

# **COLUMBIA ELEMENTARY RIDDLE ELEMENTARY**

**STUDENT HANDBOOK**

**2023-2024**

Revised 07-19-2023

**QUICK REFERENCE INFORMATION**

**www.zebras.net**

**Columbia Elementary**

PK – 1<sup>st</sup> Grade

Principal:

Jason Snyder

574-223-2501 x 2001

Head Secretary:

Melisa Lahman

574-223-2501

ECA Treasurer:

Natalie Leslie

574-223-0506

Nurse:

Samantha Butler

574-223-2501 X 2010

Columbia Counselor:

Brenda McClain

574-223-2501 x 2005

**Riddle Elementary**

2<sup>nd</sup> Grade – 4<sup>th</sup> Grade

Luke Biernacki

574-223-2880 x 1001

Michelle Shaffer

574-223-2880

Attendance:

Theresa Kimmel

574-223-1540

Jenny Baldwin

574-223-2880 x 1010

Riddle Social Worker :

Taylor Tharp

574-223-2880 x 1005

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**TO REPORT ABSENCES (24 HOURS)**

Columbia Elementary 574-223-0506

Riddle Elementary 574-223-1540

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**Scheduled hours for school (Grade K-4)**

School begins Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday at 8:15 a.m. and dismissal time is 3:00 p.m.

STUDENTS SHOULD NOT ARRIVE BEFORE 7:30 A.M and 7:45 A.M. on Wednesday. If your student

needs to be at school earlier, they must be enrolled in the Extended Day Program at Columbia Elementary

(Before School begins at \$14 weekly and After School begins at \$24 weekly). Students are not to come and

stay in the classroom to wait for the bell unless permission from the teacher. Wednesdays are late start

mornings. School starts at 8:30 a.m. and students are counted tardy at 8:45 a.m. In case of a 2-hour delay on a

Wednesday morning, school will start at 10:15 a.m.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this handbook is to acquaint the parents of the Rochester Community Schools elementary students with the curriculum, policies, and school services. Through an understanding of the regulations that keep the school functioning efficiently and an awareness of the opportunities offered in the various phases of school life for growth and development, a firm understanding will be established among the school administration, faculty, parents, and students.

**It is important that both parents and students read this handbook.** It is suggested that parents go over its contents with their child so that questions can be addressed. *The handbook is not meant to be all-inclusive; you will probably have questions it does not answer.* If you need additional information, we will welcome your personal inquiry and the opportunity to help you. We suggest that the best place to start is to contact your student's teacher or call Columbia office at 574-223-2501 or Riddle office at 574-223-2880.

## **ELEMENTARY MISSION STATEMENT**

Rochester Community Schools... inspiring individuals to learn, grow, and give.

## **VISION STATEMENT**

In a student-centered, academically challenging environment that cultivates character, celebrates learning, and fosters collaboration, the staff, families and greater community of the Rochester Community Schools Corporation, as partners, will develop creative, lifelong learners. Cultivating the development of the skills and enthusiasm to be contributing members of society to shape a changing world will be the hallmark of student development.

## **THE ELEMENTARY CURRICULUM**

The curriculum program of the elementary school builds basic foundations for understanding in the ever-expanding environment of each child, as well as a carefully planned developmental program of the basic subjects. Organized areas of subject matter areas includes: (1) social studies, comprised of history, geography, and civics; (2) language arts comprised of listening and observing, speaking, English, reading, writing, and spelling; (3) science; (4) arithmetic; (5) health; (6) music; (7) arts and crafts; (8) physical education; and (9) special education. The teaching of thrift, conservation, citizenship, character, morality, and responsibility is also included in the elementary program.

The curriculum includes all the planned learning experiences provided by the school. There are special teachers in art, physical education, computer lab and music. The classroom teacher provides the setting for children to grow at a rate commensurate with their ability.

**KINDERGARTEN:** Although kindergarten is not compulsory, it is our hope and desire that 100% of our kindergarten children will have pre-school training.

A child is eligible for kindergarten if the child is five years of age on or before August 1<sup>st</sup>. Birth certificates and immunization records must be presented at the time of enrollment. Exact dates are announced in the local newspapers and on the local radio station. The enrollment is for the entire school year. Further information may be obtained from the principal of the elementary. Early admittance criteria may be found on the Rochester Community School Corporation website at [zebras.net](http://zebras.net).

## **ARRIVAL TIMES AND PROCEDURES**

School doors open at 7:30 a.m. Children who need to be at school before that time must be enrolled in the Before School Program at Columbia Elementary. That program begins at 6:30 a.m. Classes begin at 8:00 a.m. Anyone arriving after 8:15 a.m. will be considered tardy and must be signed in at the office by an adult. Upon arrival at school between 7:30 a.m. and 8:00 a.m., Riddle students are to go directly to the cafeteria and Columbia students will go to the gym. At 8:00 a.m. they are released to go to their classroom.

## **ATTENDANCE STATUTORY BASIS AND LEGAL REQUIREMENTS:**

511 IDC 6-2-1

Each school shall adopt and enforce a written attendance policy. Adequate notice should be given to all teachers, parents, and students. The policy should be reviewed periodically to ensure that it complies with current law.

INDIANA CODE 20-33-2-27

### **COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE:**

It is unlawful for a parent to fail to ensure that the parent's child attends school as required under this chapter. Before proceedings are instituted against a parent for a violation of this section, personal notice of the violation shall be served on the parent by the superintendent or the superintendent's designee.

INDIANA CODE 20-33-2-44

### **PENALTY:**

Any person who violates any provision of this chapter is guilty of a Class B misdemeanor.

INDIANA CODE 20-33-2-9b

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Developing high standards of dependability and reliability is a joint endeavor between the school and the parents of each student. Since business, industry and the professions expect and demand a high level of attendance and time-on-task, the education of our students must reflect these expectations and responsibilities. Through the combined efforts of parents, students, and the school, the goals of self-discipline and assumption of responsibility become major priorities in developing life skills and attitudes as well as preparing for entry into the adult world.

It is difficult for young people to learn if they are not in class: The teaching-learning process builds upon itself. So that all parties involved in the education of our students can assist in the maintenance of excellent attendance and the development of self-discipline, the following policy and procedures are presented.

When a student is absent from school, his/her parent or guardian should call the school before 8:30 A.M. **The 24-hour attendance telephone number is 574-223-0506 at Columbia and 574-223-1540 at Riddle.** A message can be left at this number anytime. Please state the student's name, teacher, and reason for absence. Also, if you would like homework that request should be made at the same time so teachers will have time to get it ready. Homework will be available for pick up at 2:45 p.m. but only if it has been requested. No homework will be available if phoned in after 8:30 a.m. **IF WE DO NOT RECEIVE A CALL BY 8:30 A.M. A CALL WILL BE PLACED TO YOUR HOME OR WORK PLACE.**

**Students who are absent from school for any part or all of a day due to illness, injury, or sleeping-in may not attend or participate in extracurricular activities (including practices) during the same day without permission from the principal or head teacher.**

## **ABSENCES**

**For purpose of this policy absences are classified as: In Attendance, Excused, Unexcused, and Truant.**

### **A. In Attendance**

These absences are not included in the six (6) day limit outlined in part B below:

1. Chronic/Severe health related absences: These require written verification from a licensed physician (letter of incapacity) and must be on file with the school nurse.
2. Other absences requiring verification:
  - a) Court summons and subpoenas with written verification: Student needs to follow the appointment procedures outlined in *Excused Absences, -Section 3B below*.
  - b) Service on the precinct election board or as a helper to a political candidate or party on the date of each general, city or town, special or primary election, with written verification. Student needs to follow the appointment procedures outlined in *Excused Absences, -Section 3B below*.

