

PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK

2023 – 2024



RIVER SCHOOL

4439 River Rd.

Sodus, MI 49126

Phone: (269) 925-6757 www.riverschoolk8.org

RIVER SCHOOL

"Providing Educational Excellence as a Pathway to Success"

Welcome to River School

All the members of the staff are pleased to have you as a part of our River School family and we will do our best to make your experience productive and successful.

Mrs. Laura Lausch, Principal
Mrs. Carol Quattrin, Business/Student
Accounting, Homeless Liaison

() Adopted by the Board of Education on August 15, 2023

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Mrs. Erica Santiago –President
esantiago@riverschoolk8.org

Ms. Barbara Pence-Secretary
bpence@riverschoolk8.org

Mrs. Gina Edwards – Treasurer
gedwards@riverschoolk8.org

School District Goals
Improve Academic Achievement
Develop High-Performing Staff
Build Community and Parent Relations

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Sodus Township School District #5 (River School) is to provide each student a diverse education in a safe, supportive environment that promotes self-discipline, motivation, community involvement and excellence in learning. River School works with the parents and community members to assist the students in striving towards their educational pursuits, developing skills to become independent and self-sufficient learners who will succeed and contribute responsibly in a global community as they grow towards adulthood.

NON-DISCRIMINATORY POLICY

The Sodus Township School District #5 (River School) Board of Education believes in the concept of equal opportunity for all people who are affected by the operation of the district's schools. The River School Board of Education, its agents or employees, shall not, because of race, color, sex, national origin, affiliation of handicap, deny the participation in programs, employment or other benefits administered and/or governed by the school district. The Board of Education will comply with all relevant provisions and requirements of the Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1984, Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Administration will evaluate current practices, investigate complaints, develop processes and procedures regarding grievances and respond to inquiries and guide compliance efforts pursuant to the implementation of this policy. The Board of Education will appoint an internal compliance coordinator(s) for the purpose of implementing these Acts. Notice of the Board's policy on nondiscrimination in employment and education practices and the identities of district compliance coordinator(s) shall be posted throughout the district and published in any recruitment statements and general information publications.

PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR SPECIFIC AREAS OF THE ABOVE STATEMENT:

Laura Lausch
4439 River Road
Sodus, MI 49126
(269) 925-6757

SCHOOL HOURS

Breakfast – 7:50 a.m. – 8:00 a.m.
Start Time – 8:00 a.m.
Lunch – 11:00 a.m. – 12:20 p.m.
Dismissal – 3:00 p.m.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Parents are encouraged to be involved in their children's education. We offer parents the opportunity to volunteer in classrooms and for school-wide activities. We believe that strong parent involvement and along with high expectations contribute to quality schools. Please contact the principal if you are interested in volunteering. All volunteers must complete the River School Volunteer Release Form prior to participating in activities in which there will be direct contact with students.

ARRIVALS/DEPARTURES

There will be no supervision for children who walk to school or who are brought by parents before 7:50 a.m.

Students should be picked up from school by a parent/guardian **no later than 3:10 p.m.**

RELEASING STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL

For safety purposes, students may not be released from classrooms to anyone unless notice has been received to do so. Please report to the office and we will contact the classroom in order to have your child released from class. Children will only be released to parents, guardians, or to individuals designated in the PowerSchool system. No Exceptions!

Please instruct your child to report home promptly after school. Children are not kept after school without prior parental contact. If there is to be a change in your child's typical transportation routine, please contact the office prior to dismissal for the day. Your child will follow his/her regular routine if we do not have a note or a phone call, even if the child insists he/she is to go home with someone else. Play dates must not be arranged at school.

All students are required to be in school from 8:00 to 3:00 p.m. If your child is getting picked up early on a regular basis for no valid reason, i.e. haircuts, avoiding after school traffic, picking up other siblings, etc., he/she may be marked absent. Over time this could result in a truancy referral. *Middle school students leaving early for school related sports activities are excused. Parents must provide the principal and teacher with practice and game schedules.

ACCIDENTS AND ILLNESS

Students involved in minor accidents (small cuts, scratches, and bruises) will be cared for by school personnel. If a child becomes ill or there is potential injury that could be serious, parents will be notified immediately. Parents must make arrangements for their child to be picked up and cared for, as the school is not equipped to care for sick children.

The following steps will be taken if it is necessary for a child to be sent home because of an illness, fever over 100 degrees, or serious accident:

- Office staff will first notify the parent
- If parent is unavailable, the person(s) designated as the emergency contact(s) will be called
- If neither parent nor the emergency contacts can be reached, the principal will decide the next course of action
- If the child needs urgent medical care, the child will be taken to a local doctor or hospital
- In all cases, EVERY EFFORT will be made to reach and notify the parent

Please make sure we have current telephone numbers where you can be reached (home, cell, work) as well as current emergency contact information.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

As a general guideline, children with a fever (100.4 F or greater), vomiting, or severe diarrhea should remain at home until symptoms are gone. We ask parents to keep students at home until they are fever free without medication for 24 hours to avoid exposing other students to infection.

