WORK – LEARN – GROW

RIVER TRAILS MIDDLE SCHOOL

FAMILY REFERENCE GUIDE

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rtms.rtsd26.org

RTSD26

This Family Reference Guide is an addition to the River Trails School District 26 Handbook and is meant to be supplemental to the policies and procedures that are written in the district's handbook. Please be sure to read both carefully.

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(Favor de llamar a la Sra. Esparza-Viveros al teléfono 224-612-7602 si tiene algunas preguntas sobre el contenido de este manual.)

Section 1: General Information

HOURS OF OPERATION

Office Hours: 7:00 a.m. - 4:00p.m.

School Hours: Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays: 7:40 a.m. - 2:58 p.m.
Thursdays: 8:30 a.m. – 2:58 p.m.

EMERGENCY DAYS

Cancellation of school takes place only during extraordinary circumstances such as extreme weather, equipment failure or public crisis. The school board and administration are aware of the hardship which can be caused by an abrupt cancellation. Therefore, school will not be canceled unless a significant safety risk has been created by an unusual circumstance. E-Learning Days may be used in lieu of a school cancellation.

Every practical means is used to notify parent/guardian of an impending cancellation, including emergency calling system, text and email notifications, and social media. School closing information will also be posted on our web page at www.rtsd26.org. The final decision for school cancellation or E-Learning is that of the Superintendent of Schools. Very rarely will school be canceled once students have arrived at school and are in the building.

COMMUNICATIONS

Communication between home and school is of vital importance. This is a two-way process. Teachers and parents/guardians are encouraged to keep the other informed about what is happening at school or home. A monthly school newsletter is generated from the Principal's office around the first of each month. There are numerous flyers, handouts, etc. that students take home on a regular basis. Parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to attend school functions in order to support the school and keep the lines of communication open at all times.

CONTACTING STUDENTS DURING SCHOOL HOURS

If you need to contact your student during school hours, please do so by contacting the school's main office. Students are not permitted to have their cell phones or smart devices during the school day, so any message must be relayed to the students through school staff.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent/Teacher conferences occur twice each school year. Information and sign ups will be shared by the school prior to the conference dates.

CHANGE OF CONTACT INFORMATION

It is very important, for emergency and administrative reasons, that every student maintain an up-to-date address record at the school office. Please notify the school IMMEDIATELY if you have a change of address, phone number, etc. during the school year.

PICTURES

Individual student portraits are taken at the beginning of the year with a retake day scheduled several weeks later. Parents/Guardians may purchase pictures packages through the photography company. All ordered pictures are delivered to the parents/guardians from the photography company.

Throughout the school year, staff may take pictures of class or school activities and share them in newsletters, on social media, in the yearbook, or on our school or district websites. Students of families that have opted out of the photography consent during the registration process will not have their pictures included in the list above.

REGISTRATION

New first grade students should be 6 years old on or before September 1st. A physical exam is required when a student enters school for the first time. A child's age must be verified by a birth certificate and immunization records must be complete. Upper level students who are transferring from other schools should arrange to provide copies of their academic record to ensure proper placement in a classroom/level. Visit the Registration Page at rtsd26.org for more information about registration.

SCHOOL SAFETY/EMERGENCY DRILLS

Fire drills, shelter-in-place drills, bus evacuation drills, secure-the-school drills, and relocation drills are conducted periodically throughout the year. Detailed escape plans are posted inside the door of each classroom. Students are expected to remain quiet and cooperative throughout each of these drills. More information about each school's crisis plan can be found in the District 26 Handbooks shared with all families at the start of each school year.

VISITORS

We welcome visitors - in fact, we encourage parents/guardians to join us in school to support the learning happening in classrooms. Anyone interested in supporting a class or seeing a program must receive approval from the teacher and/or principal prior to the visit. All visitors to school property are required to:

- Report to the building's main office and receive permission to remain on school/District property.
- Show/provide a state ID card for a background check.
- Obtain and wear a visitor badge. All visitors must wear and have their visitor badge visible at all times while in the building.
- Any staff member may request identification from any person on school or district property. Persons on school/district property without permission will be directed to leave and may be subject to police intervention.

On occasions when large groups are invited onto school/District property visitors are not required to sign in but must follow school/District official's instructions.

Visitor access to classrooms and personnel will be permitted in limited situations. The administrator may grant, deny or modify the request and the administrator's decision shall be final. Prior to visiting a school, school building, or school facility, a visitor must complete the District's form, Request to Access Classroom(s) or Personnel for Special Education Evaluation and/or Observation Purposes, prior to the visit and submit it to the principal. The Building Principal or designee will attempt to arrange the visit at times that are mutually agreeable. The principal or designee will accompany any visitor for the duration of the visit, including during any interviews of staff members. For more information, contact the Building Principal.

ARRIVAL

Please see this document for the full Arrival procedures.

- ***Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays:*** Morning supervision begins at **7:15 a.m.** Students will be able to enter the building at 7:33 a.m. The instructional day begins at 7:40am.
- ***Thursdays – Late Arrival****:* Morning supervision begins at **8:10 a.m.** Students will enter the building at 8:23 a.m. The instructional day begins at 8:30am.

During extremely cold or rainy/snowy weather, students who arrive at school before the 7:33 a.m. bell will be allowed to enter the building and stand quietly in their designated areas. The playground supervisors will monitor the students when they are inside before school.

