

# Rich Valley School



## Handbook

Office Hours: 8:00 am - 4:00 pm

Phone: (780) 967-5754

Fax: (780) 967-4484

Revised September 2024

## **Introduction**

Welcome to Rich Valley School! As a small rural school, we provide students with the opportunity to build strong, meaningful relationships in an environment that encourages open communication, where every voice is heard. We prioritize respect for individual differences and embrace diversity. Our goal is to inspire academic excellence, based on the Alberta Program of Studies, through a high-quality learning environment, encourage risk-taking, and offer leadership opportunities while supporting students on their lifelong learning journey. Please share with your child's teacher any information regarding their needs that will help us better serve him or her. We believe that communication among parents, students, and the school is critical in assuring student success.

## **Our Vision**

Empowering our students to face the challenges of today and the opportunities of tomorrow.

## **Our Mission**

Rich Valley School is dedicated to delivering a high-quality education that supports our students in becoming a community of learners. Our focus is on academic excellence, critical thinking, and responsible citizenship, empowering students to thrive as lifelong learners in a dynamic, global society.

## **Our Motto**

Learning Together

## **Operational Procedures**

### **Attendance and Late Policy**

Regular school attendance is essential for student success. Students are expected to attend school every day and arrive on time unless they have a medical appointment or are unwell. If your child will be absent, please notify the school by calling 780-967-5754. If you need to leave a message, be sure to include your child's full name and the reason for their absence. If we do not receive notification of an absence, our secretary will reach out to the parent or guardian to confirm the absence. This process is in place to ensure the safety of all students.

### **Guardianship**

To help ensure your child's safety, please inform us of any special circumstances regarding guardianship with copies of court orders.

### **Accidents/Injures**

The goal of the staff at Rich Valley School is to act as reasonable parents in handling student accidents. The following procedures will be utilized in case of an accident:

- We will give immediate attention to any minor injury and in most cases, parents will be notified.
- For more serious injuries, parents will be contacted as soon as possible.
- If students require professional medical assistance, an ambulance will be called.
- Under no circumstances will staff give legal consent to medical treatment of students in their charge.

### **Screening for Illness/Staying Home When Sick**

- Parents are asked to screen their child every morning to ensure they are well enough to attend school.
- If students are sick, they need to stay home

- If students show symptoms at school, parents will be contacted to pick up their child immediately
- Students cannot ride the bus if they are sick
- Please ensure you have an updated emergency contact identified at the school in case you are unable to pick up your child
- Parents of students with pre-existing conditions (ie. Allergies) need to notify the office. If symptoms, due to the pre-existing condition, do not worsen, your child may remain at school.

### **Mental Health and Wellness**

We recognize the importance of offering a continuum of supports and services to ensure the success of all our students. We are committed to providing access to services through NGPS contracted professionals, such as a speech-language pathologist, occupational therapist, and school psychologist. Additionally, we have a half-time Success Coach who focuses on promotion, prevention, and early intervention services across the mental health continuum, collaborating with schools, communities, and healthcare providers. Our school also benefits from the work of two staff members involved with the NGPS Wellness Committee, who offer support, information, training, and capacity building for all staff.

### **Technology and Personal Electronic Devices**

Our goal is to ensure a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment that protects the rights of others while providing appropriate, educational use of technology. It is an expectation that all students use cell phones responsibly in school. Northern Gateway Public Schools recognizes the importance of technology and has established clear guidelines on the use of technology and personal electronic devices. Rich Valley School's policy reflects that of Northern Gateway Public Schools.

- We expect all students to model the qualities of good digital citizenship by following standards of acceptable use and ethical practices when using school-owned technology (software, hardware, Internet) or their electronic devices. The Technology Use Agreement form is signed and reviewed with students at the start of the school year.
- All students are provided with NGPS-owned Chromebooks. Using the Google platform, students can access their documents, presentations, and school-assigned Gmail accounts anywhere, anytime, on any device. When a teacher determines an educational purpose for personally owned devices (cell phone, iPod, etc.), these items may be used in the classroom as directed by the teacher. Otherwise, personally owned devices will be stored out of sight.
- Cell phones and personal electronic devices are prohibited during instructional time, non-instructional time, outside recess, and in non-supervised areas. The use of social media is not permitted at school or any school-sponsored events as per the Ministerial Order.
- Parents and guardians are encouraged to exercise judgment in whether a student should bring an item to school that they consider valuable.