The following are known as communicable diseases:

<i>Impetigo</i>	<i>Pink Eye</i>	<i>Scabies</i>
<i>Head Lice</i>	<i>Whooping Cough</i>	<i>Ringworm</i>
<i>Scarlet Fever</i>	<i>Strep Throat</i>	<i>Chicken Pox</i>

If any of the above communicable diseases are observed at school, parents will be contacted immediately, and the child will be sent home for the appropriate treatment. If the disease is discovered at home, parents should contact the school office. If your child is diagnosed with head lice – a free, non-toxic treatment may be available upon request from the school office. The child will then be readmitted to school only when accompanied by a parent/guardian, checked by an office staff member, and found to be symptom free.

SHOT RECORDS

Prior to enrolling for the first time in River School, students must comply with minimum immunizations required by the state. Please keep the school fully informed of shot records and any illness your child experiences. A record is kept here in our office for each child.

If students do not have the required immunizations, they may not be allowed to attend school until they receive the required immunizations. Questions related to immunizations should be directed to the office. Your cooperation is appreciated in this very important matter.

MEDICATIONS

No medication of any kind (over-the-counter and prescription) can be dispensed by the office staff without written permission of the parent/guardian and written verification by a doctor. A Medication Request and Authorization Form must be filed with the building principal before a student will be allowed to begin taking any daily prescription medication or over-the-counter medication. This written and signed request form is to be submitted on an annual basis and will include:

1. prescription order from doctor;
2. student's name;
3. medication and dosage or procedure required;
4. times required;
5. special instructions including storage and sterility requirements;
6. date prescribed medication will be started;
7. date prescribed medication will no longer be needed;
8. physician's name, address and telephone number;
9. agreement/satisfactory arrangement to deliver medication from school
10. medication must be in the original prescription bottle

If the Medication Request and Authorization Form is not on file, the medication can not be distributed to the student.

This also applies to occasional-use emergency inhalers. If the medication, dosage, schedule, or procedure is changed or eliminated the school must be notified.

Medication must be brought to school by the parent or guardian. All medication must be in the current prescription bottle. It will be counted and received by office personnel in order to be kept and dispensed in the school office. No student should bring medication to school. Any medication brought by students,

will be confiscated and kept in the office but not dispensed. If you have any questions regarding our medication policy, please call the school office. Over the counter medication can be given to the student by the parent/guardian only. This includes medication such as cough drops, ibuprofen, and allergy medication. According to state law teachers and staff cannot dispense medications.

STUDENT HEALTH

The Berrien County Health Department provides students with vision and hearing screening on a biyearly basis. Parents are notified of the results only if the exam indicates that medical attention is advisable. Please inform the office if your child has any special health problems so that we can record the information on his/her health record.

HEAD LICE

Head checks for pediculosis (head lice) are made by our staff and volunteers. If a child is found to have lice or nits, you will be notified and must remove your child from school immediately. Treatment information will be forwarded to you or can be received from the health department. Students cannot return to school until treatment is complete and the hair follicles are nit-free. We appreciate your cooperation in this matter.

MANDATORY REPORTING OF STUDENT'S HEALTH AND SAFETY

Our first concern is always the health and safety of all River School students. For this reason, in accordance with the law, staff members are required to report any information that suggests a student may harm herself/himself or others or that a student may be a victim of abuse or neglect. If a student discloses such information either directly to a staff member, or indirectly through a written assignment or communication, this information must be reported to the appropriate authorities or agencies. Such information may include, but is not limited to, any reference to possible physical or sexual abuse, severe depression, harmful substance abuse, eating disorders, self-mutilation, suicidal ideation, illegal activity, or any threat of safety to others. This information is shared confidentially and exclusively for the purpose of protecting our students.

Please be advised that school districts are required to report certain acts of student misconduct to police or other state and/or federal agencies.

PERSONAL PROPERTY ITEMS

Due to the possibilities of theft, breakage and disruption within the classrooms, students are asked to leave electronics, toys, etc. at home unless required for a class project. The student will assume responsibility for any item brought to school. Staff reserves the right to confiscate personal items that are disruptive or inappropriate for the school/classroom. Items will only be returned to the parent/guardian.

LABELING OF ITEMS

We suggest that you label lunch boxes, books, shoes, and anything else that can be marked conveniently with your child's name. Primary school children often lose or forget personal belongings; this will help us get them to the rightful owner. If an item becomes misplaced, please check the lost and found.