DISMISSAL

Please see this document for the full Dismissal procedures. Middle school students are dismissed at 2:58 p.m. If a student has an early dismissal, the parent/guardian MUST pick up and sign the student out in the school office.

PERSONAL TRANSPORTATION GUIDELINES

1. Restrictions on School Property To ensure pedestrian safety, no person may ride or operate personal transportation or recreational equipment anywhere on school property (including sidewalks, parking lots, drop-off lanes, athletic fields, and playgrounds) at any time.

- **Manual Equipment:** Bicycles, kick scooters, skateboards, rollerblades, and roller skates must be dismounted immediately upon entering school grounds.
- **Electric & Motorized Equipment:** E-bikes, e-scooters, hoverboards, and electric skateboards are strictly prohibited on school property at all times.
- **Non-Highway Vehicles:** Dirt bikes, golf carts, ATVs, UTVs, and mini-bikes are prohibited on school property at all times.
- **ADA Accommodations:** Exceptions are made for mobility devices required under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Please contact your building principal if you or your student require mobility accommodations.

2. Rider Responsibilities ("Walk Your Wheels")

- **Walk Your Wheels:** Students who ride bicycles or manual scooters to school must dismount the moment they reach school property and walk their devices directly to the exterior bike racks.
- **Helmets & Traffic Safety:** We strongly urge all students to wear a properly fitted helmet and strictly obey crosswalks and traffic signals on their way to and from school.
- **Storage & Security:** Equipment must be parked and locked at outdoor bike racks. Personal equipment is not permitted inside school buildings. (Note: The District is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged property.)
- **Local Bike Registration:** We recommend locking devices with a heavy-duty lock and utilizing the Mount Prospect Police Department's free bicycle registration program for added theft protection.

LOST AND FOUND

All clothing, etc., found in and around the school building, regardless of its value, is placed in the lost and found area located in the vestibule at the main entrance. Computers, money, jewelry or any other articles of value are turned into the office. Students may claim them after properly identifying the object(s). All items in the lost and found are donated twice each year - during winter break and over summer break.

PARENT TEACHER COUNCIL (PTC)

The PTC is an organization of parents and teachers. We work together to provide enrichment programs for our children, fund special projects that are recommended by the School Improvement Team, and provide the opportunity for parent/guardian involvement in the school.

The PTC provides a variety of programs for our children. The children and staff look forward to these programs with great anticipation. Parent/guardian volunteers are an essential part of the PTC. We need parent/guardian involvement as well as your financial support to continue offering all of the wonderful programs to our students. Our meetings are held monthly and all parents/guardians and teachers are welcome to attend all meetings. By joining the PTC you are surely a part of your child's elementary education at River Trails Middle School. For more information, please visit the PTC Page at rtms.rtsd26.org.

Section 2: Universal Expectations

ATTENDANCE

The Illinois compulsory attendance law requires all children ages 6-17 to attend school. Children below the age of 6 years or above the age of 17 years who are enrolled in grades Kindergarten – 12 are also required to attend school while in session during the regular school term.

The primary responsibility for notifying the school when a child is to be absent lies with the child's parent/guardian. Therefore, it is the expectation of the District that a parent/guardian will notify the child's school by 9:00 a.m. if their child is to be absent from school on any given day. Any parent/guardian failing to notify the school of an absence will be contacted by telephone at home or work to verify the absence. Calls reporting an absence can be made by dialing our main phone number, **(847) 298-1750.** These calls can be made at any time of the day, seven days a week. If you leave a message reporting an absence, please include the following information:

- Student's name, please spell the last name.
- Length of absence.
- Reason for absence - giving this information eliminates the need to write a note and send it with your child.
- Request for homework if the absence is more than 2 days.

The District is required to maintain attendance records on all children. The Illinois State Board of Education has established guidelines for half-day and full-day attendance. The guidelines are based on instructional time with the following general parameters:

	Kindergarten	First Grade	Grades 2-8
Full Day Credits	4 hrs/240 mins	4 hrs/240 mins	5 hrs/300 mins
Half Day Credits	2 hrs/120 mins	2.0 hrs/120 mins	2.5 hrs/150 mins

Consistent with the requirements of state law, if any child in grades K-8 is absent from school, and there is no record that the absence has been authorized and is for valid cause, the school will, within 2 hours after the first class in which the child is enrolled, make a reasonable attempt to contact the parent or guardian of the child's absence. This notice will not be given for those absences authorized by the parent/guardian.

The School District will determine if the student is a truant, chronic or habitual truant, or a truant minor.

A "*truant*" is a child subject to compulsory school attendance who is absent without valid cause from such attendance for a school day or portion thereof.

