

# River Mill Academy

## Student/Parent Handbook 2025-2026

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## INTRODUCTION

This handbook provides general information about our school and highlights the policies and procedures. Please read this book carefully; it is the expectation that parents and students are apprised of the rules and expectations of River Mill Academy through the receipt and use of this handbook. Please be aware that the Board of Directors may revise policies from time to time after the publication of this document. You may refer to the River Mill Academy website ([www.rivermill-academy.org](http://www.rivermill-academy.org)) for updated Policies and Procedures. Should you have a question about any aspect of the school, do not hesitate to contact us.

## HISTORICAL SUMMARY

After the North Carolina General Assembly passed the House Bill 955 on June 21, 1996, the members of the FREE Board (Financial Reform for Excellence in Education) made application for the establishment of a charter school. The charter was approved on May 21, 1998. River Mill Charter School opened its doors on August 18, 1998. In order to continue to provide a strong academic emphasis, River Mill Charter School was renamed River Mill Academy in 2001. In 2004, River Mill Academy obtained ownership of its charter and now maintains its own board of directors.

The educational focus of the charter school is to set a new standard in North Carolina for K-12 education by motivating all students to achieve their full potential. The goal is to assist parents in their mission to develop exemplary young citizens with superior academic preparation, equipped with analytical

thinking skills, a passion for learning and a virtuous character, all built upon a solid foundation of knowledge.

The mission statement for River Mill Academy is: ***To allow serious students the opportunity to become confident, well-rounded individuals, prepared for a successful future while providing a safe and positive environment.***

## SCHOOL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

### Admissions Policy

(Board Policy approved 06/20/2024 rev.6)

River Mill Academy is a tuition free public school. Any child who is qualified under the laws of North Carolina for admission to a public school is qualified for admission to a charter school. To qualify to attend a North Carolina public school, a student must be a resident of North Carolina. County boundaries or school attendance areas do not affect charter school enrollment. River Mill Academy does not limit admission to students based on intellectual ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, athletic ability, disability, race, creed, gender, national origin, religion, or ancestry. The school may give enrollment priority to siblings of currently enrolled students who were admitted to the school in a previous year and to the children of River Mill Academy staff. General Statute 115C-218.45 restricts the portion of priority enrollment given to children of staff and board members to no more than 15% of the total student body.

During each period of enrollment, River Mill Academy will accept applications for new students. Once enrolled, students are

not required to enroll in subsequent enrollment periods. *Open space is determined by the number of current students planning to return.* To properly plan, the school may routinely inquire with parents in early spring through letters of intent to ascertain if students will return to River Mill Academy the following year. Applications for new students are available on the River Mill Academy website.

The enrollment application will begin the first school day of January and will last at least thirty (30) consecutive calendar days. The school shall enroll an eligible student who applies, unless the number of applications exceeds the capacity of a program, class, grade level, or building. If the number of applications exceeds the number of available spaces, a lottery will be held to fill vacant seats for the next school year. After seats are filled, the drawing will continue to determine the order of a waiting list. Any application for enrollment received after the deadline is not entered in the lottery but is added to the end of the grade level waiting list. Current year waiting lists dissolve when the next enrollment period begins.

Lottery procedures will comply with the NC Open Meeting Laws provided in G.S. 143-218.10(a) by publicizing the date and location of the meeting as well as allowing anyone to attend.

#### Lottery procedure:

The selection process will be by random drawing. Upon filling all available positions, the acceptance by lottery will continue, thereby, creating a school waiting list. Children of personnel of River Mill Academy will be drawn separately and first; followed by siblings of students enrolled in a previous year. The general wait list for each grade level will then be randomly drawn, starting with the lowest grade level in the school. The lottery process will then proceed for each grade. As openings become available at the applicable grade level, students will be admitted based on their current lottery number. If applicants who are selected for admission decide NOT to enroll at River Mill Academy, the parents of the next child on the wait list for that grade will be notified.

River Mill Academy shall make a reasonable effort to contact all non-confirmed, accepted applicants to clarify their decision to accept or decline continuation of the enrollment process.

If multiple birth siblings apply for admission to a charter school and a lottery is needed under G.S. 115C-238.29F(g)(6), the

charter school shall enter one surname into the lottery to represent all the multiple birth siblings. If that surname of the multiple birth siblings is selected, then all the multiple birth siblings shall be admitted.

Questions should be referred to the Administrative Office, 336-229-0909.



## Physical Examination Requirement

Within thirty (30) calendar days of their first enrollment date, all pupils must show evidence of immunization against diseases as outlined in state law. Such evidence of immunizations must be provided in the form of an official document from a licensed health care provider or a health department clinician.

In addition, all students entering a North Carolina public school for the first time must present a completed *Health Assessment Transmittal Form* within thirty (30) calendar days.

## McKinney-Vento Dispute Resolution Policy

(Board Policy approved 06/16/2022)

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (also referred to as the McKinney-Vento Act) acknowledges that disputes may arise between Public School Units (PSUs), students and their parents, or unaccompanied youth, regarding eligibility, school selection, or enrollment decisions. The McKinney-Vento Act includes dispute resolution among the required duties of the PSU homeless liaison. Below is the McKinney-Vento Dispute Resolution Policy and Process for *River Mill Academy*.

PSUs should bear in mind that disputes related to eligibility, school selection or enrollment should be initiated at the request of the parent, legal guardian, or unaccompanied youth and not at the request or convenience of the PSU. Additionally, issues related to the definition of homelessness, the responsibilities of the PSU to serve homeless children and

youth, and/or the explicit rights of homeless children and youth are addressed in the McKinney-Vento Act. Disputes related to eligibility, school selection, or enrollment shall be resolved within the parameters of the federal McKinney-Vento Act.

The following procedures are specified in the McKinney-Vento Act:

**Enrollment:** If a dispute arises over eligibility, school selection, or enrollment, the child shall be immediately admitted to the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute. In the case of an unaccompanied youth, the homeless liaison shall ensure that the youth is immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute.

**Written Explanation:** The PSU must provide a written explanation of the eligibility, school selection, or enrollment decision to the parent, legal guardian, or in the case of an unaccompanied youth, to the unaccompanied youth. (The written explanation must include a description of the parent's, legal guardians, or unaccompanied youth's right to appeal the decision.)

**Homeless Liaison:** The designated PSU homeless liaison is assigned to carry out the dispute resolution process in an expeditious manner, such that the local process is completed in **no more than 15 school business days or 30 calendar days, whichever is less.**

**Responsibility:** The PSU homeless liaison is responsible to inform the parent, legal guardian, or the unaccompanied youth of the dispute resolution process.

### OVERVIEW

When a dispute occurs regarding eligibility, school selection, or enrollment the following process must be used:

- **Level I:** The initial dispute request is made with the PSU's homeless liaison.
- **Level II:** If unresolved, the dispute moves to the PSU head administrator (Level II).
- **Level III:** If unresolved the dispute moves to the local governing Board (Level III) for review and final decision on behalf of the charter school.
- **Level IV:** If the dispute continues to be unresolved, the final appeal (Level IV) is to the NC State Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth

(EHCY). Every effort must be made to resolve the dispute at the local level before it is brought to the NC State Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth.

### INITIATION OF THE DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESS

When a dispute occurs regarding eligibility, school selection, or enrollment the parent, legal guardian, or unaccompanied youth shall be informed in writing of the PSU's decision including reasons for the decision within one (1) school business day in a language and format understandable to the parent, legal guardian, or unaccompanied youth of their right to appeal the decision made by the charter school and be provided the following:

1. Written contact information for the PSU homeless liaison and State Coordinator, with a brief description of their roles.
2. A simple form that parents, legal guardians, or unaccompanied youth can complete and turn into the school to initiate the dispute process (the school should copy the form and return the copy to the parent, legal guardian, or youth for their records when it is submitted.)
3. A written step-by-step description of how to dispute the PSU's decision.
4. Written notice of the right to enroll immediately in the school of choice pending resolution of the dispute.
5. Written notice of the right to appeal to the State Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth if the district-level resolution is not satisfactory.
6. Written timelines for resolving district- and state-level appeals.
7. A copy of the NC Dispute Resolution Policy (hard copy or online link).