CELL PHONES

Students in grades K-5 may use cell phones only before and after the school day. The use of cell phones, except those approved by the teacher or principal, are prohibited during the school day and must be powered off while stored in a backpack.

Students in grades 6-8 may use their cell phones before and after school, during lunch, and recess times, as long as they do not create a distraction, disruption, or otherwise interfere with the educational environment. Except as authorized by a staff member, students are prohibited from utilizing a cell device

to capture, record and/or transmit the words or sounds and/or images of any student, staff member, or other person. Using a cell phone to capture, record and/or transmit audio and/or pictures/video without the proper consent is considered an invasion of privacy and is not permitted.

Students shall have no expectation of confidentiality with respect to the use of their cell phone while on school property or school sanctioned trips.

Students may not use their cellular device in any way that might reasonably create (in the mind of another person) an impression of being threatened, humiliated, harassed, embarrassed or intimidated. In particular, students are prohibited from using their cell phones to: 1) transmit material that is threatening, obscene, disruptive, or sexually explicit or that can be construed as harassment or disparagement of others based upon their race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age, religion, ancestry, or political beliefs and 2) engage in “sexting”-i.e., sending, receiving, sharing, viewing, or possessing pictures, text messages, emails or other materials of a sexual nature in electronic or any other form. Violation of these prohibitions shall result in disciplinary action. Furthermore, such actions will be reported to local law enforcement and child services as required by law.

Students are also prohibited from using a cellular device to capture, record, and/or transmit test information or any other information in a manner constituting fraud, theft, cheating, or academic dishonesty. Likewise, students are prohibited from using their cell device to receive such information.

Students are personally and solely responsible for the care and security of their cell phone. The staff and Board assume no responsibility for the theft, loss, or damage to, or misuse or unauthorized use of, cellular devices brought onto district property or on school sponsored trips.

EARLY DISMISSAL OR TWO-HOUR DELAY

We suggest that parents listen to advisories on the radio in the event of severe weather. Certain weather conditions may cause the school to have an early dismissal or a two-hour delay. Broadcast will be made on the following stations: **Television: Channel 16 and 22, Radio: AM – 940 and 1400 – FM: 107.1, 97.5, 94.9 and 103.7 and the River School Facebook page.**

SCHOOL VISITORS

Visitors are welcome at our school. Arrangements **must** be made with the teacher prior to visiting any classroom. All visitors must report to the office first and sign in. This will allow us to maintain a safe and orderly school setting. To avoid disrupting classroom learning, our office staff will deliver any items to the student during the day.

Students are not to invite students from other schools or friends to visit during the school day.

BOOKS

Books issued to students, including library books and textbooks, are the property of River School. They should be used with care and returned in good condition. Students accept responsibility for books (that have been personally issued to the student) when lost, stolen, or damaged and may be assessed a replacement or repair fee.

EMERGENCY DRILLS

For their own safety, students will be instructed on the first days of school concerning emergency procedures. Throughout the school year fire, tornado, and safety drills are held. Specific instructions vary from class to class depending on location within the building. All students are expected to follow directions and remain quiet during such drills.

Fire Drill: involves evacuation of building in the event of a fire

Storm Drill: involves locating all personnel to a secure, protected area

Safety Drill: ensures we are prepared to take action should a threatening or armed person enter the building and/or grounds – “Internal Threat” or “External Threat”

TELEPHONE

The school telephone is for business purposes. **Students will be allowed to use the telephone for emergencies only.**

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Berrien RESA staff members and district personnel may periodically visit River School to observe students and consult with teachers for the purposes of improving teaching practice and designing academic and behavioral interventions for students.

CONFERENCES

Parent-Teacher Conferences are more than a time to go over a report card or progress report. They are valuable sources of information about your student. Because conferences are important to all parents, your cooperation is requested in being on time for your appointment. Also, because the time for conferences is limited by the number of students and our desire to give each student adequate attention, it is our goal to have one conference per family scheduled for each child. Parent/Teacher conferences are held twice a year, in the fall and spring. Watch the monthly calendars to find the exact date and times. Please plan to attend and support your student.

COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY AND NETWORKS

Before any student may enhance his/her school career through participation in the school's computer network, he/she and his/her parents must sign an agreement, which defines the conditions under which the student may participate. Failure to abide by all of the terms of the agreement may lead to termination of the student's computer account and possible disciplinary action up to and including suspension from school or referral to law enforcement authorities.

The use of the Network is a privilege, which may be revoked by the District at any time and for any reason. Appropriate reasons for revoking privileges include, but are not limited to, the altering of system software or the placing of unauthorized information, computer viruses or harmful programs on or through the computer system in either public or private files or messages.