- c) Legislative page for or as an honoree of the General Assembly, with written verification. Student needs to follow the appointment procedures outlined in *Excused Absences, -Section 3B below*.

**B. Excused Absences**

***A maximum number of six (6) of these absences may be accrued during each semester per class.***

**Make up work is permitted.**

1. Deaths and funerals of immediate family members (immediate family members are defined as father, mother, guardian, grandparents, aunt, uncle, brother, brother-in-law, sister, sister-in-law, child, or anyone living in the household).
2. Religious observances. Student needs to follow the appointment procedures outlined in **Section B3 below**.
3. Illness or accidents verified by parent/guardian/physician.
  - a) Illness or accidents verified by a doctor's note. A maximum of two (2) school days from the date of absence will be permitted for the student to produce written verification. Only the dates listed on the doctor's note will be acceptable. After two (2) days it will not be changed to a medical excused absence.
  - b) Medical and dental appointments. Parents should make every effort to schedule appointments during non-school hours. If it is necessary that a student must miss school for an appointment, **release from school must be requested in writing by the parent or guardian OR a parent must call the attendance office to request the release of the student from school.** The written request must state time of appointment and request the time for release from school. In order for the appointment to be approved as a medical absence, the student must provide the school with a medical slip showing the time of arrival at the doctor's office, the departure time, and the proper signature. The student is expected to be in school prior to and/or following the appointment. This includes a student who is absent beyond the time of the appointment and reasonable travel time (as determined by the building administrator). Doctors may be contacted to verify appointments.
    - 1 **Note:** Parents of a student with chronic health problems (allergies, gastrointestinal problems, etc.) should file a Letter of Incapacity with the attendance office and school nurse at the beginning of each school year. Parents must verify when each absence is the result of the chronic illness. If a student becomes chronically ill during a school year, a Letter of Incapacity must be filed as soon as possible. The school may request an additional Letter of Incapacity at the beginning of each grading period depending on the type of illness.
4. Pre-arranged absences with parents. These absences are part of the six (6) total days of accumulated absences that are permitted per semester. When family circumstances necessitate removing the child from school, the following criteria will be considered before approval is granted or denied:
  - a. Requests must be made in writing to the principal.
  - b. Written request on the approved form must state the student's name, the first date of student absences and the last date of student absences. The request must be submitted at least five (5) school days prior to the first date of absence unless waived by the principal or his designee.
  - c. A student must turn in a Notice of Absence sheet prior to leaving.
5. Funeral of a friend (or relative not defined in *Excused Absences, Section 1.*)
6. Home emergencies cleared through the principal/head teacher. Student needs to verify the emergency as outlined by the principal or head teacher.
7. Probation appointments. Student needs to follow the appointment procedures outlined in section *Excused Absences, Section 2B.* *Student must provide verification from the probation department stating appointment start and finish time.*

8. Court attendance at parental request cleared through the principal or head teacher. *Student must provide verification from the court stating appointment start and finish time.*

**C. Unexcused**

**Any student who is unexcused/truant may not attend any extra-curricular activities on that day.** All other absences, with the exception of those resulting from suspension are unexcused and are of two types:

1. Parent and school approved absences exceeding the limit of six (6) per class period each semester.
2. Any absence not reported to the school by parent/guardian will be counted as an unexcused absence.

**D. Truancy**

Any student who chooses to be out of class or school without the knowledge or consent of his/her parents and/or school authorities will be considered truant. An example of an absence that will not be considered justifiable would be taking a day or part of a day off to attend a rock concert, or leaving school without permission. A student who participates in such activities will be considered truant by school officials, regardless of parental consent. A student who is not in an assigned area when at school can also be considered truant. *Truant students may not attend any extracurricular activities that day.*

1. Leaving the school building and grounds during class hours
  - a. No student shall leave the school building or grounds at any time during class hours without first receiving permission from the attendance officer, head teacher, nurse, or principal. Students who do not follow this procedure will be considered truant. Permission will not be given to a student to leave school during the day (except for emergencies and illness) unless s/he presents a signed note from the parent or guardian stating the reason and time the student is to be excused.
  - b. At the time the student leaves school, s/he shall sign out on a sheet posted in the attendance office. Failure to sign out will count as a truancy. A student returning to class before school is dismissed must sign in upon return. Failure to sign in may count as one of the six (6) absence days allowed per semester.
2. Parents may not excuse students for time missed that does not fall under the Indiana Compulsory Attendance Code.

**E. Attendance Procedures for Late Arrival, Early Dismissal**

It is necessary that a student be in attendance throughout the school day in order to benefit fully from the educational program of the Corporation. The Board recognizes, however, that from time-to-time compelling circumstances require that a student be dismissed before the end of the school day.

As agent responsible for the education of the children of this Corporation, the Board shall require that the school be notified in advance of such absences by request of the student's parent or guardian, which shall state the reason for the early dismissal. Justifiable reasons shall be determined by the building administrator.

1. Tardy procedure. If a student is not at school by 8:15 a.m. they are counted tardy. Leaving the school within 75 minutes of the end of the day will also be considered tardy. Anything over 75 minutes will be counted as a half day. If a student is going to the dentist or doctor please bring a slip verifying the student's appointment. No note about such appointment would be tardy and unexcused. Arrival at school after 9:30 a.m. or leaving before 1:30 p.m. will be counted as a 1/2 day absence, excused or unexcused. Students who are absent from school for any part or all of a day due to illness, may not attend or participate in extra-curricular activities (including practices).

We require that notes be sent to the teacher of the student who needs to be dismissed early so he/she will be aware of the early dismissal. A note should be sent to the director of the after school program if your child is enrolled in that program but will not be in attendance. **NOTES ARE ALSO REQUIRED IF YOUR STUDENT IS TO GO HOME A DIFFERENT WAY THAN NORMAL.** We will no longer be allowing students to ride the bus with another student. Phone calls for changing dismissal plans will only be accepted if it is an emergency.