- ***Valid cause for absence*** – A child may be absent from school because of illness, medical appointment, observance of a religious holiday, death in the immediate family, family emergency, school activities, special or unusual events approved by the parent(s)/guardian(s) and pre-approved with the school, situations beyond the student's control as determined by the Board of Education or such other circumstances which cause reasonable concern to the parent for the safety or health of the student. In the event that a child is absent for the purpose of observing a religious holiday, the absence will be considered excused and the student will be given an equivalent opportunity to make up any examination, study, or work requirement. Excessive health-related absences without doctor's notes are not valid causes for absence. Students may take up to five (5) excused mental health days during a school year. Students taking more than two (2) mental health days in a school year will be referred to our Student Support Team.
- ***Chronic absentee*** - The state of Illinois considers any student that is absent for 10% or more of the school year as being "chronically absent." Absences can be either excused or unexcused. Students who are identified as chronically absent are reported to the Illinois State Board of Education each year.
- ***Chronic or habitual truant*** – A "chronic or habitual truant" is a child who is subject to compulsory school attendance and who is absent without valid cause from such attendance for 5% or more of the previous 180 regular attendance days. Students who are identified as chronic or habitual truants will be referred for school-based interventions or reported to the North Cook Intermediate Service Center.

- ***Truant minor*** – A chronic truant to whom supportive services, including prevention, diagnostic, intervention and remedial services, alternative programs, and other school and community resources have been provided and have failed to result in the cessation of chronic truancy or have been offered and refused.

Parents or Guardians may obtain assistance to approve attendance by contacting the school administration, counselor, or nurse.

If you wish to pick up homework for a child who is absent, please let us know when you call in your child's absence and the message will be passed on to your student's teachers. Assignments will be ready for you to pick up in the office between 3:35 P.M. and 4:00 P.M. that afternoon. *Homework will be brought to the office only if the child is absent for 2 or more days***.**

Students that are absent during the school day may not participate in any after school events or activities for that day.

ILLNESS - IS YOUR CHILD TOO SICK TO ATTEND SCHOOL?

The best way to prevent the spread of disease is to keep children home from school if they exhibit the following symptoms:

- A temperature over 99.9 degrees. *Following any illness, the temperature should remain normal (98.6 or lower) for a period of 24 hours without the aid of medication before the child returns to school.*
- Sore, red throat, earache or swollen glands.
- Any undiagnosed rash or skin eruption - children cannot attend school with a rash unless we have a doctor's note informing us that the rash is not contagious.
- Nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea. *Students should remain home for 24 hours after vomiting. If a student vomits at school, he/she must stay home for 24 hours after he/she is picked up by a parent/guardian.*
- Eyes that appear reddened and/or are crusted, unless we have a doctor's note that it is not communicable conjunctivitis.
- Acting listless or drowsy, complaining of headache, appearing flushed, lack of appetite or in other ways appears ill.
- Is coughing, sniffling or has a runny nose. Many communicable diseases begin with these symptoms and are most contagious at this time.

There are several ways in which you can protect yourself and your children from communicable diseases:

- Good hand washing, especially before eating, after playing outside, and always after using the bathroom to prevent germs from entering mouths.
- Getting plenty of rest to avoid stressing the immune system. Early bedtimes and limited screen time help with adequate sleep.
- Eating three healthy meals each day enhances our immune system.
- Not sharing food or drink prevents sharing germs.
- Covering our mouths when we cough or sneeze and disposing of tissues in a lined wastebasket - helps prevent the spread of infection.

These same simple practices will also help to prevent the spread of more serious diseases. If you have questions or concerns about the spread of infection, please feel free to contact the school health office

TARDIES

Prompt arrival at school is expected of all students. Late arrival causes anxiety for your child, disrupts class, and causes loss of instructional time. *Any child who arrives at class after the first bell (7:40 am; 8:30 am on Thursday)is considered tardy.* These students MUST go to the office for a late pass prior to their admittance into a classroom. Students (and their parents/guardians) that are chronically late will be eligible for an intervention by school administration or referral to school or community resources.

VACATIONS

Parent(s)/guardian(s) are encouraged to schedule vacations during non-attendance days. Vacation plans should be discussed with the child's teachers and arrangements made to complete missed assignments. The school should be notified well in advance of an extended absence. Vacations are not excused absences. Teachers are not required to prepare work in anticipation of a student's vacation absence. Chromebooks, textbooks, library books or any other school property should not be taken out of the state or country.

STUDENT BEHAVIOR

All students and staff are asked to follow our life rules:

- Be Respectful
- Be Responsible
- Be Ready To Learn.

Students spend time at the beginning of each school year reviewing what it looks like to follow the life rules in different settings and situations around the school. Unexpected behaviors that do not follow the expectations are categorized as either *minor* or *major* behaviors:

- *Minor Behaviors* are lower in intensity and handled by the classroom teacher or school staff. Responses may include, but are not limited to: corrective prompts, reteaching, natural consequences, behavior reflections, restoration of relationships, loss of privileges, and parent contact.
- *Major Behaviors* are more intense and handled by the principal or assistant principal. Responses may include, but are not limited to: natural consequences, behavior reflections, restoration of relationships, loss of privileges/detentions, suspensions and parent contact.

BEHAVIOR MATRIX

Generally, the following student behaviors fall under the minor and major categories:

Minor	Major
Unprepared	Defiance/Noncompliance
Defiance/Noncompliance	Disrespect
Disrespect	Disruption
Disruption	Bullying
Student Conflict	Technology Violation
Technology Violation	Inappropriate Language
Inappropriate Language	Physical Contact
Physical Contact	Property Misuse, Damage Vandalism
Property Misuse, Damage Vandalism	Academic Dishonesty, Forgery
Academic Dishonesty, Forgery	Out of Area/Inappropriate Location
Out of Area/Inappropriate Location	Threat
	Theft
	Harassment
	Gang Affiliation
	Use/Possession of Illegal Substance
	Repeated Minors

See the District 26 Handbook for a full explanation of Prohibited Student Conduct and Disciplinary Measures.

