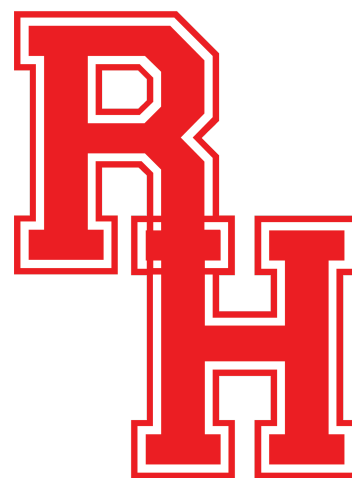


# Riker Hill Elementary School



Parent/Guardian  
Handbook  
2022-2023

# Table of Contents

## Preparing for Opening Day

Genesis Access and Forms.....	4
School Supplies.....	4
Back to School Dates.....	4

## Getting To and From School

Arrival.....	4
Dismissal.....	5
Exit Locations.....	5
Parking.....	5
Transportation.....	5
Aftercare Offerings.....	5

## Attendance

Overview.....	6
Excused Absences.....	6
Late Arrival & Early Dismissal.....	6
Reporting Absences/Tardies/Early Dismissals.....	6

## Birthday Celebrations.....7

## Building Security

Visitors.....	7
Security Drills.....	7

## Code of Conduct.....8

## Communication

Assistance & Concerns.....	8
Social Media.....	8
Website.....	8
Weekly Update.....	8

## Course of Study Components.....8

## Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Equity Team.....	9
HSA Equity Committee.....	9
100% 's.....	9

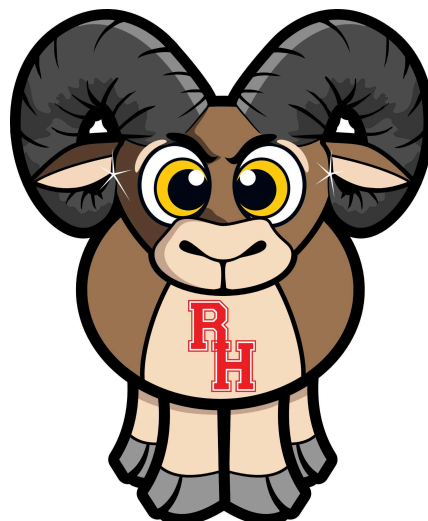
## Dress Code

BOE Policy #5600.....	9
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## Health & Medical

Immunization and Records.....	10
Food Allergies.....	10
Medications in School.....	10
Sending to School.....	10

<b>Homework</b> .....	10
<b>HSA</b> .....	11
<b>Ramilly Spirit</b> .....	11
Values.....	11
Gatherings.....	11
Spirit Days.....	11
<b>School Counseling</b> .....	
Social & Emotional Learning.....	11
Connections.....	12
Elementary School Counseling Department.....	12
HIB.....	12
<b>Snack, Lunch, &amp; Recess</b> .....	12-13
<b>Special Education</b> .....	
Team Members.....	13
Referrals/Evaluations.....	13
SEPAC.....	13
<b>Student Support</b> .....	
Basic Skills Instruction.....	14
I&RS.....	14
Project Achieve.....	14
504 Referral.....	14
<b>Technology</b> .....	
Digital Citizenship.....	15
Devices.....	15
Help Desk.....	15
<b>Appendices</b> .....	
Appendix A (Drop-off Diagram).....	16
Appendix B (Pick-up Diagram).....	17



## Preparing for Opening Day

### Genesis Parent Access

If you have a new student, your usernames and passwords for Genesis Parent Access will be emailed to your primary email address. If you do not receive this document, please contact our registrar, Mrs. Amy Ennis, at ext. 8002. Every family should fill out the new Genesis Forms for the 2022-2023 school year. In addition, please update your Primary Contact, Parent/Guardian Contacts, Emergency Contacts, Publicity Information and Automated Alert Preferences. In addition, please ensure that your email and phone information are up to date. It is helpful for you to have 2 parent/guardian contacts entered when applicable. You will be utilizing Genesis Parent Access to receive teacher assignments, view grades, and obtain report cards.

