, and does not replace, other rules and policies set forth in the Employee Handbook. Because it is impossible to anticipate all potential situations, the information below is described as "guidance" rather than "rules" or "policies," because there may be occasions in which exceptions are permissible, though any exceptions should truly be rare and easily justifiable.

In addition, the guidance below is intended to provide examples of the type of situations in which employees need to be conscious of maintaining boundaries with students. It is not an exhaustive list of such situations, and all employees need to exercise careful judgment in any situation involving students to ensure that proper boundaries are maintained.

Employees of the School:

- Should not engage in any type of behavior that might have the appearance of impropriety if observed by others.
- Should avoid being alone with a student. For example, employees should not be alone with students in a non-public space or inside a room with a closed door. Coaches and other athletic

employees should not be alone with a student when engaging in otherwise permitted physical contact such as when teaching a skill. It is understood that teachers may meet with their students for educational purposes outside of classroom time and that some of those meetings will involve one-on-one meetings. Such private meetings with a student should, whenever possible, occur in a public space or in a room or office with the door open or in a place where the meeting is visible from the outside.

- Should not discipline students in any physical manner.
- Should not lavish attention on a particular student, including giving inappropriate gifts.
- Should not converse with students about their sexual lives except for an educational, health, or safety-related purpose, nor should they reveal details of their own sexual lives or romantic relationships to students.
- Should not reveal other inappropriate details about their personal lives to students.
- Should not inappropriately “hang out” with students outside of school or spend an inordinate amount of time “hanging out” with students even inside school. Adults at the School should always remember they are not the students’ “friends” and therefore should not be engaging in peer-like behavior with the students.
- Should never provide alcohol or drugs to a student, nor permit a student to drink or use drugs in their presence. An employee should never drink or use drugs in the presence of a student, except on the rare occasion of a School-sponsored event at which the school provides alcohol to adults in attendance. Needless to say (but said here for emphasis) any such drinking should be in moderation.
- Should not have extended physical contact with a student. Any such contact should be limited to a supportive, congratulatory, or quick hug, arm squeeze, or pat on the back. If a student engages in repeated and/or prolonged physical contact with a School employee, the adult in question should clearly and firmly discourage such behavior, and if the student persists, the adult should involve a supervisor to assist the employee in handling the situation.
- Should not engage in physical horseplay, roughhousing, or other inappropriate physical games with a student.
- Should not direct a student to keep a secret from, or not share information with, the student’s parents/guardians or other School employees.
- Should not tutor a student in the student’s home without the student’s parent or guardian present. In addition, School employees should not tutor students in the employees’ homes unless another adult is present and the student’s parent/guardian has given permission.
- Should not allow students to ride in the employees’ personal cars without written (email will suffice) permission from a parent/guardian and approval from the appropriate school principal. In addition, employees should not ride in students’ cars.
- Should not be present at a student’s home when a parent/guardian/caregiver/babysitter is not present, whether for a social gathering or otherwise. In addition, employees should not invite students to their homes without approval from the appropriate school principal and written parental/guardian consent (email can suffice). Employees should never have only one student alone at their home, nor should the employees have students to their home at all unless there is another adult present and the appropriate authorizations are obtained.
- During any and all overnight trips and sleepovers, should not be alone with a student in their room, should sleep in a separate room, should not invite a student to sleep in their room, and should not be inside a student’s room when a student is sleeping or changing.

Anyone who believes a boundary has been crossed should bring such information to the appropriate school Principal, who will then be responsible for addressing it with the employee. Information that a boundary may have been crossed that comes to the attention of the School will be followed up on by others, including the Head of School and communicated with the student’s parent(s)/guardian(s). Oftentimes, boundaries are crossed inadvertently and require nothing more than a reminder to the

employee to maintain a boundary in the future. Other times the crossing of a boundary is indicative of a more serious problem and may indicate an inappropriate relationship.

These boundary guidelines are not applicable if the employee is the parent, guardian, or sibling of the student in question.

Security, Emergencies, and Drills

RCDS takes the safety of its students and the community very seriously. There are systems in place in the event of an emergency on campus, and regular drills are conducted to make all those on campus aware of the procedures.

Emergency Preparation

RCDS has a thorough Emergency Preparation Plan that includes procedures for mid-day emergency dismissals from school for snow, extended power outages, and other unexpected events. If there is the need to implement the emergency dismissal procedures, families will be contacted (parent/guardian or emergency contact) to inform them of the emergency dismissal and to confirm the plans for transportation from school. No student will be dismissed from school during an emergency dismissal without such contact and confirmation.

