

The Riverside School

K-8 Family Handbook



2025-2026

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INTRODUCTION

The Riverside School Family Handbook sets forth general expectations regarding the students' and families' enrollment at school, but does not constitute a contract between them and the school. This copy of our handbook supersedes prior versions. Riverside reserves the right to modify, change, suspend, or cancel, at any time, without prior notice, any part or portion of the contents of this Handbook.

MISSION

The mission of The Riverside School is to develop active learners, patient leaders, and engaged citizens in a supportive community.

PHILOSOPHY

The Riverside School is dedicated to the ideal that children be involved, enthusiastic participants in their education. We nurture and encourage curiosity, creativity, and individuality, and we instill in students an appreciation for hard work. We believe that children can learn to be strong, effective leaders, and we are committed to developing in our students the skills necessary to take on leadership roles. We believe that students must be aware of and be active in the broader world around them in order to become ethical and compassionate members of society. Support for our students' growth as learners, leaders, and citizens must come from every element of the Riverside community, both in and out of the classroom; therefore, we value and rely on the deep involvement of parents, faculty, staff, and administration in the development of our students.

MOTTO

Cum patientia omnia possunt confici. With patience all things are possible.

EMBLEM

The Riverside School's emblem is the heron, a symbol of patience, perseverance, and tenacity. A great blue heron frequented the campus in the school's first years.

ACTIVE LEARNING AND CURRICULAR FOUNDATION

We believe that a challenging, inspiring and diverse early education leads to future academic achievement and positive adulthood. The Riverside School curriculum strives to integrate: sciences, mathematics, literature, social studies, modern and classical languages, arts, athletics, and wellness. Teachers model scholarship in their fields and a passion for lifelong learning. Students exercise curiosity, critical thinking, creativity, organization, and personal responsibility to take their learning several steps beyond minimal exposure. Through this effort we help students to find delight in the blend of art, academic, physical, emotional, and social development.

Our curriculum is guided by our mission, and aligns with and extends beyond national standards. Riverside has a structured academic program based on English (literature, composition, grammar), mathematics, natural sciences, world languages (Latin and Spanish), history, current events, and cultural awareness. Arts and athletics are essential to the development of our students, offered as both regular and elective classes, and integrated into

academic and community pursuits when possible. We design opportunities for leadership inside the classroom, within the school community, and within the greater community of the Northeast Kingdom. We engage our students as citizens with service learning that begins in the classroom and extends to the greater community. Field trips enhance student learning through inquiry, application, and experiential learning.

HISTORY

Riverside was the home of Dudley P. Hall, who built Riverside in 1864. He made his fortune as a lumber baron in Burke before starting a mill in Lyndonville. His portrait hangs in the office of the head of the school. The Riverside house stayed in the Hall family for many generations. Hall's daughter, Mabel, married Charles Walter, and the house was passed on to their daughter, Dorothy Charlotte Walter, who made many changes, including restoring the furnace, digging a well, and rebuilding the foundation. When Dorothy died the house passed to her sister, Elizabeth. Elizabeth left Riverside to her daughter, Annette, whose child, Annie, also spent much time there.

Riverside Cottage, as it was then called, was the site of many social events, including weddings, Halloween parties, birthdays, and church socials. Many of these events were held in the Cedar Circle while the children played in the cupola. These social customs were passed down through the family members that lived at Riverside.

Dr. Timothy Thompson bought the house in 1976 when the original family could no longer afford its upkeep. He made more renovations to the house, adding a laundry room and closing up the four-seat outhouse (currently the paint closet). The Thompsons also started a school in their house because they wanted their elementary-age children to be challenged more. They wanted their children to learn French and to explore hands-on learning in a small community. When the Wildridge School in Newark closed, the Newells and the Kohnes were open to new teaching opportunities and joined the Thompsons at what was then called the Riverside Day School. In addition to practicing medicine, Dr. Thompson worked part-time as a teacher. When the school started, there were eight students and used rooms one, two, and three, while the Thompson family lived in the rest of the house.

There have been a great many overnight field trips in the history of The Riverside School. There was usually one in the spring and one in the fall. Everyone, student and teacher alike, was expected to help out on these field trips. For instance, they would wash the dishes, clean the fire pits, and at the end of the field trips the kids would take down the tents. When they went on field trips all the students would get an assignment packet that would have to be finished by the end of the trip. Today, Riverside continues to take two all-school field trips each year.

The early days of Riverside saw the birth of many traditions that continue today. Students also could win an award that's called the Kohne cup, which was won by getting the most eggs on the Easter Egg Hunt. They had Kite Day when they made their own kites and flew them. When Riverside was a young school, the Thompson's cat would knock over the students' lunch bags and the dogs would eat it. The students started bringing in lunch boxes that closed. They used to have art in the cupola because it was a great view. Riverside has always performed plays. Every year the kids would have Mr. Newell dress up in a huge pumpkin costume and he would go around checking on classes on Halloween. Many of these

traditions have changed over the years, but many live on. We continue to hold Mythology Day in celebration of our emphasis on classics. We put on an all-school musical theater production every spring. And every fall, Riverside students participate in a social studies fair to honor the long-running Riverside emphasis on geography.

(Written and Revised by the Class of 2009, in the fall of 2005 and the spring of 2009)

ACCREDITATION

The Riverside School is approved for public funding by the Vermont Agency of Education and accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges.

THE ORDER OF THE HERON

The Order of the Heron was founded by Riverside's Board of Trustees to honor outstanding, long-term devotion to and care for the school. Merle Thompson, Founder and Trustee Emerita, was the first inductee, which took place at Riverside's 2004 Commencement.

ADMINISTRATION, LEADERSHIP, FACULTY, AND GOVERNANCE

Head of School

Caroline Thompson

Assistant Head of School

Nelia Rath

- support for the head of school
- direction of co-curricular programs
- published communications

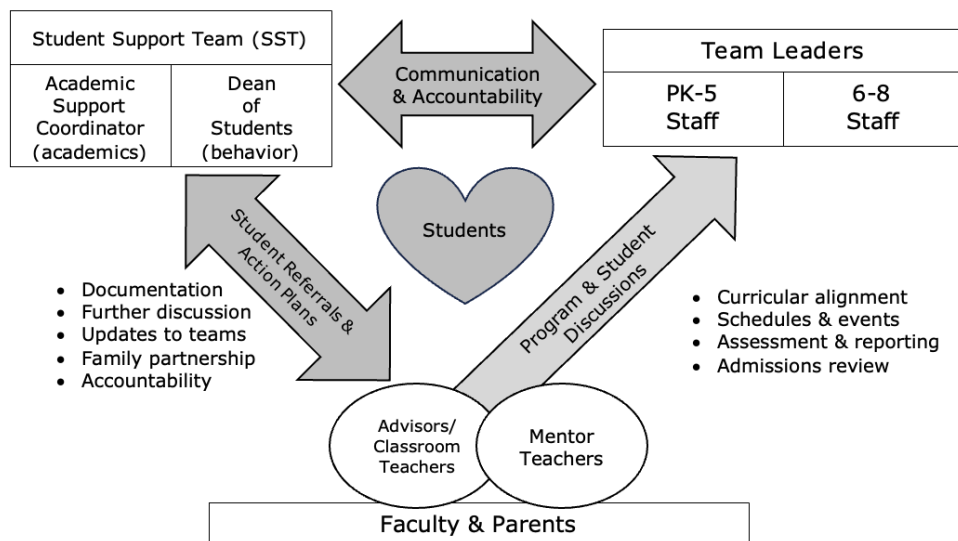
Director of Finance and Operations

Krystal Ingalls

- front office communications
- financial record keeping
- general student care

Leadership

Riverside has always been a school that prides itself on collaborative leadership. Many tasks traditionally completed by administrators are done at the team level at Riverside. When the faculty was smaller (fewer than ten teachers), nearly everything was done and decided in faculty meetings. As we've grown, it's become clear that we will all benefit from a better delegation of some of these tasks. With that in mind, we have created a new administrative structure to better meet the needs of our growing school with an increasing diversity of learning styles among the student body. In addition to a formal mentorship program for new teachers, we now have team leaders for middle school, 3-5, and PK-2, who work with faculty on alignment, programmatic issues, schedules, student concerns, etc. There is also an Academic Support Coordinator, who will help oversee academic needs and supports in all grades, and a Dean of Students, who will have conversations with students, keep faculty and parents in the loop about behavioral concerns, and will, with the Director of Special Education, co-chair our Student Support Team. These new or refined roles will, along with the Head of School, Assistant Head of School, and Director of Operations work to ensure the school continues to meet its mission at all levels- student, faculty, and family.



Elementary Team Leader

Emily Spring

Middle School Team Leader

Karin Welch

- facilitation of team meetings
- curricular alignment
- schedules & events
- assessment & reporting
- admissions review

Academic Support Coordinator

Deandra Early

Dean of Students

Joel Gilbert

- documentation of supports
- further discussion
- updates to teams
- family partnership
- accountability

2025-2026 Faculty

Carrie Albritton

Will Albritton

Katie Baker

Natalie Dalpe

McKenna Earl

Deandra Early

Sean Fortier

Nathan Gair

Joel Gilbert

Abby Johnson

Kathleen Haines

Tyler Hartshorn

Kristen Langlais

Kate Murphy

Renee Piernot

Jamie Robinson

Emily Spring

Marie Vaine

Hanna Wheeler

Karin Welch

Director of the K-8 Extended Day Program: Emily Short

The Riverside School Inc. is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation governed by a Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees is responsible for the overall policy of the School and the School's financial stability. The Board of Trustees hires, directs, advises, and evaluates the Head of School, its only employee. It formulates its strategic plan, which the Head implements for the improvement of the school.

The head of school is directly responsible to the Board and acts in consultation with the Board. The Board entrusts the Head of School or their designee with the day-to-day operation of the School; the supervision of students; the hiring, supervision, evaluation, and development of staff; and the integrity and development of the curriculum.

Board of Trustees

Kim Behr

Eric Daffinrud

Barry Hertz

Bryn Hoffman

Cath Kane '85

David Kennedy

Mike Moore

Chris Nesbitt

James Newell

Nicki Reimert

Arcelie Reyes

Carrie Stahler

Karina Weiss

Polly Yerkes, '86

Merle Thompson, Emerita

GENERAL STUDENT INFORMATION

WELCOME!

You are here because you bring a passion, whether academic, artistic, or athletic, to our school community; a positive attitude toward learning; and a desire to be challenged by, and the ability to work with, the achievement opportunities Riverside offers. We look forward to celebrating and pursuing those things further with you.

SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY

Riverside's small size and family atmosphere encourage a nurturing community. We foster meaningful relationships between students, teachers, and parents through open communication, shared celebration, and a common investment in our students. Students take pride and feel ownership for the caring, safe, and positive environment. We expect students to promote a culture of kindness at school, embracing our diverse personalities, interests, and learning styles.

If a student or parent needs anything, please do not hesitate to ask any student, teacher, or staff member. We are always here to help.

SCHEDULE

The school day begins promptly at 8:00 a.m. and ends at 2:45 p.m. for Pre-K, 3:00 p.m. for Grades K-5, and 3:30 p.m. for Grades 6-8

DROP OFF & PICK UP

Students may arrive as early as 7:45 a.m. and should be ready for school to begin promptly at 8:00, when community greetings begin, and which have a significant impact on a positive start to the day for students.

For the parents of grades K-8 students, please be mindful that drop off and pick up times can create congestion in our driveway. If you need to stop in to speak to an administrator or teacher at these times, please use the parking lot to the far left of The Main House to park your car and walk into the office or classroom. **Please do not leave your car idling and unattended in the drop off or pick up sections of our driveway.** The parents of our Pre-K students are required to park in the designated parking spaces near the Yurt and walk their children to and from the Pre-K classroom.

Please plan to pick up your child within 15 minutes of dismissal (3:00-3:15 for grades K-5 and 3:30-3:45 for grades 6-8). After that time students will be signed into the Extended Day Program.

Pick up times and locations during our Athletic days (Skate, swim, ski) can vary. Out of respect for our faculty's schedules, please plan to pick up your child promptly on those days.

MORNING ASSEMBLY

Morning Assembly is an important part of our school day serving as a community gathering to begin the school day and is led by our 8th grade students. We ask that you make every effort to have students in the barn on time. Grades 4-8 will attend morning assembly daily; grades Pre-K – 3 attend weekly. Assembly includes announcements and an activity, such as read alouds, games, performances, sharing of learning, physical activity, ethical guidance, community building activities, all-school discussions, or current events. Riverside regularly schedules guest presenters as well. If you know of an engaging presenter or you yourself would like to present, please contact the 8th Grade Advisor.

FOOD ON CAMPUS

Each student should bring a personal water bottle with their name on it, along with a healthy lunch and snack in labeled containers each day. Riverside's refrigerator and microwaves are available for students' use according to age-appropriate guidance by faculty and staff. We encourage families not to include candy, chewing gum, soda, or caffeinated beverages in student lunches and snacks. The school asks parents to support these guidelines when students are eating at school or on field trips. On Wednesdays, students may order pizza by the slice, which is then charged to the family's school store account.

Should parents volunteer to prepare foods for an event at school, we ask that they consider dietary restrictions of the students involved by asking for guidance from a teacher or the health care staff. If they are preparing a dish for an event that includes adults, simply note ingredients on a card that can be displayed with the food.

CLEAN UP

Riverside has a unique and historic campus. In order to practice responsibility and instill an appreciation for the school, cleanup of the school's buildings and grounds is performed at the end of each day by students. Elementary teachers assign daily jobs to maintain their classrooms. Middle school students work in crews led by eighth-grade captains to maintain their classrooms and the school's shared spaces. Their jobs might include sweeping, vacuuming, cleaning counters and/or microwaves, washing eating utensils, stocking supply areas, putting away lost and found and materials, or taking out trash and recycling.

EXTENDED DAY PROGRAM

The Riverside School offers an Extended Day Program for grades K-8, which consists of physical activity, creative play, and snack time. Riverside teachers and parents often volunteer to lead weekly and seasonal, co-curricular, club meetings, free of charge, which are independent of the Extended Day Program. The Afterschool Program for PreK is a separate program explained in the Preschool Family Handbook.

It is our belief at Riverside that unstructured play time is an essential part of child development. The Extended Day Program is an opportunity for kids to enjoy the myriad benefits of this type of play. While physical and emotional safety is paramount, the role of adults is minimized, allowing kids to play in mixed-age groups, problem solve, collaborate, and take risks in a safe environment.

Our Extended Day Program for grades K-5 students begins at 3:15 and for grades 6-8 begins at 3:45. K-8 students must check in with the adult supervisor immediately upon dismissal from

school. Grades K-8 must be picked up by 5:00 p.m or supervised by another adult, even if there are Riverside activities later in the evening. While students are allowed to register for and attend the EDP between dismissal and when a club meeting begins, we do not allow students to return to the EDP after a club meeting ends. They should be supervised by the club leader until the parent arrives for pick up, unless plans are specifically made with the EDP staff to accommodate an individual family's need.

Because we need to plan staff and snacks and consider indoor spaces in inclement weather, it is important for us to know how many students will be participating each day. If parents wish their child to take part in the extended programming on a regular basis, they will complete the registration form from the director of finance & operations which is included in the August mailing of annual forms. We understand that unexpected situations occur, and in the spirit of being a supportive community, we will work to accommodate changes in attendance when we have 24-hours notice.

When school is in session for a half-day, the Extended Day Program will run from dismissal until 5:00 pm. Staff carefully monitor attendance on these days, and request that parents let us know directly if their child will attend. There will be no Afterschool Program for students who are dismissed from an off-campus activity (4th-6th swimmers in the fall, skating and skiing in the winter, K-3rd swimmers in the spring, etc.). Parents must pick up directly from those activities.

When parents pick their child up from the Extended Day Program, they sign their child out with the staff member in charge. We will not dismiss children out into the driveway or on the playground to wait for their ride.

Clubs

Clubs meet according to unique schedules that are published in the Monday Memo.

If a student is participating in an Afterschool club, such as chess, robotics, fiber arts, strategy games, Latin, homework, or Math Counts, we ask that parents pick up their child directly from that club and its supervisor, at the appropriate time. Students engaged in a club activity will not go back into the Afterschool program for the duration of the afternoon. This makes supervision difficult. If a parent cannot pick up their child right after a club dismisses, they should speak to the supervisor of that specific club directly.

Soccer

We have multiple soccer teams organized by grade level that compete against other school teams after school. Participation is highly encouraged for all students, it is the small minority that choose not to play on Riverside's positive, supportive, encouraging team. They are coached by parent volunteers and Riverside staff. There is no fee for participating in the soccer program. Most practice happens during fall PE classes during the school day, although there are optional after school practices. Games are usually scheduled on Tuesdays and Thursdays from mid-September to late October.

HOMEWORK

The Riverside School believes that homework is purposeful, targeted, and given in conjunction with materials already or about to be taught in class. Homework allows for practice and reinforcement of skills, extensions of classroom content, and preparation for class the following day. Through homework routines, students also practice the life skills of time management, responsibility, and meeting the expectations of others. We believe that homework is differentiated based on age, developmental capacity, and academic needs of the student. While homework may not be assigned daily, we believe strongly that reading across the grade levels and across all disciplines is an essential and worthy activity each afternoon/evening at home. Larger projects or multi-day assignments provide an opportunity for older students to practice organization, prioritization, and time management.

As an average, we intend for students to spend about 10 minutes per grade level on schoolwork at home (5th grade ~ 50 minutes). We recognize that each student and family is different, and so this may not always be consistent or accurate. We encourage families to describe for us what homework time is like at home so that their teachers can support them accordingly, which may mean helping students organize materials, clarifying expectations, or modifying assignments. Students on Individual Education Plan or 504 are entitled to modifications of their program, including homework expectations, based on the recommendations of their educational team. Students who pursue significant extra curricular activities should recognize how those commitments may impact their learning and the overall Riverside experience. Those priorities may lead to further conversations between the school and families, initiated by either.

While homework should not require excessive parental support, it should provide a venue by which parents can remain aware of classroom activities and student understanding and success. We suggest that a regular schedule at home helps students to complete their assignments. Parents will be kept informed when a student is consistently having difficulty keeping homework assignments up-to-date. Likewise, parents should confer with teachers when homework assignments or homework time become problematic.

Study hall periods for 6-8th graders and study lunch time for all students provide students time to complete unfinished work and teachers for assistance, while also practicing independence greater than that possible in the classroom setting. Students may volunteer to go to study lunch or a teacher may assign a student to attend if they need to complete an assignment. A log is kept of students who are frequently assigned study lunch.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Riverside students pride themselves on demonstrating curiosity for, perseverance through, and ownership of their academic work. Riverside teachers recognize the unique backgrounds, interests, and needs of each of our students and strive to support them accordingly. Issues of academic dishonesty are rare and treated as teachable moments. Patterns of plagiarism or cheating may be addressed with more serious consequences.

For an guidelines about Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence, see the "Acceptable Internet Use" section.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the theft of someone else's work, especially written work. Sometimes students plagiarize accidentally, as when a quotation mark or citation indicating authorship is left out of a paper. Accidental plagiarism may also occur when a parent has given too much help to the improvement of a student's written work. Sometimes plagiarism is a deliberate attempt to pass off another person's work as one's own. Accidental or not, plagiarism will be addressed as deemed appropriate by Riverside faculty. When assigning research-based work, faculty will instruct students on the importance of giving credit to the work of others and the seriousness of plagiarism. If plagiarized work is turned in, the teacher will directly address the student. If accidental plagiarism becomes regular or problematic, or if the case is believed to be intentional, the work will not be accepted and any late penalties for the work will be applied when it is turned in correctly. If the plagiarized work belongs to another student, the proper owner will be informed and involved in resolving the issue as well. A pattern of plagiarism or a flagrant act of plagiarism, such as turning in an entirely copied paper, may result in suspension or expulsion from school.

Cheating

If there is a suspicion of or concern about a student cheating, a teacher will address it as soon as possible with the student. If it's obvious that cheating has occurred, the teacher will inform the parent and ask the student to complete the task again. A pattern of cheating or a flagrant act of cheating may result in suspension or expulsion from school.

PERSONAL PROPERTY

Students are assigned places to keep their personal belongings at school, with the exception of some personal electronic devices, explained further in the "Personal Devices" section. For K-5 students it's typically a set of hooks and part of a boot tray, and a place in the classroom near their desk. For middle school students it is a set of open shelves in our cubby room. We expect students to respect each others' belongings and spaces, only accessing them with permission of the owner. We teach personal responsibility and trustworthiness. Should there be a significant concern about student honesty and integrity, we reserve the right to inspect a student's belongings and will inform the parent/guardian before doing so. Such a search would be done by the head of school and a staff member together. Elementary teachers may, at times, help their students look for things (lunch, boomerangs, forms, etc.) in their bags or belongings. A complete "Search and Seizure" policy is in *The Riverside School Policy Manual*, which is available on our website.