### School Supplies

Please refer to the school [website](#) for a list of recommended school supplies. If you ordered a school supply kit from the HSA, they will be placed at your child's desk on the first day of school. If you have any items from the previous school year, including classroom/library books, classroom supplies, etc, please bring them to be collected.

### Back to School Dates

August 24	August 30	September 1	September 5	September 22	October 3
<b>New Family Orientation</b> 4:00-4:45pm	<b>Kindergarten Welcome!</b> 2:00-3:00pm	<b>First Day of School</b>  <b>Back to School 1st Day Ramily Pep Rally @ 7:50am</b> (weather permitting)	<b>Labor Day</b> School Closed	<b>Back to School Night 2022</b> 6:30-8:30pm  <i>*More info to come!</i>	<b>Picture Day!</b>  <i>*More info to come!</i>

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## Getting To and From School

### Arrival

**Bus:** Students will be picked up at their bus stop and dropped off at our *Bus Zone*, located near the sidewalk near the playground. Students will be escorted from the bus to their *Before School Areas*.

**Car:** Students who are driven to school can be dropped off along the curb in front of the school. There will be a one-way traffic pattern in place (beginning at Hearthstone Drive - be mindful of school neighbors traveling against traffic). Cars will enter from the Hearthstone Drive side of Blackstone Drive and exit through the Morningside Drive side. We ask that everyone wait in a single line and pull all the way up to the end of the curb near the *Side Blacktop* (see Appendix A).

Students should have their belongings ready to go as the car pulls up to the curb. They should exit as quickly and safely as possible. Parents/Guardians who would like to get out of the car should use the *Back Parking Lot*.

## **Dismissal**

**Bus:** Students will be dismissed from their classroom and will assemble in the *Main Gym* for attendance to be taken. They will be escorted to the *Bus Zone* where they will load the bus and be dropped off at their assigned bus stop.

**Car:** Students will be escorted out of the building to their assigned exit locations. Families with multiple students will exit using the location of the youngest child. For those with siblings in kindergarten, students will exit out the *Side Blacktop Doors* (see Appendix B). Kindergarten will dismiss at 2:37pm. All other students will dismiss at 2:42pm. There will be a one-way traffic pattern in place (beginning at Hearthstone Drive - be mindful of school neighbors traveling against traffic). Cars will enter from the Hearthstone Drive side of Blackstone Drive and exit through the Morningside Drive side.

Students in Grades K, 1, and 2 MUST have an adult pick them up from a teacher. Students in Grades 3-5 are permitted to walk as long as you indicated this in the *Genesis Parent Portal*.

## **Exit Locations (see Appendix B)**

Grade K (Backer/Chorba) - Classroom Back Doors = Diagram #4

Grade K (Korfin) - Side Blacktop Doors = Diagram #3 (Exit Doors #2)

Grade 1 - Side Blacktop Doors = Diagram #3 (Exit Doors #2)

Grade 2 - Main Entrance Doors = Diagram #1 (Exit Doors #1)

Grade 3 - Media Center Doors = Diagram #1 (Exit Doors #8)

Grades 4 & 5 - Upper Wing Doors = Diagram #5 (Exit Doors #6)

## **Parking**

Parents/Guardians can park along the curb, leaving the area directly in front of the playground open for buses. We ask that you do not double park, as this creates a safety hazard and blocks traffic. The *Back Parking Lot* will be open for parents/guardians before school (until 7:55am) and after school (starting @ 2:15pm). The *Staff Parking Lot* is reserved for school and district personnel and will not be accessible during arrival and dismissal (with the exception of handicapped parking). We advise you to drive slow when approaching, entering, and leaving school grounds and exercise extreme caution.

In the event you are coming to the school while school is in session i.e. dropping off an item, presenting to a class, etc., you are permitted to park along the curb (school-side) in front of the building. Please do not block the bollards (yellow poles) near the *Main Entrance*.