### Level I: PSU Homeless Liaison Communication

**If a parent, legal guardian, or unaccompanied youth wishes to appeal the PSU's decision related to eligibility, school selection, or enrollment:**

1. The parent, legal guardian, or unaccompanied youth must file a request for dispute resolution with the PSU's homeless liaison (or to his/her office) either verbally or by submitting a form that initiates the dispute resolution process. The request for dispute resolution must be submitted by the parent, legal guardian, or the unaccompanied youth to the homeless liaison within **two (2) school business days** of receiving

the initial homeless liaison decision on enrollment, school selection, or enrollment. The parent, legal guardian, or unaccompanied youth may initiate the request directly with the homeless liaison or they may initiate the request with the school where the dispute is taking place. If the request is submitted to the school where the dispute is taking place, the school shall immediately forward the request to the PSU's homeless liaison. In the event that the PSU's homeless liaison is unavailable, a PSU designee may receive the parent's, legal guardians, or unaccompanied youth's request to initiate the dispute resolution process.

2. The homeless liaison must log their receipt of the dispute, including the date and time, with a written description of the situation and the reason for the dispute, and a copy of the dispute must be forwarded to the homeless liaison's immediate supervisor and the charter school's head administrator.
3. Within **one (1) school business day** of their receipt of the complaint, the homeless liaison must decide on the dispute and inform the parent, legal guardian or unaccompanied youth in writing of the result. It is the responsibility of the PSU to verify the parent's, legal guardian's or unaccompanied youth's receipt of the written notification regarding the homeless liaison's Level I decision.
4. If the parent, legal guardian, or unaccompanied youth disagrees with the decision made at Level I and wishes to move the dispute resolution process forward to Level II, the parent, legal guardian, or unaccompanied youth shall notify the PSU's homeless liaison of their intent to proceed to Level II **within one (1) school business day** of receipt of notification of the Level I decision.
5. If the parent, legal guardian, or unaccompanied youth wishes to appeal the homeless liaison's Level I decision, the PSU's homeless liaison shall provide the parent, legal guardian, or unaccompanied youth with an appeals package containing:
  - a. A copy of the parent's, legal guardians, or unaccompanied youth's dispute which was filed with the PSU's homeless liaison at Level I,
  - b. The decision rendered at Level I by the PSU homeless liaison, and
  - c. Any additional information from the parent, legal guardian, unaccompanied youth, and/or the homeless liaison.

### **Level II: PSU Superintendent Communication**

(If the dispute remains unresolved after a Level I appeal)

1. If there is a disagreement with the decision rendered by the PSU's homeless liaison at Level I, the parent, legal guardian, or unaccompanied youth may appeal the decision to the charter school's head administrator, or the head administrator designee, (the designee shall be someone other than the PSU's homeless liaison) using the appeals package provided at Level I.
2. The charter school's head administrator, or his/her designee, shall meet (verbally, virtually, or face-to-face) with the parent, legal guardian, or unaccompanied youth. The meeting shall be **held within two (2) school business days** of the parent's, legal guardians, or unaccompanied youth's notification to the PSU of their intent to proceed to Level II of the dispute resolution process.
3. The charter school's head administrator, or his/her designee, shall provide a decision in writing to the parent, legal guardian, or unaccompanied youth with supporting evidence and reasons, **within two (2) school business days** of the charter school's head administrator, or his/her designee's, meeting with the parent, legal guardian, or unaccompanied youth. It is the responsibility of the PSU to verify the parent's, legal guardians, or unaccompanied youth's receipt of the written notification regarding the charter school's head administrator Level II decision.
4. A copy of the dispute package, along with the written decision made at Level II is to be shared with the PSU's homeless liaison.
5. If the parent, legal guardian, or unaccompanied youth disagrees with the decision made at Level II and wishes to move the dispute resolution process forward to Level III, the parent, legal guardian, or unaccompanied youth shall notify the PSU's homeless liaison of their intent to proceed to Level III **within two (2) school business days** of receipt of notification of the Level II decision.
6. If the dispute remains unresolved, the process then moves to Level III.

### **Level III: Local Governing Board Review**

(If the dispute remains unresolved after a Level II appeal)

1. The charter school's head administrator, with assistance from the homeless liaison, shall forward all written documentation and related paperwork to the local governing Board for review within **two (2) school business days** of notifying the parent, legal guardian, or unaccompanied youth of the decision rendered at Level II.
2. The entire dispute package including all documentation and related paperwork is to be submitted to the governing Board in one consolidated and complete package. It is the responsibility of the PSU to ensure that the dispute package is complete and ready for review at the time of submission to the governing Board.
3. The local governing Board, or a panel of at least two Board members, shall schedule a conference with the parent, legal guardian, or unaccompanied youth to render a final decision on behalf of the Board. The Board or Board panel shall provide a written decision **within two (2) school business days**. The Board's or Board panel's decision shall be considered the final decision of the charter school for the purpose of appealing to the State Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth. The written notification shall be provided to the parent, legal guardian, or unaccompanied youth as well as to the head administrator and the homeless liaison. Also, the notification shall contain the name and contact information for the State Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth along with details on appeal rights of the parent, legal guardian, or unaccompanied youth.
4. The parent, legal guardian, or unaccompanied youth have the option of filing an oral or written dispute with the State Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth **within three (3) school business days** of receiving the Board's or Board panel's decision. The local homeless liaison shall provide the complete dispute record **within three (3) school business days** following the request of the State Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth. The State Coordinator shall issue a final written decision to the parent, legal guardian, or unaccompanied youth and the PSU **within ten (10) school business days** following receipt of a complete dispute package. Additional details on the NC Dispute Resolution policy and the process used by the State Coordinator for the Education of

Homeless Children and Youth is located here.

### Dispute Resolution Terms

1. The terms "homeless," "homeless child," and "homeless student" shall mean the same as the term "homeless children and youth" as defined by 42 U.S.C. § 11434a (2). These terms shall also be deemed to include the term "unaccompanied youth."
2. The term "unaccompanied youth" shall mean the same as defined by 42 U.S.C. § 11434a (6)
3. The term public school unit (PSU) includes local school administrative units, charter schools, lab schools, regional schools, Innovative School District schools, and Innovations Zone schools, and was formerly known as local educational agency (LEA).
4. The term "PSU dispute resolution process" shall refer to the PSU's policy on resolving complaints brought by parents, legal guardians, or unaccompanied youth regarding students experiencing homelessness. The term shall refer to appeals processes within the PSU, prior to any appeal by the parent, legal guardian, or unaccompanied youth appeals to the State Coordinator.
5. The term "local homeless liaison" shall refer to the official at each PSU, who ensures the PSU dispute resolution process for homeless children and youth is mediated in accordance with local, state, and federal policy as required by 42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(6)(A)(vii).
6. The term "school business day" means days on which students are scheduled to be in attendance at school, according to the academic calendar adopted by the PSU.
7. The term "State Coordinator" shall refer to the staff person who carries out federally mandated duties regarding students experiencing homelessness as required by 42 U.S.C. § 11432(d)(3).
8. The term "State appeal process" shall refer to the policies the State Coordinator, PSUs, parents, legal guardians, and unaccompanied youth must follow when a parent, legal guardian, or unaccompanied youth seeks to appeal a dispute to the State Coordinator.