## **EMERGENCY SCHOOL DISMISSAL**

There may be instances, especially in the winter, when it is necessary to either begin school late or close school early or for an entire day. In the event of heavy snow, severe fog, etc., parents should listen to radio station: WROI - Rochester, or watch one of two television stations in South Bend: WSBT or WNDU or Channel 4 on RTC. Announcements will be made only when schools are closed, dismissing early, or beginning late. Parents/Guardians are requested to provide the most updated information so School Messenger, our automated calling system, can contact parents in the event of an unscheduled early dismissal, delay or closing, or other school information. If there is no announcement, then school will be in session as usual. **PLEASE DO NOT CALL THE SCHOOL OFFICE OR THE RADIO STATION.** These calls only tie up telephone lines which need to be kept open in order to handle the emergency. Parents can also look for postings on the school district web site: [www.zebras.net](http://www.zebras.net). Parents should have in place a plan for their student(s) in case of an early dismissal from school. It is important that you go over that plan with your child so he/she will know where they are to go. **PLEASE DO NOT PLAN TO HAVE YOUR STUDENT CALL HOME OR ELSEWHERE.** With more than 450 students in each building, it is not practical or possible for students to call to get instructions on such occasions. Please do not e-mail your student's teacher instructions for a different way to get home. They don't always have time to check e-mail messages.

## **E-LEARNING DAYS**

In the event that school is canceled, an E-Learning day may be called. During an E-Learning day, students are expected to complete the work assigned to them. If work is not completed, students may be counted absent and/or be required to attend a study table in order to get the work completed.

## **CHECK AND MONEY POLICY**

Please write all lunch and school activity checks payable to Columbia if your student attends Columbia School or Riddle if your student attends Riddle School. Book rental checks should be made payable to Rochester Community Schools and have parent driver's license number on the check. A note of explanation should accompany all monies sent to the school. Both the note and money should be enclosed in a sealed envelope with the student's name written on the outside. **SEPARATE CHECKS ARE NEEDED FOR BOOK RENTAL, LUNCH AND EXTENDED DAY.** Columbia and Riddle will no longer take checks for field trips.

## **GIFTS AND PARTIES**

The school sponsors parties for special occasions and holidays. With the exception of Christmas gifts, our school is not in favor of student gift exchanges or the giving of presents by students to staff members.

**Invitations to outside parties will not be distributed at school.** We are not allowed to give out phone numbers or addresses of students or staff members. Please remember that due to health regulations any treats brought to school must be of the pre-packaged purchased variety. The delivery of flowers, balloons and other gifts is discouraged at school.

## **EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS**

It is essential that each parent furnish the school with a **current** emergency phone number that can be reached in case an emergency arising at school. We frequently find that parents cannot always be contacted. **THIS IS A PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY.** If you have an unlisted or unpublished telephone number, it is still extremely important that the school has your number in the event of an emergency. The number is not released to any person other than the proper school authorities. **In addition, whether you have an unlisted or a listed number, it is important that you inform the school of any change in your telephone number or home address.**

## **ENROLLMENT**

Registration of a new student is accomplished by:

1. Completing an enrollment form for each child
2. Presenting an official birth certificate
3. Furnishing the school with the required health information concerning the student
4. Paying the fees for textbooks
5. Any court documentation

## **TRANSFER OF STUDENTS FROM PRIVATE SCHOOLS**

Private transfer students will be placed in our program at the level determined to best meet their individual educational needs. That determination will be based upon the following rules:

1. Students who transfer from private schools which are state commissioned and/or regionally accredited will be placed in a grade comparable to the one they were in, unless there is compelling reason to believe that such placement would be educationally unsound.
2. Students who transfer from private schools which are not commissioned or accredited by the State are subject to any or all of the following criteria to determine placement:
  - (a) Assessment testing for best placement will be done to determine the student's grade level.
  - (b) Interview with the principal and a committee of teachers (not involved in the specific placement) on the basis of achievement as well as social and physical age of the child.
  - (c) The student or his/her parents requesting transfer may be asked to present specific written curriculum covered in the non-accredited or private school. In addition, any permanent records or information pertaining to achievement may be requested to help determine placement. Parents who have questions regarding this policy should contact the building principal.

## **BOOK RENTAL POLICY**

Textbooks and school technology apps are on a rental basis and fees are due on the first day of each semester. The rental price is estimated on usual wear and replacement. Students using rental books should exercise great care so that the least possible damage and loss may occur. The student is held responsible for unnecessary marking, damage, and loss of rental books. Ordinary wear only is expected. When a book becomes torn or in need of repair, it should be brought to the attention of the teacher. The textbook rental collection schedule for late enrollments or early withdrawals is figured on a pro-rated basis. Families who wish to apply for textbook assistance should complete the Application for Free/Reduced Meals and/or Textbook Assistance form. These students who qualify for textbook assistance will still have a balance due as the state never pays for all of the fees. The balance is the responsibility of the parent/guardian.

## **TECHNOLOGY RESPONSIBLE USE POLICY**

A technology use form must be signed by both students and parent upon enrolling in Rochester Community Schools. Read the guidelines carefully (see policy below), because all students will be held accountable to proper use of school computers/IPads. Misuse of school computers/IPads may result in loss of computer privileges.

### **Acceptable Use Policy**

We created this list to help students and parents understand what practices are acceptable in the business world and in school. **The following are prohibited actions on school owned technology:**

- o **Personal email:** The content of all email is subject to monitoring and is not to be considered private. Email containing obscenities, personal attacks, gang references, drug references, and any other content deemed unacceptable is strictly prohibited and will result minimally in the loss of email.

- o **Personal Computing Devices:** Any personal device brought to school is subject to search and possible retention by the school if probable cause exists.
- o **All-student email:** an e-mail which goes to every student.
- o **Posting anything on any website (YouTube, Facebook etc) detrimental to any student or staff member.** Students must understand that they are responsible for any and all postings they place on sites on the internet.
- o **Visiting Proxy sites is PROHIBITED!!** RCSC maintains an internet filtering service intended to protect students from accessing inappropriate and unsafe Websites. Any Website or method of circumventing this safeguard will result in LONG TERM loss of internet privileges.
- o **Possession, use, and downloading of Executables:** any process (i.e. program executable, script, batch file, etc.) that is not pre-loaded on a RCSC computer or approved by staff is **STRICTLY PROHIBITED!**
- o **Downloading or Streaming Non-school related Music from the Internet is strictly prohibited:** E-mailing links to songs or possession in your favorites list or document files is also prohibited.
- o **Viewing Websites of questionable value or websites unrelated to school work may result in severe disciplinary action.**
- o **Chain letter/Communications:** a letter or communication that encourages the recipient to send it to more people. These are disruptive and use excessive server space and *will result in loss of email privileges.*
- o **Using someone else's e-mail account will result in loss of privileges.**
- o **Visiting chat rooms, using Instant Messaging clients or sites is prohibited.**
- o **Installing software not approved by School Administration is a suspend able offense.**
- o **Loading games:** Putting a game on a computer for use on the computer.
- o **Copying software is a crime and will be treated as such.**
- o **Plagiarism is a crime and will be treated as such.** Theft is theft: using someone else's intellectual property as your own constitutes stealing.
- o **Logging on an account not your own is strictly prohibited.**
- o **Moving software from a local machine to a server:** copying program files to the server to be used on another machine is never allowed.
- o **Inappropriate computer-to-computer communication (hacking):** any attempt by a student to control another computer, delete/change files, send network-level messages, sniff IP packets, or **any malicious or non-school related computer-to-computer communication will minimally result in loss of privileges.**
- o **Playing games during class time is strictly prohibited.**
- o **Using racist/sexist/threatening comments in the database or email**
- o **Printing personal documents:** any printing done that is not associated with the classroom is not allowed.
- o **Using school e-mail or the school's network for personal gain:** using your email or network to make money may result in a suspension.
- o **Sending email to groups of larger than five must first be approved by a staff member.**
- o **Possession or use of destructive programs:** Having any program that can cause any sort of damage to the computers will result in suspension.
- o **Going around log-on procedures:** using a computer without logging on the computer (i.e., without supplying your username and password), booting off floppies: using a disk to start a computer with a different operating system such as DOS is also prohibited.
- o **Re-installing or re-activating a program that has been removed from the system:** putting a program back onto a computer that was removed from that computer.
- o **Purchases over the Internet:** many things may be bought over the Internet with a credit card. The school cannot be responsible for the liability of these transactions.
- o **Sharing personal information with strangers over the Internet:** giving someone information which can be used to find the person