LOST AND FOUND

We would ask that parents take the time to mark water bottles, lunch boxes/bags, backpacks and any clothing items that might be taken off: coats, snow pants, mittens, hats, sweatshirts, etc. Unidentified student belongings are placed in the lost and found, which is a designated part of the cubby room in the house. From time to time, they are displayed in assembly or classrooms, and announcements are made in the Monday Memo regarding them. If items remain unclaimed after a reasonable period, they are donated to our yard sale or a charity.

EMAIL

3-8th graders will be issued a Riverside email address that follows the pattern of preferredfirstname.lastname@theriversideschool.org, as have all staff. Their @theriversideschool.org accounts will be deleted and they will lose access to the content within the Google suite after graduation. Those students will use that address to access a suite

of cloud-based tools provided by Google Apps for Education. That is the address teachers prefer to use, should they choose to communicate with students by email. We expect that students will use email with the same integrity that they do their in-person communications. We ask that parents at home support students in learning how to find a login site and access those apps from their devices at home.

BOOMERANGS & PLANNERS

In grades PreK through 3, each student will have a “Boomerang” folder that is sent home daily. The folder may contain necessary parent communications, completed student work, and/or a short assignment for practice at home. In grades K-4 students have a Boomerang folder; in grade 5 students will have a Boomerang as well as a planner/assignment book; Grades 6 through 8 will have only a planner/assignment book. Planners will be given to students in out on the first day of school. At the start of the year, teachers for those grades will monitor entries made in the planner, building independence with their students using the tool thereafter. We encourage use of the planner to assist students in organizing and managing their time for short-term and long-term assignments. Planners should be brought to every class every day and home each evening. If a student would prefer to buy their own style of planner that is fine. If a student loses their planner, they will be expected to buy their own to complete the school year

JOURNALS AND STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Teachers may assign journal writing or writing to be shared in informal publication for students as part of their coursework. Teachers read all writing that they assign to students. If a student wishes to record private thoughts and does not wish the teacher to read them, parents can provide a separate journal for home use. As “mandated reporters,” teachers are required to report immediately to the head of school all threats of and references to violence and/or suicide that alarm their professional opinions, who will communicate such concerns to parents immediately. Student work for publication will be reviewed carefully in order to ensure fair balance, accuracy, and maturity. A full policy on “Student Publications” is included in *The Riverside School Policy Manual*, which is available on our website.

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION BETWEEN STUDENTS AND EMPLOYEES

Riverside teachers will be issued a Riverside email address that follows the pattern of preferredfirstname.lastname@theriversideschool.org, as have all 3-8th graders. Their @theriversideschool.org accounts will be deleted and they will lose access to the content within the Google suite after the end of their employment. That is the address teachers will use, should they choose to communicate with students by email. We expect that students and staff will use email with the same integrity that they do their in-person communications.

Written communication between students and employees is a matter of record and should be conducted only using Riverside’s email accounts. Any electronic communication with students on other media (texts, messenger, phone conversation, etc.) or any communications via email that don’t meet the standards outlined in the “Professional and Ethical Conduct” section above should be shared with relevant staff members (advisor, teacher, head of school, etc.) and parents immediately. Parents have the right to be included in any and all electronic communications between students and employees.

In compliance with state law, staff are prohibited from utilizing social media for direct communication with students.

LEARNING AT HOME

Decisions about campus closure and reopening will be made by the head of school, in consultation with the board of trustees and the leadership team. Such decisions will comply fully with state and federal guidelines, which may be stricter than Riverside's normal operating procedures. Should Riverside be required to close its campus and continue with home-based learning, we will strive to announce that with sufficient time for families to prepare and for students to gather materials and information from campus. Riverside will maintain the same expectations for academic integrity, digital citizenship, and kindness, and faculty will address concerns with the same seriousness and level of consequence as we do on campus.

Teachers will strive to design learning goals and activities that foster our mission, are developmentally appropriate, and also recognize the unique opportunities and limitations of learning from home. We expect students to do their best to engage with the expectations set by teachers, communicating and participating in a way that demonstrates effort and commitment. We hope parents will do their best to provide space, materials, and a routine for their students at home that supports both their academic learning and their mental health. Consistent, honest, and clear communication between students, parents, and teachers is essential during these times.

Should a campus closure last for an extended period of time, faculty will adjust their formal assessments and student records to reflect and accommodate that unique, extended change in educational format.

LIBRARY

Riverside has a small library for staff, teachers, and students to share. It is managed by the director of co-curricular programs and is designed to be used by students mostly independently. The main room includes most of the fiction texts in two sections: early reader/first chapter books and juvenile/young adult books, both organized by author's last name and often featuring spine labels that denote genre. The back room holds picture books organized roughly in bins by author's last name, and the non-fiction collection. There are posters and signs noting the topics on each shelf according to the Dewey Decimal system, which then requires students to search a specific shelf for books on a topic of interest.

Students may sign out books for about two weeks by themselves, following posted instructions, and should return those books on the labeled shelf. Students and parents will be reminded about seriously overdue books. If a book is lost or damaged, students will be responsible for the cost of replacing it. All books must be returned before the last day of school.

Teachers also maintain small libraries in their own classrooms for students to use according to the system and expectations that are set there.

SCHOOL STORE

You may buy a limited array of supplies at school, such as lined paper, pencils, erasers, folders, notebooks, and index cards. The cost will be charged to your school store account by the director of finance and operations. Students and parents should be clear with each other about expectations regarding charges to the school store account. Families may give the director of finance and operations a school store allowance amount, if they wish.

STUDENT COUNCIL

Student council officers are elected from the eighth grade at the beginning of each semester. Students from 5th through 8th grade who wish to serve on the student council for a full semester may volunteer. Student council coordinates community service projects, dances, and other events.

ENGAGED CITIZENSHIP

Riverside students practice how to apply their learning and leadership skills outside of the classroom. Student-led assemblies, cross-grade mentoring and daily cooperative school cleanup all help to cement the school community. Service projects and current events discussions help connect the school to the local community, the nation and the world. Students practice community participation and plan to use what they have learned to enhance the world around them. We work to integrate consideration of others, our environment, and the diversity of larger community needs into many facets of curriculum.

Students, teachers, and families regularly engage in service work during the Fall Field Trip. Community Service Day is a special event held before Thanksgiving vacation during which students and staff choose projects in the local community and contribute significant time and energy to helping others. Middle schoolers often choose to take ownership of extra chores at school or supporting other organizations during flexible times like study hall, advisory, or leadership periods.

The director of co-curricular programs works with different teachers to make explicit the opportunity for community service applications of their learning goals and opportunities for specific students, both within and outside the Riverside community.

ATHLETICS

The Riverside School highly values physical fitness and athletic endeavor. Riverside has traditionally organized inter-school soccer matches in the fall (more information about that is explained on page 6 as part of the Extended Day Program). The school also provides instructional and recreational opportunities such as swimming, ice-skating, Nordic and alpine skiing. We will hold most of our physical education classes outside unless it is rainy or cold. We therefore, encourage all students, regardless of age to have proper clothing and footwear for engaging in outside activities. An extra pair of shoes, socks, and/or a jacket left at school is recommended. Extra clothing can be placed in the student's book bag, on their hook, or in their cubby.

During ski, skate or swim Fridays, please be sure that your child has the correct clothing and equipment. For ice skating, if requested by parents, teachers will ensure that students are wearing helmets and that they keep their helmets on for the entire skating period. For downhill skiing and snowboarding, helmets are required of all students.

Riverside's ski, skate, and swim programs on Friday afternoons are an important part of our physical education and community building programs. We plan and implement them with intention to teach not only physical skills, but also personal organization, time management, and patient leadership. As well, we believe collaborating with area organizations and experiencing our local, natural resources builds a stronger community for everyone involved.

These programs are organized to include transportation for students from Riverside and appropriate instruction, engagement, and supervision, at no extra cost to parents, with the exception of any rented equipment.

PATIENT LEADERSHIP

Riverside students respect and appreciate the individual qualities of themselves and their peers. Strong, positive character is a trait we believe to be as important to future success as academic achievement. We develop leadership, responsibility, respect, compassion, and individual strengths of each student in various parts of the school day and throughout the academic year. Character building happens in small class discussions, cross-grade interactions, advisory conversations, and opportunities students have to demonstrate diverse talents.

Eighth graders at Riverside are given extra roles and responsibilities in the school community and are expected to maintain the best standards of behavior as role models for other students. Eighth graders develop leadership skills over the course of the year as part of the advisory class. Those skills are reinforced and integrated into other classes and aspects of Riverside's program as well.

Eighth graders lead assemblies and clean-up teams beginning on the first day of school. They are intentional about helping younger and newer students become true Riversiders by embracing, teaching, and modeling the culture of our school. Eighth graders are responsible for designing and leading opportunities for students to work with and have fun with mixed age groups. They lead such activities during field trips, some lunch periods, festival days, play week, and in spring elective courses they teach with supervision by faculty.

Our 8th grade leaders make special presentations at assemblies based on personal interests and opinions. They assist faculty, staff, and students alike in carrying out many of the wonderful traditions that make Riverside a special place.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Throughout the school year the Riverside community engages in seasonal celebrations and festivals to highlight curricular areas, such as Biography Fair, Community Service Day, Winter Carnival, Mythology Day, Play Day/Week, or the Festival of Poetry and Prose. Often the last day of school before a vacation is dedicated to such a special event before an early dismissal. We encourage family and friends to join us during these celebrations. All of these events are described in the Monday Memo and listed on our calendar and our website.

GENERAL PARENT INFORMATION

CURRICULUM AND PROGRAM

The Riverside School curriculum recognizes The Common Core Standards for ELA and Mathematics, the Next Generation Science Standards, as well as various nationally recognized standards and frameworks as resources for curricular alignment. Riverside faculty have set consistent, clear, and rigorous learning goals that may parallel or extend beyond those state and national standards. Teachers are responsible for using a complete, detailed curriculum, including concepts, learning objectives, teaching methods, learning activities, and formative and summative assessments. Teachers provide a synopsis of the upcoming week's lesson plans at the beginning of each week in the Monday Memo.