All computers located throughout the building and issued to students are the District's property and are to be used by students, appropriately and solely for educational purposes. The District retains the right to access and review all electronic, computer files, data bases, and any other electronic transmissions contained in or used in conjunction with the District's computer system and electronic mail. Students should have no expectation that any information contained on such systems is confidential or private. The District, with or without the student's knowledge or permission, may review such information. Using a password does not guarantee confidentiality, and the District retains the right to access information. All passwords and security codes must be registered with the teacher and/or administration. A student's refusal to permit such access may be grounds for disciplinary action.

WELLNESS POLICY – BREAKFAST, LUNCH & SNACKS

River School is committed to creating a healthy school environment that enhances the development of lifelong wellness practices to promote healthy eating and physical activities that support student achievement.

Nutrition education that teaches the knowledge, skills, and values needed to adopt healthy eating behaviors shall be integrated into the curriculum and school activities. Nutrition education information shall be offered throughout the school including, but not limited to, school dining areas and classrooms.

All students, K-8, shall have the opportunity to participate regularly in supervised physical activities, either organized or unstructured, promoting physical fitness.

The principal shall implement this policy and assess how well it is being managed and enforced.

LEGAL REFERENCE: Section 204 of Public Law 108-265 (Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004)

PARTIES

The classroom parties scheduled during the school year include a Halloween, Christmas, and Valentine's Day party. Teachers send home information about the parties before they occur. Parents are welcome to volunteer to help at parties but please **no siblings** allowed. All treats need to be prepackaged, with the ingredient list made visible. We highly encourage healthy treats (low fat, low sugar, etc).

FIELD TRIPS

Teachers may use field trips away from school to enhance the educational process. You will be asked to sign permission for your child to participate in any field trip. It is important that you sign and return this form. **Without a signed permission form from a parent, a child may not go on a field trip. Permission may not be given over the phone.**

We cannot accommodate extra family members/preschoolers/friends on field trips. This distracts from the learning experience.

The following rules apply to any adult who chaperones a class field trip:

- You are there for the safety and protection of your child, and other children in the class
- This is a special time for your son/daughter to be the center of your focus
- No younger or older siblings will be allowed when you act as a chaperone
- Alcohol and tobacco are strictly prohibited before, during, and after the field trip.

If a parent does not give the child permission to participate in a field trip, the child is expected at school. The teacher will plan for activities for this student. A student who is not ill will be considered truant if they do not attend school.

RECESS

Children have outdoor recess daily except when there is inclement weather. When it is raining or when the temperature is very cold (10 degrees/zero wind chill or under) students will have indoor recess. Therefore, it is important that children are dressed appropriately for that day's forecasted weather. Shoes that cover the feet and do not have slippery bottoms are best for our playground. In the winter boots, hats, and mittens are necessary as we do go outside. Generally, if a child is well enough to attend school, he/she is well enough to participate in recess activities. However, upon the written request of a parent, children returning from school after an illness may stay indoors for a maximum of two school days. Any requests for a period of more than two days must be accompanied by a doctor's written verification. Recess is a privilege; students may be excluded from recess periods as a consequence for not completing assignments or for not adhering to class or school rules.

The following set of basic rules has been designed to provide for a safe environment for all students while outside on the playground:

1. Students should only play within the fenced in area; this includes the blacktop, playground equipment, and field space. The front of the building is “out of bounds”.
2. Students are not permitted to enter the building during recess or the noon hour unless given permission by the supervisor on duty. Classes must line-up on the playground, as an entire class, in order to proceed into the building at the culmination of recess.
3. Outdoor equipment will be shared by all and used in the manner in which it was intended.
4. The following activities are not allowed: throwing snowballs, sliding on ice, piggyback rides, king of the mountain, tackling, chicken, or other types of rough play.
5. Food must remain inside the building and is not to be brought onto the playground.
6. All types of balls should be used AWAY from the building. Students may not leave the school property to retrieve a ball.
7. Bats, hard balls, and cleats are not permitted. Any sports equipment brought from home must be safe and approved by staff.

ANIMALS

Students may bring animals to school only after receiving permission from their teacher and principal during specified special event days. Due to the possibility of injury to other students, animals are not permitted on the floor. No animals will be kept at school on a permanent basis.

PROGRESS REPORTING

The reporting of students’ progress at school occurs through parent/teacher conferences, report cards, telephone calls, and other contacts throughout the year. Parents also have the ability to stay current on their child’s grades and attendance through the Power School Parent Portal. Parents are distributed student access codes and instructions at the beginning of the school year.

Our teachers make many telephone calls to parents, and we strongly urge parents to call the school if they wish to talk to a teacher or the principal. If the teacher is with the class, arrangements will be made or a message given. We encourage the free exchange of information so that children can benefit from their school experience to the maximum.