- o **Meeting someone you have met over the Internet**
- o **Using more than your 250 MB limit on the server:** having files on your space in the server which uses more than 250 MB of storage space.
- o **Individual Computer configurations (CPU and Monitor) are to be left as set.**
- o **Abuse or destruction of Technology will result in appropriate disciplinary action. Student/Parent are subject to charges that result from damage to iPads and other equipment that are assigned to the student.**

The staff at Columbia Elementary and Riddle Elementary reserves the right to at any time, given the rapidity of change in technology, to add, delete, or modify the above policies and restrictions. We reserve the right to examine and confiscate any storage device used on campus. We expect common sense usage of our technology.

## **REPORT CARDS/PROGRESS REPORTS**

The educational welfare of your child is best served when there is complete understanding and cooperation between the home and school. As a basis for such understanding and cooperation, the school reports to the parents four times per year. Mid-term reports will be sent home with all students stating a child's current grades and areas of academic progress. Conferences may be scheduled by parents or teachers as needed throughout the year. All report cards are to be signed and returned by parents.

The following criteria may be used to determine the progress for students:

- K-2**
- E = Excellent 90% and above
  - S = Satisfactory 80-89%
  - N = Needs Improvement 70-79%
  - U = Unsatisfactory Progress 69% and below

\*\*Columbia staff considers a child to have mastered daily work and nine week work if a percentage of 80% or higher is achieved. A lower percentage on daily or nine week work in any area needs to be interpreted as an area where further reinforcement might be necessary.

### **Grades 3-5:**

A+ 100-98	A 97-93	A- 92-90
B+ 89-87	B 86-83	B- 82-80
C+ 79-77	C 76-73	C- 72-70
D+ 69-67	D 66-63	D- 62-60
F 59-below		

The following markings may be used in Music, Art, Physical Education and Writing:

- S - Satisfactory
- U - Unsatisfactory

## **PROMOTION - RETENTION - ASSIGNMENT**

Any promotion policy is to be based on the welfare of the individual student and not on a set of arbitrary rules. Placing a pupil where it is believed he/she will have the greatest opportunity to develop his/her potentialities is to be the basis for consideration of promotion or non-promotion of any student.

Promotion is the assignment of a student to a higher grade level based on the student's achievement of established criteria in the current grade. Retention is the re-assignment of a student to the current grade level during the next school year. Retention is particularly justified whenever a student's achievement is below state testing standards or below grade standard due to his/her attitude of indifference or lack of effort, physical or social immaturity, and frequent and long absences. This action will be indicated on the report card during the school year. Parents will be conferenced concerning this decision near the end of the school year. All third grade students need to pass the IREAD assessment, unless they qualify for a "Good Cause" exemption as

defined by the Indiana Department of Education, or they will be retained in the third grade. Placement is the assignment of a student to a specific grade level based on the determination that such placement will most likely provide the student with instruction and other services needed to succeed and progress to the next higher level of academic achievement. Parents will be notified concerning this decision near the end of the school year.

### **ELECTRONIC ACCESS**

Harmony, the student management program, offers parents the ability to access student information with a password anytime. Grades are available through the Rochester Community Schools website at [www.zebras.net](http://www.zebras.net).

### **NOTICE OF DIRECTORY INFORMATION**

Our school takes great care to keep your child's personal information safe. However, information such as names, grade levels, or photographs of students are normally shared with the public in places such as the yearbook, sports team rosters, and in music programs.

If parents **DO NOT** want their child's name or picture listed at **any** time, please notify the office before August 15<sup>th</sup> each year.

### **Audio/Video Recording of School Performance (Copyrighting Material)**

This performance includes copyrighted materials which have been properly licensed specially for this event. However, audio and/or video recording for re-broadcast or distribution in any way without the express written consent and proper license from the author is a violation of Federal copyright law and is prohibited.

### **CUSTODIAL AND NONCUSTODIAL PARENTS; EQUAL ACCESS TO STUDENT RECORDS**

If one (1) parent has been awarded custody of the student by a court order, the parent of custody shall provide to the principal of the school a copy of the custody order and inform the school in writing of any restrictions and/or limitations in the rights of the non-custodial parent. A non-custodial parent, unless restricted by a court order, will be given access to all student reports cards, student records, and disciplinary actions. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, a non-custodial parent will be permitted to participate in school conferences related to the student.

The non-custodial parent may not visit with the student during the school day, nor may the student be released to the non-custodial parent unless written permission is given by order of the court or by the custodial parent.

### **STUDY HABITS AND HOMEWORK**

Homework is a very important part of a student's education. It offers practice for a particular skill, extends or enriches learning, and helps develop good study habits and time management skills.

In addition, homework offers the opportunity for parents to become interested and involved in their child's educational training. This mutual interest in education will motivate the student and provide an atmosphere for good communication between the student, parent, and teacher.

Parents do their part to improve homework when they:

1. Cooperate with the school in making homework effective.
2. Provide their children with suitable study conditions (desk, lights, books, supplies), reserve time for homework, and turn off the television.
3. Encourage their children but avoid undue pressure.
4. Are interested in what their children are doing but do **not** do their homework for them.
5. Understand what the school expects homework to accomplish.

Due to the importance of homework, assignments are made by teachers for one of the ideas previously identified. As time is often allowed in school for finishing learning activities, not every child will have the same length of homework each evening. As a rule of thumb, students will have approximately 30 minutes of homework per evening for four days a week. The way in which students apply themselves during the school day will vary the actual evening time required.