Riverside students love to learn, and their experience in a day, week, or year at our school involves much more than traditional classroom activities. Our dynamic, mission-based program is integrated across disciplines to enhance and connect the experiences we provide for students. Academics, arts, athletics, off-campus, and mixed-age activities create the culture of our program. No matter their passions, Riversiders find a way to practice and demonstrate their skills while also embracing new challenges in a supportive context.

GUARDIAN'S ROLE IN EDUCATION

Choosing to become a Riverside family means making it a priority to take an active role in the life of our school. Our work as a faculty and staff would not be possible without your generous support and we hope you feel a shared commitment to our mission. School life extends and develops the process of learning with the family. Riverside depends on parent involvement and support. Staying informed through our Monday Memo and emails from specific teachers or staff, and initiating communication with teachers and staff is essential. Parents are encouraged and welcome to observe, participate in, or help with classroom activities at any time.

The success of The Riverside School depends greatly on the commitment of parents to make our program a real part of your family's time, energy, and resources. Their active support enhances our programs and represents a unique opportunity for involvement in each child's education. Parents participate in a variety of ways, meeting many of our needs. Volunteer opportunities include minor cleaning and maintenance work around campus, transporting and chaperoning students during sports and field trip activities, providing food for special events, serving with trustees and teachers on strategic committees, assisting in classrooms, answering phones and working on fundraising events. We enthusiastically welcome opportunities for parents to share their skills/talents/ and hobbies with our students as well.

Knowing that income from tuition only covers a portion of Riverside's operating budget, we ask families to recognize that in choosing an independent school they have also chosen to support our advancement efforts which include: marketing our school through positive reputation, fundraising events, and annual giving. More details about advancement are in the "Financial Information" section beginning on page 39.

Chaperone and Volunteer Guidelines

When parents or guardians participate in school events, chaperone field trips, or assist in classrooms, they do so as representatives of Riverside and must uphold our shared values and attend to student's physical and emotional safety. In some cases an individual's ability to serve as a volunteer, visitor, or chaperone may be limited due to legal or safety concerns, such as court orders, previous conduct, refusal to comply with expectations, or vehicle safety concerns. The head of school has the right to determine whether an individual may serve in a volunteer or supervisory capacity at any Riverside event, on or off campus.

All volunteers and chaperones must demonstrate respectful and professional behavior while acting as representatives of the school; follow all rules and directions from the activity leaders, refrain from using personal electronic devices during supervision, focus their attention on the students, complete any required forms requested by the school.

For more information about volunteering on field trips, see the "Field Trips" section further on.

Supporting Diverse and Multi-household Families

We are committed to creating a welcoming, inclusive environment for all students and families. This includes honoring and supporting students from diverse family structures, such as those with divorces, separated, blended, co-parenting, or extended family living arrangements. Our goal is to ensure equitable communication, access, and engagement for all guardians involved in a Riverside student's education.

With that goal in mind, we strive to use neutral and inclusive language such as "parents and guardians," "caregivers," "grown ups," and "family members," both in formal communications and in conversations with students. All legal guardians will have equal access to academic records, school communications, and opportunities to meet with staff. Families may request to have multiple copies of paper documents when appropriate. Families are periodically asked to indicate their names, pronouns, and titles; the names and contact information of all adults who should receive school reports and communications, and any special communication arrangements or requests. Riverside will honor those requests with respect, discretion, and sensitivity.

In classroom activities or discussions about family, Riverside will include and reference diverse family structures. If families are navigating conflict, staff will remain neutral and child-centered, focusing on the student's well-being and access to consistent support.

ANNUAL FORMS

At the start of each school year we ask parents to complete or update a set of annual forms on our Blackbaud school management system. Parents are notified in mid-August of the forms' availability and it is essential that they are completed or updated before the deadline in order for us to be sure we have accurate information about our students and families at the start of the year. This information is expected of approved and accredited schools like ours, and allows us to start the year in an informed, efficient, and safe manner.

PARENT ADVISORY GROUP

The purpose of the Parent Advisory Group is to create a group of Riverside parents to support the Riverside teachers, administrators, and program. All parents are invited to

attend the regular meetings. While attendance is not mandatory, regular attendance helps create a more effective group. The specific goals of the PAG and its dedicated members are to:

1. Support two-way communications between the head of school, faculty, and parents.
 - Actively read the Monday Memo each week, responding with questions as needed to be confident in its meaning
 - Use social media to stay abreast of and share goings-on at Riverside
 - Be present and welcoming of others at Riverside events
 - Attend PAG meetings to discuss ideas, information, celebrations, concerns, or needs that Riverside has. This helps us keep up to date and able to share this information as needed with all the other parents.
 - Share questions or concerns we have and to bring awareness to administrators, facilitating brainstorming about solutions. (To clarify, personal issues and issues of a particular student or family are not part of our role, instead these issues are to be sent directly to the teacher or to the head of school)
 - Work together to create solutions to any issues that arise and to help provide volunteers and support to complete any needed projects.
2. Act as a mentor for other Riverside parents to learn about and participate in the Riverside culture, and the culture of independent schools in general.
 - Classroom parent leaders are expected to specifically mentor new Riverside families, which requires making a habit of checking in with those parents periodically during the school year, both in-person and by phone or email.
 - Recognize and participate in the ways that our school may be different than others you've experienced: participate in additional fundraising events, donate to Annual Appeal, stay abreast of legislative issues, act as a volunteer, attend events, build relationships with other families and students
3. Facilitate parent participation in Riverside events, which includes fundraisers, coffee house events, festival days, presentations of learning, and more. Members are to be aware of these events, attend whenever possible, and share with other parents as needed.

Specific Membership Responsibilities of the PAG

- Riverside Administrators: attend PAG meetings to share information and concerns, answer questions, clarify issues as needed; help to plan the meeting agendas; support PAG Leaders as needed; provide volunteer students for child care during meetings.
- PAG Leaders: Attend meetings; provide support as listed above; create and facilitate the meeting agenda; support members to be heard; be a point person for room parents to answer questions or clarify issues as needed; continually assess the PAG's role and purpose; create organizational chart for the PAG, continue to assess and update it as needed.
- PAG Members/Room Parents: attend meetings; provide support as listed above; possibly sign up to share in contributing food for meetings; communicate to parents in the classroom they are assigned to share PAG information; make a connection with classroom teacher to facilitate ongoing communication; build relationships with all parents from class for communicating PAG information and supporting that class's teacher.

- Fundraiser Point Person: Riverside builds its budget with an expectation that the parent community will collaborate to meet a specific fundraising goal that addresses the gap between tuition income and program expenses. This person will attend PAG meetings; provide support as listed above; and also be available to receive fundraising ideas from parents and then decide, delegate, and help to execute them with other parents. While we have some traditional fundraisers, we want to welcome new ideas annually.
- Sunshine Point Person: attend meetings; provide support as listed above; be available to receive any specific concerns or celebrations from the personal lives of our faculty, staff, and families in order to coordinate supports, gifts, or the like, as needed; coordinate volunteers for our traditional, semi-annual, teacher appreciation meal weeks.

FAMILY CONTACT LIST

In the early fall, once all annual forms have been returned, we will share a list of grade levels and contact information for all of our students and families. We encourage families to use that information to support each other and build a stronger Riverside community. Families might use that information to discover new neighbors, coordinate carpooling, plan social events, reach out to another family in need or celebration, or communicate with peer parents. Parents can request that we not share any or part of their contact information on the annual Family Biography form.

PARENTAL COMPORTMENT

Riverside expects all parents and guardians to comply with applicable school policies and state and federal laws. We reserve the right to regulate the behavior of adults in our community and on our campus. We may authorize dismissal of the adult from campus if it is in the best interest of the school.

VISITORS TO CAMPUS

All visitors to Riverside's campus should check in at the front office, inside the double red doors of the main house. It's essential that we know who is on campus. Often parents, guardians, or other known support staff or volunteers will be directed to take themselves where they need to go to visit a student. We may choose to escort visitors where they need to go as well. We reserve the right to ask any visitors to leave campus at any time.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

The Riverside School believes that regular attendance is directly related to success in academic work and establishes habits and skills necessary for learning to occur. We place value on the learning that takes place in our classrooms each and every day. Lost instruction is difficult to recover, but lost engagement in discussion, debate, data collection, group work, and peer interaction is nearly impossible to replicate. Classroom participation is important to the educational process. All enrolled students are expected to attend school daily for the full academic year, except for illness, physical incapacity, or mental incapacity.

Students who are habitually and chronically absent from or tardy to school are typically not gaining an adequate formal education. In an effort to support the student and family, when a student misses an average of one day per week over the course of two months, or more than two consecutive weeks, or the equivalent of three weeks/15 days during the year, the

head of school will discuss the absences with the parents and may be obliged to file a truancy report with the state of Vermont. In extreme cases of habitual absence, the school reserves the right to deny advancement to the next grade.

Tardiness

The school day begins promptly at 8:00 a.m. Depending on the day and the grade level, students are expected to be in their classrooms or assembly in the barn. When students enter their classrooms or the barn after the day has begun, it is disruptive to the community time we value. We ask that students who arrive late report to the main office first to sign in, so that the director of finance and operations is aware of their presence and can supervise them until assembly ends or accompany them to assembly or their classroom. Chronic tardiness affects a student's experience, and the head of school will communicate directly with families who are developing such habits or patterns in their arrivals to school.

Medical Absence

Either the school or the parent may initiate a medical absence due to an illness, injury, or mental health issue. If it's the parent's decision, then it is the responsibility of the parent to notify the director of finance and operations as soon as possible. If a student does not arrive at school by 8:30 and the director of finance and operations has not received a phone call or email from a parent or guardian, a call will be made home. For students in grades PreK-5, we ask that parent to contact the appropriate teacher for missed work that can be completed at home. If the student is in middle school, we expect the student to be ultimately responsible for seeking out missed work from peers or from the middle school teachers. We understand that illness can be debilitating, therefore, due dates for make-up work will be at the discretion of the teacher and communicated to the parent. Usually students are given as many days to make up work as they were absent. Riverside may use its discretion to determine if a student may return to school and/or if there are any conditions to be met for returning.

Planned Repeated Absences

If your child is to be absent for a regular appointment such as counseling or sports training, you must give notification to the director of finance and operations as soon as the schedule is confirmed by completing the appropriate paperwork provided with this handbook. After notification, the director of finance and operations will alert the head of school and the student's teacher(s) so as to give teachers time to plan and arrange school assignments as necessary. It is expected that both the student and the parent(s) understand that missed school work must be completed. If your child has difficulty balancing class work and commitments outside the school, the head of school, the teacher, and the parent(s) will engage in a conversation that supports the student's efforts as well as their needs.