SCHOOL DISCIPLINE PROCESS

Discipline is part of the learning process at River Trails Middle School; it is not solely to enact punishment. Students will benefit from a fair and equitable discipline process that promotes guidance and accountability.

Depending on the level and frequency of the disciplinary infraction, a student may receive one or more of the following consequences:

- Warning
- Call home to parent/guardian
- Minor Infraction (Minor Infractions occur after the child has been repeatedly warned)
- Time out detention in the detention room or the front office
- Lunch and/or After School Detention
- Loss of Privileges
- Restitution
- In school suspension
- Out of school suspension (Students may not attend any after school activity during an out of school suspension.)
- Expulsion

Investigation of behavioral problems will consider the procedural due process rights of students:

- Notification and explanation of the content of the allegation of misbehavior.
- Right to tell their side of the story.
- In cases of suspensions lasting more than five days or expulsion, students will be given the right to request a hearing where they may cross-examine and present witnesses on their behalf.
- Application of sanctions or discipline based on the content and severity of the misbehavior in accordance with district policy and state law.

Unlawful student behavior may result in the filing of a police report. District 26 and the police department maintain a cooperative working relationship. As required by State Law and governed by confidentiality requirements, District 26 and the police department maintain a reciprocal reporting system.

Disciplinary actions for special education students will comply with state and federal regulations and provisions of the student's individual education plan and behavior management plan. Special education students are expected to comply with district discipline and behavior policies.

All students should report issues relative to school safety to the principal or assistant principal. This would include knowledge of weapons, drugs, bullying, sexual harassment, and threats to do harm to staff, students, the school, or its property.

NOTE: Students may be disciplined for conduct not specifically stated in the rules when the administration determines that the behavior interferes with the physical and/or emotional safety of students, staff, or property.

DRESS CODE

Students are expected to be dressed appropriately while in the school each day. While this may mean different things depending on weather, activities, and more, the following general guidelines should always be followed:

- T-shirts exhibiting distasteful/inappropriate images, words, and/or phrases. Clothing with excessive holes or rips, sagging pants, and any clothing that reveals undergarments.
- Students may not wear costumes to school except in case of school spirit activities.
- Pajamas may not be worn in school (except for school spirit activities).
- Hats and hoods may not be worn (except for school spirit activities).

Students in violation of the dress code will be required to call home for a change of clothing. The matter will be documented as an office disciplinary referral.

TECHNOLOGY

Every student in grades 1-5 has a Chromebook and technology is integrated into the curriculum at each grade level. Visit the Technology Page at rtsd26.org for more information and to view the Chromebook Handbook.

Technology infractions may result in the loss of district technology privileges. Examples include visiting unapproved and inappropriate websites; tampering with or using a device without permission, and/or misuse of a printer. Students must never share their Google account username or password information with anyone. Each RTMS student may be assigned a Chromebook. Please see page 10 for more information on the use of Chromebooks.

HALLWAYS

- Walk on the right side of the hallway.
- Be where you are supposed to be. Make sure you obtain a pass from a staff member if you need to leave class or designated area.
- Use a low volume when speaking. Do not yell, scream, or shout in the hallways.
- The gym and LRC are not to be used as a hallway to pass from one class to another unless permission is given by staff.
- Walk with a purpose. Running is not allowed.
- Public displays of affection are not allowed.

LOCKERS

Hall lockers are provided with combination locks for security of books and personal belongings. The student is responsible for keeping their locker neat and orderly. The lockers are the property of the school district and are subject to unannounced searches at any time. Notice or consent of the student is not required. Students are not to share locker space or combinations with anyone. Locker locks may not be modified or left unlocked for the purpose of quicker entry.

Gym lockers and locks are also provided. If a gym lock is lost, the student must pay for a new one. To prevent loss, gym lockers must be kept locked.

Students are able to access lockers during designated times throughout the school day. Grade level teachers will forward this information to the students during the first week of school.

Students must receive permission from an administrator before decorating lockers. Balloons and personal photographs may not be used to decorate lockers. Students may not use school printers to print locker decorations. No more than two students may decorate a locker. Decorations must come down after four weeks.

The school is not responsible for lost or stolen locker items.

BACKPACKS

Students may not carry materials in backpacks or book bags during the school day. Backpacks and bookbags must be stored in lockers. This is a safety issue and is strictly enforced. Please note that wheeled backpacks do not fit in the lockers.

CELL PHONES/PHONE CALLS

Cell phones, earbuds, and headphones must be powered off and placed out of sight (This can be in your pants pocket, jacket, bookbag, coat, etc.) upon setting foot on school grounds, until it can be placed in your locker before you head to your first class of the day. Smartwatches capable of making calls/texting should only be used for telling time during the school day. The only time you can have your phone out (and on) is after the 2:58 p.m. bell; it can only be used for calls in approved designated areas. We expect that you are considerate when taking photos; photos/video should NEVER be taken in locker rooms or bathrooms. It should be noted that students are welcome to use the office phone to contact parents. Phones can be used on the bus for listening to music/playing

games via headphones only. Exception: Sponsors for after school activities may allow the use of phones (for music or games) within a closed environment/classroom; however the sponsor must be present and give permission. Students are not allowed to use cell phones in or around the building, excluding the exceptions mentioned above. The phones need to be out of sight while in or around the building. Failure to adhere to cell phone guidelines will result in the confiscation of the student's phone. Confiscated phones will only be returned to parents. RTMS is not responsible for lost phones.

