

Woodside Elementary School Parent-Student Handbook

Dear Woodside Parents and Students,

Sharing in the journey of a child's education is an important partnership between parents, teachers and school administrators. The Woodside faculty, staff and I enjoy the opportunities and challenges that our students face with each new day and each new school year. The information provided to you in this Parent-Student Handbook will help you navigate your way through the school year here at Woodside Elementary School. Please read the handbook in its entirety as our school policies and practices are sometimes modified from one year to the next. It is our intention to provide you with as much school information as possible in this format.

Wishing each of our students and their families a happy, healthy and successful school year!!

Yours in Education,

Mrs. Melissa Signore
Principal

Mission Statement

The River Vale School District is dedicated to providing each student with a comprehensive education based on the New Jersey State Learning Standards in a safe, supportive environment. The Board of Education and staff join with both parents and the community-at-large in a commitment to promote self-discipline, motivation, and academic excellence in all children. We value our students' acquisition of knowledge as well as the development of their critical thinking and problem solving skills. Our ultimate goal is to help all children develop into independent, self-sufficient, and productive learners.

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Home-School Communication

Woodside School thrives on positive communication. One important avenue of communication is between parents and our school faculty. In addition to written communication, parents may leave messages for faculty members via the Main Office and electronic mail. Parents should call 201-358-4028 and follow the prompts. The easiest way to reach our staff is through email. All email addresses are listed on our staff page on the school website. Please keep in mind if you require an immediate response it is best to reach out by telephone.

Report Cards

Report cards can be accessed via the Genesis Parent Portal three times throughout the year. Report cards are provided after the completion of each trimester. The link to the Genesis portal can be found on the River Vale website under the Parents tab. Should you encounter any difficulty accessing your child's report card from the Parent Portal be sure to contact the office at 201-358-4028 for assistance.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parents need to be aware of the educational expectations and progress of their children. Likewise, teachers need to work collaboratively with their students' parents in sharing expectations, constructing goals and building relationships. Parent-Teacher Conferences are scheduled for the fall and spring each year. Conferences serve as an ideal way for parents and teachers to communicate so that the best interest of the student is realized. Additional conferences may be scheduled before or after school as needed. Please do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher. Direct, purposeful and timely communication works best.

Website Communication

The River Vale School District, by leveraging technology, has made a concerted effort to maximize school – home communication while going “green”. The “Go Green” folder located on our school website is the best means to stay informed. This form of communication is much quicker, more comprehensive, and “retrievable” if need be. Both district and school websites contain a host of information and are outstanding resources. The Woodside School website posts information germane to our school happenings. Please check our websites frequently to stay apprised of scheduled events such as Visitation Day, Literacy Night, Math Night and other offerings. Please note that principal email blasts will also be used to communicate key information. Making the school website your home page is a helpful way to stay connected. Other forms of communication to assist in keeping parents abreast of various school happenings will be made through social media. Please be sure to follow us!

Building Security

The River Vale School District makes safety a top priority. The RVSD abides by all state safety/security mandates and works in conjunction with the River Vale Police Department.

- All faculty and staff wear RVSD issued photo I.D. badges.
- All visitors enter the school building through our front/main office doors only. A buzzer system activated by staff allows entry. All other outside doors are kept locked during the school day.
- Visitors/volunteers must present themselves at the Main Office upon entry and state the purpose of their visit. Visitors must sign in, provide a photo I.D. and wear a visitor badge issued by the secretaries.
- Visitors/volunteers exiting the building must sign out in the Main Office and return the badge in exchange for their photo I.D.
- Fire drills and safety/emergency drills are conducted as prescribed by state guidelines.
- Board Of Education policy and signage aligned to safety protocols is enforced on school property.
- **Electronic Surveillance:** According to River Vale Board of Education Policy 7441: *Electronic Surveillance in the School Buildings and on School Grounds*, “The Board of Education authorizes the use of electronic surveillance in school buildings and on school grounds to enhance the safety

and security for school district staff, students, community members, and other building occupants and to protect the school district's buildings and grounds. The content produced by the surveillance system under certain circumstances may be considered a student record and if so it will be subject to the Board of Education policy and regulations regarding confidential student records." *So you are aware, for privacy reasons electronic surveillance equipment is not placed in certain areas of the school. If you have any questions about the district's use of electronic surveillance equipment, please feel free to reach out directly to your child/children's building principal.