### **Technology Fees and Access**

It is preferred that the technology fees be paid directly through the use of School Cash Online but cash and cheques addressed to "Rich Valley School Students Union" will also be accepted. The fee for **Grades 1–7 is \$32.00** and for **Kindergarten is \$16.00**. Equitable access to technology for all students supports social responsibility and the development of critical thinking skills through avenues that are relevant, responsive, and meaningful. The technology integration fee levied on behalf of NGPS ensures that students have access to devices that can be used both at school and at home; to software that is connected to, and complements, curriculum; and to processes that both reinforce and encourage the demonstration of learner competencies.

### **Other Fees**

It is preferred that all fees be paid directly through the use of School Cash Online but cash and cheques addressed to “**Rich Valley School Students Union**” will also be accepted.

### **Administrative Procedure 507 - Waiver of Fees**

Guided by the principle that finances should not be a barrier to a child's education, Northern Gateway Public Schools will waive fees for independent students or parents/guardians if they meet certain income guidelines, are on social services or are facing exceptional circumstances. If you qualify, you may apply using the application form for a waiver of fees – Administrative Procedure 507 Appendix – Application for Waiver of Fee(s) and Instructions.

### **Communication**

Communication between all parents and teachers is crucial. Please remind your child to bring home all notes and agendas so that you can read them. Our teachers will strive to be in touch with you as often as possible (teachers will notify you of their preferred method of contact – ie. Agenda, Remind, etc.). If an agenda is a teacher's preferred method of messaging, please return the agendas each day.

### **School Website**

Stay up to date with all the latest news and information about our school by visiting <https://www.richvalleyschool.ca/>. On the website, you will find our monthly newsletter, calendar, current events, contact details, and various forms.

### **Remind Notification Program**

REMIND is a messaging app that allows you to receive and send messages with the classroom teacher. There is a school-wide account and a classroom account. The school-wide account is used to communicate important information, school events, emergencies, and updates throughout the year. The classroom account is used to communicate with the teacher. You may sign up to receive messages by text, email or both (There is also a REMIND app if you prefer). All phone numbers and email addresses are private (no one can see how you signed up or what contact you are using). This is an excellent communication platform that is effectively utilized. It is extremely important that everyone sign up for both the classroom and school account to ensure timely communication that can happen in an instant. If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact the school @ 780-967-5754.

### **School Year and Monthly Newsletter**

A monthly calendar of events will be sent out digitally. Weekly classroom updates will be shared out on the classroom Remind accounts and our monthly newsletter will be shared out via Remind.

### **Busing Policy**

The bus is an extension of the school and for the safety of all students; every student is responsible for his/her conduct while traveling on the bus. Bus transportation is a privilege that may be withdrawn in the event of misconduct.

Make sure you and your children are familiar with the bus rules set out by the Board of Education.

1. Students must obey the driver promptly.
2. Students are to sit properly in their assigned seats while the bus is in motion.
3. Bus drivers may allow eating food on the bus.
4. Students shall not operate equipment or engage in any noisy activity that may distract the driver.
5. Students loading or unloading in rural areas who live on the opposite side of the road must cross in FRONT of the bus and at least ten paces ahead. Students must cross under the instruction and direction of the driver.
6. In urban areas, students should cross only at intersections or pedestrian crosswalks. Bus