## **Transportation**

Any questions regarding your child's district busing should contact the Director of Transportation Office, Lisa Marazzo ([lmarazzo@livingston.org](mailto:lmarazzo@livingston.org)). Bus assignments are on the *Genesis Parent Portal*.

## **Aftercare Offerings**

JCC & CMA will be picking up students at dismissal. YMCA will be providing a daily after-school program in the *Main Gym* until 6:00pm. Parents/Guardians who are picking up children from the YMCA should use the doors (#4) behind the building which leads directly to the *Main Gym*. Students must be registered for these programs through the organization directly. We are only able to

help facilitate the students getting picked up. Please indicate this in the dismissal options in the *Genesis Parent Portal*. Any concerns that arise during these programs should be directed to the respective Supervisors.

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## Attendance

### Overview

Our Campus Aide, Deb Ottaiano ([dottaiano@livingston.org](mailto:dottaiano@livingston.org)) is the point of contact for all attendance matters and questions. Students must attend at least 4 hours of school per day (excluding lunch/recess), in order to be counted as “present.” Students who arrive past 7:55am will be marked tardy. As per district policy, 3 tardies will result in 1 absence. Also, 3 early dismissals will result in 1 absence. Parents/Guardians of students who reach 5 cumulative unexcused absences will receive an auto-generated email. In the event a student is chronically absent, a meeting with Mr. Toomey will be scheduled and an action plan will be created.

### Excused Absences

As per the NJDOE, the only excused absences that apply to K-5 students are for religious observances and *Take Your Child to Work Day*. All other absences must be reported as unexcused. In the event that a student has an illness requiring a student to see a doctor or be hospitalized, please provide documentation from the attending physician, and we will work with families on an individual basis.

### Late Arrival and Early Dismissal

We kindly request that parents/guardians please make every effort to ensure that their children arrive at school on time. Students who arrive past 7:55am must be escorted to the *Main Entrance* by an adult. Please press the white doorbell button and an Office Team member will meet you at the door. You will also be asked to sign-in your child at that time.

Students should not be picked up early unless it is an emergency. Please make every effort to schedule doctor’s appointments, dental, and orthodontic appointments, or other related types of services after instructional time whenever possible.

If, in a rare case, a student needs to be picked up during the day, the parent/guardian should enter it in the *Genesis Parent Portal*. Upon arriving at the school, you should ring the bell and wait outside the school until your child is brought outside.

### Reporting Absences/Early Dismissals

Parents/Guardians should report absences and early dismissals, and dismissal changes through your *Genesis Parent Portal* account. Please let us know each morning before school starts (by 8:30am) if your child will be absent along with the reason. If your child is coming to school late, you should still mark them absent and it will be changed to tardy when they arrive. If you do not report your child absent and we don’t hear from you by 9am, an automated call will be made and police may be called.

You can enter attendance information in advance, and you can also record your child as being absent for up to 10 days in a row. The portal will display a list of all days you reported your child absent, tardy, or early dismissal.

## Birthday Celebrations

We fully support birthday celebrations during the school day. Each grade-level will handle this a little differently while making each child feel special on their birthday. During classroom celebrations, no food is permitted to be eaten in class. Any goodie bags sent in cannot contain anything edible and there must be enough for everyone in the class. Also, we are unable to provide class roster and contact information for party invitations. However, if you are inviting the whole class to a party, teachers can hand out paper invitations to the students in the class.

In addition, the *Ramilly News* morning announcements will include the names of all students, teachers, and staff members celebrating a birthday each day. There will also be a monthly birthday lunch table for students who have a birthday that month to sit with Mr. Toomey. Please email your child's homeroom teacher and Office Team member, Michelle DiStasio ([mdistasio@livingston.org](mailto:mdistasio@livingston.org)) if you do not wish to have your child's birthday celebrated and mentioned.

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## Building Security

### Visitors

All doors are locked for security reasons. If you are dropping something off for your child, please label it with their name and teacher, ring the bell to inform the Office Team, and leave the item in the bin located by the *Main Entrance*. An Office Team member will bring it into the office and deliver it to your child. Please ask for Nurse Kathy's Office ([kgiordano@livingston.org](mailto:kgiordano@livingston.org)) regarding medical-related deliveries.