## SCHOOL PROCEDURES AND POLICIES

### Administrative and Operational Decisions

(Board Policy Approved 06/20/2024 rev. 1)

The Principal or his/her designee has executive authority to manage the school's day-to-day business operations and administrative decisions.

Board members will not seek to micromanage administrative decisions or school operations nor, outside of the authority of the full board, seek to micromanage the Principal.

In case of an incident that endangers any person, a staff member, volunteer, committee member, board member, or parent is authorized to take reasonable action to alleviate the immediate danger only. The matter then must be referred to the Principal for a permanent solution.



### Before and After School

River Mill Academy provides before and after school care for parents who need childcare before and/or after regular school hours. Information about the program is available in the school office.

### Bus Transportation

River Mill Academy provides limited bus transportation to and from campus. Pick-up and drop-off points are located throughout Burlington/Graham and surrounding areas. Bus routes are published on the website.

It is important that no student be left unattended at a morning pick-up point. A parent/guardian must remain with the student until the bus arrives in the morning.

In the afternoon, no student will be dropped off unless a parent/guardian is at the bus stop. If a student's parent/guardian

is not present when the bus arrives, the student will be brought back to the school and a parent/guardian will be notified.



### Attendance Policy

(Board Policy approved 06/15/2023 rev. 10)

The goal of River Mill Academy is a 95% attendance rate for all students. All RMA students are required to be in attendance for at least 90% of the total school days each year. If a student is absent from school for more than 10% of the school days in a single academic year, or high school block semester, the Principal or a committee established by the Principal will consider whether the student's grades will be reduced or whether promotion or graduation will be denied because of the absences.

The Principal or committee will review other measures of academic achievement, the circumstances of the absences, the number of absences, and the extent to which the student completed missed work. A committee may recommend to the Principal and the Principal may make any of the following determinations:

- The student will not receive a passing grade for the semester.
- The student will not be promoted.
- The student's grade(s) will be reduced.
- The student will receive the grade(s) otherwise earned; or
- The student will be given additional time to complete the missed work before making a determination of the appropriate grade(s).

According to state law, a written note must be brought in and submitted to the homeroom teacher within three (3) days, for an absence to be considered EXCUSED.

Absences other than short-term illness and death in the family require additional documentation, or, in certain situations, prior approval of the Principal. Students who have medical appointments should bring confirmation of the appointment in order for the absence to be considered excused.

"Prior approval" requires *one-week* written notice by the parent/guardian to the Principal, *prior* to the first day the student proposes to miss school. The prior approval request must explicitly state the nature of the absence. With the exception of religious holidays, absences requiring prior approval – educational opportunity and immediate demands of the home – will be restricted to five (5) days each year. Absences granted this prior approval require that the student complete all work prior to the first day of approved absence. Work not completed, including quizzes and tests, will receive no credit. **Requests for prior approval for absences during End-of-Grade testing or final exams and End-of-Course testing will NOT be approved.**

**Students must be fever free (without fever reducing medication) and vomit free for 24 hours before they may return to school.** Please do not send your child to school if he/she is running a fever over 100 degrees. If your child begins to run a fever over 100 degrees, you will be called to come and pick up your child.

**Excused absences (lawful)** – Absences for the following reasons shall be classified as excused absences when the indicated documentation or approval is provided:

- A. Illness of the student – extended illness requires verification by a doctor who is licensed to practice medicine in North Carolina
- B. Medical or dental appointment – verification by doctor required
- C. Death in the immediate family
- D. Quarantine – a copy of quarantine order required by the State Board of Health or the Health Department
- E. Religious holiday – prior approval by the Principal required
- F. Court summons – verification by court system required
- G. Immediate demands of the home – prior approval by the Principal required
- H. Valid educational opportunity (travel) – prior approval by the Principal required
- I. Suspension from school

Students are eligible for make-up work for excused absences (except for out-of-school suspension, please see below) and are responsible for securing make-up assignments. Students will have three days for each day missed with a maximum of five days for make-up work. Make-up work not completed in the allotted time will result in a zero.

**Unexcused absences (unlawful)** – Any absence from school, with or without the knowledge of the parent, which does not

meet the requirements of an excused absence shall be classified as unexcused.

**Absences due to out-of-school suspension** – Absences due to out-of-school suspension are considered involuntary absences for attendance accounting purposes and are not considered a violation of the compulsory attendance law. Absences due to out-of-school suspension are excused absences from school. **Students shall not receive credit for daily class work but shall be allowed to make up missed work such as homework and tests.**

All make-up work due to out-of-school suspensions must be made up within the specified time (three days for each day suspended with a maximum of five days for all make-up work). Make-up work not completed in the allotted time will result in a zero. Parents may pick up their student's assignments from the front office while their child is serving a suspension. Students who are suspended from school are not permitted on campus nor are they permitted to attend or participate in extra-curricular activities.

**Individual class absences – Each nine (9) week grading period,** students may not exceed five (5) individual class absences. A grade of 55 will be assigned until such time as the student and parent can resolve the attendance issue with the Attendance Appeals Committee, as described below. Parents and students should check report cards under Teacher Comments to see if the 55 grade was due to an attendance violation.

#### **Attendance Appeals**

Each student's absences will be reviewed by the administration prior to report cards being issued. A school attendance policy appeals committee shall be established to hear appeals. This appeals committee shall consider student/family hardships and any extenuating circumstances, in addition to the student's attendance record. Parents and guardians will have the opportunity to appeal absences to the Attendance Appeals Committee. Parents and students must present documentation to the appeals committee justifying all class absences. **Appeals for absences which had no supporting documentation at the time of the absence will not be considered.** Parents are responsible for providing evidence that the excessive absences were lawful in accordance with the State Department of Public Instruction's School Attendance and Student Accounting Manual and school board policy. Violations of the attendance policy may result in the student being

assigned a grade of 55, unless the grade earned was lower.



## **Daily Schedule**

(Board Policy Approved 06/20/2024 rev 6)

The Elementary School day begins at 8:00 am. Students who are not enrolled in the before school care program may enter the building beginning at 7:20 am. **Students are to be in their classrooms at 8:00 am.** School ends with dismissal at 2:25 pm.

The Middle School and High School day begins at 7:45 am. Students may enter the building beginning at 7:20 am. **Students are to be in their first period class at 7:45 am.** School ends with dismissal at 2:25 pm.

Please be certain that you have a pick-up plan in place for your child(ren). Students who leave school early, must be picked up **before 2:00 pm.** (This insures an uninterrupted school dismissal).

Students are not permitted to be on campus after school unless they are participating in a school sanctioned activity such as tutoring, interscholastic athletics, or clubs. Any student remaining on campus after 3:00 pm who is not participating in a school sanctioned activity will be escorted to the after-school program and the student's parent will be charged an appropriate fee for this service.

Please take advantage of the after-school program if you need to make arrangements for your child after 2:45 pm. Information about the before and after school program is available in the school office.

Parents are reminded that we adhere to a dismissal procedure. Students are not to be removed from the classroom at the end of the day by parents or guardians. All students must report to bus and car rider lines with their classroom teacher and fellow students.