Emergency calls may be placed in the school office with the permission of the administration. Parents/guardians should not call the school to speak to students except in an emergency. Students may not use the office phone after school unless approved by administration.

Section 3: Educational Programs

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

All students are expected to meet certain academic standards in all subject areas each school year. Each subject has a specific set of standards and curriculum, including:

- Common Core English Language Arts
- Common Core Mathematics
- Next Generation Science Standards
- C3 Framework for Social Studies State Standards
- National P.E. Standards
- National Core Arts Standards

Students who fail to meet these standards will be involved in conferences with their teachers and parents. Administrators and teachers will work with parents to provide these students every opportunity to learn the material.

ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS

- Students active in interscholastic sports, clubs, and activities are subject to an "Academic and Extracurricular Participation Contract." Academic completeness will take precedence over activities.
- Students earning failing grades (specifically during their 8th grade year) may not be part of the 8th grade graduation ceremony.
- Students who miss a class during a school day to attend another school activity such as band sectionals, field trip, etc. are expected to complete homework in the same time frame as if they were present for all classes during the school day.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Students are expected to maintain integrity and honesty when completing homework, taking tests/quizzes, and any other type of academic assignment. Students cheating will receive consequences at the discretion of the teachers and/or administration. Cheating includes but is not limited to the following: copying and/or allowing someone to copy your work, plagiarism (see definition of plagiarism on page 8), purposefully grading an assignment incorrectly, and working with a partner on an independent assignment. Students should never ask another student to "see their work." If a student asks you, say "no."

ASSIGNMENT NOTEBOOK

An Assignment Notebook is given to every student on the first day of school or at registration. Students are required to keep daily assignments in this notebook and maintain this notebook throughout the school year. Replacement cost is $5.00. A limited number of replacement notebooks are available in the main office. If there are no copies available, students are required to purchase a student notebook outside of school.

REPORT CARDS

Report cards are issued to students at the end of each trimester of the school year. The report cards are shared via email about 7-10 days after the end of the grading period. Parents will be notified by automatic email system. Notices of Concern may be sent home mid-trimester. Parents and students are encouraged to access PowerSchool to monitor student progress. Parents may access their student's progress/grades via the internet. Access codes for students & parents are emailed home at the beginning of the school year.

ADVANCED PROGRAMS

Any parent/guardian wishing to explore grade level or subject acceleration should check the Acceleration page at rtsd26.org or contact the school principal.

- Grade Level and Single-Subject Acceleration is an available option when the school cannot find ways to meet individual student needs within a classroom setting. Students that qualify for single-subject or grade-level accelerations are typically extreme outliers compared to their peers.
- Placement in the Acceleration, Challenge, Excellence (ACE) program is available to the 4th and 5th grade students who qualify in the areas of math, reading, or both. Placement in the ACE program is determined with the use of a matrix that includes academic assessments, cognitive testing, work habits, and teacher recommendation.

Advanced Math and Literature/Language Arts grades are weighted. River Trails Middle School has an honor roll published each trimester. The honor roll is tabulated in the following way:

Regular Education Program:	**Advanced Programming Classes**:
A = 6.0	A = 6.5
A- = 5.5	A- = 6.0
B+ = 5.0	B+ = 5.5
B = 4.5	B = 5.0
B- = 4.0	B- = 4.5
C+ = 3.5	C+ = 4.0
C = 3.0	C = 3.5
C- = 2.5	C- = 3.0
D+ = 2.0	D+ = 2.5
D = 1.5	D = 2.0
D- = 1.0	D- = 1.5
F = 0	F = 0
I = Incomplete	I = Incomplete

The point value is totaled and divided by the number of subjects to determine which honor roll that student qualifies for. ALL classes that receive letter grades are included in the calculation of the grade point average:

HIGH HONORS = 5.5 - 6.5
HONORS = 4.5 – 5.4

(No grade in any subject may be lower than a “C” or an “I”. A qualified student will be placed on the honor roll after all work is turned in.)

Please note Pass/Fail designations are not calculated in grade point averages.

Decisions regarding classroom placement, intervention, and retention shall be based on a student’s successful completion of the curriculum, attendance, other criteria determined by the district, and a careful evaluation of the advantages and disadvantages of alternatives.

HOMEWORK AND CLASS ASSIGNMENTS

Homework contributes toward building responsibility, self-discipline and lifelong learning habits. It is the intention of the River Trails Middle School staff to assign relevant, challenging, and meaningful homework assignments that reinforce classroom learning objectives. Homework should provide students with the opportunity to apply the information they have learned, complete unfinished class assignments, and develop academic independence. Homework grades are modified based on students’ individual needs (i.e. IEP, EL, 504 Plans). Homework is mandatory. Homework assignments must be submitted with high quality effort by the due date.
Parents/Guardians can help their children by arranging a quiet, comfortable place for the students to work and by seeing that their assignments are completed on time.

Encourage your child to discuss what they did in school each day. The best way to do this is to ask open-ended questions, such as:

- What was your favorite part of your day?
- What was the hardest part of your day?
- What's one thing you learned in reading/math/science/art today?