- stops shall be arranged in a place close to safe pedestrian crossover areas.
7. Parents shall ensure their children are suitably dressed for current weather conditions (proper footwear, outerwear, headgear and mitts). Students who are unsuitably dressed will be reported to the Principal.
  8. Students must be on time. The bus driver shall not be required to wait if students are not at, or near, the bus stop at the scheduled time.
  9. Students shall proceed promptly to their buses after school dismissal. Students who are constantly late and delay the bus shall be reported to the Principal or designated supervisor.
  10. Students who miss their homeward bus are to report to the supervisor.
  11. Outside of ordinary conversation, classroom conduct is to be observed on the bus.
  12. Students shall not throw waste paper or other rubbish on the floor of the bus or out the window.
  13. The following activities are prohibited:
    - a. unnecessary conversation with the driver
    - b. extending any part of the body out of the windows
    - c. possession and/or consumption of alcoholic beverages/narcotics
    - d. profane language
  14. Students are responsible for any damage caused by them on the bus.
  15. Students who repeatedly violate school bus regulations will be reported to the Principal and the Director of Transportation. Major offenses will be reported immediately. The Principal or designate may suspend a child from riding the school bus for violation of any regulation(s) in compliance with the Education Act.
  16. A bus driver reports student infractions using a behavior form. A copy of this behavior report is given to the assistant principal, Transportation Department, parent/guardian, and a copy also remains with the driver.
  17. Visit [www.ngps.ca](http://www.ngps.ca) to view our complete Administrative Procedure 810: Safety and Code of Conduct on Buses

### **Parking and Unloading**

Parking at our school is limited. Vehicles are not permitted in bus unloading/loading areas during bus drop-off and pick-up times (8:30 - 8:50 a.m. and 3:00 – 3:20 p.m.). Please park on the north side of the school (by the playground). For safety, remember to turn off unattended vehicles.

**\*\*Reminder – It is illegal to drive beside the buses when they are loading/unloading. Please enter and exit from the west entrance. (Second entrance at the back of the schoolyard)**

### **Students Leaving With Parents**

Please sign your children out at the office if you are picking them up during school hours (you may also call ahead if you would like them to meet you out front). Parents picking up students at the end of the day will need to inform the bus driver and secretary. For safety reasons, students will not be permitted to go onto the East-West road, so all pick-ups and drop-offs should be made at the North end of the school, by the playground.

### **Bell Times**

**School will start at 8:48 a.m. and end at 3:10 p.m.**

Students get off bus	8:40	Lunch begins	12:15
Class starts	8:48	Class starts	12:40
Recess begins	10:04	Recess begins	1:48
Class starts	10:18	Class starts	2:02
Recess begins	12:00	Load buses	3:10

### **Calendar Days**

Copies of the School Calendar will be made available at the beginning of the year.

### **Kindergarten Days**

Kindergarten will be on Tuesdays and Thursdays until around mid-March, which will then switch to Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. Check the monthly calendar for exact dates.

### **Instructional Support Plans**

The ISP is an Instructional Support Plan developed to meet the needs of students who require specialized learning supports in order to demonstrate the outcomes of the programs of study. After the student's needs have been assessed, a team comprised of a child's educational team develops the ISP. This team includes the classroom teacher, inclusive education facilitator, parents and other service providers (when necessary).

### **Expectations**

Our expectations of students are derived directly from Section 31 of the Education Act and NGPS AP350. A student shall conduct himself/herself to reasonably comply with the following code of conduct:

#### **Student responsibilities: A student, as a partner in education, has the responsibility to:**

- a. attend school regularly and punctually
- b. be ready to learn and actively engage in and diligently pursue the student's education,
- c. ensure that the student's conduct contributes to a welcoming, caring respectful, and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging,
- d. respects the rights of others in the school,
- e. refrain from, report, and not tolerate bullying or bullying behavior directed toward others in the school, whether or not it occurs within the school building, during the school day, or by electronic means,
- f. comply with the rules of the school and the policies of the board,
- g. cooperate with everyone authorized by the board to provide education programs and other services,
- h. be accountable to the student's teachers and other school staff for the student's conduct, and
- i. positively contribute to the student's school and community.