Arrival at School

- Arrival time is between 8:25 and 8:45. Staff supervision in the school building is provided each day during this time frame.
- Students will enter the school through the main front door entrance only and line up outside their classroom door. Only students may enter the building for morning line up.
- A student is considered late and will be marked TARDY after 8:45 a.m. **He/she must be signed in by the individual dropping off the child in the Main Office.** Excessive tardiness will be monitored by the district's data reporting system.

Student Attendance

As we all know, consistent attendance is vitally important to excellent student achievement. Your child's success in school depends on regular school attendance. Children who miss a day of school miss a day of learning, and the positive impact of daily instruction and class discussions cannot be replaced with makeup assignments. To that end, whenever possible, please schedule appointments after school or on vacation days and refrain from scheduling vacation time when school is in session. Please be advised that students shall be recorded as either: (a) present; (b) absent, (c) excused which applies **only** for state approved religious observances or "Take Your Child to Work" Day.

If your child is absent from school, please contact the school nurse at 358-4028 ext. 2020 or via email prior to 8:45 a.m. and provide a reason for the absence. The school nurse should also be called if your child will be late. Voicemail is available 24 hours per day. If a student does not report to school and we have not been notified by you, you will receive a phone call indicating that your child is absent.

As our district and school abide by BOE policy and closely monitor absences and tardiness, we sincerely thank you for your ongoing efforts to ensure your children are regularly attending school and look forward to a great school year together.

Excusing Students Early From School

- Students excused from school early are to be signed out at the Main Office by a parent/guardian. Only adults listed on a Family Dismissal Plan form are permitted to pick up students. Any changes to the dismissal plan must be presented to the child's teacher with proper advanced notice.
- Parents should notify the teacher and Main Office if a child needs to be excused from school early for an appointment, etc. Students will be called to the office upon parent arrival.
- Appropriate identification may be requested upon early pick-up at the Main Office.

School Closings

Unusual weather and/or occurrences may cause schools to close. School closings are determined by the Superintendent of Schools in consult with other Pascack Valley Regional School Districts. Announcements of the school closings will be made via the Honeywell Instant Alert for Schools System.

By using this contact system parents can receive telephone, text messages and emails regarding emergency closings. The Honeywell Instant Alert System is tested prior to the school year to ensure contact information is correct. Please make sure your contact information in the Parent Portal is up to date and correct.

Student Dress Code

Student clothing should be comfortable, suitable to the weather/season, and allow for maximum learning. Parents are asked to use good judgment in dressing students appropriately for school. Students should be dressed in such a manner that they are safe and do not distract or offend others. Parents should also take weather conditions and temperature into consideration. The following guidelines will help clarify our expectations:

- Hats may not be worn in school except those worn for religious or medical purposes, unless there is a pre-announced special occasion permitting them.
- Sunglasses may not be worn in school unless they are worn for medical purposes or there is a pre-announced special occasion permitting them.
- Flip-Flops and other such footwear should not be worn to school as they present a safety hazard for students at recess and in P.E. classes. There is a direct link between flips flops on the playground and visits to the nurse. Please make safe decisions regarding the footwear your children wear to school.
- Clothing may not be adorned by slogans, symbols or advertisements promoting inappropriate themes.
- Sneakers are mandatory during physical education classes.

Daily Schedule

Arrival Time - All Grades (Bell)	8:45 a.m.
Dismissal Time - Kindergarten (Bell)	3:00 p.m.
Dismissal Time - Grades 1-5	3:05 p.m.

Delayed Opening:

Arrival Time: 10:15 a.m.

Early Dismissal:

1:00 p.m.

Lunch Procedures

Lunch/Recess Schedule

12:00-12:25 Grades K,1 and 2 are at lunch / 12:30-1:00 Grades K,1 and 2 are at recess
12:00-12:25 Grades 3,4 and 5 are at recess / 12:30-1:00 Grades 3, 4 and 5 are at lunch

- Students remain in school for lunch unless signed out by a parent/guardian in the main office.
- There is a balance of time spent eating and at play.
- Due to a host of health-related issues, any food-“sharing” is not permitted.