MAKE UP WORK

Any time a student or family knows in advance of an upcoming absence, either for one day or more, assignments should be requested in advance. Please inform the teacher as soon as possible.

In the case of illness, please call the office in the morning and to allow appropriate time for the teacher to prepare the assignments. This allows for less classroom disturbance. **You can pick up the work in the afternoon of the same day, if arrangements have been made with the teacher.**

ATTENDANCE

Irregular attendance and tardiness not only hinders a student’s own studies, but also interferes with the progress of those students who are regular and prompt in attendance. A good attendance record helps maintain good progress in school. We account for every child every day. Please call the office at (269) 925-6757 before 8:00 a.m. if your child is:

- Sick or staying home for any reason
- Going to an appointment (doctor, dentist, etc.)
- Going to be out of town/on vacation

Excused absences include; illness, observance of a religious holiday, death in the immediate family, legal reasons, or other reason as approved by the principal. All other absences are considered unexcused. The school may require documentation explaining the reason for the student’s absence.

Attendance is taken twice a day; in the morning and in the afternoon. A student is considered to be absent for a half day when they are absent for two or more hours in either the morning session of school (8:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m.) or the afternoon session of school (11:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m.)

We encourage you to make medical appointments outside of school hours. Students should attend school prior to their appointment and/or return the same day. Missed minutes/hours add up to missed education. You will be called at work or others contacted if the student has not been excused for the day.

Being in school is vital to a student's success. Chronic absenteeism is defined as "a student who misses ten percent (10%) or more of the enrolled school days in a school year, whether absenteeism is due to unexcused, excused or disciplinary absences." Regular, prompt attendance is not only important, it is the law. After five unexcused absences, parental contact will be made. If attendance does not improve, a parent conference will be requested and referrals to outside agencies may take place. After ten unexcused absences, Berrien RESA will be notified. At that point, they can serve legal notice. After reviewing documentation, they can advise legal action, which may result in prosecution of the juvenile and the adult.

If your son/daughter continues to be tardy and/or absent, we will make a truancy referral to the appropriate authorities. A copy of the Berrien County Truancy Guidelines can be found online at Berrienresa.org, and copies are available in the school office.

A student that becomes ill at school should inform the teacher. If necessary, parents will be contacted. It is important for an emergency telephone number to be on file in the office. Please complete the emergency contact information on the registration form. The office should be notified immediately when emergency information changes. Please keep us up to date.

TARDINESS

Being on time for school is important. Frequently arriving late not only puts the child behind in their morning activities, but also interrupts the teacher and those students who are regular and prompt in their attendance. A student who is not in his/her assigned location by 8:10 a.m. shall be considered tardy. Students arriving after 8:00 a.m. must be signed in at the office by a parent before going to the classroom. Students should not arrive late without a parent/guardian escort.

VACATIONS

Vacation times are scheduled into the school calendar. Please make every effort to plan your vacations around the breaks in the calendar. There is no question that when students miss school for any length of time, it will affect their academic progress.

A proposed absence-for-vacation should be requested in writing and presented to the principal/school office. The length of absence should be made clear. Student work is expected to be made up and returned to school as soon as possible.

DRESS CODE

Good grooming is important to the well being of every student. The home and the school need to cooperate in this matter. School is the child's place of business, and children who are dressed appropriately seem to do a better job. How an individual dresses represents not only that person but the school, home and community as well. Hats and heavy coats will not be worn inside the building. **If a student has selected a manner of appearance that is beyond mere freedom of expression and disrupts the educational process or presents risk to themselves or others, he/she may be removed from the educational setting until he/she corrects their appearance.**

**Footwear must be worn at all times for health and safety reasons.

**No winter boots should be worn during school.

** Clothing which identifies alcoholic beverages, drugs, cults, sexual references or contains any profanity is strictly prohibited. Students will be asked to turn their clothing inside out.

**Caps or hoods are not to be worn in the building.

**Shorts and skirts must be fingertip length.

**Sleeveless shirts or tank tops should be three fingers wide on the shoulder. No exposed midriffs. **

All pants, skirts, and shorts must have the waistband at the wearer's waistline.

**Gang related clothing is not allowed.

** Heavy chains and/or clothing with chains are not appropriate for school, students will be asked to remove the chains.

Brief and Revealing Clothing: Students must recognize that brief and revealing clothing are not appropriate apparel for the school day. The following guidelines on brief clothing are examples and do not cover all situations. As mentioned above, students shall not wear halter tops, garments with spaghetti straps or strapless garments. Garments that are "see through", cut low, or expose one's midriff are not acceptable. Garments must be three fingers wide on the shoulder and fit closely under the arms. Undergarments should not be visible. All pants must fit around the waist and be properly fastened.