When your child leaves campus for such appointments, the parent is expected to sign the student out with the director of finance and operations each and every time.

Planned Extended Absences

Our annual schedule is intentionally designed to cluster vacation days together in order for families to have extended absences without disrupting the educational program. If you plan an extended absence during days in which the school is in session, it is important to realize that learning and relationship building are going on without you. It is the parent's

responsibility to notify the head of school as soon as the absence is planned. With the exception of an emergency, it is reasonable to expect that at least one month's notification be given to school for an extended absence. The parent must complete the appropriate paperwork provided in this handbook and return it to the director of finance and operations. They will notify the appropriate teacher(s) in a timely fashion so that the teacher may work proactively with the parents and the student to ensure that instruction and engagement activities are completed. Missed work will be returned to the teacher in an appropriate time frame that has been discussed and arranged between the teacher and the parent(s).

You should be aware that there is a maximum amount of time out of school that teachers can reasonably be asked to support absent students. Often teachers have not fully planned out what they are going to do weeks or even days in advance in some subjects, so providing "packets" in advance for weeks-long vacations is not possible. We very much want to support families in the meaningful learning that can happen on extended trips, but we must balance that with reasonable expectations on teachers and the understanding that content skills, academic proficiencies, and relationship building with peers at school will inevitably suffer with extended time away from school. If your child is going to be gone for more than a week, we may not be able to proactively provide complete materials, feedback, or assessment of their learning.

Early Release

If a student must leave early due to illness or a late afternoon appointment, parents should notify the director of finance and operations as soon as possible. Staff strive to have the child prepared and waiting for pick up. It's essential that either the student or parent sign out in the front office before leaving campus. Missed work will be treated in a manner similar to a full-day absence.

SNOW DAYS

Occasionally severe weather may require cancellation or delayed opening of school. The head of school will make a final decision as early as possible. As soon as conditions are assessed and a decision is reached, local radio stations and television stations will be informed. The director of finance and operations will start an automated school messaging system and will notify news outlets. When in doubt, call the head of school. While we strongly encourage our students and families to get out and enjoy nature on these days, in order to meet the minimum number of school days for the year, there may be an element of learning at home on some snow days.

TRANSPORTATION

By observing these guidelines, you will ensure the safety of your child, yourself, and/or other passengers in your vehicle, as well as the valuable time of other drivers.

- Do not block the driveway by parking your car and leaving it. If you would like to walk your child into school or need to stop to visit with a teacher or administrator, you may park directly in front of the Granary or to the left of the main house.
- Please pull your car as far forward as possible each time you advance.
- All K-8 students must exit and enter vehicles only at the Carriage House porch unless you have parked and will be walking your child into school.
- For safety's sake, always use the appropriate entrance and exit.

- If you arrive after 8:00, please do not drive around the cedar circle, but instead drive up the fire road and park to the left of the main building to avoid traveling in the circle when students are moving to and from classes. Late arrivals will need to report to the main office.

Parents should ensure their children are aware of their daily transportation arrangements. The following guidelines are given to parents regarding transportation to and from school:

- If your child is not going directly home in the usual manner or with the usual driver, notify the school office in writing, by note or email, or by a phone call. We will only allow students to be transported by those drivers you've listed on your annual Biography Form, or have communicated specifically with us about.
- If you arrive for pick up after 3:15 (K-5th grade) or 3:45 (6-8th grade) and your child is not enrolled in the after-school program, you may be charged the after-school rate for that day. On ski, skate, and swim days, students will be instructed to remain inside the lodge, the arena, and/or the lobby of the Field House until the arrival of their transportation. Your compliance with pick-up times is greatly appreciated.

REGULAR COMMUNICATION

Monday Memo

Riverside provides timely and pertinent information about current events in the school community through the yearly calendar and weekly Monday Memo. The Monday Memo includes a synopsis of each class's lessons for the upcoming week, a calendar of important dates in the month ahead, and notices about needs, events, and information from the School. Whether your family receives the memo electronically or in hard copy, it is imperative that it is read thoroughly and in a timely manner. It is emailed directly to middle school students, posted on our website, and hung on the bulletin boards by the entrance to the main house and in the microwave room as well. Many students are eager to read the memo in order to understand and to plan for all the goings on at their school. Questions and suggestions are always welcome. Additions to the Monday Memo must reach the assistant head of school by Friday of the week prior to the Memo's publication.

Parent-Teacher-Student Conferences

Two conferences with parents and students are scheduled on the yearly school calendar, one in the middle of each semester. About three weeks before those dates an announcement and link will be in the Monday Memo for parents to schedule specific time slots for their meetings. Conferences may be held at any other time by specific arrangement, either in addition to or instead of those scheduled in advance.

MULTI TIERED SUPPORT SYSTEM (MTSS)

The Student Support Team (chaired by the Director of Academic Support and Dean of Students), along with faculty members ensures that all students are getting appropriate support based on teacher observations, parent and student feedback, assessments, screeners, and progress monitoring programs. To best implement this, we have adopted the "MTSS" model used by many schools around the nation. MTSS stands for Multi-Tiered Systems of Support, which is a system for delivering services and supports to meet the needs of all students and their families so they can achieve essential learning outcomes.

Based on data and outcomes, students are given the support level they need to best access our curriculum and thrive at school.

- **Tier 1** happens in the classroom, and reflects best practices, differentiation, flexibility, good programming, and appropriate curriculum for a diversity of learning styles.
- **Tier 2** means additional support, small-group instruction (by classroom teacher or interventionist), modifying assignments or instruction, and possible formation of a student-specific educational support team.
- **Tier 3** usually refers to extra interventions or specialized instruction, heavily modified curriculum and assignments, and a formal Individualized Education Plan.

HIGH SCHOOL PLACEMENT

Many Riverside 8th graders are afforded a choice in where to attend high school and so we embrace placement as an opportunity for the student to reflect carefully upon their interests, needs, and learning styles and to think critically about which will provide the best fit for their next educational experience. Each fall, admissions officers from various local high schools visit 8th grade advisory to present information and answer questions about their schools. This begins the important process of choosing secondary schools. While the 8th grade advisor will provide guidance during this process, it is the responsibility of the parents and the 8th graders themselves to manage deadlines, to set up visits (note that visiting days do not count as absences from Riverside), and to ensure that all paperwork is completed and submitted. Please note that Riverside can only release school records with written permission from families.

CONVEYING AND RESOLVING ISSUES

Regarding Students and Staff

If a parent has a question or concern about their student's work in the classroom, behavior with other children, or interaction with a teacher, they should contact the teacher directly. Since we are committed to teaching our students about the importance of direct communication, we would ask that you model that by making arrangements to confer with the teacher directly either through a conference or a phone conversation.

If a middle school student feels uncomfortable about the way a teacher is treating him or her, the student should discuss the situation with their advisor (grades 6-8) and parent who should request a meeting with the teacher.

Should a parent or student still feel a concern has not been addressed, then the parent should call and schedule a conference with the teacher and the head of school. The conference will help define the problem and will initiate a reasonable and documented process leading to the resolution of the issue in a timely manner.

If an issue involves the head of school, the parent should first discuss the issue with the head. If the issue is not resolved, the parent should convey the concern in writing to the president of the board of trustees, who will arrange for a meeting with a parent and the head of school to resolve the issue.

Regarding School Programs and Policies

Should a parent or student have a concern about an aspect of our program or policy, either may request a conference with the head of school. The conference will help define the problem and will lead to faculty discussion and possibly modifying the area concern. In an effort to be supportive and model appropriate communication and problem solving, we ask that parents not advance their concerns regarding program or policy with other parents.

If an action by a teacher is identified by a parent as a violation of law or of school policy as defined in *The Riverside Policy Manual*, the parent should discuss the concern immediately with the head of school, who will document the complaint and take appropriate action as defined in state and/or federal regulations, or policy implementation as defined in other Riverside Board and/or personnel policies.

HEALTH CARE

Illness or Injury at School

If a student is seriously injured or becomes seriously ill during the school day, a parent will be notified. You may be asked to come to school to pick up your child. As noted in the section above on Attendance, either the school or the parent may initiate a medical absence due to an illness, injury, or mental health issue. Emergency situations will be referred to the parent or to Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital, or the closest emergency medical facility to the school activity. If we are unable to reach a parent, guardian, emergency contact, or family doctor, we will make the decisions necessary to ensure the child's well-being, as outlined in the Permission and Medical Release form signed by the parent at the start of the year.

Medication

The following federal and state regulations apply if your child must take prescribed medication during the regular School day or during School-sponsored activities:

- your child must bring only the required dosage of prescription medication to school, along with written orders from your physician;
- The physician's orders must state the name of the drug, the dosage, and the reason for prescribing the medication;
- The medication must be in a container correctly labeled by the pharmacy or the physician and will be stored in a secure, locked storage place.
- The medication and written instructions must be left in the custody of the health care staff or their designee.

If your child must bring non-prescription medication, the following regulations apply:

- The medication must be accompanied by written instructions from the parent;
- The instructions must state that your child has suffered no ill effects from the use of the medication;
- Your child must bring only the required dosage to school;
- The medication and written instructions will be left in the custody of the health care staff or their designee

Personal medications, with the exception of some inhalers and epipens, are kept in the office of the health care staff person and occasionally guarded by other teachers or staff when necessary, such as on a field trip or when the health care staff are not available to give the medication. All personal medications are returned to parents at the end of the school year.

Most Riverside staff are trained in first aid and CPR. Riverside keeps and provides appropriate doses of acetaminophen and ibuprofen, only when advance permission has been given by parents on the annual medical form. Riverside keeps and would provide appropriate doses of antihistamine after getting verbal permission from a parent at the time of the incident.

Allergies and Dietary Restrictions

Parents are expected to provide information about allergies and dietary restrictions within the Permission and Medical Release form. Riverside's health care staff person reads all of these forms and shares essential information with other Riverside staff as needed. Student inhalers and epipens are kept in a safe place depending on individual student needs and family requests. Those plans are reviewed with parents each year. When food is provided at school events or activities, every effort is made to provide alternatives for students who need them.

Immunizations

As a state-approved school, it's essential that we have up-to-date information on the status of your child's immunizations. Those immunizations are:

- ☐ DTaP (Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis)
- ☐ IPV/OPV (Polio)
- ☐ Hepatitis B
- ☐ MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella)
- ☐ Varicella (Chicken Pox)
- ☐ Tdap (12 yrs and older)

If your child had the varicella/chicken pox illness, instead of the vaccine, you must complete the History of Disease form. Please contact Riverside for a copy of this form.