Lunchroom Expectations

- Students should follow the guidelines provided by the lunchroom supervision to create a safe, orderly, and secure environment.
- Proper behavior and manners are expected.
- Student lunches can be dropped off in the basket/bins located in the Main Office foyer. Foods should be delivered no later than 15 minutes before your child’s lunch period. Lunch aides distribute delivered lunches to students.
- Please inform your child of what lunch he/she will receive daily to eliminate confusion.
- The lunchroom is an orderly, safe and comfortable environment. Students should respect teachers and lunch aides on duty.

Allergies

As students may have allergies (i.e. peanut, milk, fruit, etc.), specific guidelines are placed in the lunchroom, classrooms and during special occasions. If your child has any allergies, be absolutely sure to contact the school nurse and complete the appropriate medical forms. Communication between home and school is a key factor in keeping the school environment safe for all food allergic students.

Help us keep our classrooms safe and be respectful of children with dietary restrictions. Our nurse and teachers work to keep parents informed of our food allergic protocols. Should you require clarification about our food allergic protocols, please consult with our nurse and/or the classroom teacher.

Integrated Nutritional Guidelines

In accordance with the child nutrition regulations set forth by the New Jersey and United States Department of Agriculture, the River Vale Elementary Schools have implemented helpful guidelines for selling, serving and distributing beverages, snacks, and food items at school. This important "wellness" initiative serves to support the physical, emotional and social fitness of children in support of their overall growth and development.

These guidelines apply to edible items sold, served, or distributed during the school day (i.e. class parties, fundraising sales, P.T.A. lunches, classroom rewards.) The River Vale School District is placing an emphasis to closely monitor and reduce the quantity of food items brought into school for events where the first ingredient is sugar.

Please note that the lunches and snacks children bring to school are **not** governed by these guidelines. However, a well balanced nutritious lunch or snack that includes healthy foods and beverages is strongly encouraged. Please review these guidelines and follow them when planning snacks, lunches, classroom parties and et al.

Beverage, snack and food items that **cannot** be served, sold, or distributed at anytime before the end of the school day are:

- Any food or snack item listing sugar as the first ingredient (reminder: sugar has various names). Exceptions may be made for special school celebrations (holidays and curriculum related activities).
- Food of Minimal Nutritional Value (FMNV = all forms of candy) are not permitted to be sold, served, or distributed at any time.

New beverage, snack, and food standards:

- Beverages: All offered shall be milk, water or 100% fruit or vegetable juice. Beverage size shall not exceed 12 ounces (except for water and 2% or less milk).
- Snacks: No more than 8 grams of fat per serving. No more than 2 grams of saturated fat per serving.
- Food: P.T.A. a la carte lunches are held to the no more than 8 grams of fat, 2 grams of saturated fat per serving guideline.
- Fast Food: Mass orders from fast food establishments for students are not permitted.

Class Party Suggestions

A classroom party is a time for fun and celebration. Accordingly, the food served should be fun and festive, as well as nutritious and balanced. Food served at a class party must follow the guidelines stated in our handbook. Treats are allowed as long as they follow the guidelines and are healthy options. A balanced party menu may include food items such as: cheese & crackers, a fruit/vegetable platter and healthy treats, served with 100% fruit juice and water. All store bought food must have an ingredient label. Class parties are reserved for very special celebrations such as holidays or other grade level events as approved by the Principal. Please continue to help us educate students about healthy nutrition and eating habits.

End of year celebrations should be coordinated with classroom teachers. Class picnics will be reserved for grade 5 celebration events only.

Student Birthdays

Woodside School has a no birthday treat celebration policy. Students can have their birthday recognized in other celebratory ways, which does not include food and/or drink items. Suggestions for this can include: sending in a birthday pencil for your child to give to classmates, small stickers commemorating their birthday or a small party favor. Please be sure to check with your child's classroom teacher.

Student Health Services

The students of River Vale have the services of a full time school nurse. We encourage parents to speak with the school nurse about any health related questions and/or concerns. Our school nurse handles all medical matters such as issuing medications here at school.