#### **Parent responsibilities: A parent has the prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be provided to the parent's child, and as a partner in education, has the responsibility to:**

- a. act as the primary guide and decision-maker with respect to the child's education,
- b. take an active role in the child's educational success, including assisting the child in complying with section 31,
- a. ensure that the child attends school regularly,
- b. ensure that the parent's conduct contributes to a welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe environment,
- c. co-operate and collaborate with school staff to support the delivery of supports and services to the child,
- d. encourage, foster, and advance collaborative, positive, and respectful relationships with teachers,
- e. principals, other school staff, and professionals providing support and services in the school, and

- f. engage in the child's school community.

### Teachers:

- (1) A teacher while providing instruction or supervision must
- a. provide instruction competently to students;
  - b. teach the courses and programs of study that are prescribed, approved, or authorized pursuant to this Act;
  - c. promote goals and standards applicable to the provision of education adopted or approved pursuant to this Act;
  - d. encourage and foster learning in students;
  - e. regularly assess students and periodically report the results of the assessments to the students, the student's parents, and the board;
  - f. maintain, under the direction of the principal, order, and discipline among students while they are in school or on the school grounds and while they are attending or participating in activities sponsored or approved by the board

### Discipline

Following NGPS [Administrative Procedure 350](#), we support our students in demonstrating acceptable behaviors. Respectful and responsible behaviour by all students is essential to a positive learning environment and it is important to provide a safe and caring school environment. Students, staff, parents, and community members are expected to model and reinforce socially responsible and respectful behaviours. Learning, and not punishment, shall be the foundation and primary consideration of any disciplinary action. To this end, wherever possible, teaching a child what to do is preferable to what not to do. Corrective discipline, wherever and whenever possible, shall be a private activity that maintains all students' sense of dignity. Disciplinary action and/or consequences shall consider the specific and unique special needs of any student. The parent(s) or guardian(s) shall be informed of disciplinary actions that pertain to their child while respecting the privacy of other children who may be involved.

### Schedule of Disciplinary Actions:

- Problem solving, monitoring, or reviewing behaviour expectations with student and reprimand;
- Parental involvement;
- Assignment of designated tasks;
- Temporary removal of privileges;
- Detention of the student so long as the detention does not interfere with transportation or sustenance;
- Implementation of an in school short term opportunity placement involving an out-of-class learning opportunity;
- Establishment of a behavioural contract with student;
- Suspension, as defined in the Education Act (section 36), including:
  - Suspension by the principal from riding the school bus.
  - Suspension from a classroom period by the teacher.
  - Suspension from any school-related activity.
  - Suspension from school, as per the Education Act, for up to five (5) days
- Expulsion from school.

### **Field Trips**

Field trips are among the most memorable of school experiences. They enhance the curriculum and make it possible for children to have firsthand experiences, thus extending classroom learning. Students are expected to adhere to the school's behavioral expectations.

Parents are required to submit a consent form and associated fees to the school prior to the field trip, otherwise, students will not be permitted to attend. The consent will indicate the purpose, the curricular components addressed, the cost, and other requirements for the field trip.

No child will be refused the right to participate in field trip experiences due to a lack of funds as long as this situation is brought to the attention of the teacher or principal who will work with the family to find a mutually agreed solution. If a student is not able to participate in a field trip due to any other reason, other arrangements will be made.

### **Volunteers in the School**

As per Administrative Procedure 390 for Northern Gateway Schools, in order to ensure the security and safety of our staff and students, all volunteers in our schools need to be registered. Please complete the attached form if you wish to volunteer at Rich Valley School. The information collected on this form will be held in strict confidence.

A volunteer is an individual who assists the school and/or students in curricular and/or extra-curricular activities, not including Division employees, guest speakers, presenters, special visitors to the school or School Council members while in their role as School Council members.

### **Locked Doors**

For security reasons, all doors will be locked at all times. (Other than recesses, bus arrival and departures). Please ring the doorbell at the main entrance when you arrive.

### **After School Sports/Activities**

Parents picking up students at the end of school sports/activities will park on the north side of the school and pick up their child at the gym entry doors.