# CLASS schedule

## Afternoon Dismissal Schedule

Elementary	2:25 pm
Middle School	2:25 pm
High School	2:25 pm

## Elementary School Lunch Schedule

Kindergarten Lunch	10:50 – 11:15
1 <sup>st</sup> Grade Lunch	10:55 – 11:20
2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade Lunch	11:00 – 11:25
3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade Lunch	11:30 – 11:55
4 <sup>th</sup> Grade Lunch	11:35 – 12:00
5 <sup>th</sup> Grade Lunch	11:40 – 12:05

## Middle School Schedule

1 <sup>st</sup> Elective	7:45 – 8:32
2 <sup>nd</sup> Elective	8:35 – 9:20
1 <sup>st</sup> Period	9:23 – 10:30
2 <sup>nd</sup> Period (homeroom)	10:33 – 11:40
3 <sup>rd</sup> Period	11:43 – 12:10
Lunch	12:10 – 12:35
3 <sup>rd</sup> Period	12:35 – 1:13
4 <sup>th</sup> Period	1:16 – 2:25

## High School Schedule

1 <sup>st</sup> Block	7:45 – 9:20
2 <sup>nd</sup> Block (homeroom)	9:23 – 11:00
3 <sup>rd</sup> Block	11:03 – 12:38
Lunch	12:40 – 1:05
4 <sup>th</sup> Block	1:05 – 2:25

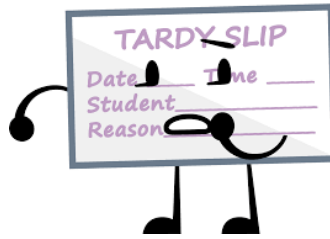


## Two-Hour Delay Schedule - Middle School

1 <sup>st</sup> Period	9:45 – 10:45
2 <sup>nd</sup> Period	10:47 – 11:47
3 <sup>rd</sup> Period	11:50 – 12:10
Lunch	12:10 – 12:35
3 <sup>rd</sup> Period	12:35 – 1:15
4 <sup>th</sup> Period	1:17 – 2:25

## Two-Hour Delay Schedule – High School

1 <sup>st</sup> Block	9:45 – 10:45
2 <sup>nd</sup> Block	10:47 – 11:47
3 <sup>rd</sup> Block	11:50 – 12:40
Lunch	12:40 – 1:05
4 <sup>th</sup> Block	1:05 – 2:25



## Tardy Procedures

Students who arrive late to class must report to the front office to obtain an Admit Slip. Middle School and High School students entering the building will be issued tardy slips beginning at 7:44 am. Elementary students entering the building will be issued tardy slips beginning at 7:59 am. Elementary and middle school students must have a parent/guardian sign them in. High school students over the age of 16 may sign themselves in with a note explaining the reason for tardiness, signed by the parent/guardian. No student will be admitted late to class without an Admit Slip. Doctor and dentist appointments, and court summons will be considered excused tardies. All other tardies, including car trouble and oversleeping, will be considered unexcused and may be subject to disciplinary actions.

All students must be at school before 11:00 am or sign out after 11:00 am to be counted present for the entire day. Students must be counted present in order to participate in extra-curricular activities for that same school day. Middle and High School students are held accountable for attendance on a class-by-class basis. Secondary students must be present for at least half of the instructional period to be counted present.



## Early Dismissal

Parents of students in grades K-8 must report to the front office to sign their student out for the day. Students in Grades 9-12 must present a note from home, signed by a parent/guardian, specifying the reason the student needs to leave school early, to the front office before school begins for the day. Students will receive an Early Dismissal Slip to show their teacher in order to leave class early.

Doctor and dentist appointments, funeral services for immediate family and court summons will be considered excused early dismissals. All other early dismissals will be documented as an afternoon unexcused tardy and may be subject to disciplinary action.

Students will not be released after 2:00 pm. Please plan to pick your student up before 2:00 pm if he or she has an appointment. If the student returns to school the same day, he/she must bring documentation to the front office and secure an Admit Slip to be admitted to class.



## Regular Dismissal

After 2:00 pm, parents must pick their child(ren) up in the car rider line. Parents are asked to be respectful of the car rider line. Please do not park and walk in to pick up your child(ren) or cut in front of other vehicles waiting to pick up students.

Parents are reminded that we adhere to a dismissal procedure. Students are not to be removed from the classroom at the end of the day by parents or guardians. All students must report to bus and car rider lines with their classroom teacher and fellow students.

## Afternoon Dismissal Schedule

Elementary	2:25 pm
Middle School	2:25 pm
High School	2:25 pm

## Lost and Found

Articles found in the buildings and on the campus are to be turned in to either of the two Lost & Found collection boxes located in the elementary building and middle school buildings. Students have the responsibility of keeping up with personal items. Please do not leave coats, pocketbooks, wallets, etc. where someone else might pick them up. Always label your belongings so we may return them to you when found. Items not claimed will be donated to local charities at the end of each semester.



## Lunch Policy

(Board Policy approved 06/16/2022 rev 7)

River Mill Academy partners with local restaurants to provide a lunch option for students every day. Meals must be pre-ordered and pre-paid. Instructions will be provided on the River Mill Website. Providing this service helps us to assist parents in giving students nutritious, balanced meals. Students are welcome to bring meals from home. The price of lunches will be published on the school website ([www.rivermill-academy.org](http://www.rivermill-academy.org)) No fast-food deliveries will be accepted.

## Perfect Attendance Awards

Students will be awarded Perfect Attendance certificates at the end of the school year. Perfect attendance is awarded to students who do not have any absences (excused or unexcused) and/or tardies (excused or unexcused) for the school year.

## Driver's Eligibility Certificates

(Board Policy Approved 07/16/2015 rev 1)

The North Carolina Department of Motor Vehicles requires that individuals applying for a permit present a driver's eligibility certificate from his/her school. In order to obtain a certificate, the student must have passing grades in 70% or more of his or her classes. Adequate academic progress will be evaluated at the midpoint of the school year (first semester grades) and at the end of the school year.

The student's parent or legal guardian must present the following documents to the Principal or the front office staff in order to obtain the Driver's Eligibility Certificate:

- Student's birth certificate
- Student's social security card
- Proof that the student has passed driver's education
- Student's most recent semester or year-end report card

## Telephone Use, Messages/Deliveries

Please make all transportation arrangements before your child leaves for school each day. Students will not be released from class to make personal calls. Students may only use the office phone to make emergency phone calls. Students will not be called out of class to accept phone calls. If you have a message for your child or your child's teacher, please understand that this message will be given to them sometime before the end of the day. This is to eliminate class interruptions. If transportation changes are necessary, please contact the office prior to 1:30 pm so that the office staff has time to deliver the message to your student prior to dismissal.

We do not accept responsibility for delivery of gifts to students from parents and friends. River Mill Academy will not accept Valentine's Day deliveries. For safety reasons, balloons and flowers are not permitted on school buses.



## Social Media Policy

(Board Policy Approved 07/15/2021 rev 1)

River Mill Academy (RMA) realizes that part of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning is adapting to the changing methods of communication. The importance of teachers, students, parents, coaches, and school volunteers engaging, collaborating, learning, and sharing in these digital environments is a part of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning. To this aim, River Mill Academy has adapted the following guidelines to provide direction for instructional employees, students, parents, and extracurricular clubs and athletic leaders when participating in online social media activities.

Students, parents, coaches, and employees should be aware that third parties – including the media, faculty, future employers, and school officials – could easily access social media profiles and view all personal information. This includes pictures, videos, comments, posts, and posters. Inappropriate material found by third parties affects the perception of the individual and of RMA. This can also be detrimental to a student's future employment options.

Students, parents, employees, coaches, and RMA volunteers should not engage in inappropriate harassing, demeaning, threatening or offensive behaviors while participating in online communities. Examples may include, but are not limited to, depictions or presentations of the following:

- Content online that is derogatory, demeaning or threatening toward any other individual or entity as well as any acts of violence (examples: derogatory or taunting comments aimed at a classmate, teacher, staff member and/or school employees and derogatory comments against race, sexual orientation, and/or gender)
- Content online that depicts or encourages unacceptable, violent, or illegal activities (examples: hazing, sexual harassment/assault, discrimination, fighting, vandalism, academic dishonesty, underage drinking, illegal drug use)
- Content online that would constitute a violation of the RMA *Student Behavior and Conduct Policy* (examples: negative comments publicly about a classmate, teacher, staff member, or other school employee.)