If you choose to exempt your child from immunizations for medical or religious reasons, a form must be completed and signed each year by the parent. Please contact Riverside for a copy of this form. As of the 2016-2017 school year, the state of Vermont no longer allows for a Philosophical Exemption. The above forms can also be found on the website of the Vermont Department of Health.

PRIVACY OF INFORMATION

Riverside does not sell or give any information, such as postal, electronic mail, and/or residence addresses or telephone numbers to anyone outside the parent community. The school does not disclose recipients when emailing Monday Memos or other mass communications. Official school business, school-related fundraising, regular school communications, school-related volunteer opportunities, holiday greetings, social events, and mission-aligned community or educational events are the only allowed uses of the list.

Regarding individual student experiences, we use our discretion to share information only on a need-to-know basis, when it is in the best interest of the student or our community. We may also share specific information when legal requirements demand our disclosure.

Formal student records are released only after parents have authorized a specific request or signed the Record Release Form for 8th graders at the start of the year.

STUDENT SELF IDENTIFICATION

Each student has ownership of their identity: name, pronoun, and the like. When their requests are serious and intentional, we follow their lead on how they would like to be identified, and whether their request is for in-person and/or in-writing (informal communications, assessments, transcripts, health records, etc).

When a student has made a request that we change the pronoun or name we use for them, the classroom teacher or advisor will facilitate a conversation where the student introduces themselves and their wishes in a classroom setting and try to ascertain whether or not the student has shared this preference with their parents and encourage them to consider doing so if it feels safe. If the student has requested a name change on written documents, we will do this only after asking their permission to reach out to the parents/guardians and supportively inform them of their child's wishes, if they haven't done so themselves.

FIELD TRIPS

The Riverside School arranges field trips in the belief that shared experiential learning has great value for the school community. Field trips, whether fall, spring, or part of a day, are designed to be fun for all. They are also working school days. Field trips represent a wonderful opportunity for parents to become part of the school community, and we encourage all parents to join us for at least a portion of the fall field trip.

We rely on parent volunteer chaperones to carry out successful field trips, and we communicate our needs and expectations to those parents in advance. They function as chauffeurs, supervisors, leaders of study groups, and teachers. Overnight trips often involve students and adults working in assigned groups to serve others. Every field trip is unique in its planned activities and in the composition of the group. Some trips will accommodate younger siblings, while others, such as those involving lengthy museum visits or indoor activity, will need to be restricted. Please check with the staff leader of the trip for recommendations about a given trip.

We need our volunteer chaperones to be comfortable with the following: supervising groups, using good judgment to make decisions about student behavior and supervision, driving in unfamiliar areas, demonstrating positive flexibility with changes to the itinerary or supervision duties, practicing collaborative problem solving with other adults as needed, and using a cell phone to stay in contact with the rest of the group. In other words, our chaperones are very involved with the activities and engaged with the students. Chaperones are mentors as well as supervisors and we ask that chaperones do not smoke or consume alcohol while assuming this kind of responsibility.

We trust our chaperones' judgment and expect that you will intervene in any situations you find inappropriate. When you observe a Riversider doing something that makes you uncomfortable, please address it: describe and label the behavior, then suggest an alternative. If you think more attention is needed to the child or the behavior, please communicate that concern to a Riverside teacher.

Fall Trip

The fall field trip is usually to one location for three days and two nights. In the fall we stay closer to Riverside, and the lodging is often rugged: lean-tos, tents, or perhaps cabins. In

recognition of our goal to bond as a community and also the developmental needs of younger students, the fall field trip is designed as a one-day experience for grades K-3 and an overnight experience for grades 4-8. If parents of K-3 students with older siblings (grades 4-8) are willing and able to be with us at night, younger students are welcomed. Each person on the field trip will be assigned a room, cabin, or a tent. In our planning we carefully consider any concerns that you or your child may have, but please understand that these concerns cannot always be accommodated. If you or your child has any special needs or concerns, please let us know about them well in advance of the field trip. The close relationships fostered by our fall field trip draws the community together, integrating new students, new faculty, and new parents with one another at the start of the school year.

Spring Trip

K-3rd grade classes take day field trips that are developmentally appropriate and richly connected to classroom learning. These traditionally happen in May, but may occur at other times of the year as well, if the opportunity arises and the schedule allows (see Day Trips below). 4-5th graders and 6-8th graders go on 2-night trips in May to more urban destinations. The program in the spring is more academic, trying to connect curricula with student's interests and abilities, and to the location we are visiting.

Day Trips

Individual Riverside teachers often organize field trips for part or all of one day. We often seek chaperone volunteers via requests in the Monday Memo. If you can donate your time in this way, we are grateful and we ask you to let us know as soon as possible. Advance notice of chaperone participation is crucial to careful planning. Please communicate directly with the teacher in charge of the trip. We expect that you will be "on duty" from the time you meet at Riverside until the return. The teacher in charge of the trip will explain specific supervisory duties to each chaperone. In order to drive students off campus, parents must complete a Driver Information Release Form, which can be obtained from the director of finance and operations.

Riverside's ski, skate, and swim programs on Friday afternoons are considered day field trips as well, and are described fully in the Athletics section of General Student Information on page 14.

Field Trip Health

The Riverside School has coped supportively with students who have never been away from home before and who may experience homesickness, allergies, car sickness, bed-wetting, or nervous stomach. If your child has recently been ill, use your discretion about whether he or she is well enough to go on a field trip. Please do not send a child if the child has a fever or is too ill to attend school. If your child needs medication or has other special medical needs, be sure to inform the staff member who is coordinating the trip. Please refer to the directions involving medications during school; these apply on field trips as well.

The field trip coordinator will have a first aid kit, medical release slips, personal medications, and the telephone numbers of all parents. If an accident or serious illness should occur, the staff and chaperones will act to safeguard the welfare of the child and will contact the child's parent(s) as soon as possible.

Equipment and Food

Before each field trip, the field trip coordinator will communicate needs in the Monday Memo. If you indicate that you have something to lend, the coordinator will contact you about the use of your equipment. Mark everything with your name. After the field trip, all borrowed equipment, any found clothing, and other unclaimed items will be left on the porch at Riverside for a week.

Food on our field trips is ample, appealing, and nutritious. Consistent with any school day, candy, gum, soda and caffeinated drinks are discouraged.

Other than to take pictures, we will not allow students to communicate or entertain themselves with digital devices, even en route in the carpools. We want to encourage students to interact with each other instead of being "plugged in." Should a student need to make a call, s/he should ask a faculty member for permission to use their phone, and the adult will decide if it's truly necessary or not. If a student is found to have used such technology inappropriately, it will be taken and held by a faculty member until the end of the trip.

Behavior

All school rules apply on all school trips including field trips. Riverside students have a well-earned reputation as being behaved, polite, interested, and engaged. This reputation is enhanced every year by the pride the students have in themselves, each other, and their school. We admire and highly value this student-led and student-maintained heritage. Chaperones are encouraged to observe and address minor negative behaviors. Should significant negative behaviors occur, they will be addressed by Riverside teachers. The coordinator of the field trip may decide to send a student home. The parent would be responsible for meeting us halfway between Riverside and the trip's location.

BIRTHDAYS

Staff, teacher, and student birthdays are noted for all to see on the main calendar in the front office. Celebrating birthdays by singing "Happy Birthday" at morning assembly is a Riverside tradition. On a student's birthday, parents may provide cake, other treats, and drinks (although we prefer no candy or chewing gum, soda or caffeinated beverages) for the class OR the entire student body at lunchtime. Please consider students with known food allergies in your planning; any questions about those needs may be directed to the teacher or our health care staff person. We celebrate summer birthdays on the last day of school.

DISTRIBUTION OF INVITATIONS

Distributing invitations in any manner at school for a social event outside of school, such as a birthday party, is not allowed unless everyone in the class is included in the event. Please instruct students to consider the feelings of others and to not to discuss any such events at school.

SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS

When a member of Riverside's professional teaching staff is absent, every effort is made to obtain a content-skilled person with teaching experience and a commitment to working collaboratively with students in their learning to substitute. The head of school develops and maintains a list of qualified substitute teachers. Before being asked to substitute at Riverside, an individual visits the school, is interviewed by the head of school or designee, and has

completed fingerprinting and a criminal background check. Parents are always welcome to volunteer or contract as substitutes. Please contact the director of finance and operations to sign a release for the necessary background checks, and to make an appointment for fingerprinting.

SCHOOL SAFETY AND RULES

The Riverside School expects students to be safe and to maintain age-appropriate behavior in all school activities. We encourage them to practice personal responsibility. We recognize many mistakes as teachable moments. We believe appropriate risk taking is essential to learning and maturing. Teachers will use signals, reminders, and redirection when possible to reinforce appropriate school behavior. Whenever appropriate, we aim to help students practice resolving their own conflicts with conflict resolution, peer mediation, and anger management strategies. We teach and practice personal responsibility, restricting freedom and choice when more learning is obviously necessary. Logical consequences will be the next step. Parents and the head of school will be asked to conference with the student and teacher when needed. Serious or repeated offenses will result in more serious consequences, which may include probation, suspension, or expulsion. We reserve the right to inform a student's future school of any serious disciplinary action.

Some of the inappropriate behaviors and relevant consequences introduced below are described within the relevant policies in *The Riverside School Policy Manual*, which is available on our website.

VISITOR POLICY

All visitors are required to check in at the front office before entering campus and appointments are required to speak with faculty and staff. Any visitors who do not comply with these requirements may be asked to leave and law enforcement may be called as needed.

Riverside does not regularly lock the external doors of the house, the barn, the granary, or the yurt during the school day. Students and staff need to access all buildings on campus throughout the day to attend classes and other activities consistent with our mission and academic model.

PERSONAL DEVICES

We discourage students from bringing personal phones, music players, tablets or wearables to school. While we acknowledge that students may need to call home during the day to check on appointments, athletic schedules, and/or pick-up arrangements, we welcome our students to use the land-line phone in the main office at a time when learning is not interrupted. We ask that they do so in the office with permission of a staff member in order to help teach them which calls are necessary, how to problem solve on their own, and to be aware of any changes in their pick up or after school plans.