Homework procedures for absent students

- Do not call for homework to be sent home until the second day of absence.
- Parents/Guardians should call the office before 10:30 a.m. on the second day of absence.
- When calling, the parent/guardian will indicate the subject(s) and teacher(s).
- A parent/guardian may pick-up the homework on the second day *in the office*. Homework may not be ready to be picked up before 3:30 p.m.
- If a sibling or friend is to bring the homework home, the parent/guardian is to follow the same procedures (1-4) listed above.

Students on average are assigned between 30-90 minutes of homework each night depending on the grade level. Completion time may vary depending on individual abilities. In addition to assigned homework, students are encouraged to read at least 20 minutes at home each night. Late homework assignments may be given partial credit. No credit will be given if the assignment is submitted after the unit is completed.

HOMEWORK PHILOSOPHY

Students will be assigned homework to help build independent study skills. Homework shouldn't be excessive; middle school students shouldn't be doing homework longer than 90 minutes on a given night. Middle school students lead busy lives, but they need to get at least eight hours of sleep. Active students must prioritize their activities; academic responsibilities should take precedence over extracurricular events. That being stated, please monitor your child's approach in this regard. We don't recommend allowing children to stay up beyond their normal sleeping hours to complete homework. It is the responsibility of each student to meet their homework obligations on time. The natural consequence for failing to submit acceptable homework on time is an incomplete which may impact their grade. Students can keep track of assignments through their assignment notebook and their teacher's Schoology page.

Students are encouraged to follow the following tips for staying organized, studying, completing homework and managing stress:

- Set a short term academic goal each trimester.
- Use your planner to schedule your academic responsibilities. Write down what is necessary, such as due dates and assignment names.
- Set aside no less than 60 minutes after school in a quiet place to study every day.
- Establish a place for supplies, assignments and homework; keep everything in its place. Binders and a color folder system are helpful.
- Keep your locker neat.
- Develop an effective system of organization and stick to it. Follow a routine of good habits.
- Take a break; email a friend or an adult who can help you if you feel frustrated. Remember, it's going to be OKAY; we will challenge you to do your best, but we will also support you.
- Listen, take notes and ask questions in class. Read directions.
- Use Powerschool to stay on top of your academic responsibilities.
- Find out what resources are available to help you learn, such as the LRC, or early/after school teacher assistance.

FIELD TRIPS

From time to time, individual classes may take a trip that supplements or enriches the educational program. The trips are an important part of your child's education. The cost of these trips will always be kept to a minimum. A permission slip containing information and the cost of the trip will be sent home well in advance of the activity. Students may accompany the class only with a signed permission slip.

Section 4: School Services

HEALTH SERVICES

The school nurse assists in the maintenance of health records, dispensing medication, routine health checks, parent/guardian contacts concerning health problems, care of minor injuries, and assistance in vision and hearing screenings. Please be sure to contact our nurse if your child has any atypical health needs while at school. Our nurse does not always call every parent when a child visits her office but she will call when a student bumps/hits their head or has symptoms that persist for some time.

All new and transfer students are required to have updated physical and vision exams. Incoming 2nd grade students are required to have updated dental exams. More information can be found on the Health Services webpage.

MEDICATIONS

If your child must take medication at school, the following requirements must be met:

- ALL medications (prescription and over-the-counter) must be brought to school by parent/guardian.
- All medications (including over-the-counter) must be accompanied by a permission slip.
- All prescriptions must be current and clearly labeled in the ORIGINAL container.
- Prescription labels must include: child's name, drug identity, dosage instructions, doctor's name and prescription date.
- Refrigeration is available.
- All medications are to be dispensed by school health aide or other authorized school personnel.
- Parents//Guardians do have the option of coming to school themselves to administer the medication.

Detailed policies and forms can be found on the Health Services webpage.

CONCUSSION

During the course of a school year, your child will engage in physical activity by participating in a number of different activities. Those may be physical education classes, recess, athletics, intramural sports or other extracurricular clubs offered at school. District 26 has a concussion policy and protocol that will be followed if your child sustains any such injury. The building nurse will observe for signs and symptoms for all head related injuries. Parents will be contacted and communicated with by the building nurse.

LIBRARY RESOURCE CENTER (LRC)

Students are allowed to use the LRC during library hours with the permission of their classroom teacher. The LRC collection is constantly updated and expanded. Books are chosen for either their educational or recreational value. Popular magazines are also available for a two-week check out. Students may check out two items at a time. Many teachers will bring their students to the LRC during class time, especially for English/Language Arts, to check out books and/or to do research. Families will be charged for lost, damaged, or severely overdue books.

Students may access our LRC starting at 7:00 AM Monday through Wednesday, and Friday. They may work in the LRC after school from 3:00PM-4:00PM, Monday through Thursday. Students are required to obtain a pass from the main office in the morning that they would like to come for early supervised and quiet study. No pass is needed for the supervised after school study, but students should arrive promptly at 3:00, unless they have a pass to arrive later.

LUNCH PROGRAM

Students have the option of bringing a lunch to school or purchasing a hot lunch. With our school lunch program, students have a choice of hot and cold lunch options. Students who bring lunch from home may purchase milk each day through their MyMealtime account. Do not send cash to school. Parents are able to monitor student lunch purchases online.