Ultimately, you are solely responsible for what you post online. Before creating online content, consider some of the risks and rewards that are involved. Keep in mind that any of your conduct that adversely affects your job or educational performance, the performance of others or otherwise adversely affects students, parents, suppliers, volunteers, people who work on behalf of RMA or RMA's legitimate business/education interests may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination/suspension or expulsion.

## Transportation Policy

(Board Policy Approved 01/19/2017 rev 1)

**Rationale:** To provide safe and secure transport of River Mill Academy (RMA) students, faculty, or staff to and from the RMA Campus and to assure all drivers of RMA vehicles are suitable for that purpose.

### I. Drivers Expectations

- A. License Requirements – Anyone who operates any of the motor vehicles owned by RMA shall be properly licensed by the North Carolina Division of Motor Vehicles to operate a School Bus. Such persons must obtain (at a minimum) a Class C Commercial Driver License (CDL), attend the required School Bus Driver

Training classes, and pass the required testing by the North Carolina DMV to obtain the following endorsements: P (Passenger), S (School Bus), and K (Intrastate only). Endorsement K is required unless they carry a current driver's medical card on their person.

**Any driver who loses their Bus Driver Certification must notify the Principal within 24 hours.**

B. Prohibited Driver – Applicants convicted of the following disqualifying offense(s) shall be denied coaching/volunteer privileges. Conviction of a crime, as used in this policy, includes (1) the entry of a plea of guilty, nolo contendere, no contest or the equivalent, (2) a verdict or finding of guilty in a court of law or military tribunal, or (3) a prayer for judgement.

- All sex offenses regardless of the amount of time since offense.
- All felony violence offenses regardless of the amount of time since offense.
- All felony offenses within the past eight (8) years (other than violence or sex).
- All misdemeanor violence offenses within the past six (6) years.
- All misdemeanor drug and alcohol offenses within the past two (2) years or multiple (more than one) offenses in the past six (6) years.
- Any other offense, whether misdemeanor or felony, within the past fifteen (15) years that would be considered a potential danger to children or directly related to the functions of that volunteer.
- Other acts that River Mill Academy determines are grounds for disqualification.

**Students will not be allowed to operate RMA owned vehicles under any circumstances.**

II. Driving Activities

A. Instructional Field Trips

- In-County – Any of the RMA vehicles may be used for transporting students to such field trips within Alamance County with the approval of the Principal.
- Out-of-County – Any of the RMA vehicles may be used for transporting students to such field trips outside of Alamance County with the approval of the Principal.
- Coach Buses – can be hired for the transportation of students to overnight, out-of-county instructional field trips. Approval of the Principal is required.

B. Off-Campus Athletic events

1. All athletic events within Alamance County:
  - a. Parents must provide transportation to and from the event.
  - b. Parents must understand that they assume all liability of their student athlete.
  - c. If there are transportation issues, please contact the Athletic Director.
2. All athletic events outside Alamance County:
  - a. Transportation will be provided by a RMA vehicle to and from the event. Exception: Any team that has three or less athletes, the parents will be responsible for all transportation to and from the event. Students are NOT allowed to drive themselves to out of Alamance County events. Parents will assume all liability.
  - b. Parents may transport their child home from an away event. The parent must sign the child out with the coach before leaving the event/facility.
3. All students must comply to the coaches' instructions and be on time for all events.
4. If there are unique circumstances, i.e. doctor's appointment or family event that would prevent a student from riding the RMA vehicle to an event, the parent must seek prior approval from the Athletic Director to transport their child to the event.

## STUDENT/PARENT FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND PROCEDURES

### Credit Card Acceptance and Security Policy

(Board Policy Approved 06/16/2016 rev 1)

River Mill Academy (RMA) will accept credit cards (Visa, MasterCard, and Discover) for Mandatory Fees and Voluntary Fees, as defined in the School Fees Policy. Cash back is not available on any transaction.

Credit card transactions may only be accepted in the following manner:

- In person in the school's front office by the RMA School Secretary or the Finance Manager.
- Via a third-party organization which is

PCI-DSS compliant

- With written permission, a Principal's designee, utilizing a self-entry program or self-swiping program such as PayPal or Square.

RMA personnel accepting credit cards for payment of services or goods will make every effort to protect and secure all credit card data collected, regardless of how it is stored (physically or electronically), including but not limited to account information, card imprints, correspondence and Terminal Identification Numbers. In addition, RMA personnel will ensure compliance with the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS).

Data is considered to be secured only if the following criteria are met:

- Only approved processing software programs and hardware with secure communication protocols and/or encrypted connections are used for the processing of electronic transactions.
- Email **is not** used to transmit credit card payment information.
- All transactions must be processed immediately and documents containing cardholder and card information must be shredded.
  - o The card-validation code of a credit card is never stored in any form.
  - o All but the last four digits of any credit card account number are masked if credit card data is displayed.
  - o All credit card and electronic payment data that is no longer deemed necessary or appropriate to store is destroyed or rendered unreadable.
  - o The processing and storage of personally identifiable credit card or electronic payment information on RMA computers and servers is prohibited.
  - o Credit card or electronic payment information is never downloaded onto any portable electronic or storage devices.
- No credit card receipt, document, or correspondence of any kind, referencing the transaction shall include more than the last four digits of the account number or the month and year of the expiration date.
- No RMA employee, contractor, or agent who obtains access to credit card or other personal payment information may sell, purchase, provide, or exchange said information in any form to any third party other than to RMA's acquiring bank, depository bank, Visa, MasterCard or other credit card company, or pursuant to a government request.



## Penalty for Non-Payment of Fees Policy

(Board Policy Approved 06/16/2022 rev 3)

Students who owe money for mandatory fees, including but not limited to, cafeteria meal accounts, PE fees, library fees or fines, returned checks, or voluntary fees, including but not limited to, outstanding obligations to River Mill Academy or any school related organization (i.e. PTT) will not be issued progress reports/report cards and access to the online Infinite Campus Parent Portal will be blocked for all accounts within the same household. In addition, students will not be allowed to attend school functions which charge a fee, to purchase items sold by the school or any school related group or organization, and will not be allowed to try out and/or participate in athletics, extracurricular activities, clubs, field trips, dances, field day, awards programs, prom (juniors and seniors), graduation (seniors), or any school functions that are not part of the regular instructional program. Club sponsors, coaches, and others who supervise extracurricular activities will be instructed to remove students who consistently fail to meet their financial obligations from rolls or rosters until such obligations are met.



## Returned Check Policy

(Board Policy Approved 06/19/2014 rev 2)

River Mill Academy is charged a fee when we receive a check that cannot be processed due to insufficient funds. In accordance with the Board of Directors approved NSF Check Handling Procedures, via certified mail, the Finance Manager will notify anyone whose check is returned and request that the matter be resolved as soon as possible. A service charge of \$25.00 will be added to the original amount of the returned check.

Unresolved payments or repeated

returned checks will be handled in accordance with the approved Board of Directors NSF Check Handling Procedures.

## Textbook Policy

(Board Policy Approved 08/18/2011)

Textbooks are school property and must be treated accordingly. Lost or damaged textbooks must be paid for. The following book damage fee shall be applied:

One-year-old	100% of full price
2-3 years old	75% of full price
4-5 years old	50% of full price
Beyond 5 years old	25% of full price



# ACADEMICS

## Curriculum

Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> Grade follow the North Carolina Standard Course of Study curriculum as deemed by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction with an emphasis on College Preparatory classes for grades 9-12. All students are encouraged to participate in challenging honors and advanced placement course offerings as well as Career and College Promise courses through Alamance Community College.