Surveillance Cameras on Campus

The School has installed video cameras at certain open and public spaces on campus, such as all official entrances to the School's campus, as well as at key campus crossroads. The School seeks to balance the security, safety, and other benefits derived from the use of video surveillance with any privacy concerns of the School's employees, students, families, and guests. In all cases, security equipment is used in a manner that adheres to legal statutes and ethical standards where the right of privacy is concerned and is not used where there exists a reasonable expectation of privacy, such as in restrooms, locker rooms, etc. In addition, all entrances to the School's campus are posted with signs notifying School community members and other visitors that there are video surveillance cameras actively in use on campus. These surveillance cameras record visual footage in each location, but do not record any sound or other audio.

Search and Seizure

The School may conduct a search of a student and/or the student's belongings, including personal items, such as bags and backpacks, personal electronic devices, and other effects, if the School suspects a student may be violating the law or violating a School rule or code of conduct. Lockers are the property of the School. Students exercise control over their lockers from other students, but not from the School and its officials. As a result, the Head of School and the Head's designees, as well as law enforcement officials, may search lockers as the School determines may be appropriate, which may include random searches. The School and law enforcement officials may seize items that may jeopardize the safety of others or property, or constitute a health hazard.

Parking on School premises is a privilege, not a right. As such, any person who operates a vehicle on School property or in connection with any School-related activity is agreeing that the School may inspect and search the vehicle and its contents without notice and without further consent.

Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting

RCDS is committed to the highest standards of care for our students and seeks to ensure that our students are protected from inappropriate or hurtful actions by adults responsible for their care, as well as by anyone else who may mistreat a student. In accordance with New York State law, all School employees are required to report suspected abuse or neglect of any student under age 18.

New York State law requires any person suspecting that a child has been abused or neglected to report such suspicion immediately to New York Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment (SCR), a division of Child Protective Services (CPS). Suspicion or belief may be based on factors including, but not limited to, observations, allegations, facts, or statements by a child, a victim, or a third party. Such suspicion does not require certainty or probable cause. The responsibility to report rests both on the School and also on all School employees. While a School employee may wish, and is indeed encouraged, to consult with the Head of School prior to making a report of suspected child abuse or neglect to SCR, all employees are required to report their reasonable suspicions to SCR, even if the Head of School may not agree with the employee's concerns.

Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act

This notification is required by the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA, 40 CFR Part 763 of Title II of the Toxic Substances Control Act). Asbestos Management Plans have been developed for the School. These plans are available and accessible to the public at the School's Facilities Department.

This notification is required by law and should not be construed to indicate the existence of any hazardous conditions in our school buildings.

XI. FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

Parental Comportment and Support for School Policies

At RCDS, we believe that a positive relationship between the School and a student's parents or guardians is essential to the fulfillment of the School's mission. We recognize that effective relationships are characterized by clearly-defined responsibilities, a shared commitment to collaboration, open lines of communication, mutual respect, and a common vision of the goals to be achieved.

The School understands and appreciates that parents and guardians may employ different means to meet the expectations and responsibilities expressed in this policy. Nevertheless, RCDS, at all times, may dismiss a student whose parent, guardian, family member, or other adult involved with the student, in the sole judgment of the School, fails to comply with this or any other policy or procedure of the School, engages in conduct either on or off the School's property that could undermine the authority of the School's administration, and/or otherwise behaves in a manner that is unbecoming of a member of the School community. The School may refuse re-enrollment of a student if the School believes the actions of a parent or guardian on or off the School's property make a positive, constructive relationship impossible, or otherwise may interfere with the School's accomplishment of its mission and/or educational goals.

To assist in creating the most effective relationship, the School expects that parents will observe the following guidelines:

1. Share in the School's vision.

- Support the mission of the School.
- Understand and support the School's philosophy, policies, and procedures.
- Support the School's disciplinary process, and understand that the School's authority in such matters is final.
- Be supportive of the School's commitment to a diverse and inclusive community.
- Acknowledge that the payment of tuition is an investment in the education of the student, not an investment of ownership in the School.
- Support the School's emphasis on sustainable practices.

2. Provide a home environment that supports the intellectual, physical, and emotional growth of the student.

- Create a schedule and structure that supports a student's study and completion of homework requirements.
- Be aware of the student's online activities and use of computers, television, and video games.
- Encourage integrity and civility in the student.
- Be a role model, especially when it comes to behavior at School and at athletic events.
- Encourage the student's participation in events that promote high standards; actively discourage participation in events that can lead to illegal or unwise behavior.