Students may improve their study habits by observing the following suggested principles:

1. Be sure there is a clear understanding of each assignment.
2. Form the habit of using a certain time and place for the study of each subject.
3. Study conditions such as good lighting proper ventilation, and quietness are encouraged.
4. Have necessary materials on hand.
5. Try to develop the skill of working independently of others.
6. Spend enough, but not too much time, with each subject.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

**In order to maintain an environment conducive to learning the following rules will pertain to all students:**

### **WEARING APPAREL**

Student's clothing should be simple, comfortable, and clean. Clothing should be in keeping with weather conditions. Lightweight clothing for warm weather; a coat, boots for snow and rainy weather; and warm outer garments for cold weather. All students will be expected to go outside for recess. All students go out if the temperature and wind chill is 25 degrees or warmer at Columbia Elementary and 20 degrees or warmer at Riddle Elementary. Please have your child wear appropriate shoes that can be worn at recess and/or PE class. Shoes must be worn at all times. The wearing of any apparel that has any writing, printing, symbols or pictures that is judged by the principal/faculty/staff of the school to be immoral, lewd, or vulgar, or is suggestive and/or infers sex, drugs, alcohol, tobacco, and violence is prohibited, this includes school supplies and backpacks. No midriffs shall be permitted. Hats, headbands and headscarves are only to be worn when going outside. Hooded shirts will be allowed with hoods down inside the building during normal school hours. Printing or sewing the student's name in his/her wearing apparel will help him/her in recognizing belongings more easily and will help us to return lost articles of clothing to their rightful owners.

### **GENERAL RULES FOR ALL STUDENTS**

All students are expected to know and understand these rules. Ignorance will not be a form of defense. Violations of these rules may result in the following discipline actions to include but not limited to:

1. Loss of recess
  2. Loss of privilege
  3. After school detention
  4. In-school suspension
  5. Suspension out of school
  6. Expulsion
- 
1. Students are under the school's jurisdiction from the time they leave their home until they return home again whether they are walking or riding the bus.
  2. Students are to walk, not run, to and from their buses when loading and unloading.
  3. Students are to show courtesy at all times and respect to others by talking in a soft voice and keeping hands to oneself.
  4. Students are to walk quietly in the halls at all times.
  5. The use of profanity will not be tolerated.
  6. Unethical behavior such as lying or cheating will not be tolerated.
  7. Any form of violence, rowdiness, harassment or actions that disrupts the school's operation is viewed as unacceptable behavior and will be dealt with accordingly.
  8. Students are **not** to bring knives, guns, ammo, tobacco, vapes, matches, skateboards, trading cards, recording devices, or any "look alike" toys to school that may be harmful or cause a disturbance. The only exception would be if such items were needed for a classroom project or presentation and have prior approval from the school.
  9. Students are not to engage in any illegal activities such as theft, gambling, forgery, extortion, dealing in illegal drugs or be in possession of any dangerous weapons either on their person, in their desk or in any carrying vessel.

10. Any action that defaces, damages or destroys personal or public property is considered unacceptable behavior and will be dealt with immediately. Guilty parties will be held financially responsible.
11. Students are expected to use the playground equipment properly and with respect. Students will also be expected to know and follow the playground rules. There will be no throwing of snowballs to or from school or on the playground. There will also be no throwing of any object that could be harmful to another person or could cause damage to property.
12. Students are not allowed to leave school grounds unless they have permission.
13. No gum chewing will be allowed.
14. Kindergarteners and first graders will not be allowed to ride their bikes to school.
15. Glass containers should not come to school.
16. A student may possess a cellular telephone or other electronic device as long as it is not on during school hours and stored out of sight. If the cell phone is out and seen by any staff personnel, the phone will be confiscated and need to be picked up by a parent. The school will not be responsible for lost or stolen items.
17. Pets/animals are not permitted at school without prior administration approval.
18. If a student is suspended out of school for any reason:
  - A. They are not to attend any school activities home or away.
  - B. They cannot be on any school grounds while suspended.

19. Bullying

Definitions A. IC 20-33-8-0.2 - "Bullying" means overt, **unwanted**, repeated acts or gestures, including (1) verbal or written communications or images transmitted **in any manner** (including digitally or electronically), (2) physical acts committed, **aggression**, or (3) any other behaviors, that are committed by a student or group of students against another student with the intent to harass, ridicule, humiliate, intimidate or harm the other targeted student and create for the targeted student an objectively hostile school environment that:

1. places the targeted student in reasonable fear of harm to the targeted student's person or property;
2. has a substantially detrimental effect on the targeted student's physical or mental health;
3. had the effect of substantially interfering with the targeted student's academic performance; or
4. has the effect of substantially interfering with the targeted student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, and privileges provided by the school.

(b) The term may not be interpreted to impose any burden or sanction on, or include in the definition of the term, the following:

1. Participating in a religious event.
2. Acting in an emergency involving the protection of a person or property from an imminent threat of serious bodily injury or substantial danger.
3. Participating in an activity consisting of the exercise of a student's rights protected under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution or Article I, Section 31 of the Constitution of the State of Indiana, or both.
4. Participating in an activity conducted by a nonprofit or governmental entity that provides recreation, education, training, or other care under the supervision of one or more adults.
5. Participating in an activity undertaken at the prior written directions of the student's parent.
6. Engaging in interstate or international travel from a location outside Indiana to another location outside Indiana.

The discipline rules describing bullying may be applied regardless of the physical location in which the bullying behavior occurred, whenever:

1. the individual committing the bullying behavior and any of the intended targets of the bullying behavior are students attending a school within a school corporation; and
2. disciplinary action is reasonably necessary to avoid substantial interference with school discipline or prevent an unreasonable threat to the rights of others to a safe and peaceful learning environment.
3. **A record made of an investigation, a disciplinary action, or a follow-up action performed under rules adopted under this section is not a public record under IC 5-14-3.**

These rules apply when a student is on school grounds immediately before or during school hours, immediately after school hours or at any other time when the school is being used by a school group; off school grounds at a school activity, function or event; traveling to or from school or a school activity, function or event; or using property or equipment provided by the school.

These rules prohibit bullying through the use of data or computer software that is accessed through a computer, a computer system or computer network of a school corporation.

## **HARASSMENT POLICY**

Harassment of a student or staff member by other students or any member of the staff is contrary to the School Board's commitment to provide a physically and psychologically safe environment in which to learn and may be a violation of Federal or State law.

In addition to sexual harassment, which includes unwelcome sexual advances of any form of improper physical contact or sexual remark, harassment, shall also include any speech or action that creates a hostile, intimidating or offensive learning environment.

Any reports are to be investigated by the Principal promptly. Anyone found to have violated this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension or expulsion from the Corporation.

## **BEHAVIOR AND DISCIPLINE**

While under the school's jurisdiction, all staff members have the authority to monitor behavior. This includes the authority to correct or reprimand any student who does not conduct himself in the manner of a good school citizen. This covers the time that students are on school grounds immediately before, during, and immediately after school hours, and any other time when the school is being used by a school group. This authority also extends to off school grounds at a school activity, function, or event and the time traveling to or from school or a school activity, function or event.

Referencing the paragraph above, school jurisdiction now extends to discipline for illegal conduct which occurs during holidays and summer breaks.