Inside Shoes: A pair of "inside shoes" must be kept here at school for the students to wear indoors during the school day. Following the first snowfall that accumulates on the ground, snow boots should be worn by all students. Students without boots will need to remain on the blacktop area when outside. Wet shoes worn inside the building causes undo wear and tear on the new carpets. We ask that parents help us in making sure that students are dressed appropriately for the weather and the school day. No roller shoes or cleats may be worn on the premises.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

The staff at River School is dedicated to providing a safe and pleasant learning environment for all students. We believe in a positive approach to discipline. Our rules are made for everyone to follow.

River School Rules

1. Be on time.
2. Be prepared.
3. Pay attention.
4. Do your best.
5. Be a good school citizen.
 - Respectful and courteous to each other.
 - Respectful and courteous to all adults at school.
 - Respectful of school and others property.

Each classroom teacher has his or her own expectations and consequences that students need to respect and obey.

SCHOOL SAFETY

The Board of Education is committed to maintaining a safe school environment. The Board believes that school crime and violence are multifaceted problems, which need to be addressed in a manner that utilizes the best resources and coordinated efforts of school district personnel, law enforcement agencies, and families. The Board further believes that school administrators and local law enforcement officials must work together to provide for the safety and welfare of students while they are at school or a school sponsored activity. The Board also believes that the first step in addressing school crime and violence is to assess the extent and nature of the problem(s), and then plan and implement strategies that promote school safety and minimize the likelihood of school crime and violence.

1. Public Act No. 104-"Pupil to Employee Assaults and Bomb Threats"

- Requires the mandatory expulsion of students who physically assault an employee or a volunteer of the school district.
- Requires the Board of Education to expel up to 180 days a pupil who commits a verbal assault against a person employed by the School Board
- Requires the Board of Education to expel up to 180 days a pupil who makes a bomb threat or similar threat directed at a school building, other property, or school related event.

2. Public Act No. 103-"Snap Suspensions"

If a teacher in a public school has good reason to believe that a pupil's conduct in class, subject, or activity constitutes conduct for which the pupil may be suspended, the teacher may cause the pupil to be suspended from class for up to one (1) full school day.

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

Corporal punishment is specifically prohibited. The River School Staff will not:

1. Hit, strike, grab, punch or inflict other bodily pain on a student;
2. Restrict a student's movement by binding or tying him/her;
3. Inflict mental or emotional punishment such as humiliating, shaming, or threatening a student;
4. Deprive a student of meals, snack, rest, or necessary toilet use;
5. Confine a student in an enclosed area such as a closet, locked room, box, or similar cubicle.

POSSESSION OF A WEAPON

A weapon includes, but is not limited to, firearms, guns of any type whatsoever (including air and gas powered guns – whether loaded or unloaded), knives, razors, clubs, electric weapons, metallic knuckles, martial arts weapons and explosives. It may also include any toy that is presented as a real weapon or reacted to as a real weapon. Criminal charges may be filed for this violation. Possession of a weapon may subject a student to expulsion and possible permanent exclusion. It makes no difference whether or not the weapon belongs to someone else, unless the student can provide convincing evidence that the weapon was placed in the student's possession without his/her knowledge. If it can be confirmed that a weapon was brought on District property by a student other than the one who possessed the weapon, that student shall also be subject to the same disciplinary action.

State law may require that a student be permanently expelled from school, subject to a petition for possible reinstatement if he/she brings onto or has in his/her possession on school property or at a school related activity any of the following:

- Any cutting instrument consisting of a sharp blade over three (3) inches fastened to a handle
- Any similar object that is intended to invoke bodily harm or fear of bodily harm (e.g. air gun, blow-gun, toy gun, etc.)

USE OF AN OBJECT AS A WEAPON

Any object that is used to threaten, harm, or harass another may be considered a weapon. This includes but is not limited to padlocks, pens, pencils, laser pointers, jewelry and so on. Intentional injury to another can be a felony and/or a cause for civil action. This violation may subject a student to expulsion.

KNOWLEDGE OF DANGEROUS WEAPONS OR THREATS OF VIOLENCE

Knowledge of dangerous weapons or threats of violence must be reported to the principal. Failure to report such knowledge may subject the student to discipline.

PURPOSELY SETTING A FIRE

Anything, such as fire, that endangers school property and its occupants will not be tolerated. Arson is a felony and will subject the student to expulsion.

PHYSICALLY ASSAULTING A STAFF MEMBER/STUDENT/PERSON ASSOCIATED WITH THE DISTRICT

Physical assault at school against a District employee, volunteer, or contractor which may or may not cause injury may result in charges being filed and subject the student to expulsion. Physical assault is defined as "intentionally causing or attempting to cause physical harm to another through force or violence".