## Testing and Accountability

(Board Policy Approved 07/21/2011)

River Mill Academy will participate in all required testing of students by the North Carolina State Board of Education and the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NC DPI). The school will meet all deadlines and follow all testing schedules established by NC DPI, notwithstanding the school closing for unforeseen events such as disasters. Test security requirements as demanded by NC DPI will be followed. River Mill Academy will participate in all training and test administration preparation sessions

provided by the state to ensure maximum efficiency in the testing setting.

River Mill Academy will encourage student participation in the PSAT, and the SAT/ACT as offered by the College Board in Princeton, New Jersey.

River Mill Academy will meet all additional requirements required by the NC DPI and the United States Department of Education and any other regulating agencies as required by law for documentation, notification, and public disclosure of student, teacher, and school accountability measures.

## Grading System

- A - SUPERIOR (90—100)
- B - ABOVE AVERAGE (80—89)
- C - AVERAGE (70—79)
- D - BELOW AVERAGE (60-69)
- F - FAILURE (59 or below)

Individual teachers are responsible for determining and publishing their system of grading for their class or subject. Parents and students are to address any concerns regarding grading policies with the individual classroom teacher.

Questions or concerns regarding grades must be addressed promptly when report cards are issued. Grades will become permanent four weeks after the end of each grading period.

Incomplete grades on report cards may only be given with a written plan of work approved by the Principal. Incomplete grades must be changed to a numeric grade no later than two weeks after report cards are issued. The Principal must approve any special concerns.

## Distance Learning and On-Off Campus Courses

(Board Policy Approved 07/19/2018 rev 1)

High school 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students may be permitted to attend selected classes at a local community college during their high school career. Students must be sixteen years of age and obtain permission from the school administration to attend these classes. Students and parents are responsible for any expenses associated with taking courses at the community college.

High School students have the opportunity to enroll in distance learning. Additionally,

some Community College courses may be taught on our campus. Students are not eligible to take distance learning or off campus courses if a comparable course is offered on River Mill Academy's campus.

Students and parents are responsible for purchasing textbooks and supplementary materials that may be required for these courses and transportation to/from if necessary.

Information regarding available courses will be provided to eligible students upon class registration or by contacting their guidance counselor.



## Final Examinations

(Board Policy Approved 06/20/2024 rev 6)

All students shall take semester examinations. High school students may be exempt from final examinations when they have met the following criteria.

The following exam exemption requirements apply to *core classes*:

- Exemptions apply **only** to seniors.
- Student must maintain a course average of 90 or higher.
- Student must have five or fewer absences for the course (excused or unexcused).
- Students must have five or fewer late arrivals to school over the course of the semester (excused or unexcused).

Students in grades 9 to 12 may be exempt from *elective* final examinations using the above criteria.

Students who schedule AP courses will sign a contract indicating that they will take the College Board AP Exam.

Students may not exempt a state mandated assessment regardless of the grade they are earning in the class.

**State End-of-Course Exams and Final Exams count as 20% of the final grade.**

## Honor Roll

Honor Roll certificates will be awarded at the end of each 9-week grading period. For a student to be eligible for the "A" Honor Roll, he/she must have no **final** 9-week grade lower than 90. For a student to be eligible for the "A/B" Honor Roll, he/she must have no **final** 9-week grade lower than 80 and at least one grade of 90 or above.

## Honor/Advanced Placement Classes

(Board Policy Approved 06/16/2016 rev 1)

Since our charter requires River Mill Academy to be a college preparatory school, there will be no vocational subjects offered. Instead, challenging academic electives will be taught to middle and high school students. Several of our courses may be taken as "honors" courses. These courses require prior approval by administration for students to enroll. Advanced Placement courses are offered at the high school level. Students must obtain teacher recommendation to take AP courses. Honors and Advanced Placement classes carry a higher-grade point and can increase a student's overall GPA. **No student is allowed to drop a class after the first ten days of school.**

## Honor Societies



### National Elementary Honor Society (NEHS) – 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

The NEHS is an organization that allows students to be recognized for their outstanding academic achievement along with providing meaningful service to their school and community. NEHS also promotes personal responsibility and develops essential leadership skills.

Students who excel academically and model exceptional responsibility are selected by a review of their GPA (grade point average), which must meet a minimum of a 90 average. Students must not have received any discipline referrals. GPA is calculated from the previous year 2<sup>nd</sup> semester and the current year 1<sup>st</sup> semester grades. Qualifying third through fifth grade students are provided with an application which must be completed and returned by the deadline or the student forfeits eligibility. The application consists

of personal information, an essay, and a log of volunteer service. Students are notified by email or a letter. Inductions are held in the spring of each school year.

### National Junior Honor Society (NJHS) – 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Grade

The National Junior Honor Society is the nation's premier organization established to recognize outstanding middle level students. More than just an honor roll, NJHS serves to honor those students who have demonstrated excellence in the areas of scholarship, service, leadership, character, and citizenship.

Candidacy for the NJHS is open to current 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade students who have a GPA of 90 or higher in all of their core classes for the first 3 quarters of the year in which they apply. Candidates must have an exemplary behavior record with teachers and administration, with absolutely no discipline referrals. In addition to scholarship, membership in the NJHS is based on a candidate's experience in the areas of Leadership, Service, and Character.



Candidate applications are given by faculty advisors to students who meet the minimum academic requirements. After the application deadline, a faculty committee votes on anonymous applications for membership. Submission of an application does not guarantee membership into the National Junior Honor Society. Candidates accepted by the committee are notified by letter. An Induction Ceremony is held in the spring.



### National Honor Society (NHS) – 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> Grade

The National Honor Society (NHS) is the nation's premier organization established to recognize outstanding high school students. More than just an honor roll, NHS serves to recognize those students who have demonstrated excellence in the areas of scholarship, service, leadership, and character.

Students with a 3.5 weighted GPA will be invited to apply for membership in the spring of their sophomore year. Students who elect to apply will complete the

provided application, in which they offer their record of service to the community, leadership, discipline, and a brief statement about their plans for the future. Applicants are then assessed (confidentially, in writing) by the faculty based on the criteria for membership in the NHS: service, leadership, and character. Completed applications and faculty reviews are then read, discussed, and weighted by the faculty council in a private meeting and decisions for acceptance or non-acceptance are made at that time. All applicants are informed by letter of the decision by the faculty council regarding admission. An Induction Ceremony for new members is held in the spring. Newly inducted NHS members are charged for one-time dues of \$5.

Once inducted, NHS members begin participating in many activities to make their school, community, and world a better place. They attend monthly or twice-monthly meetings in which they plan events to support the mission of NHS: scholarship, service, leadership, and character. Members are expected to maintain a GPA of 3.5 or higher, maintain a clean disciplinary record, and to volunteer in at least one service or fundraising project per semester. On average, NHS conducts one fundraising or community service project per month.



## Promotion Policy

(Board Policy approved 06/20/2014 Rev. 13)

### Elementary and Middle School Promotion Policy

For students to be promoted in K-1, they must meet expected growth in Reading, Math, and Writing.

For students to be promoted in grades 2, 4-8, they must meet expected growth in Language Arts, Math, Social Studies, and Science. For students to be promoted in grade 3, they must meet expected growth in Language Arts, Math, Social Studies, and Science and meet the standards defined by the Read to Achieve legislation (NC House Bill 950 S.L. 2012-142 Section 7A).