Appropriate school behavior should include courtesy, a proper attitude and respect of others and school property.

Inappropriate behavior will be documented.

## **DRUG-FREE SCHOOLS**

In accordance with Federal law, the Board of School Trustees prohibits the use, possession, concealment, or distribution of drugs by students on school grounds (or within 1,000 ft. of school), in school or school-approved vehicles, or at any school-related event. Drugs include any alcoholic beverage, anabolic steroid, controlled substance as defined by State statute, or substance that could be considered a "look-a-like" controlled substance. Compliance with this policy is mandatory for all students. Any student who violates this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, in accordance with due process and as specified in the Rochester School Board Policy Handbook, up to and including expulsion from school. When required by State law, the Corporation will also notify law enforcement officials.

The Corporation is concerned about any student who is a victim of alcohol or drug abuse and will facilitate the process by which he/she receives help through programs and services available in the community. Students and their parents should contact the school principal or counseling office whenever such help is needed.

## **CUSTODIAL V. NONCUSTODIAL ISSUES FOR SCHOOL PERSONNEL**

### **DEFINITIONS**

1. Primary Physical Custody: This is the parent that the student lives with most of the time. The parent who has primary physical custody is the "custodial parent." The parent who does not have primary physical custody is usually called the "noncustodial" parent.

2. Joint Physical Custody: The child lives with both parents about half of the time.
3. Primary Legal Custody: The parent with primary legal custody is the only parent who can make decisions about the child's education, religion, and who can sign permission slips for school.
4. Joint Legal Custody: Both parents have the right to information about the student's education. This means that both parents can visit the child at school, can sign permission slips, can register the child for school, and can pick the child up from school.
5. Sole Custody or Custody. One parent is the custodial parent and does not share legal custody with the other parent. The parent without sole custody or custody is called the "noncustodial" parent and will only be allowed to come to the school if a Judge allows it in an Order. The noncustodial parent has a right to grade reports and teacher conferences just like a custodial parent, unless the Judge has denied access to that parent.

### POLICY

1. A parent who enrolls a student, or who obtains an Order providing primary physical custody or sole custody of the student must give a copy of the most recent order from the Judge to the school. If an order from the Judge says that one parent cannot come to the school or pick the child up, a copy of the Order must be given to the school.
2. If the school does not have an Order providing otherwise, staff will treat parents as if the Order provides Joint Physical and Legal Custody to both parents.
3. A non-custodial parent may visit with the student at school, may eat meals with the student, and may pick the student up from school if
  - a. the parent has joint legal custody; and
  - b. there is no Order that says that the parent cannot come to the school or pick up the student.

### PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Parents of our school children are welcome at all times to visit their children's classes. Research tells us that children whose parents are active at school do better academically. Some possible activities that parents might consider doing are to have lunch with their student at school, volunteer to help in their classroom, go on field trips, attend the Book Fair with their student and become involved with various school sponsored groups. These are all good ways to let your child know that you want to be a part of their school life and that you consider their education to be important.

To guarantee and protect our students' learning environment, we ask that parents contact their student's teacher before they visit a classroom. To avoid classroom disruptions, please leave student items at the office. We also ask that school visits not take place during the beginning few weeks.

\* If students are being dropped off by parents in the morning, we ask that all parents continue to drop their child(ren) at the front office area rather than accompanying them to classrooms or breakfast.

\* Please sign in at the front office and get a visitor's tag if you are here to join your child for lunch or a special classroom party.

\* Please drop off items for your student at the front desk and we will make sure that they receive those items during the day.

\* Please remember that if your child is here prior to 7:45 am, they should go to before school and will need to pay accordingly for those services.

\* Update changes in phone numbers, address, and emergency contacts with the front office when changes occur.

\* No classroom pickup.

\* The front doors at Columbia will be locked until 7:45 am. If your student arrives early, he or she will need to go to the before school care.

\* Parents that utilize before-school services at Columbia will need to enter the 1<sup>st</sup> grade doors and report to the adult there.

\* Changes in transportation for students **MUST** be communicated to the front office or the teacher in the form of a note.

In the continuing effort to insure the safety of our students and staff, any visitor to our building must present a driver's license and sign in at the office and receive a School Gate Guardian tag. In addition, any parent who may be assisting with any school activity must have a limited criminal background check on file. As is true in all of our school buildings, smoking is not allowed. We are a smoke free campus.

Visitors are encouraged to turn cell phones off or turn them on vibrate.

**THANK YOU FOR UNDERSTANDING OUR DESIRE AND LEGAL NEED TO KEEP OUR SCHOOL A SAFE, LEARNING ENVIRONMENT.**

## **MONTHLY NEWSLETTERS**

In order to keep our parents informed of the activities at Columbia/Riddle Elementary, a monthly newsletter is sent home at the beginning of each month along with a menu from the cafeteria. We encourage you to not only read this newsletter, but also save it for reference during the month. You can also check out our web page at [zebras.net](http://zebras.net).

## **LOST AND FOUND**

A "lost and found" is maintained in our school so that articles may be returned to their rightful owners. Students are urged to make an early effort to locate lost articles. These articles are placed in a box. At the end of each nine weeks unclaimed articles are given away to someone who can use them. **PLEASE LABEL ALL CLOTHING AND PERSONAL ITEMS.**

## **MEDICAL SERVICES**

**Nurse's Clinic:** The goal of our Nurse's Clinic is to keep students comfortable, safe, healthy and learning. With this in mind, we may provide various first aid and/or hygiene products according to the student's needs. These could include over the counter topical itch creams, antibiotic ointment, redness relief eye drops, oral relief gel, or burn gel, etc. You may contact your school nurse for further information on what products might be used in the clinic. **If there is a particular product that shouldn't be used on your child, please notify the School Nurse in writing immediately.** Students will be treated and returned to class immediately in most circumstances. If seriously ill or injured, the student may remain in the clinic to rest and rehabilitate with the hopes of returning to class, otherwise a parent/guardian or designated emergency contact will be notified that the student needs to be sent home from school. If a student contacts their parent/guardian during the school day to be picked up for illness but has not reported to the school nurse for assessment, the occurring absence will be unexcused. Students must obtain a pass from class in order to see the Nurse. During passing period the student should check in with the next teacher and get permission to see the Nurse. If proper procedure is not followed it will result in tardiness and the student being unaccounted for.

**Allergies:** If your child has an allergy, a Physician's order is required in order for accommodations to be made. This order will remain in effect for the entirety of the student's time at Rochester School Corp. If the allergy has resolved, another Physician's order is required to stop accommodations. We cannot solely accept parent requests due to new laws and regulations.

**Emergency Medication:** Each school is equipped with an automatic external defibrillator (AED) in case of cardiac emergency, and stock epinephrine (EpiPen) in case of anaphylactic allergic reaction. If your child has a known allergy and uses an EpiPen or similar product you must provide this to the school nurse so that a specific plan of care can be made for your child.