Visitors will be permitted on a limited basis and by appointment only. Please contact our Office Manager, Debbie Paoella ([dpaoella@livingston.org](mailto:dpaoella@livingston.org) or 973.535.8000 x.8131) in the event you are requesting to enter the building. HSA Officers and Committee Chairs will communicate the list of volunteers with us before any HSA sponsored event requiring parents/guardians to enter the building.

Upon arrival, visitors will be asked to state their name, child, and other identifying questions before being admitted. If there are multiple people outside, please do not hold the door for others to enter after you. They must go through the screening process. Once in the building, visitors should report to the *Main Office* where they will sign in and get a visitor sticker. This must be worn at all times when in the building and returned when signing out.

### Security Drills

We are required to have 1 Fire Drill and 1 School Security Drill each month. These are age-appropriate and done in a manner that does not cause children to have a traumatic experience. Parents/Guardians will receive an email notification indicating there was a Security Drill (not Fire Drills) by the end of the same calendar day that the drill took place.

## Code of Conduct

Click [here](#) to review the LPS Student Code of Conduct. While this is a general overview of district expectations, some specifics may vary by age and grade-level appropriateness.

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## Communication

### Assistance & Concerns

We kindly request that all parents/guardians email or make appointments with teachers regarding academic issues. Parents/Guardians may contact staff via email using the first initial and last name of the staff member. Teachers will respond to email communications within 24 hours. If you email a teacher on a Friday, holiday, or weekend, the teacher will respond to your email by the end of the next school day.

Our Office Team is also available to answer any general questions you may have. Please feel free to contact our Office Manager, Debbie Paoella ([dpaoella@livingston.org](mailto:dpaoella@livingston.org)) or Michelle DiStasio ([mdistasio@livingston.org](mailto:mdistasio@livingston.org)). If you have academic/classroom concerns, you should contact your child's teacher before reaching out to Mrs. Kandel or Mr. Toomey.

### Social Media

You can follow and tag us on Twitter @RikerHillRams. There will be pictures of all of the wonderful events taking place at Riker Hill. There is also a feed on the school website that includes all of the posts.

### Website

You can visit our school's [website](#) to view our calendar of events and happenings. We will make every effort to keep the website updated as often as possible. The [district website](#) also serves as a valuable resource for district information.

### Weekly Update

Families will receive a *Weekly Update* email from Mr. Toomey via *Blackboard Connect* every Sunday during the school year. If school is closed for a holiday, the update will be sent the day before school resumes. These emails contain important information and upcoming events happening in our school. Please read through the email before contacting the school with any questions.

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## Course of Study Components

Generally, students will have the following academic subject areas each day\*:

Science  
Social Studies

Reading Workshop  
Writing Workshop  
Math Workshop

*\*Slightly varied by grade-level*  
Students will have each of the following special area subjects once per week, each day:



Art  
Media  
Music

PE (2x per week)  
Spanish  
STEAM

In certain grade-levels, there is a FLEEx (Focused Learning Experience) period throughout the week which provides students with an opportunity to have additional teacher support in various subject areas, as well as opportunities for both large group and small group instruction.

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## **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

### **Equity Team**

We have a school-based team that meets throughout the year to promote equity initiatives in all areas of the school. The team works with teachers to make instruction more responsive to diversity, and inclusive of various cultures. The teams also work to strategically implement professional development and school-based programming focused on diversity, anti-racism, and cultural inclusivity in teaching and learning in order to create a common language and set of expectations for the school community.

### **HSA Equity Committee**

Through our strong partnership with the HSA, we have a committee who meets to discuss ways to celebrate our cultural diversity while finding ways for students to experience and learn about each other's cultural traditions. Parents/Guardians are invited to come into classrooms and present their family's cultural holidays with the students, in coordination with the HSA. More information will be shared by the HSA.

### **100%'s**

The Livingston Public Schools adopted 100% 's in Spring 2022, which can be found [here](#). A copy of these are posted in every classroom.