Medications

1. School nurses can administer prescription and non-prescription medication only if they have written orders from the student's physician indicating the name of the medication, dose and time the medication is to be administered. The medication must be presented to the nurse by a parent in the original prescription package with student's name.
2. All medication prescriptions must be renewed by the child's physician at the start of each school year. The form for medication administration is on the nurse's website under "Forms". Please make sure it is filled out completely and signed by both the physician and the parent.

Physicals & Immunizations

The State of New Jersey requires all students new to the district and all kindergarten students must submit a complete physical exam and immunization record upon entry to school.

Illness and Injury

Children with definite signs of illness such as colds, skin diseases, or childhood communicable diseases need to be kept at home. A child may not return to school until they have been symptom (fever, vomiting, and diarrhea) free for at least 24 hours. This policy is both for the health of the affected child as well as the entire school population who could become infected.

If a child is injured or becomes ill at school, he/she will be temporarily cared for in the nurse's office until a parent or designated person is able to take the child home. Parents must provide the school with emergency numbers where either parents or another designated adult can be reached to take responsibility for the ill or injured child. Be sure to keep all emergency contact information current.

Physical Education Restrictions

Any child coming to school with stitches, crutches, casts/immobilizers or a head injury will be excused from physical education and recess. A physician's note stating the diagnosis, activity limitations, and when physical activity can be resumed is required.

Lice

Lice are transmitted through direct contact. Please teach your child not to share head apparel. Should you notice any indication of lice, please be sure to notify the school nurse so appropriate protocols may be followed. Further information can be found on our School Nurse's website.

Health Related Emergencies

The State Department of Education, in conjunction with the United States Secretary of Education, has requested that all school districts address and incorporate a health-related response protocol into their

safety and security plans. Influenza pandemic is an example of a health-related emergency. If and when such an emergency arises, pertinent information will be disseminated to parents, faculty, and community members via a variety of communication formats.

Keep in mind, limiting the spread of common colds and viruses is a goal shared by the entire school community. It is important that anyone presenting symptoms of illness remain at home and return only after symptoms resolve and students are physically able to return to school. We strongly encourage good hygiene (i.e. covering a cough/sneeze, using tissues, hand washing, etc.) and appreciate the efforts of parents in reinforcing appropriate hygiene practices.

Use of Technology Resources

The River Vale Public School District affords all students supervised access to a host of technology resources, including the Internet. Educational technology is seamlessly infused into the classroom learning environment on a consistent basis. Students learn how to access information and communicate effectively as contributing members of our global society.

Proper student etiquette is the responsibility of each and every student where the use of technology resources is concerned. It is important to note that the use of such resources is a privilege, not a right. Students are to use technology resources only in productive ways in order to enhance the learning process. While in school, students must never post/share personal information about themselves (i.e. names, addresses, telephone numbers, or personal photographs) on the internet or send harassing messages electronically (i.e. cyber-bullying). The River Vale Board of Education prohibits acts of cyber-bullying at any time by school district pupils that may impede education through the use of any school district owned, operated, and supervised technologies. The building principal or designee may report allegations of cyber-bullying to law enforcement authorities. (File Code: 5512.02)

The River Vale School District supports the use of technology resources within the context of the educational endeavor and appreciates the support of parents and faculty in promoting student technology safety practices both at school and at home. An Acceptable User Policy Agreement is electronically reviewed by students and parents acknowledging their compliance to abide by the rules and guidelines concerning the district's network policies.

Cell Phones & Camera Use

Cell/camera phone use in school is not permitted. Students whose parents permit them to carry a cell phone may do so. However, it must be stored and turned off for the duration of the school day with no exceptions. Violations such as receiving calls, placing calls, text messaging or camera/video phone use will be subject to disciplinary action. In addition, camera phones, video cameras, and any devices which records video images or voices used by students and parents must have prior approval for purposes such as school events, class trips, etc. The clear intention here is to respect privacy rights.

Special Programs & Services

1. **Intervention and Referral Service Committee** – The Intervention and Referral Services Committee is a resource for classroom teachers and/or parents who seek support with students who may be experiencing learning, behavioral or health difficulties. The I&RS Committee offers assistance from colleagues, parents and resources to help students improve. Parents whose children will be discussed at these meetings will always be contacted prior to the meeting date. For further information regarding our I&RS process, contact our School Guidance Counselor.
2. **Basic Skills Instructional Program** – Students who need additional support in reading, writing and mathematics will receive assistance through this program. Services may be provided either in class or as a pull-out program.