### **Library/Learning Commons**

We are proud of our library and are constantly trying to improve it. We ask that students take special care of our library books and keep them away from food and drinks. If a book is damaged, or not returned, that student will be responsible for the replacement cost of that book plus a \$5.00 charge for shipping and processing. Library and school privileges may be withheld until that book is paid for or returned. If damaged books are a constant occurrence, **the student may lose his/her library privileges for the rest of the school year.** Even by spilling water on a book the pages become brittle after drying and the life of that book is greatly reduced. Please help us preserve our books so that future students may enjoy them too!

### **Lost and Found**

We always have many unmarked items and clothing. Please label all items so they can be returned. The 'lost and found' items are on the boot racks in the main entry. Please have a look anytime you are in the school. Any unclaimed items at the end of the year will be donated to the United Church Bissell Centre in Onoway.

### **Damage to Property**

Rich Valley School staff and students are very proud of their school. To ensure that this continues, students will be held responsible for willful damages to school property or materials.



## **Dress Code**

Rich Valley School believes students should be dressed in a manner conducive to learning and respectful of community standards. We expect students to understand that similar to the workplace, there is a distinction between casual clothing for wearing at home and appropriate clothing for school. Clothing worn to school should be clean, neat, and suitable for the occasion and the weather. Hats may or may not be allowed based on the classroom teacher's preference.

- Apparel will not advertise nor promote drugs or alcohol
- Apparel will not use inappropriate language or innuendo
- Apparel will be worn so as not to expose undergarments

Students who fail to follow our dress code will be asked to change their attire. If that is not possible, they may be given alternate clothing for the day or a phone call home will be made to bring in different clothing.

Shoes must be worn at all times and be sufficiently tied. Both an indoor and an outdoor pair of shoes are required year-round. No wheelie shoes are allowed as indoor shoes. High-heeled shoes are not suitable for school activities so are also not allowed as indoor shoes.

## **Inclement Weather and Busing**

Students are expected to dress according to the weather conditions. The expectation is that the students will be outside during recess except in the case of inclement weather.

### To Run or Not to Run? School Bus Transportation in Inclement Weather

When the safety of transporting bus students is at risk because of severe weather conditions, the Superintendent of Schools, in consultation with the Director of Transportation Services, may choose to suspend school bus services and, in extreme cases, close schools. Procedures used in this process can be found in Administrative Procedure 750: Severe Weather and Emergency Closure. Please note: Except in very special circumstances, NGPS schools always remain open on school days.

The decision to run or cancel school bus transportation due to weather concerns and/or road conditions is not a decision that is made lightly. There are a number of factors considered, and bus drivers are consulted, before making the call. In addition to traveling and scouting the roads himself, and consulting with Environment Canada, 511, and highway cameras, NGPS Transportation Director, Rhett Czaban is communicating with local drivers and contacts in all NGPS communities between the hours of 4:00 am and 6:00 am.

The initial determination to run or not run buses is made between 6:00 am and 6:30 am and is communicated directly to parents in the following ways:

- Via the BusPlanner App
- Via the Bus Status tab on our homepage at ngps.ca
- On our Facebook page @northerngatewaypublicschools
- On school websites – look for the Bus Status tab
- On Twitter @ngpschools
- Via phone calls to parents by bus drivers (circumstances permitting)

Every effort is made to communicate with parents directly regarding changes to bus transportation; however, phone calls home are not always possible given the timing and the situation the bus driver is dealing with at the time. If you do not see a cancellation message on

the NGPS website, Facebook page, or Twitter feed, buses are running.

What Guides Us? Administrative Procedure 750: Severe Weather and Emergency Closure refers to -40 degrees Celsius, including wind chill, as ONE determination factor in canceling buses. This point is based on area data, not specific site information. For example, while individual homes may have thermometers indicating a temperature below the specified -40 degrees Celsius, the data that is collected for each area is the evidence that is used to support the decision to cancel bus transportation.

The Director of Transportation utilizes his best judgment, based on the combination of temperature, visibility, road conditions, and consultation within our communities when making the decision to run or not to run buses.