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## **Dress Code**

### **BOE Policy #5600**

The Livingston Public Schools recognize that each student's mode of dress and grooming is a reflection of that student's personal style and individual preferences. The Livingston Public Schools will impose its judgment on students and parents/legal guardians only when a student's dress and grooming are distracting, distasteful or affect the educational program of the school.

Please adhere to the following:

- Proper and safe footwear is required at all times. When students are participating in lab science or technology classrooms, shoes should cover all parts of their feet.
- Clothing that is distracting, disrupting or sexually revealing is not to be worn in school.
- Clothing that could cause damage to any student or school property is not to be worn.
- Slogans, patches and emblems that are obscene, drug/alcohol related, gang or violent in nature, are not permitted in school or at any school-sponsored activity.

Should students report to school or to a school activity in clothing which does not conform to the Dress Code, school staff will review the circumstances and determine the measures to be taken to properly address the violation.

These measures may include:

- Parent/legal guardian bringing a change of clothes to school.
  - Parent/legal guardian student conference.
- 

## **Health & Medical**

### **Immunization and Records**

All students are required to be up to date with their immunizations. Records must be provided to the school nurse. As mandated by New Jersey law, no student will be admitted to any school in our district without evidence of having been immunized and a certificate of immunization signed by the healthcare provider.

### **Food Allergies and Sensitivities**

If your child has any food allergies, intolerances, or sensitivities, please contact Nurse Kathy to discuss their condition and needs. She will work with you to ensure the teachers and staff are up to date with the latest information to keep your child safe. Also, classrooms with students who have any food allergies will be labeled (student identification will be kept confidential) to help limit exposure.

### **Medications in School**

All medications administered by the nurse in the school must have the appropriate forms completed and signed by the healthcare provider and parent. Medications are to be delivered to the nurse in the original pharmacy container. These forms are on the district website or you may contact Nurse Kathy for them.

### **Unsure whether to send your child to school?**

Your child must be fever-free for 24 hours WITHOUT FEVER-REDUCING MEDICATION before returning to school. Your child cannot return for 24 hours after any episode of vomiting or diarrhea. If you have any questions regarding your child's symptoms or questions concerning sending your child to school, please contact Nurse Kathy ([kgiordano@livingston.org](mailto:kgiordano@livingston.org)) or 973.535.8000 x.8132. Additionally, please notify the nurse of any communicable disease such as strep throat, flu, stomach virus, chicken pox, etc.

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## **Homework**

Frequency and quantity will vary by grade-level. However, there will be a maximum of 30 minutes of homework assigned per night. Students are encouraged to spend time engaging in physical activities and having play dates to further develop social skills.

All students will benefit from spending additional time reading AND/OR being read to each night for at least 15-20 minutes!

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## HSA

### Overview

We are fortunate to have a dedicated group of parent/guardian volunteers who work tirelessly to support our Ramily. Through programs, events, and fundraisers, the HSA plays an integral role in our school community. Everyone is encouraged to get involved and become a member of this fantastic organization. For more information about our HSA and how to get involved, please visit their [website](#).

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## Ramily Spirit (Ram + Family = Ramily)

### Ramily Values

At Riker Hill, we pride ourselves on modeling our Ramily Values in everything we do.

Rams are:

- Kind
- Caring
- Friendly
- Respectful
- Responsible

### Ramily Gatherings

We have gatherings once a month during the school year. These are opportunities for our Ramily to come together and celebrate each other, while focusing on a different theme/focus each month. Student Council Officers take an active role in leading these gatherings and we are treated with visits from various Special Guests, as well as our mascot, Cornelius.

### Spirit Days

There are many spirit days throughout the school year. Every Friday (or Fri-YAY as we call it), students, teachers, and staff are encouraged to wear RH gear and/or red apparel. All other Spirit Days will be communicated with families via Mr. Toomey's *Weekly Update* email as well as in the *Ramily News* morning announcements.

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## School Counseling

### Social & Emotional Learning

We will continue to build on the work we have been committed to in supporting students in their social and emotional development. During uncertain times, it is crucial that we are providing students with opportunities to foster these skills and interact with their peers using different mediums.