**Head Lice:** If your child is found to have head lice, the nurse will work with you and let you know what needs to be done. Our policy on this can be found at [Zebras.net](http://Zebras.net) policy #8451 - PEDICULOSIS (HEAD LICE)

**Immunizations:** Students need to be immunized as required by the state of Indiana in order to attend school. Parents and/or students will be notified of requirements in advance. On or by the first day of school, proof of immunization is required. Immunizations need to be entered into the state database (CHIRP) by the health care provider or documented proof must be provided to the school. If the student is not in compliance as of the first day of school, communication with your school nurse is crucial as the student risks exclusion from school for noncompliance.

**Medications:** All medications taken at school need to be administered through the health office. Only Food and Drug Administration(FDA) approved medications will be administered. **Students may not carry any medications including cough drops with them at school or store in lockers, or back packs, etc.** All medications need to be submitted to the Nurse's office with a signed medication consent form or a permission letter stating the medication, dosage, time to be given, dates to be used and parent signature. Consent forms can be found on Zebras.net or supplied by the school. All medications must be in the original bottle/container. Prescription medications must have the pharmacy label or doctor's order with the child's name, name of medication, the correct dosage, and the instructions for administration. Elementary through Middle School students may NOT transport medication to school, and parents/guardians need to pick up medications from the school.

All communicable diseases such as pink eye, fifth disease, strep, etc. will follow the RCSC Policy, per the IDOH guidelines. Students will be excluded from school activities until examined by a healthcare provider approving readmission or by completing the maximum period of communicability as outlined by the IDOH.

The school nurse is available for consultation and recommendations. Diagnosis and treatment are prescribed only by the student's family doctor.

## **STUDENT ASSISTANT SERVICES**

Rochester Schools Student Support Services office is housed in the Learning Center building at 1818 Park Road. This office works closely with principals, counselors, nurses, and teachers in Preschool through Grade 12 to assure all students receive necessary educational, health, and behavioral supports as they progress through school. The following individuals are located in this office: Director of Student Support Services, Administrative Assistant, Tech Dept., School Psychologist, Occupational Therapist, and Physical Therapist. Student Support Services coordinates student programs such as: Special Education, Section 504, Homeless, and Alternative programs.

## **LANGUAGE, SPEECH AND HEARING**

A language, speech and hearing program is maintained in our schools, designed to meet the language, speech and hearing needs of the students.

As required by state law, all children in grades 1,4,7 and 10 receive hearing screenings along with all special education students, new students and any referred by the classroom teacher, principal or Students' Assistance Team (S.T.A.T.) or (SST-Columbia).

Students failing the hearing screening are referred for further medical evaluation. Any student with a prior history of hearing loss will receive a complete audio logical evaluation each year. Parents/guardians will be notified if further testing of speech or language is necessary for possible enrollment in speech therapy. Students will not be tested further nor enrolled in the speech/language therapy program without parental permission. If parents do not want their child's speech or language screened, he/she should notify the Speech/Language Pathologist at the school.

A yearly speech conference is required by law with all parents of students involved in the speech program.

## **HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION**

Homebound instruction is available for students who will be homebound for a minimum of four weeks. A doctor's statement must be on file with the school corporation having jurisdiction of said child so stating. Parents desiring homebound tutoring for their child should contact the school principal.

## STUDENT INSURANCE

The Rochester Community Schools carries accident insurance on all students. This policy covers injuries that are sustained while at school or a school-sponsored function. This does not cover the cost of eyeglasses. However, this insurance is a secondary source with parental insurance being the primary source. Dental coverage has a limitation of one year from the accident date, even though dental treatment may extend beyond that time period. Please bring any school-related accidents to the principal's attention as soon as possible. Insurance forms are available at each school office.

If you are employed and no insurance coverage is provided - A LETTER OF VERIFICATION FROM YOUR EMPLOYER STATING THAT NO COVERAGE IS PROVIDED MUST BE SUBMITTED.

## MEDIA CENTER

The goal of the media center is to provide books, periodicals and other materials that will not only compliment the school's curriculum but also encourages a life-long love of reading and learning.

The school librarian will assist students as they learn to use the media center facilities so that they can prepare assignments with confidence and efficiency. The students will also receive guidance as they search for books which match their ability and interests. Students are responsible for the library books and materials that they borrow. **If a school library book is lost or damaged beyond repair, the student will be expected to pay for the replacement of the book.**

## LOCKDOWN PROCEDURE

The Rochester Community School Corporation has enhanced the lockdown procedures. The enhancements that we teach are known as **ALICE**.

**Alert:** We get the word out using clear language and describe the location of the event.

**Lockdown:** We will continue to lockdown students in secure areas.

**Inform:** Keeping staff and students informed continually allows for good decision making.

**Counter:** Apply skills to barricade, and if necessary, distract, confuse and gain control.

**Evacuate:** Reduce the number of potential targets for the intruder, and reduce chances of injuries resulting from authorities confronting the intruder when help arrives.

## CAFETERIA

Cafeteria facilities are available to all students. Meals are provided and are based on the nutritional values as set up by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. In addition to giving daily nutritional needs, the plan is based on teaching correct eating habits and introducing new foods.

No student is permitted to leave the school grounds at noon for lunch unless arrangements have been made with the office to do so. Each student must bring a sack lunch or purchase a school lunch. Milk may be purchased or juice may be sent. CARBONATED BEVERAGES or GLASS CONTAINERS SHOULD NOT BE SENT TO SCHOOL. **No fast food will be allowed in the cafeteria.** If a parent brings fast food for lunch, the student will need to eat their lunch in the office area. Parents are encouraged to pay for their student's lunch on the first day of each week or monthly. Pre-pay monies can be used for meals or milk. You may check your student's account by going to [myschoolbucks.com](http://myschoolbucks.com). You must have an account set up prior to logging on and adding money to your child's account. If a student withdraws, a request can be made in writing for any money that is in the student's account. Menus are published on the website as well as being sent home at the beginning of each month.

If someone other than a custodial parent or legal guardian wants to eat lunch with a student, the office needs a note from the custodial parent giving permission for this to happen.

Students with food allergies and other dietary needs must have a note from their doctor updated yearly.

Person's eating with a student must have the correct monies. Parents cannot use student accounts to eat lunch.

Cafeteria Guidelines:

1. Children should observe rules of courtesy and proper table etiquette.

2. Students should make an effort to at least sample all portions of their lunch.
3. Children are not allowed to charge except in emergencies.
4. Students with five charges will be required to carry lunch until the lunches are paid or an alternate lunch of sandwich and milk will be provided at no charge to the student.

School breakfast costs \$1.80 for students and lunch is \$2.75. APPLICATIONS FOR FREE/REDUCED LUNCHES ARE AVAILABLE IN THE SCHOOL OFFICE.