The primary consideration in the event of severe weather conditions is whether it is SAFE to be transporting children. The expanse of the Division (375 km along Highway 43) means that running buses is not an all-or-nothing response as the conditions can vary greatly from school area to school area. NGPS is committed to being reasonable, responsible, and attentive to the information that is available throughout the day in all areas.

### **It's Always Your Call!**

The final decision to send a child to the bus stop or to school always rests with parents, even though buses and schools may be operational.

### **School Council/Enhancement Society**

Our school thrives on the strength of our community, and we deeply value the dedication of our School Council members to our students—this is what makes us exceptional! Meetings are typically held on the first Wednesday of each month. We encourage you to join us and share your ideas. The Rich Valley School Enhancement Society meetings follow immediately after the conclusion of the School Council meetings.

### **Medication**

Medication shall not be distributed to any student by a staff member. In exceptional circumstances, prescription medication may be administered by the Principal or designated as per the instructions on the medical forms filled out by parents/guardians. It is the responsibility of the parent to provide sufficient reason, in writing, for special consideration. Written instructions signed by both the parent and physician shall be required as outlined in NGPS Administrative Procedure 714 with an accompanying medical care plan.

### **Lunch Policy**

Students are dismissed at 12:00 pm to go outside for recess. They will come in at 12:15 pm to eat their lunch. Students must eat in their classrooms. Food is not allowed in hallways and gymnasium.

### **Photos**

Individual and group photos are usually taken in September or October. Parents have the choice to purchase any of the pictures they wish.

### **School Cleanliness**

Students are expected to remove outside footwear when entering the school building. Often during dry weather, it is possible to waive the above proceedings. While inside the school, students are expected to wear clean and dry footwear.

### **School Supplies**

The school supply list is included in each student's report card envelope at the end of the school year. Students are expected to bring their supplies on the first day of school. Please note that the school does not sell supplies. Remember to check periodically throughout the year to ensure your child has the necessary supplies for their classes.

### **Reporting Periods and Report Cards**

Our school utilizes an outcomes-based reporting system, which assesses student learning based on specific outcomes and communicates progress using achievement indicators. This approach provides clear descriptions of how well your child demonstrates the essential skills, knowledge, and attitudes outlined in each course. The outcomes reflect what your child is expected to know and achieve according to the Alberta Education Program of Studies.

The primary goal of assessment is to gather information about student progress to enhance teaching and learning. Reporting aims to provide students and parents with an accurate evaluation of performance in relation to curricular outcomes. Teachers continuously assess student learning through various methods. These may include conferencing, observations, teacher-designed tests, standardized tests, and evaluations of student work.

We use PowerSchool to document evidence of learning, and the Parent Portal offers parents/guardians access to their child's progress at any time. Formal progress reports are distributed in November, March, and June. Parent-teacher interviews, held twice a year in November and March, offer an opportunity to discuss your child's intellectual, physical, social, and emotional development. These interviews highlight successes and challenges while establishing shared learning goals to support improved student success at home and school.

### **Homework - Study Habits**

Most of the student's work is completed during assigned classroom times. However, if some tasks remain unfinished, homework may be assigned. If your child has homework, ensure they have a comfortable, quiet workspace with a desk or table, good lighting, and any necessary materials to support their study.

### **Critical Response Procedures/Exits**

#### **Fire Drill Procedure**

1. Students will follow a predetermined route out of the school.
2. If route is obstructed, they will go to the next nearest EXIT.
3. Students are instructed to leave in an orderly fashion.
4. The emergency bag is taken from the classroom.
5. Students & teachers meet at a designated spot.
6. Teachers take attendance to see if anyone is missing.
7. Any missing students are reported.
8. Wait for the "All clear" announcement before re-entering the school.

**Lockdown Procedure**

1. When you hear "Lockdown", close the classroom door immediately (making sure it is locked).
2. Students are instructed to hide in a predetermined spot and remain silent.
3. Attendance is taken to ensure all students are accounted for.
4. DO NOT OPEN THE DOOR FOR ANYONE
5. When all is clear, an announcement of, "All clear" will be made.