Our School Counselor, Mrs. Kandel ([dkandel@livingston.org](mailto:dkandel@livingston.org)) will visit with classes and provide teachers with supplemental lessons to develop many of the “human” skills that we want our children to learn, practice, and demonstrate. We encourage you to contact your child’s teacher or Mrs. Kandel if you need additional support or if you are concerned about your child’s well-being. Please feel free to visit the district’s [Mental Health Resources](#) at your convenience.

### **Connections**

We have many gatherings and activities, as well as partnering with the HSA, where students can interact with their peers in a safe and responsible way. We will continue to find meaningful ways to build community and continue to strengthen the many relationships within our Ramily.

### **Elementary School Counseling Department**

For more information about our Elementary School Counseling Department, please visit their [website](#).

### **HIB**

Please visit the district’s [website](#) for more information about these procedures. Feel free to contact our school’s Anti-Bullying Specialist, Mrs. Kandel with any questions.

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## **Snack, Lunch, & Recess**

### **Snack**

There will be time for each child to have a snack each day. Snacktime will take place in the classroom with upper grade-levels having a “working snack.” Students should pack a light, nutritious snack and have something that can be easily eaten. Please don’t pack anything breakable.

### **Lunch**

Students will eat in the *Main Gym*, which also serves as our *Cafeteria*, and will be seated by homeroom class. Hot or cold lunches are available to order through the district’s food provider (Aramark). The monthly lunch menu will be uploaded on the district’s website so you know what options are available each day. Please don’t pack anything breakable. Also, there will be no microwave to heat up food.

Orders will be taken by the homeroom teacher in the morning and there will be no pre-order option. Students will walk up to the counter to get their lunch during their lunch period. It is important that parents/guardians add money to your child(ren)’s [MySchoolBucks](#) account. This will be charged each day lunch is ordered. Students have the option to order as often as they’d like. Please note: Parents/Guardians of new students and kindergarteners will be able to create an account after 8/29.

Starting in October, students will also have the option to purchase a snack with their lunch for an additional fee. Every Friday will be *Ice Cream Day* where students will be able to purchase a frozen treat (1 per student) for an additional fee. All charges will be deducted from their *MySchoolBucks* account.

### **Recess**

Students will have an opportunity to use the *Balls/Miscellaneous Equipment*, *Blacktop Stencils*, *Blocks*, *Lower Blacktop (w/ Gaga Pit & Basketball Hoops)*, and *Playground*. We are able to accommodate 2 grade-levels at a time. Students are not permitted to bring their own equipment from home to use at recess.

In the event of inclement weather, students will remain in their classrooms and have various activities to choose from i.e. coloring/drawing, board games, reading a book, Chromebook, etc. While we want students to have various socialization opportunities during their free time, if students have difficulty acting appropriately, they may be required to engage in independent activities.

During this “unstructured time”, there are ample opportunities to develop and practice social skills. We will support students in these areas, while encouraging appropriate and respectful interactions with peers. Safety is a top priority and students will be instructed and reminded of all guidelines in place.

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## **Special Education**

### **CST (Child Study Team)**

Our school’s team is made up of various professionals who all have different specializations to support students’ needs (listed in alphabetical order). Some of our members are shared with other schools in the district which are indicated with an asterisk.

- Behaviorist\*
- LDT-C (Learning Consultant)\*
- Occupational Therapist\*
- Physical Therapist\*
- School Psychologist
- Social Worker\*
- Speech Therapist

All students who have an IEP (individualized education plan) are managed by a Case Manager which is our School Psychologist, Dr. Stefanakis.

### **Referrals/Evaluations**

Parents/Guardians who are concerned about their child’s development and abilities should speak with their homeroom teacher first. Anyone who would like to consider having their child evaluated by the Child Study Team should contact the building principal, Mr. Toomey.