## **BUS POLICIES AND RULES**

A **bus pass** will be needed if a student is to ride a different bus than normal. A bus pass is only good for one day. We will no longer transport friends to student homes due to crowded buses. Permanent changes must be on a bus form and require a 48 hour notice. **We will no longer take phone calls regarding transportation changes for that particular day. If your child is to go home a different way, please send a note with your child.** Balloons, glass containers, liquid containers are prohibited. No food or drink is to be consumed on the bus. Difficulties between students while on the bus are to be reported immediately to the driver.

School bus drivers are to have control of all school children between the time they are picked up at their home and the time they are delivered to school. It is the duty of the bus driver to keep order and maintain discipline while the students are on the bus and along the bus route. He/she will do their best to see that no child is imposed upon or mistreated while in their charge.

Students are expected to observe the following rules while being transported to school:

1. Obey the driver's instructions the first time they are given.
2. Stay in your seat and speak in a low, normal voice.
3. Keep all parts of your body and all objects inside the bus.
4. No pushing, shoving, fighting, name calling or inappropriate language at any time.
5. No eating, drinking, littering, smoking, spitting, or defacing of seats or interior of the bus.
6. No pets (live animals), toys or balloons are permitted on the bus.

Using ignorance as a form of defense for violation of the rules above will not be accepted.

**ALL BUSES ARE EQUIPPED WITH VIDEO CAMERAS FOR THE PURPOSE OF MAINTAINING THE SAFETY OF ALL STUDENTS. RIDING THE BUS IS A PRIVILEGE, NOT A RIGHT!**

### **BUS ISSUE CHAIN OF COMMAND:**

If a student or parent has a bus issue, you will first need to contact:

1. The bus driver, don't call the school first
2. If the problem is not resolved, contact the head bus driver at the transportation office at 223-4675.
3. If the problem still persists, contact the student's school for assistance.

## **PUBLIC COMPLAINTS AND CONCERNS**

These can be found on our zebras.net website under Board Policies 2000 Controversial Issues 2240.

Any person or group having a legitimate interest in the operations of this Corporation shall have the right to present a request, suggestion, complaint, or concern relating to Corporation personnel, the program, or the operations of the Corporation.

Any requests, suggestions, complaints, or concerns reaching the Board, board members, and the administration shall be referred to the Superintendent for consideration according to the following procedure:

### **First Level**

If it is a matter directed toward a staff member, the matter must be addressed, initially to the concerned staff member who shall promptly handle the complaint and make every effort to provide a reasonable explanation or take appropriate action within his/her authority and Corporation administration guidelines.

This level does not apply if the matter involves suspected child abuse, substance abuse, or any other serious allegation which may require investigation or inquiry by school officials prior to approaching the professional staff member.

As appropriate, the staff member shall report the matter and whatever action may have been taken to the Building Administrator.

### **Second Level**

If the matter cannot be satisfactorily resolved at the First Level, it shall be discussed by the complainant with the staff member's supervisor.

### **Third Level**

If a satisfactorily solution is not achieved by discussion with the Building Administration, a written request for a conference shall be submitted to the Superintendent. This request should include:

1. the specific nature of the complaint and a brief statement of the facts giving rise to it;
2. the respect in which it is alleged that the complaint (or child of the complainant) has been affected adversely;
3. the action, which the complainant wishes taken, and the reasons why it is felt that such action be taken.

Should that matter be resolved in conference with the Superintendent, the Board may be advised of the resolution.

### **Fourth Level**

Should the matter still not be resolved, and requires a Board decision or action, the complainant shall request, in writing, a hearing by the Board.

The Board, after reviewing all the materials relating to the case, may grant a hearing before the Board and provide the complainant with its written decision.

The complainant shall be advised, in writing, of the Board's decision, no more than forty (40) business days following the hearing.

### **Matters Regarding the Educational Program**

If the request, suggestion, complaint, or concern relates to a matter of Corporation program, it should be addressed, initially, to the Building Administrator and then brought, in turn, to higher levels of authority in the manner prescribed in "Matters Regarding a Professional Staff Member".

### **Matters Regarding Instructional Materials**

If the request, suggestion, complaint, or concern relates to instructional materials such as textbooks, library books, reference works, and other instructional aids used in the Corporation, the following procedure shall be followed:

A. The criticism is to be addressed to the Building Administrator, in writing, and shall include:

1. author;
2. title;
3. publisher;
4. the complainant's familiarity with the material objected to;
5. sections objected to, by page and item;
6. reasons for the objection.

B. Upon receipt of the information, the Building Administrator shall, appoint a review committee, the number of which shall be determined by the building administrator, and which shall consist of:

1. one (1) or more professional staff members including the Media Specialist;
2. one(1) or more Board members;

3. one(1) or more lay persons knowledgeable in the area;
4. one(1) or more students.

C. The Superintendent shall be an ex-officio member of the committee.

D. The committee, in evaluating the questioned material, shall be guided by the following criteria:

1. the appropriateness of the material for the age and maturity level of the students with whom it is being used;
2. the accuracy of the material;
3. the objectivity of the material;
4. the use being made of the material;
5. reviews from reliable selection tools and sources of recommendation.

E. The material in question may be withdrawn from use pending the committee's recommendation to the Superintendent.

F. The committee's recommendation shall be reported to the Superintendent in writing within thirty (30) business days following the formation of the committee. The Superintendent will advise the complainant, in writing, of the committee's recommendation and advise the Board of the action taken or recommended.

G. The complainant may appeal this decision, within thirty (30) business days, to the Board through a written request to the Superintendent, who shall forward the request and all written material relating to the matter to the Board.

H. The Board shall review the case in public session and advise the complainant, in writing, of its decision within thirty (30) business days.

No challenged material may be removed from the curriculum or from a collection of resource materials except by action of the Board, and no challenged material may be removed solely because it presents ideas that may be unpopular or offensive to some. Any Board action to remove material will be accompanied by the Board's statement of its reasons for the removal.

## **DISTRIBUTION OF LITERATURE**

Groups and organizations not directly affiliated with school, such as Cub Scouts, Girl Scouts, Bowling Club, etc., will need to have all enrollment forms and information approved by the building level administrator or by the superintendent if the information is to be made available in more than one school. All approved forms and information will then be placed on school counters and an announcement will be made to students.

Groups/organizations will not be able to address students during school hours. Arrangements may be made with school administration to obtain space during Open House and student registration dates to distribute information to students and parents.

## **ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT PLANS**

This notification is to advise all patrons, occupants, or their legal guardians, collective bargaining organizations, and parent-teacher organizations, that the asbestos management plans are available for review upon request. A copy of the plans for all buildings under the jurisdiction of this local education agency are available in the Administration Building, which is located in 690 Zebra Lane, Rochester, Indiana 46975; telephone number 574-223-2159. Plans for individual schools and other buildings are located in the administration office of each building. The plans can be viewed by any person during normal business hours of the particular school. Interested parties wishing to inquire about the hours and times that the plans are available should call the above number.

In accordance with the US EPA's AHERA Standard (ref: 40 CFR 763.80), all information concerning asbestos-containing materials in the schools of the Rochester Community School Corporation is available for review and copying by students, staff and guardians during normal business hours.