3. Participate in the establishment of a home/School and School community relationship built on communication, collaboration, and mutual respect.

- Provide a home environment that supports positive attitudes toward the School.
- Treat each member of the community with respect, assume good will, and maintain a collaborative approach when conflicts and challenges arise.

- Help build and maintain a positive School environment by not participating in or tolerating gossip.
- Maintain tact and discretion with regard to confidential information. In cases when students or others are in imminent danger of harm, when there is a compelling reason for doing so, or when legal requirements demand that confidential information must be revealed, information may be disclosed to the Head of School, administrators, outside professionals, or law enforcement officers.
- Respect the School's responsibility to do what is best for the entire community, while recognizing the needs of an individual student.
- Seek to resolve problems and secure information through appropriate channels (i.e., teacher/advisor/counselor, Head of School, in that order).
- Acknowledge the value of the educational experience at the School by making regular and timely School attendance a priority and scheduling non-emergency appointments outside the classroom day.
- Support the School through volunteerism and attendance at School events.
- Share with the School any religious, cultural, medical, or personal information that the School may need to best serve students and the School community.
- Understand and support the School's technology policies.

Family-School Communication

We value open lines of communication between parents and school. Grade-level newsletters are sent by email. From time to time, questions or concerns may arise. It is important to the relationship between home and school that proper channels of communication be respected and followed. *Questions that relate to classroom practices and procedures, or curriculum, should be addressed directly to the teacher responsible before being brought to the Principal.* Dr. Sotirhos is available if further assistance is needed, or if the question is more general in nature.

During the school day, between 8:00 a.m. and 3:00p.m., a teacher will not be available for phone calls, unless it has been prearranged. If you email a teacher, *do not assume that the teacher will read it during school hours.* Please understand that employees are teaching between 8:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. so they will not be checking emails or phone messages until after dismissal. If you must contact the teacher, please call the Lower School Office and your message will be relayed to the teacher. You may also leave a voice message for employees by calling their voicemail directly.

The RCDS phone numbers are listed in the RCDS directory. Should you choose to communicate by email, the employees' addresses are first name_last name@ryecountryday.org. In general, employees are expected to respond to phone calls and emails by the next business day.

Parent-Teacher Communication and Conferences

Parent conferences are held twice per year (please see the School calendar for dates) and are extremely important forums for teachers and parents to exchange information about student progress. Students may sometimes participate in these conferences when specifically agreed upon by the teacher and parent in order to maintain effective, direct communication among teacher, parent, and student. The School also may require parents to meet separately or together, as the School determines appropriate. Additional conferences may be scheduled at the request of parents or teachers at any time during the school year.

Current Family Contact Information

Parents are expected to keep the School informed of contact information for emergency situations. If a parent is going to be away from home for an extended length of time, please leave a forwarding address and telephone number where the parent can be reached, as well as information regarding who will be responsible for the student and how they may be reached in case of illness or other emergencies.

Multiple Households

In order for the School to communicate most effectively with parents and support each student, teachers and administrators need to be aware of students who spend time in multiple households. Additionally, information regarding who the primary caregiver is should be communicated to the School, in the event of an emergency, and whether special co-parenting arrangements exist. If there are court-ordered guidelines regarding visitations, picking up a student from school, parent involvement in field trips, or other issues, the School should be informed.

The School expects separated or divorced parents to cooperate and partner with the School with respect to their child's education. For this reason, the School will not get involved in parental disputes or custody issues.

These situations can be stressful for parents and confusing for students, and assistance in minimizing the School's phone calls for clarification is very important. Unless otherwise specified, the School will generally communicate with any parent for whom the School has current contact information and may provide the parent with copies of the student's report card, as well as other informational mailings and electronic communications during the year.

School Gatherings Off Campus (Not Sponsored by the School)

In the younger grades, party invitations should not be delivered or discussed at School unless all classmates are included. The misuse of party invitations in a school setting can be very hurtful to students. The invitations themselves can offer all parents an important teaching opportunity with students on considering the feelings of others. No one likes to be excluded, and often parties create these feelings in students who are not a part of the celebration.

It is important to remember, through their quest for acceptance from peers and their desire for greater independence, that students still need clear boundaries and guidance, and the following section provides some ideas to consider. They are designed to be practical and, more importantly, are based on the values that we, as a school, stand for as part of our mission. In this sense, we hope that all our parents will support these in spirit, if not in letter.