### **SEPAC (Special Education Parent Advisory Committee)**

Each school has 2 parent/guardian representatives who serve on the district’s committee. This is chaired by the Assistant Superintendent for Equity, Inclusion, Intervention and Inspiration. The committee works collaboratively with all special education parents and district staff in an advisory capacity to the Livingston Board of Education to:

- Establish, review and maintain by-laws;
- Foster increased communication of services and information for families of children with special education needs;

- Facilitate and foster parent involvement in parent education resources;
  - Foster and promote inclusionary special education settings for all student; and
  - Provide advisory information to the Livingston Board of Education of issues pertaining to special education services in the district.
- 

## **Student Support**

### **Basic Skills Intervention**

We are fortunate to have a talented team of interventionists who support students with targeted intervention in the areas of Reading, Writing, and Math. Students who were previously enrolled in these programs will automatically continue to receive this support. In the event a student has tested out, parents/guardians will be notified and the student will be exited from the program and monitored. For students who are in need of support, there are specific criteria used to determine eligibility. Parents/Guardians will receive a permission slip for their child to be screened. If they meet the criteria to be enrolled in one or both of the intervention programs, a consent form will be sent. If they are not eligible, parents/guardians will receive a letter informing them of this.

### **Intervention & Referral Services (I&RS)**

When a student is consistently experiencing academic, behavioral, social, or emotional challenges in the classroom, teachers may refer them to the I&RS Committee for consultation and assistance in planning strategies and interventions that will support a student's educational program.. The Committee is made up of various professionals in the school and works to recommend interventions for general education teachers who have noticed that students in their class are experiencing difficulties. The committee will monitor the progress of students served by offering the teacher strategies to implement. Data are collected in order to evaluate the efficacy of the interventions and strategies recommended. The committee may, also, develop and implement educational interventions for your child within the general education classroom.

If your child is referred to the I&RS Committee, your child's teacher would have previously notified you of their concerns. Once they make the referral, parents/guardians will receive an input form to share your observations at home. The Committee meets monthly and will communicate with parents/guardians through written communication mailed via USPS.

*\*Please note: this is NOT the same as a Child Study Team referral for Special Education.*

### **Project Achieve**

The district will be offering after school support for students who need additional intervention in the areas of Reading, Writing, and Math. There are specific criteria used to determine eligibility. Parents/Guardians of students who are eligible will be notified at the appropriate time.

### **504 Referrals**

If you feel that your child has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits the performance of a major life activity, please contact Mr. Toomey to discuss pursuing a 504 plan.

## **Technology**

## Digital Citizenship

With students having more access to technology at a young age, we must help them grow and develop as digital citizens. During the course of the school year, we will provide lessons to help students appropriately use the various technologies and tools, as they navigate through their online learning experience. We encourage you to visit the district's [Digital Citizenship & Internet Safety](#) website for more resources. The district has firewalls and security measures in place, but in the event we notice a student visiting an inappropriate site, we will meet with them and notify you.

## Devices

Students will have access to a personal district device (Chromebook), which will be used to access web-based learning applications, G Suite, and more. Those who are returning to Riker Hill in Grades 1-4 already have a device. Students in Grades K and 5 will be issued new devices during the first week of school. All new students in Grades 1-4 will receive their device during the first week of school. Parents/Guardians will be required to pay a Device Fee through your MySchoolBucks account.

*\*Please note: School-issued devices are district property and all web browsing activity can be tracked using GoGuardian. Students who repeatedly violate the district's Acceptable Use Policy may lose the privilege of using a school-issued device.*

## Helpdesk

In the event students experience technical difficulties with their Chromebook, parents/guardians should contact the [Technology Helpdesk](#) and submit a claim. District Technicians visit our school periodically throughout the week to assist with troubleshooting. When claims are submitted, it alerts them to provide assistance.



***IT'S ALWAYS A GREAT  
DAY TO BE A RAM!***





**STAFF ONLY**



**ADULT  
SUPERVISION  
REQUIRED**

**PARK HERE**

**PARK ALONG CURB OR  
IN BACK PARKING LOT**

**\* = PARK BETWEEN THESE POINTS**



## Appendix B (Pick-up Diagram)