If a student brings personal phone, music players, tablet or wearable device to school because it feels important to their family, it should be brought to the office for safe storage upon arrival at school in the morning. An administrator will keep them safely in their office and students may visit to use them as needed, with permission. Such items may be picked up at the end of the school day. Should a student be found using a personal device elsewhere or without permission, we will hold that item in the main office until the parent comes in the afternoon for pick up.

On Field Trips and off-campus activities phones are not allowed, with the exception of our Friday skiing program, with acceptable, developmentally appropriate use, such as contacting an adult or communicating to solve a problem.

The school provides computers for any class work that requires them, however, there are specific circumstances when students may be allowed to bring their own laptops to school and use them for school-related activities. Students are expected to ask for permission from an adult before using any device on campus.

PREVENTION OF BULLYING, HAZING, AND HARASSMENT

The Riverside School is committed to providing all of its students with a safe and supportive school environment in which all members of the school community are treated with respect. It is the policy of the School to prohibit the unlawful harassment of students based on race, color, religion, creed, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability.

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

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

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

You can find Riverside's full policy on the prevention of Bullying, Hazing, and Harassment in *The Riverside School Policy Manual*, which is available on the school website at Our Team → Board of Trustees. Riverside follows Vermont C10 procedure for prevention and investigating allegations, which are linked in the the policy manual.

Please note that the following employees of The Riverside School have been designated by the District/Independent School to receive bullying, hazing, and harassment complaints:

1. Roy Starling, Head of School
2. Joel Gilbert, Dean of Students

DANGEROUS MATERIALS

The possession, use, or distribution of dangerous materials such as fireworks, weapons, tobacco, alcohol, marijuana, or illegal drugs of any kind will not be allowed at school or any school-sponsored activities. Any student violating this rule will face severe consequences, which may include suspension or expulsion from school. School policy allows for search of school property upon reasonable suspicion of the head of school. Any staff member violating this rule will be subject to disciplinary action as determined appropriate by the head of school. Full policies on "Tobacco Prohibition" and "Search and Seizure" are included in the Relevant Policies section at the end of this handbook.

APPROPRIATELY RISKY ACTIVITIES

Because we believe in the importance of independence, we give our students the opportunities and guidance to practice appropriate risk taking, both in and out of the classroom. These vary greatly depending on age, teaching style, necessary pre-teaching and time of year, and individual student needs. Examples of such activities might include use of sharp objects (more below), exploration of the stream, short unsupervised errands, and bare feet (more below under "Appropriate Clothing," or sledding). In any such activity the teacher would consider the variables above and coach the student specifically, according to their developmental stage.

Knives

Students may be allowed to use knives at school with certain limitations and in specific situations. Students are discouraged from bringing sharp knives of their own to school. If a student does bring a knife, they must give it to a teacher and explain their intentions with it upon arriving at school. The teacher will safeguard the knife and monitor any approved use. If a student requests to use a knife to cut something, the teacher involved will assess their prior skills and supervise their use as a teaching opportunity.

A teacher may introduce the appropriate use of knives in a specific activity with consideration for the age, maturity, and skill of the students involved. If they plan to do so they will communicate those plans in advance with parents, assess the safety skills of the students first, and directly supervise the use of knives.

INTERNET USE

Internet access is available to students at The Riverside School. Access to network resources is a privilege, however, not a right, and this access brings with it the need for responsible behavior. We have taken precautions to restrict student access to inappropriate subject matter, such as the rule that students only use computers at school under supervision by an adult. These precautions, however, are not foolproof. Proper educational exploration of the Internet network, as well as use of Riverside email accounts, depends upon the principled conduct of computer users and the cooperation of parents in guiding their children as they do with other educational resources. By state law, teachers are prohibited from requiring students to use social media platforms for out-of-school academic work, school sports, clubs, or any other out-of-school school-sponsored activities.

To help students approach these privileges responsibly and to provide guidelines for students should they encounter inappropriate materials, there is an "Acceptable Computer and Internet Use" in *The Riverside School Policy Manual*, which is available on our website. If a student

violates any of the provisions or guidelines explained in the policy, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken.

Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence

As a school we strive to guide students in the developmentally appropriate and responsible use of generative AI tools. These tools include all platforms that create text, images, music, or code, based on user input. Generative AI can enhance learning when used thoughtfully, ethically, and with intention. The teaching team and board of trustees are working through formal policy development this year, which will be reviewed annually, but our general guidelines are that: students be safe (never entering personal information into AI tools), well-supervised, and engage with the tools with respect and integrity for their school and their school work. Our early elementary students may engage with a guided introduction to generative AI, our upper elementary students might practice structured use of the tools, and our middle school students might build autonomy through adult guidance.

We expect teachers to be responsible for teaching and modeling appropriate use at relevant grade levels, to monitor student interactions with AI, to clarify when and how AI tools may be used on specific assignments, and to report and address misuse of AI tools as teachable moments, when appropriate.

Parents will be informed of how AI tools are used at each grade level. We hope to share resources to support discussions of responsible use of AI at home. Parents may opt out of AI use by written request, with alternative instructional approaches provided.

APPROPRIATE CLOTHING

Students must be cleanly, decently, and presentably dressed at school and at school-sponsored activities, recognizing that the contexts of school and active learning are different from other situations in which other styles of dress can be appropriate. These activities include, but are not limited to, classroom learning, outdoor learning in all seasons and conditions, performances before an audience, athletic competitions with safety concerns, field trips of any kind, whether they come as participant or audience member. On special occasions, such as concerts and commencement and at formal events on field trips, dressier attire is expected. Bathing suits are only appropriate for water-based activities. A need for specific attire will be announced in advance. Parent(s) will be notified and asked to bring a change of clothes if children come to school wearing inappropriate clothing. Students may be able to borrow appropriate clothing from the school if necessary and available.

Riverside values time outdoors and intentionally builds outdoor time into the curriculum. Learning outside can be messy, so this means students will sometimes come home dirty or wet. Parents can support us by keeping up with lesson plans and weather forecasts. PE, for example, is often outdoors in all conditions, and most elementary students have extensive outdoor time built into their daily schedule. In addition to packing appropriate rain or cold-weather gear, it is suggested that students (especially middle schoolers) have a change of clothes on campus in case they get wet early in the day.

Younger (particularly preschool-2nd grade) students will be asked to wear shoes at all times unless given permission by an adult to remove footwear for a specific activity. If outdoors for a barefoot activity, the temperature must be above 45 degrees. Older students may

choose to remove their shoes, and are expected to recognize the logical consequences of such a choice. Please ensure that footwear is appropriate for active play. We suggest that students keep an extra pair of shoes at school for activities different than transportation from home. For a younger student, that might mean slippers for inside the classroom rather than boots. For an older student that might mean sneakers for PE class rather than stylish or formal shoes. This way our students are more well prepared for all that can happen during a school day.

Some elementary teachers require students to remove outdoor shoes in the classroom and those families should ensure that they have indoor shoe substitute at all times.

PROPERTY DAMAGE

If school property damage occurs as a result of a student's actions, whether intentional or unintentional, the student will be held responsible for the repair or replacement of the property.

SUSPECTED ABUSE OR NEGLECT

All Riverside staff are "mandated reporters" and thus have the duty to make faithful and timely reports of suspected abuse or neglect directly to the Department of Children and Families (800-649-5285) within 24 hours. Staff are trained on recognition of abuse and neglect. We ask that staff also inform the head of school that a report has been made. The formal policy on "Reporting Suspected Abuse and Neglect" is included in *The Riverside School Policy Manual*, which is available on our website.

RESTRICTIVE BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTION

It is the policy of the Riverside School that students not be subjected to the unreasonable use of restrictive behavioral interventions, and that there be a common understanding within the Riverside School of appropriate interventions by staff. A complete policy on "Restrictive Behavioral Intervention" policy is in *The Riverside School Policy Manual*, which is available on our website.

SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION

Specific or repeated infractions that could lead to suspension or expulsion are noted throughout this document (ie plagiarism, cheating, hazing, harassment, possession of dangerous materials).

Beyond the specifically-cited incidents of misconduct in this handbook that may lead to suspension or expulsion, a student who poses a continuing danger to persons or property or an ongoing threat of disrupting the academic process of the school shall be immediately removed from the school or to a place within the school determined by the head of school or designee. Situationally, we may call parents to pick up. The limit for suspension is ten days, unless misconduct makes the continued presence of the student harmful to the welfare of the school, in which case a longer suspension or expulsion may be appropriate. Longer suspensions and expulsions require written notice to parents and must follow the due process requirements explained in *The Riverside Policy Manual* which is available on our website. Expulsion requires a majority vote of the Board of Trustees in support of the recommendation of the head of school.

THREAT ASSESSMENT TEAM/EMERGENCY OPERATIONS

Riverside Staff regularly reflects on emergency response drills and considers potential threats to the school. We have developed an Emergency Response Plan in collaboration with local authorities and following standards required by all current laws. The Emergency Response Team and Head of School are responsible for identifying and assessing threats to the students and/or the school.

The Head of School shall ensure that members of the threat assessment team receive training at least annually in the following topics: best practices of conducting threat assessments; identifying and eliminating bias in carrying out the duties of a threat assessment team; State Board of Education Rules governing exclusionary discipline; civil rights laws including Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990; negative consequences of exclusion from school; the impact of trauma on brain development. Full explanation of this procedure can be found in the school's Emergency Operations Plan.

When faced with a potential threat by, or directed towards, a student eligible for special education or is a qualified student with a disability under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the threat assessment team shall include a team member who is a special education teacher.

ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT

In accordance with 40 CFR Part 763 Subpart E (AHERA), Riverside families should know that Riverside has an Asbestos Management Plan that includes designation of a leader, inspection and management plans, notification of stakeholders, regular surveillance, training for relevant staff, and record keeping. The detailed plan is available in the office of the director of operations, and any further questions can be directed to the head of school.

ASSESSMENT

Each teacher at The Riverside School is responsible for designing their assessments of their students. Assessments serve as a mechanism that allows a teacher to communicate progress to the student, their parents, and future teachers. The Riverside School believes that the primary goal of assessment is to improve student learning. Further, we believe that assessments are varied in form, designed to guide instruction and to inform instructional decisions that are best for the learner. Assessment should focus on all areas of student learning.

REPORTING

Teachers in grades K-5 will provide three reports, one at the end of each trimester. These are emailed to parents. Each student is assessed in terms of their progress toward learning goals in each subject area, with a 1-4 performance scale, where:

- 4: Demonstrates the intended learning at a level above expectations and serves as a model for other students.
- 3: Demonstrates the intended learning and meets the expectations independently.
- 2: Sometimes demonstrates the intended learning and meets expectations with some teacher support.
- 1: Seldom meets the intended learning and is not meeting expectations at this time, even with teacher support.