1. Always be at an event or party in your own home.

- The parents should be the greeters. During the party, parents should casually make their presence known.
- Have the party in a part of the house where the guests will be comfortable and where you can maintain adequate supervision.
- Be the ones to bring in the food and beverages. This will keep the party running smoothly, and it will allow you to meet your child's friends.
- Occasionally walk around outside.

- 2. Clearly establish ground rules and expectations with your child before the party takes place (before your child goes to any social event).**
 - Let students know your expectations: they want guidelines, though you may hear something quite different.
 - Give students options, but with clear guidelines. Discuss their responsibilities and discuss what the consequences are for inappropriate behavior and what the rewards are for appropriate behavior.
 - Stress the concept of shared responsibility.
 - Parents should take the responsibility of “playing the heavy,” if there is inappropriate behavior.
- 3. Make sure there is plenty of food and non-alcoholic beverages and plan activities.**
- 4. If your child is invited to a party, you should contact the parent giving the party and:**
 - Verify the location.
 - Verify that parents will be present.
 - Verify the starting and ending time.
 - Offer assistance (*e.g.*, chaperone, food, etc.).
 - If there is to be a sleepover, find out what the ground rules will be.

If parents must be away for any length of time, make arrangements for quality supervision in the home to ensure that parents, students, and the home are protected. Too many parties occur in homes when parents are away. Let the School and neighbors know if parents are away.

Parents Association

The Rye Country Day School Parents Association (the "PA") is a parent-governed organization representing parents and guardians of Rye Country Day School students. The PA is headed by an Executive Committee and is organized into four areas: Community Building, Enrichment, Fundraising, and the Liaison and Host Family Network.

The PA's overall mission is to help foster a sense of community amongst our parents and guardians while encouraging engagement with the School and working in partnership with the School for the benefit of the whole community.

Specifically, the PA strives to:

- build a warm and welcoming community among parents;
- facilitate communication between parents and the School; and
- raise funds for scholarships, PA activities, and other vital programs at RCDS.

Annual Fund and Fundraising

As with all independent schools, tuition revenue alone does not cover the full cost of Rye Country Day's annual operating budget. The Annual Fund helps to bridge this budget gap, and contributes vital funds to academic programs, need-based financial aid, teacher compensation, and other expenses. We ask all members of the School community, including families, alumni, parents of alumni, grandparents, faculty and staff, and friends to make a contribution each year.

XII. ENROLLMENT AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Enrollment Contracts

Enrollment contracts are typically sent to families in late January. Students may not attend classes unless a properly executed-enrollment contract is submitted to the School in a timely manner. Enrollment contracts will be sent to returning students only if the School is generally satisfied with the student's academic performance and behavior. Please see the Re-Enrollment Policy for additional information.

Unless Tuition Refund Insurance is purchased and the Insurance covers the tuition, once an enrollment contract has been signed and accepted by the School, as of June 1, parents are responsible for the full tuition for the academic year, regardless of the reason for withdrawal. Please see the Handbook's Tuition Refund Plan Policy for additional information.

Tuition Assistance

Our School community is committed to helping families effectively meet the cost of the School education to the extent that the School's resources permit. Families who demonstrate that their financial resources are insufficient to pay the full cost of tuition are eligible to apply for financial assistance. To apply for financial assistance or receive additional information about financial aid, parents should visit the RCDS website. Hard copies of the financial assistance packet are also available from the Business Office. Additional information is available on the School's website.

Tuition Payment Policy

Tuition for the first half of the school year is due on July 1. No pupil will be permitted to attend school unless either the entire tuition for the first half of the year is paid or a suitable arrangement for such payment has been established with the Business Office.

Tuition for the second half of the year is due on January 1. If tuition remains outstanding after that time, a student may not be allowed to continue to attend, at the discretion of the School.

Optional tuition insurance information is included with each student re-enrollment agreement.

Student Accident Insurance

The School provides parents with an opportunity to participate in the required Student Accident Plan. Information about the plan is included with enrollment materials.

Sibling Enrollment

Qualified children of faculty/staff and qualified sibling candidates may be given admission priority, but the School may give highest priority to motivated students demonstrating solid academic achievement or promise, and to those whose values and citizenship reflect their capacity to make a meaningful contribution to the School community. These applicants are expected to meet the same criteria as other students in terms of both readiness and behavior. To maintain balance at each grade level, the gender of the sibling may affect preference status.