VERBALLY THREATENING A STAFF MEMBER/STUDENT/PERSON ASSOCIATED WITH THE DISTRICT

Verbal assault at school against a District employee, volunteer, or contractor or making bomb threats or similar threats directed at a school building, property, or a school-related activity will be considered a verbal assault. Verbal threats or assault may result in suspension and expulsion. Verbal assault is a communicated intent to inflict physical or other harm on another person, with a present intent and ability to act on the threat.

EXTORTION

Extortion is the use of threat, intimidation, force, or deception to take, or receive something from someone else. Extortion is against the law. Violations of this rule will result in disciplinary action up to and including suspension or expulsion.

FALSIFICATION OF SCHOOL WORK, IDENTIFICATION, FORGERY

Plagiarism and cheating are also forms of falsification and subject the student to academic penalties as well as disciplinary action. Violations of this rule could result in suspension or expulsion.

FALSE ALARMS, FALSE REPORTS AND BOMB THREATS

A false emergency alarm, report or bomb threat endangers the safety forces that are responding, the citizens of the community, and persons in the building. What may seem like a prank is a dangerous stunt. Violations of this rule could result in suspension or expulsion.

EXPLOSIVES

Explosives, fireworks, and chemical-reaction objects such as smoke bombs, pipe bombs, bottle bombs, small firecrackers, and poppers are forbidden and dangerous. Violations of this rule could result in suspension or expulsion.

TRESPASSING

Although schools are public facilities, the law does allow the school to restrict access on school property. If a student has been removed, suspended, or expelled, the student is not allowed on school property without authorization of the Principal. In addition, students may not trespass onto school property at unauthorized times or into areas of the school determined to be inappropriate. Violations of this rule could result in suspension, expulsion, and/or criminal charges being filed.

THEFT

When a student is caught stealing school or someone's property, s/he will be disciplined and may be reported to law enforcement officials. Students are encouraged not to bring anything of value to school that is not needed for learning without prior authorization from the Principal. The school is not responsible for personal property. Theft may result in suspension or expulsion.

TOBACCO USE OR POSSESSION OF E-CIGARETTES/VAPORIZERS

Possession and/or use of any smoking product or device including electronic cigarettes, vaporizers (vapes, vape pens, etc.) or products associated with them is prohibited on school grounds and school property whether or not the product is intended to be used for tobacco or tobacco-like substances. This includes but is not limited to tobacco, e-cigarettes, smoking liquids, other synthetic cannabinoids, and/or synthetic hallucinogens. The District reserves the right to refer any substance to the local police agency for testing. Students found in possession of these items may face suspension and possible police referral.

UNAUTHORIZED USE OF SCHOOL OR PRIVATE PROPERTY

Students are expected to obtain permission to use any school property or any private property located on school premises. Any unauthorized use shall be subject to disciplinary action. Violations of this rule could result in suspension or expulsion.

DISPLAYS OF AFFECTION

Students demonstrating affection between each other is personal and not meant for public display. This includes touching, petting, or any other contact that may be considered sexual in nature. Such behavior may result in suspension from school or possibly expulsion.

DISRUPTION OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS

Any actions or manner of dress that interferes with school activities or disrupts the educational process is unacceptable. Such disruptions also include delay or prevention of lessons, assemblies, field trips, athletic, and performing arts events.

SEQUENCE OF CONSEQUENCES

1. Warning from staff.
2. Parent contact by teacher
3. Referral to principal
4. Loss of privilege-either recess detention or after school detention
5. Conference with parent, teacher, and principal
6. 1 day in-school suspension.
7. 1 day suspension. Possible contact to outside support agencies.
8. 3 day suspension. Possible contact to outside support agencies.
9. 5 day suspension. Possible contact to outside support agencies.
10. 7 day suspension. Possible contact to outside support agencies.
11. 10 day suspension and recommendation of expulsion to the Board of Education.

In case of severe behaviors or ones covered by state laws, any of the above steps may be skipped. Students in the severe category may be excluded from field trips. **Disruptive students shall not interfere with the safe and orderly operation of the classroom.**

ANTI-HARASSMENT AND BULLYING POLICY

It is the policy of the Board of Education to maintain an education and work environment which is free from all forms of unlawful harassment, including sexual harassment. This commitment applies to all School District operations, programs, and activities. All students, administrators, teachers, staff, and all other school personnel share responsibility for avoiding, discouraging, and reporting any form of unlawful harassment. This policy applies to unlawful conduct occurring on school property, or at another location if such conduct occurs during an activity sponsored by the Board.