Elementary teachers also provide general, narrative comments, related to both academic and mission-based goals.

Teachers in grade 6-8 will issue grades and narrative reports at the end of each trimester. Depending on the grade level, these may be proficiency-based 1-4 scores on each learning goal or traditional, summary letter grades. These reports are mailed home to parents. Cumulative grades are entered on transcripts at the end of the year. For students who have had extensive prearranged absences, who join mid-year, or who are receiving modified curriculum, student grades may be entered as "Outstanding, Satisfactory, or Needs Improvement" (abbreviated as O/S/N).

The narrative portion of all reports will address student achievement of both academic and mission-based goals. We believe feedback relative to a student's practice of and engagement with the core values listed in our school's mission statement (active learning, patient leadership, engaged citizenship, and supportive community) is fundamental. This feedback will ensure that students understand the skills and dispositions that demonstrate those values and the relevant behavioral expectations in the classroom.

These assessments are reinforced at Parent-Teacher-Student conferences twice during the year. Reporting dates are listed on the yearly calendar. Reporting dates are listed on the yearly calendar.

INCOMPLETES

If a significant amount of work is not finished, the student will receive an "Incomplete" on a report card or a semester narrative. The student and the parent(s) must make

arrangements with the teacher to complete school work to the satisfaction of the teacher. Sufficient work so that the teacher is able to make an effective assessment is essential for advancement.

STANDARDIZED TESTING

The Vermont Common Assessment Program includes the Smarter Balanced English/Language Arts and Mathematics tests for 3-8th graders, the Vermont Science Assessment for 5th and 8th graders, and the Vermont Physical Education Assessment for 4th and 7th graders. These assessments are required by the state of Vermont for all students who receive public funding for education. Riverside chooses to test all students regardless of whether the student's tuition was private pay or pay received from a choice town or district because we believe in the value of collecting many forms of data to assist in curricular and instructional decisions. The Common Core and Next Generation Science Standards, toward which students are assessed on these tests, provide consistent and rigorous expectations regarding what students need to know and be able to do by the end of each grade level. We use the Common Core Standards and the VCAP test results as guidelines or starting points for curricular discussions and development. It is only one measure that teachers and parents can use to guide individual student instructional needs and progress. Riverside also trusts that our professional faculty have set consistent, clear, and rigorous goals that may parallel or extend beyond those state and national standards.

These tests are scheduled in April and May. Please note that the testing period for The Riverside School is already scheduled on the yearly calendar. If a student or family chooses to not complete the VCAP tests, they will receive a 0 score which then affects school and state averages. If a student is absent for a significant part of the testing, they will have to miss regular class time to make it up.

National assessments augment curriculum and help students to develop test-taking skills. The Riverside School uses the results of these tests as only one means to evaluate the school's program and, in some cases, to further meet the needs of an individual student or group of students.

GRADE LEVEL ADVANCEMENT

Students in grades 6–8 must earn a satisfactory or a passing letter grade of D in all of their academic classes while maintaining an overall satisfactory or C average in order to advance to the next grade the following school year. Students in grades K–5 must successfully complete the course work and be sufficiently prepared for the next year. When it is apparent that more time is needed for the student to become proficient with the material and that the student would benefit from additional time in the present course or grade, communication among teachers, parents, and the head of school will commence as early as possible in order to plan an educational program best suited for the student's individual needs. When repeating or skipping a grade is considered, The head of school will make final enrollment and/or a placement decision in consultation with parents and Riverside teachers.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION OF EXCELLENCE

The Riverside School guides its students toward several goals. Prominent among these are the development of positive self identification through support and achievement, a positive

attitude toward learning, and the acquisition of basic and enduring learning skills. To achieve these goals the school provides a diversified and demanding curriculum that stimulates and challenges the student. Each student is admitted and sustained at Riverside with the understanding that he or she can know true success. The encouragement and recognition of this success is the daily work of the faculty and is also noted in semester comments and conferences. The faculty recognizes outstanding effort and achievement by students throughout the year. At commencement, the faculty gives formal recognition to students for outstanding achievement and effort.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

To earn a Riverside diploma, a student must earn a passing grade in all of their academic classes.

If a student is in danger of failing a course and, consequently, of being ineligible to graduate, the teacher will notify the student, the student's parent(s), and the head of school at least six weeks prior to the date of Commencement. Ongoing progress reports and messages from the teacher(s) regarding these difficulties will have preceded this notification. A student's diploma will be withheld at commencement if there is any school work not completed to the satisfaction of the teachers involved.

In rare instances, a student who is struggling to complete their work may, at the discretion of the head of school and in consultation with the teachers, be invited to repeat the year at Riverside. The student must want to repeat the grade in order for the process to be successful.

If the student chooses to repeat the grade, they will be excused from or sit with the undergraduates at the commencement ceremony. If the student chooses not to repeat the grade, they will receive a certificate of attendance at commencement in lieu of a diploma. Students enter grade ninth at the receiving high school's discretion.

Students on Individual Education Plan or 504 are entitled to modifications of their program based on the recommendations of their educational team.

The formal policy on "Student Assessment" is included in *The Riverside School Policy Manual*, which is available on our website.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

OPERATING EXPENSES

The Riverside School has only two sources of revenue: tuition/fee income and development (fundraising events, gifts, grants). All members of The Riverside School community help with development to meet current expenses and to ensure long-term stability. Each student attending Riverside is the beneficiary of many extraordinary acts of generosity on the part of parents, grandparents, staff members, alumni, trustees, and friends.

TUITION/FEES

Tuition for the school 2024-2025 year has been set by the Board of Trustees at \$10,900 for full time preschool; \$18,400 for grades K-5; and \$19,900 for grades 6-8. Tuition is unconditionally non-refundable. Tuition helps us to pay for the cost of all aspects of our program, including professional staffing, co-curricular programs, transportation, texts, workbooks, boomerang folders, and planners, and field trips. Additional fees accrue and will be billed to the school store account. These fees include items such as Wednesday pizza slices, Extended Day Program fees, equipment rentals, and individually purchased school supplies. School store bills are mailed at regular intervals, however parents may request one from the director of finance and operations at any time.

Tuition Payment Dates

For returning students in good standing, the school will forward a contract to the parent(s) in March.

Tuition is due in three installments. The non-refundable deposit of \$500 is due with the signed contract in early spring, a specific deadline is referenced in the contract. For new students accepted after April, the deadline is within ten business days of acceptance. This payment assures the student of a position in the school for the coming school year and must be paid on or before the due date. The second payment equal to 60% of the remaining balance is due on August 1. The third payment or the 40% balance is due in February. A monthly payment plan is available. Arrangements may be made through the director of finance and operations. Tuition may be paid in full before the end of the plan. The deposit is credited against tuition, and a refund is issued in late winter if the parent obligation is less than \$500.

Credit cards

Riverside accepts credit card payments. A 3% surcharge will be added to cover the cost to the school.

Choice Town Tuition

Some Vermont towns offer choice of school to students of a certain grade level, as determined by their school district. Students from those towns may be eligible to have part of their Riverside tuition paid by their district. If this option is available, the parent(s) are responsible for making the arrangements with the relevant district by completing a tuition voucher form as mailed to them by the district office twice a year. If those forms are not completed and

returned promptly, then Riverside does not receive tuition funds. If the district refuses to pay any part of a student's tuition, the parents are responsible for paying the balance.

Financial Aid

Applications for financial aid are available upon request from the director of finance and operations and will require a copy of your family's tax return. Those applications are reviewed by a committee of staff and award decisions are made based upon need. The award funds come from a dedicated amount of Riverside's operating budget. According to our policy, awards never exceed 50% of the parents' tuition obligation. We are growing an endowment fund to support more students in the future.

INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT

Recognizing that income from tuition only covers a portion of Riverside's operating budget, we ask families to recognize that in choosing an independent school they have chosen to support advancement efforts which include: marketing our school through positive reputation, fundraising events, and annual giving. If a parent would like to take a leadership role in helping Riverside with advancement please contact the head of school, who may utilize your skills and interests as part of the advancement committee of the board of trustees or the Parent Advisory Group.

Fundraising

Riverside builds its budget with an expectation that the parent community will collaborate to meet a specific fundraising goal each year. The Parent Advisory Group will work in conjunction with our parents to coordinate leadership and volunteers for such fundraising events, such as the Race Back to School, the Auction (more below), the Yard Sale, student artwork sales, or catalog sales.

The annual Riverside School Auction represents a significant means for the Riverside community to augment the School's operating budget, typically raising almost \$25,000 for our school's program. Trustees, families, students, and alumni are encouraged to solicit and gather donations. Antiques and art, weekend stays at resorts, timeshares, summer or winter homes, donations from retail businesses, a day's labor, a signed book or poster, airline miles, a cord of firewood, a gallon of maple syrup—all are attractive auction offerings. The event is open to the public and includes both a silent and live auction, food and drink, and informal entertainment. The evening is enjoyable and memorable for everyone.

Annual Fund

Riverside families support the annual fund each year. The school receives donations from parents, alumni, past parents, grandparents, trustees, friends, and the staff. Donations to the annual fund are essential and we are grateful for everyone's participation no matter the amount of the gift. Reaching participation goals helps Riverside to exhibit its supportive community and to leverage further contributions. Donations to the Annual Fund are 100% tax-deductible. Gifts of stock and bequests are also greatly appreciated.

Burklyn Arts Council

Burklyn Arts Council, a local not-for-profit run solely by volunteers, funds many of the following: student attendance at artistic performances, funds for our yearly musical performances, teaching residencies with artists, professional development in the arts for

teachers, and student scholarships for summer arts opportunities. Burklyn generates its funds through two Crafts Fairs each year, one the first Saturday in July and the other the first weekend in December. Riverside parents help Burklyn by donating home-baked cookies to sell at the December Crafts Fair and by volunteering at both fairs.

SOLICITATION

Soliciting Business Donors and Friends of the School

The Riverside School wants to protect friends and businesses from an overload of requests. We ask for an Annual Fund donation as well as for an Annual Auction donation from our business associates and friends. *Additional requests for donations are prohibited without prior permission from the head of school.*

Soliciting for Other Organizations

We want to support every member of our school, but we cannot allow solicitation of students and staff at school without prior approval from the head of school. Any poster, petition, handout, or flyer must be approved by the head of school before it is posted or distributed.