In order to purchase lunch at school, students must have money in their food account. Free or reduced lunches

are available for those families who qualify in accordance with federal guidelines (call the office for more information). Please visit the Food Service page at rtsd26.org for more information about the Free and Reduced Lunch Program, menus and how to load money into your child's MyMealtime account.

Tips for packing a lunch: To help your child and we please do the following:

- Label your child's lunch bag/box with name and homeroom.
- Use recyclable, reusable containers whenever possible. Teach your child about the importance and value of waste reduction to preserve our environment.
- Pack items you are sure your child can open. It delays lunch if he/she cannot get cans, etc., open. Beverage containers can be especially difficult for some young children.
- Plastic forks and spoons are available to all students in the lunchroom. *Do not send knives to school in lunch bags***.**
- If your child is just buying milk, please make sure there are funds in their MyMealTime account.

CAFETERIA POLICIES

- Students are not permitted to leave the school grounds during lunch.
- Each student is responsible for the cleanliness of their lunch table and floor areas (under their table).
- All food is to be eaten in the cafeteria at your seat. Food and drink may not be removed from the cafeteria without permission from a staff member.
- Students are not to leave the cafeteria for any reason without the permission of the supervisor. At the end of each lunch period, when the cafeteria is clean, the supervisor will dismiss students.
- Students who are rude, boisterous, or messy in the cafeteria may be assigned special seating or lunch detention either permanently or temporarily.
- Seating assignments are at the discretion of the supervisor(s). Students should contact a lunch supervisor to request a seat change.

FOOD AND BEVERAGE GUIDELINES

District 26 promotes, encourages and supports good nutrition for students.

- Food Distribution: Food that is to be distributed to other students must be commercially prepared and packaged. District policy prohibits the distribution of homemade food items. Food may not be distributed without prior approval from staff.
- Water in bottles is allowed in the classrooms, except in areas where certain technology may be used; teachers will inform students where water is not allowed.
- Candy is not to be eaten in the hallways.
- Gum is not allowed in school at any time.
- Food, beverages, candy, and gum are never allowed in the gym.
- Any type of fundraiser that involves food items is prohibited during school hours.
- Extreme birthday treats and surprises such as balloons and flowers are not permitted.
- "Energy" Drinks and beverages advertised with high levels of caffeine are prohibited on campus or at any school related activity.

STUDENT SERVICES

RTSD26 schools offer a variety of additional supports and resources to help students succeed:

- *Social/Emotional Learning Team.* RTSD26 schools have a social worker and school psychologist who counsel students both individually and in small groups. They are available to help children with social skills, social problems, crisis situations and family stresses. Ongoing social work cannot be given on an individual or small group basis without parent/guardian consent.
- *Multilingual Services.* There are various services at RTSD26 schools for students who speak a language in addition to or other than English. These Multilingual (ML) programs service all the 1-5 students who qualify for the program after a language assessment. Services are provided by certified teachers and are individualized to each student.

- *Response to Intervention.* RTSD26 schools have many ways to support students both academically and behaviorally. For example, all children are assessed throughout the year with AIMSweb (grade 1), MAP (Measure of Academic Progress) (grades 2-5), IAR (Illinois Assessment of Readiness) (grades 3-5) and classroom based assessments. Based on student progress, students may be provided with appropriate interventions to support areas in reading or math. These interventions may be delivered by the classroom teacher or one of our building interventionists, Parents will be made aware when a child is receiving additional academic or behavioral interventions.
- *Special Education Services.* Students that qualify for special education services will receive an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) tailored specifically to the targeted areas for each student and will be assigned a case manager (a certified teacher endorsed as a Learning Behavior Specialist) to provide additional assistance, support, and accommodations. If you have further questions about the special education program, please contact the assistant principal.
- *Speech and Language Pathologist.* Each RTSD26 school has a full-time speech and language pathologist (SLP). Students who are referred by their teachers and qualify for services can work with the SLP on a regular basis. If any parent/guardian feels their child may need help in the area of speech development, they should contact the SLP here at school. The need for a speech and language evaluation can be discussed at that time. The SLP will also screen children over three years of age that live within district boundaries.
- *Occupational Therapy.* RTSD26 has a full-time occupational therapist (OT) that works with students across the district. Students who are referred by their teachers and qualify for services can work on their motor development with the OT.
- *EL Services*. We offer special programs for students who speak a language other than English in the home. Placement is determined by level of academic functioning and English proficiency. EL students participate in a range of regular classes and activities.
- *Health Services*. District 26 follows all Illinois State health
- *Social Work*. Social workers are available to all students. Students can make a request to visit a social worker regarding questions or concerns related to peer relationships, anxiety, and/or other social-emotional matters. These adults can help with problem solving and examining the pros and cons of a particular decision. Parents or students may request a meeting with a social worker either by speaking to the social workers directly or by asking a teacher or administrator to make a referral.

BUS TRANSPORTATION - 'Ready to Ride' expectations

Bus transportation is provided by Grand Prairie Transit at (847) 871-1799. Parents/guardians who wish to make requests for changes in routes or stops should contact our district office at (847) 297-4120. *Only students that have signed up for bus services are able to ride on the AM and PM bus routes. Any student may ride the activity bus.* In addition to the district's Bus Policy located in the District 26 Handbook/Calendar, the following rules have been established in order to insure the safety of all students who ride busses:

- Use only the bus and bus stop assigned.
- Orderly behavior is required at the bus stop.
- Remain seated, facing front, when the bus is in motion.
- Talk quietly and make no unnecessary noise.
- Do not talk to the driver unless it is necessary.
- Keep head and arms inside the bus at all times.
- Do not litter the inside of the bus or throw anything out the window.
- Be especially quiet when the bus crosses railroad tracks.