The Board will vigorously enforce its prohibition against harassment based on sex, race, color, national origin, religion, disability, genetic information, or any other unlawful basis, and encourages those within the School District community as well as third parties, who feel aggrieved to seek assistance to rectify the problems. The Board will investigate all allegations of harassment and in those cases where unlawful harassment is substantiated, the Board will take immediate steps to end the harassment. Individuals who are found to have engaged in unlawful harassment will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

The Board will also take immediate steps to impose disciplinary action on individuals in any of the following prohibited acts:

- A. Retaliating against a person who has made a report or filed a complaint alleging harassment, or who has participated as a witness in a harassment investigation
- B. Filing a malicious or knowingly false report or complaint of harassment
- C. Disregarding, failing to investigate adequately, or delaying investigation of allegations of harassment, when responsibility for reporting and/or investigating harassment charges comprise part of one's supervisory duties.

It is the policy of the District to provide a safe and nurturing educational environment for all of its students. This policy applies to all activities on school property and to all school sponsored activities whether on or off school property.

Bullying or other aggressive behavior toward a student, whether by other students, staff, or third parties, including Board members, parents, guests, contractors, vendors, and volunteers, is strictly prohibited. This prohibition includes physical, verbal, and psychological abuse, including hazing, gestures, comments, threats, or actions to a student, which cause or threaten to cause bodily harm, reasonable fear for personal safety; or personal degradation. Demonstration of appropriate behavior, treating others with civility and respect, and refusing to tolerate harassment or bullying is expected of administrators, faculty, staff, and volunteers to provide positive examples for student behavior.

This policy applies to all activities in the District, including activities on school property, in a school vehicle, and those occurring off school property if the student or employee is at any school-sponsored, school-approved or school-related activity or function, such as field trips or athletic events where students are under the school's control, or where an employee is engaged in school business. Misconduct occurring outside of school may also be disciplined if it interferes with the school environment.

"Bullying" is any gesture or written, verbal, graphic, or physical act (including electronically transmitted acts, i.e. internet, telephone or cell phone, personal digital assistant (PDA), or wireless hand held device) that is reasonably perceived as being motivated either by any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression or a mental, physical, or sensory disability or impairment; or by any other distinguishing characteristic. Such behavior is considered harassment or bullying whether it takes place on or off school property, at any school-sponsored function, or in a school vehicle.

Aggressive behavior is defined as inappropriate conduct that is repeated enough, or serious enough, to negatively impact a student's educational, physical, or emotional well-being. Such behavior includes, for example, bullying, hazing, stalking, intimidating, menacing, coercion, name-calling, taunting, and making threats.

“Bullying” is conduct that meets all of the following criteria:

- A. Is directed at one or more students
- B. Substantially interferes with educational opportunities, benefits, or programs of one or more students
- C. Is repetitive in nature- i.e. it is not a one time occurrence
- D. Adversely affects the ability of a student to participate in or benefit from the school district’s educational programs or activities by placing the student in reasonable fear of physical harm or by causing emotional distress and;
- E. Is based on the student’s actual or perceived distinguishing characteristics (see above), or is based on an association with another person who has or is perceived to have any of these characteristics.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment of students by other students, employees or volunteers of the district is unlawful under both Michigan and Federal law. This behavior will not be tolerated.

WEAPONS FREE/VIOLENCE FREE SCHOOL ZONE

River School adheres to federal policy regarding weapons in schools. If a student possesses a dangerous weapon or poses a significant threat to the safety and well being of those in school, they may be removed from school.

STUDENT RECORD RIGHTS

All parents and guardians of students under the age of 18 and all students 18 years and over have the right pursuant to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, to examine the official records, files, and data of the school district directly relating to the students. They also have access to contents of said records to ensure their accuracy and fairness. Procedures for such examination and challenge shall be established by the Board of Education and will be made available upon request.

No records, files, or data directly relating to an individual student shall be made available to anyone without consent and notification of the student or of the parents or guardian of a student under 18 except:

- * The teacher and officials of this school district who have legitimate educational interest in such information.
- * There has been a federal request for submission of student records in connection with the student’s application for financial aid.
- * Directory information is personally identifiable information that would be normally subject to disclosure without parental consent.
- * A parent of eligible student may notify, in writing, the school principal of any or all information that should not be disclosed concerning the student within ten (10) days of receipt of the handbook.

PROPOSED NOTIFICATION OF RIGHTS UNDER FERPA FOR THE SODUS TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT #5 PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents, guardians, and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the District receives a request for access.
Parents or eligible students should submit to the school principal a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The school official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate.
Parents or eligible students may ask the School to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate. If the School decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the School will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.
3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.
One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the School as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom the School has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.
A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an educational record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.
Upon request, the District discloses educational records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.
4. The right to file a complaint with the U. S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the School District to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20202-5901