3. Special Education - Under very specific circumstances, which are outlined in the New Jersey Administrative Code 6A:14, a child may be eligible to receive Special Education and Related Services. The Child Study Team CST, which is comprised of the School Psychologist, Learning Disabilities Teacher/Consultant and Social Worker, will meet with the parents and teachers of the child who may be in need of services to develop a plan. The CST along with the child's parents and teachers develop an Individual Educational Program (I.E.P.) for students who qualify for special education and related services. This plan is evaluated and revised annually. Identified student programs are designed to include as much of the regular school program in the least restrictive environment possible while meeting individual student's needs. For further information regarding our Special Education services, contact our Director of Child Study Team, Mrs. Joelle DeGaetano at idegaetano@rivervaleschools.com.
4. English Language Learners (ELL) – The school, in compliance with State Law, maintains a program for students with limited English Skills. The students speak a variety of native languages and are taught to develop the functional English language skills needed for classroom success. Entrance and exit from this program is determined through assessment and teacher recommendation. For further information regarding our ELL services please contact the district's ELL teacher.
5. PoGStudio –The PoGStudio offers challenging learning opportunities for students in diverse school settings. It is designed to enhance existing practices such as higher order thinking skills and provide enrichment experiences. For further information regarding our PoGStudio, please visit the school website and/or contact the school's PoGStudio teacher.
6. Guidance - The River Vale Elementary Schools provide a guidance counselor and related services to all students. The Guidance programs include classroom instruction, character education, social skills groupings, and individualized counseling as needed. For further information regarding our Guidance program, contact our school guidance counselor.
7. Media - The Woodside School Media Center provides students and the school community with blended literacy and technology instruction, student centered experiences and quality resources. Students may borrow items from the library collection during visits, engage in the acclaimed Common Sense Media Curriculum and develop literacy and technology skills that support learning. For further information regarding our Media Center, contact our media specialist dspar@rivervaleschools.com.
8. Instrumental/Music – Instruction on standard band instruments is offered to all fourth and fifth grade students. Instrumental music lessons are scheduled as a pull-out program during the school day. Participants in this program are responsible for school work missed. A choral program is also part of our co-curricular offering for students. Choral groups generally meet before school. For further information regarding our Music program, contact Mrs. Anna Dore at adore@rivevaleschools.com.
9. DARE program – DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) is offered to fifth grade students during the school year. Classes are conducted by trained DARE officers from the River Vale Police Department. The program seeks to educate students as to the dangers of substance abuse in an age-appropriate and relevant manner as well as to foster specific resistance skills to be utilized throughout life.
10. Project Child Find – The River Vale School District sponsors a Child Find public awareness campaign to locate and provide services for underserved youth, including migrant and homeless children, with a delay or disability from birth through twenty-one years of age. Children may exhibit physical, mental, language, or emotional difficulties. Our Child Study Team will provide screening, evaluation, guidance services and, if a child is found eligible, educational programs. If you are concerned your child is developing differently, contact the Child Study Team at 201-358-4000 ext. 4101.
11. Child Abuse Reporting – New Jersey law requires school district personnel to report to the Department of Youth and Family Services and the local police department if they suspect a child may have suffered from abuse or neglect. All members of our school community should

adhere to these same guidelines.

Homework Standards

Teachers and parents recognize that homework is tied to school success.

- Homework extends class work and provides reinforcement.
- Homework helps students synthesize and integrate what they have learned in the classroom.
- Homework provides a link between school and home, giving parents an opportunity to stay abreast about their child's progress.
- Homework encourages students' self-discipline, responsibility and study habits.
- Time dedicated to independent student reading is invaluable and parents are encouraged to take an active interest in the development of solid reading habits.
- If you find your child struggling to complete homework in a reasonable amount of time, please communicate this to your child's teacher.
- Students may be excused from completing homework for observation of religious holidays. Please contact your child's teacher to make any necessary arrangements.

Character Education

Developing a strong sense of character in students/children is a responsibility of the school, parents and community at large. To that end, Woodside embraces a school wide character education program. Through our guidance curriculum and with the support of the classroom teacher, your child will learn about various character traits. We strongly encourage parents to discuss and reinforce character education at home.