Infractions of the above rules will be brought to the attention of the building administration and the parent/guardian. Continual abuse of bus privileges will result in the suspension and/or denial of transportation services.

River Trails Middle School also offers a free bus service at 4:10 each day. These bus routes are only for students who have participated in an after school activity at River Trails Middle School. Bus passes are not required for these routes.

Section 5: School Involvement

EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Flag football, basketball, volleyball, dodgeball, soccer, and softball are offered as intramurals. Please visit our website to see other available club activities.

Basketball, volleyball, wrestling, cross-country and track and field are offered as interscholastic sports. In accordance with conference rules, basketball and volleyball are open to 7th and 8th grade students on a tryout basis. Poms is open to 6th, 7th and 8th grade students on a tryout basis. Wrestling, cross country, and track and field are open to all students. State law mandates that an annual physical examination is on file prior to participation in interscholastic sports.

Additional special events are held from time to time and students will be notified when they are available. All students are to be in supervised areas no later than 3:05 P.M. or they will be asked to leave the building.

Students participating in or planning to participate in activities such as athletics, intramurals, dances, recreation nights, performance groups, or club activities must meet specific academic and behavioral requirements and maintain “good standing” during the duration of the activity. Participants are expected to adhere to the academic and behavior guidelines listed in the student handbook which is located in the assignment notebook distributed to your student on the first day of school. All students participating in extracurricular activities will adhere to the following guidelines:

ACADEMICS

The following academic eligibility guidelines will be enforced after the first two weeks of each academic trimester. Upon joining a team or group, a student may be ineligible from participation for earning an “F” in any class. In the event that a student is earning an “F” on the first day of the week (after the first practice or rehearsal has occurred), they may be ineligible from the activity for one week. The student may remain ineligible until the “F” is at least a “D”. Students may be permanently dismissed from participation for earning a grade of “F” after three weeks.

When placed on academic ineligibility, students should focus on bringing up their grades. Students may study on their own in the library after school for one hour on days of practice/rehearsals except for Fridays. Students are also encouraged to request academic assistance before or after school. Students may not participate in games/performances. Ineligible students may attend home games, but cannot dress in uniform. Students may not attend away games.

BEHAVIOR

Student-Athletes, club participants, and extracurricular performance members, may be suspended from practices, meetings, and/or competition participation for excessive disciplinary infractions. Major infractions could result in immediate suspension or permanent dismissal.

PARTICIPATION IN SPECIAL EVENTS/8TH GRADE GRADUATION CEREMONY

Students have academic and behavior standards or requirements (outlined in the sections above) that must be met in order for students to be eligible for the major activities; specifically special events in the school, class trips, class parties, and celebration ceremonies.

Students who commit major infractions of school rules or who are involved in a pattern of ongoing disciplinary problems may lose the privilege to participate in these special events.

Although it's more of a matriculation, RTMS finds value in the 8th grade graduation ceremony. However, 8th grade students must earn the honor of walking across the stage and participating in this event. An 8th grade student may be denied participation in end of year activities (including graduation ceremony) for repeated inappropriate behavior and/or major disciplinary infractions. Students must also earn a final grade of "D-" or higher in all core classes for both semesters. A fee schedule and list of activities will be provided in the spring.

PARENT-SCHOOL COMPACT

The purpose of this compact is to outline and inform parents, staff, and students how the responsibility for improved student academic achievement is to be shared. It also serves to guide the district and the school in planning for ways for the school and parents to work together to build and develop a partnership that will help children achieve Illinois state standards.

SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES:

River Trails Middle School will:

- Provide high quality, research based curriculum and instruction in a supportive learning environment that meets the needs of all diverse learners.
- Use assessments in a scope and sequence manner which will guide enrichment, instruction and intervention.
- Hold Parent-Teacher conferences each school year to inform parents of student growth and progress.
- Provide parents with regular reports of their student's progress to include:
  - Trimesterly report cards
  - MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) results
  - Progress reports for students in academic jeopardy
- Make staff available to parents through email, phone calls, and pre-arranged conferences and class visits.
- Provide parents with opportunities to participate/volunteer in their child's school and class through the Parent Teacher Council (PTC), and visits set up through the classroom teacher.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

We believe that education is a shared responsibility among parents, school and students. Parents show support of their children's learning through:

- Monitoring attendance. Ensuring the child is on time and regularly present.
- Ensuring homework completion.
- Monitoring extra-curricular activities.
- Participating in educational decision making regarding their child.
- Staying informed by making time to read and respond to all school/teacher class communications.
- In the event that curriculum delivery changes to remote learning for any reason, parents are responsible for ensuring their child participates regularly.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Be present regularly and on time to every class.
- Complete academic responsibilities as assigned to the best of their ability.
- Make time to read and study at home no less than one hour each night.
- Share information with their parents from the school.
- In the event that curriculum delivery changes to remote learning for any reason, students are required to participate regularly.