For Students Entering 9 <sup>th</sup> Grade in 2024-2025 and beyond		
Subject	Units of Credit	Courses
English	4	English 1, 2, 3, and 4
Mathematics	4	NC Math 1, 2, 3, and a fourth mathematics course to be aligned with the student's post high school plans
Social Studies	4	World History, Founding Principles of the United States of America and North Carolina Civic Literacy, American History, and Economics and Personal Finance
Science	3	Earth/Environmental Science, Biology, and Chemistry
Second Language	2	Both credits must be taken in the same second language
Health and PE	1	Health/PE students are required to successfully complete CPR instruction to meet Healthful Living Standards as a requirement for high school graduation
Computer Science/STEM	1	Computer Science or STEM
Electives	At least 10	Designated by LEA; Recommend at least one credit in fine arts
Total for River Mill Academy	29	

### High School Promotion Policy:

To be classified as a **sophomore**, a student must earn at least **seven (7)** credits, including English I and one unit of mathematics. In addition, a student must submit evidence of having completed 25 of 100 community service hours.

To be classified as a **junior**, a student must earn at least **fifteen (15)** credits, including English II, Biology, and two units of mathematics. In addition, a student must submit evidence of having completed 50 of 100 community service hours.

To be classified as a **senior**, a student must earn at least **twenty-two (22)** credits, including English III and three units of mathematics. In addition, a student must submit evidence of having completed 75 of 100 community service hours.

\*\*All graduating class members must complete 8 semesters of high school, meet minimum course requirements and have at

least 100 hours of community service. Service hours begin after completion of eighth grade and accumulate each year.



## Graduation With Distinction

(Board Policy Approved 08/18/2011)

High school diplomas are awarded summa cum laude when the graduate's weighted cumulative grade point average is 4.0, magna cum laude when the graduate's weighted grade point average is 3.5, and cum laude when the graduate's weighted grade point average is 3.0. The determination shall be made during the senior year at the end of the academic year.

## Valedictorian / Salutatorian Policy

(Board Policy Approved 08/18/2011)

The student earning the highest cumulative weighted grade point average in the graduating class each year shall be named as Valedictorian. The determination shall be made during the senior year at the end of the academic year.

The student earning the second highest cumulative weighted grade point average in the graduating class each year shall be named as Salutatorian. The determination shall be made during the senior year at the end of the academic year.

In the case of identical weighted grade point averages, the Principal shall name co-valedictorians or co-salutatorians. If co-valedictorians occur, no salutatorian will be declared. If co-salutatorians exist, there will be one valedictorian and co-salutatorians.

## Transcripts

(Board Policy Approved 07/19/2012 rev 1)

A graduating senior is entitled to have two transcripts sent without cost to post-high

school educational institutions of his/her choice. A student who has graduated, transferred, withdrawn, or left school for any other reason, and who has not previously received a transcript, shall be entitled to one transcript without cost. Additional transcripts will be provided upon request for a fee of \$3.00 each. No fee will be charged for a transcript which is required as part of a student application for scholarship or student loan.

River Mill Academy's compliance with this policy is contingent on the student/parent first settling any outstanding debts that may be in place at the time of the transcript request.



## Tutoring

### Tutoring

River Mill Academy offers tutorial help during the school year for students who are in need of help. Students who are failing a class must stay for tutoring. Teachers are required to contact parents after progress reports are issued, and before report cards are distributed, if any student is earning a "D" or "F" in any class. Early Release students who may be in danger of failing a course will forfeit early release and attend a 4<sup>th</sup> block study hall.

## University of North Carolina System Current Minimum Requirements

The University of North Carolina Board of Governors has established minimum course requirements for undergraduate admission. Please refer to the University of North Carolina website for the current minimum entrance requirements at <https://www.northcarolina.edu/future-students/admission-requirements/>

Campuses of the UNC System include:

Appalachian State University  
 East Carolina University  
 Elizabeth City State University  
 Fayetteville State University  
 NC A&T University  
 NC Central University  
 NC School of the Arts  
 NC State University  
 UNC – Asheville  
 UNC—Chapel Hill

UNC—Charlotte  
 UNC – Greensboro  
 UNC – Pembroke  
 UNC Wilmington  
 Western Carolina University  
 Winston-Salem State University

## STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES AND BEHAVIOR/ POLICIES



### Academic Conduct

(Board Policy Approved 06/15/2023 rev 3)

1. **River Mill Academy's Honor Code:** *On my honor, I have neither given nor received help on any assignment without the teacher's approval. To the best of my ability, the information I have provided has been truthful and cited appropriately so as not to steal, cheat or plagiarize.*
2. **Cheating** – The giving or receiving of unauthorized aid or assistance on any form of academic work will not be tolerated.
3. **Plagiarism**
  - a. **Plagiarism** - The representation of another person's words, thoughts, or ideas as one's own.
    - i. Prohibited conduct includes but is not limited to: use of another person's words, ideas, opinions, or theories; presenting facts, statistics, graphs, and drawings (that are not common knowledge); quoting someone's written or spoken words and presenting them as one's own; and/or paraphrasing someone's written or spoken words (without citing or attributing to that person).
    - ii. **Internet Plagiarism**– Includes, but is not limited to, cutting, and pasting material found online or generated by an artificial intelligence program.
  - b. *Plagiarism is a serious offense and is treated as theft in colleges and universities. It will be treated no less seriously here at River Mill Academy.*
  - c. **Citing Sources**—Whenever you present an idea, a written work, or words that are attributable in any way

to another person, it is mandatory that you cite the source. Seek the advice of your teachers for the proper methods of citing a source. If you are not sure something should be cited, remember this simple phrase, "When in doubt, cite."

#### d. **Disciplinary Actions for Violation of the Honor Code:**

- i. 1<sup>st</sup> offense: Zero for the assignment and letter of apology. Parental contact by teacher.
- ii. 2<sup>nd</sup> offense: Automatic 55 for the nine-week average and suspension from school. Parental contact by administration.
- iii. 3<sup>rd</sup> offense: Failure for the course (middle and high school); possible expulsion. Parental contact by administration.

## Student/Parent Laptop Policy and Procedures

(Board Policy Approved 04/20/2023 rev 6)

**Computer Laptop Immersion Program**  
 The Computer Laptop immersion program will provide an equitable opportunity for all students in grades 8 to 12 to experience a technology-rich environment and to ensure as they move toward graduation they are prepared for the workplace and life. Understanding of and adhering to the following policies and procedures is necessary for the success of the program. The signed Student/Parent Laptop Agreement, attached hereto, shall establish a contract agreed to by the parties involved.

- I. **Deployment** – A laptop computer will be distributed to students at the beginning of the school year to use during that current year. The laptop and school issued charger are to be turned in at the end of the school year.
- II. **Terms of Loan**
  - A. **Terms of Loan**
    1. River Mill Academy (RMA) will loan a Laptop Computer to students upon receipt of a signed Student/Parent Laptop Agreement.
    2. Legal title to the property (laptop) is with River Mill Academy. A student's right of possession and use is limited to and conditioned upon full and complete compliance with Student/Parent Laptop Policy and Procedures.
    3. Students may be subject to loss of privilege, disciplinary action and/or legal action in the event of intentional damage and/or violation of policies and guidelines as outlined in the Student/Parent Laptop Policy and Procedures.

4. A student's possession of the laptop terminates no later than the last day of the school year unless there is a reason for earlier termination (e.g., drop-out, expulsion, and transfer to another school).
- B. Optional Insurance
1. Insurance will be offered at a yearly cost of \$25 which will cover any unintentional damage to the laptop for the current school year. Insurance coverage is optional but is encouraged. If insurance is not purchased, the student and/or student's parent/guardian will be responsible for covering the cost of damage to the computer (broken cover, missing keys on the keyboard, cracked screen, damage to the exterior case, etc.)
  2. Insurance coverage may be purchased at the beginning of each school year on or before the date on which the laptop is issued to the student.
- C. Loss or Theft
- Parents are responsible for the replacement cost of the computer due to loss or theft.
- D. Damage
1. The student and/or the student's parent/guardian shall be responsible for compensating the school for any losses, costs, or damages. The student and/or parent guardian is liable for replacement(s) costs resulting from loss, intentional damage and/or failure to care for laptop as outlined below. Parent or guardian to pay actual replacement and/or repair costs.
  2. No annual maintenance fee will be charged for the use of the laptop, however, if unapproved changes for software installs are made to the laptop, the laptop will be re-imaged, and the student will be charged a \$25 re-imaging fee.
- E. Repossession
- River Mill Academy reserves the right to repossess the laptop at any time if the student does not fully comply with all terms of the Student/Parent Laptop Agreement.
- F. Appropriation
- Failure to return the property at the designated time and/or the continued use of it for non-related school purposes may be considered unlawful appropriation of River Mill Academy property.
- G. Modification to Program
- As the program is new to River Mill Academy, the River Mill Academy Board of Directors reserves the right to revoke or modify the program or its terms at any time.