Rights and Freedoms

Goal: To create and sustain a positive, respectful, and effective learning environment for all. Each individual at Woodside School is entitled to:

- An education
- Being treated fairly
- Freedom from being set apart because of individual differences
- Having personal information handled respectfully
- Having personal and school property respected

Students are taught conflict resolution in the classroom and via guidance lessons during the school year. The basic strategies are:

1. Take time to cool off.
2. Use "I Messages" to state feelings—no blaming, no name calling, no interrupting.
3. Each person states the problem as the other person sees it.
4. Each person says how they are responsible for the problem.
5. Brainstorm solutions together—choose a solution that satisfies both.
6. Affirm, forgive, or thank each other.

The use of conflict resolution strategies outside of school is highly encouraged as well. Learning to handle conflict in a consistent manner will help students to utilize what is learned at school to real life conflict scenarios. (Source: New Jersey State Bar Foundation)

Student Code of Conduct

The River Vale School District strives to maintain a positive and engaging learning environment for all students. In order to promote a healthy school climate conducive to student growth and development, it is

critical that students exercise proper regard for the rights and welfare of other students, for school personnel, for the educational purpose underlying school activities, and for the care of school facilities and equipment. It is important to note that New Jersey State mandates and Board of Education Policy # 5131 prohibit harassment, intimidation and bullying on school property or at any school-sponsored function.

The district maintains policies and regulations to govern student behavioral expectations and developmentally appropriate consequences which include preventative and/or corrective action plans. (Expectations for Pupil Conduct P5600)

CHART OF DISCIPLINE

Minor Infractions

Infraction	First Offense	Second Offense	Third Offense
<i>Cell Phone Use</i>	Warning	Lunch or Recess Detention	Lunch & Recess Detention
<i>Cheating/Plagiarizing</i>	Warning	Meeting with Guidance or Principal	Lunch & Recess Detention
<i>Disobedience/Noncooperation</i>	Meeting with Guidance or Principal	Lunch or Recess Detention	Lunch & Recess Detention
<i>Disruption in Class/Cafeteria</i>	Meeting with Guidance or Principal	Lunch or Recess Detention	Lunch & Recess Detention

Moderate Infractions

Infraction	First Offense	Second Offense	Third Offense
<i>Language Misuse</i>	Meeting with Guidance or Principal	Lunch & Recess Detention	2 Lunch & Recess Detentions
<i>Recklessness/Pushing/Shoving</i>	Meeting with Guidance or Principal	Lunch & Recess Detention	2 Lunch & Recess Detentions
<i>Direct/Willful Disrespect to Authority</i>	Lunch or Recess Detention	Lunch & Recess Detention	2 Lunch & Recess Detentions
<i>Mistreatment of Peers</i>	Meeting with Guidance or Principal	Lunch & Recess Detention	2 Lunch & Recess Detentions
<i>Misuse of Technology</i>	Meeting with Guidance or Principal	Lunch & Recess Detention	2 Lunch & Recess Detentions

Major Infractions

Infraction	First Offense	Second Offense	Third Offense
<i>Obscene/Provocative Gestures or Actions</i>	Lunch & Recess Detention	2 Lunch & Recess Detentions	In-School Suspension
<i>Use of Force/Making Threats to Others</i>	In-School Suspension	In-School Suspension	Out-of-School Suspension
<i>Theft/Damage/Vandalism</i>	In-School Suspension	In-School Suspension	Out-of-School Suspension
<i>Creating a Dangerous Environment (e.g., falsifying an alarm, possessing a weapon, etc.)</i>	Out-of-School Suspension	Out-of-School Suspension	Out-of-School Suspension

*The administration reserves the right to assign and alter consequences at Woodside Elementary School whenever necessary. **Multiple or egregious violations of the code of conduct may result in the loss of privileges, including, but not limited to, class trips, extracurricular activities, and participation in end-of-year celebrations/activities.**

Parental Support

Woodside School appreciates the continued support of parents in promoting positive attitudes and respectful behaviors. We value the important school-home partnership we establish each year. Thank you for taking the time to read through our handbook. We hope you find it to be helpful and informative. Please contact our school should you have any additional questions or concerns. Have a great year!