Current families who are interested in applying for a sibling are urged to contact the Admissions Office in September. Applications for admission, from both current and new families, must be submitted by the

published due dates. Enrollment decisions, regardless of a family's prior or current relationship with the School, are always made in the School's sole discretion.

Continued Enrollment

The School has the right to suspend or terminate the enrollment of a student at any time. Such a suspension or termination may result where: (i) a student fails to abide by the rules and regulations of the School; (ii) the School determines that a student's conduct or performance demonstrates an unwillingness or inability to be productive within the school community; or (iii) the School determines that the continued attendance of a student is not in the best interest of the student or the School.

The School may also terminate or refuse re-enrollment to a student whose parent or guardian fails to cooperate with the School or engages in conduct evidencing manifest disregard of school policies or rules, particularly where such conduct endangers the health, safety, or welfare of anyone in the school community on or off the school grounds.

Re-Enrollment

The Head of School reviews the academic and behavioral records of students at the end of each school year. A decision to re-enroll a student and to subsequently forward a re-enrollment contract to the parents is based upon a student's academic record, effort, attitude, and behavior throughout the prior year, and upon the willingness of the parents to accept and exemplify their responsibility in the partnership of education. On occasion, re-enrollment contracts are held until later (usually April or May) when the School decides that an appropriate decision about placement can be made, or are not extended at all, if the School determines that such a recommendation is in the best interest of the student and/or the School community. The Head of School makes the final decision as to whether a student will be invited to return for another year.

This difficult conclusion is only reached after careful consideration. While parents are obviously involved in this process, the School will make the ultimate decision, and will assist, if possible, in the process of locating an appropriate alternative school.

Leave of Absence

Should a student's extended absence from school be necessary or desired, a leave of absence may be appropriate. A leave for medical reasons will be handled in accordance with the School's Medical Leave policy. The School may recommend or grant a request for a voluntary leave of absence for other compelling reasons. The initial request for a voluntary leave of absence should be made to the Principal and Head of School. The School requires sufficient supporting documentation prior to the approval of any leave. The sufficiency of any supporting documentation will be determined by the School.

The School makes the final determination as to whether to grant a leave of absence, as well as the duration of the leave and the conditions necessary for a student's return (including, but not limited to, whether the student must reapply for admission). Whether the period of leave is counted towards academic requirements for promotion and graduation will be determined by the School.

Leaves of absence may be noted in the student's educational record, including on the student's transcript. A leave of absence will not be used in lieu of disciplinary action to address violations of the School's code of conduct, rules, or policies. Additionally, a student granted a leave of absence while on academic and/or disciplinary status may return on that same status.

Families remain financially responsible for tuition and other fees while the student is on a leave of absence.

Family Leave

Families who take a leave of absence from the School of a year or more must apply to the School for readmission. The student will be considered on a space-available basis, as well as within the context and competition of the applicant pool for the student's grade level. Strength of the applicant's file is important, including a strong finish to the student's last year at the School, as well as a strong record of academic performance and citizenship while the student is away. Ultimately, the School cannot predict the number of openings or competitiveness of applicant pools for specific grade levels, and given the School's high enrollment, there is never a guarantee of readmission for the following year. Applications for admission, from both current and new families, must be submitted by the due date set by the Office of Admissions. Enrollment decisions, regardless of a family's prior or current relationship with the School, are always made in the School's sole discretion.

APPENDIX: COVID-19 PROTOCOLS

Policies and procedures that are specifically applicable to Rye Country Day School students and families throughout the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic and related public health emergency (the “COVID-19 Protocols”) are posted on the School website at <https://www.ryecountryday.org/reopening>. If any other policy in the *Parent-Student Handbook* conflicts with the COVID-19 Protocols set forth on that page, the policies and procedures set forth on that page shall control. In other words, RCDS students and families should follow the COVID-19 Protocols described therein.

Government and public health guidelines and restrictions, as well as business and industry best practices regarding the COVID-19 virus, are changing rapidly. RCDS has developed the COVID-19 Protocols to promote a safe campus and culture, ranging from health and safety norms and social distancing and de-densification guidelines to detailed health policies and procedures specifically designed to limit the transmission of the COVID-19 virus. These protocols will be updated as appropriate in response to changed circumstances or in accordance with new government and public health guidance. RCDS may modify the protocols and by extension any of the policies in this *Parent-Student Handbook* at any time, with or without notice, to adapt to changing circumstances and community needs, consistent with its commitment to maintaining a safe and healthy school environment.