### III. General Care of the Laptop

- A. Students are responsible for the laptop they have been issued. Laptops in need of repair or damaged must be reported to the teacher, in writing. It will be the responsibility of the teacher or his/her designee to contact onsite technical support, within twenty-four (24) hours.
- B. Technical support will determine whether the laptop can be repaired onsite or a loaner should be issued. Loaner laptops are also covered by all rules and regulations as outlined in this document.
- C. Guidelines to follow:
1. Always close the lid before moving your laptop.
  2. For prolonged periods of inactivity, you should shut down completely before closing the lid. This will help to conserve the battery.
  3. When using the laptop, keep it on a flat, solid surface so that air can circulate. For example, using a laptop while it is directly on a bed or carpet can cause damage due to overheating.
  4. Liquids, food and other debris can damage the laptop. You should avoid eating or drinking while using the laptop.
  5. Take extreme caution with the screen. The screens are very susceptible to damage from excessive pressure or weight. Avoid picking up the laptop by the screen or placing your finger directly on the screen with any force.
  6. Monthly allow your battery to completely drain. Dimming the LC brightness or your screen will extend the battery run time. For help, consult your teacher or technology specialist.
  7. Never attempt repair or reconfiguration of the laptop. Under no circumstances are you to attempt to open or tamper with the internal components of the laptop. Nor should you remove any screws – doing so will render the warranty void and will result in disciplinary action.
  8. Take care when inserting cords, cables and other removable storage devices to avoid damage to the laptop ports.
  9. Do not expose your laptop to extreme temperatures, direct sunlight, or ultraviolet light for extended periods of time. Extreme heat or cold may cause damage to the laptop.
  10. Do not write, draw, paint or place stickers/labels on your laptop or bag. Remember the laptop is the property of River Mill Academy.

11. Keep your laptop away from magnetic fields, which can erase or corrupt your data. This includes, but is not limited to, large speakers, amplifiers, transformers, and old-style television sets.

### IV. Cleaning Your Laptop

- A. Routine maintenance on laptops will be done by the school technology support team. However, students are encouraged to perform simple cleaning procedures as outlined below:
1. Always disconnect the laptop from the power outlet before cleaning.
  2. Never use liquids on the laptop screen or keyboard.
  3. Clean the screen with a soft, lightly dampened, lint free cloth or use antistatic screen cleaners or wipes.
  4. Wash hands frequently when using the laptop to avoid buildup on the touch pad. Grease and dirt can cause the cursor to jump around on the screen.
  5. Clean the touch pad with a lightly dampened cloth.

### V. General Security

- A. Never leave your laptop unattended or unsecured. Laptops should be secured in a designated storage facility or a secured locker.
- B. During after-school activities, you are still expected to maintain the security of your laptop. Unsupervised laptops will be confiscated by staff and disciplinary actions may be taken.
- C. Never allow someone else to use your assigned laptop.
- D. Each laptop and charger have several identifying labels (i.e. RMA asset number, serial number, and school-specific tag coded to student name). Under no circumstances are you to modify or destroy these labels.
- E. Do not cause any intentional damage to the computer, charger and/or computer case.

### VI. General Use of the Laptop

- A. Students are **REQUIRED** to bring their laptop to school each day with a fully charged battery. Students will not be given the use of a loaner laptop if he/she leaves his/her laptop at home. Students leaving laptops at home will be required to complete assignments using alternate means (as determined by the teacher).
- B. Students will receive disciplinary referral from their teacher for repeatedly refusing to bring their laptop to class.
- C. Students will not be allowed to charge their laptop at school; therefore, power adapters should be left at home.
- D. Students will be able to save files directly to the laptop. Files for

instructional use should also be backed up on a flash drive. If a laptop is experiencing a technical issue, it is likely to be re-imaged which will destroy all local data that is not backed up.

- E. Avoid using your laptop in areas which may lead to damage or theft. Do not use your laptop around sporting activities or events in the cafeteria when food is being served.
- F. Laptops are not allowed on overnight trips or field trips without the expressed written approval of the lead chaperone and the parent/guardian.
- G. **LAPTOP USE IS NOT PERMITTED IN THE DINING AREA (LUNCHROOM) DURING LUNCH PERIODS.** The laptop may be used in designated commons areas (away from food or drink) during this time.
- H. **LAPTOP USE IS NOT PERMITTED ON THE BUS** – laptops must be stored in book bags while students are on the bus.
- I. Laptop sound will be muted at all times unless permission is obtained from the teacher for instructional purposes.
- J. Do not delete any folders or files that you did not create or that you do not recognize. Deletion of files could result in a computer failure and will interfere with your ability to complete class work.
- K. Students may not download or install software applications on River Mill Academy issued laptops.
- L. Students are prohibited from playing games in the classroom.
- M. Chat rooms are not to be accessed without specific permission from the classroom teacher.
- N. The use of the Internet at school is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use may result in suspension/termination of user privileges.
- O. Student laptops will be subject to routine monitoring by teachers, administrators, and technology staff. While off campus, parental monitoring is highly recommended.
- P. Students will provide access to any laptop computer and/or accessories that they have been assigned upon the school's request. An individual search of the laptop and other stored student files may be conducted by administrators if there is a suspicion that policies or guidelines have been violated.
- Q. Restriction on the laptops will block the student from certain functions such as accessing administrative software, installing certain programs or enabling the web camera. Any attempt to circumvent these

restrictions, on or off campus, will be seen as a violation of this contract and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken.

- R. All laptops have anti-virus protection software installed. The anti-virus software will automatically scan any unprotected space at startup. Do not remove or add any anti-virus protection software.
  - S. After ten (10) unexcused absences in a school year, the student becomes a day user. Overnight checkout for assignment completion will be at the discretion of the Principal.
- VII. Suggested Guidelines to Avoid Repetitive Stress Injuries (Ergonomics).**
- A. Ergonomics is defined as the science of making things fit people instead of asking people to fit things. Ergonomics uses knowledge from anatomy, mechanics, physiology and psychology to utilize human energy most effectively. Please read the following guidelines to promote safe, comfortable and efficient use of the student laptop.
  - B. Use a pillow, folded blanket or towel to raise the seat high enough so that your elbows are bent at about 90 degrees and hands and wrists are in a neutral posture. If the chair is not high enough or the work surface is not low enough, place the laptop on your lap, but make sure your knees are level with your hips.
  - C. Reduce pressure on your neck by tucking in your chin to view the monitor rather than bending your neck down. If possible, lower your eyes instead of bending your head forward to see the screen.
  - D. Make sure the screen is adjusted to minimize glare.
  - E. Take frequent mini breaks and change your work posture often. For example, place the laptop in your lap to achieve better wrist position for approximately 30 minutes. Then, switch and place the laptop on a table to achieve better neck position.
  - F. The arm support and padding of work surfaces is also important when working at a table or desk with hard leading edges. Use a pillow or folded towel as a wrist rest or arm support while typing.
  - G. If seated in a chair that does not provide adequate lumbar support, use a rolled-up towel or small pillow as a lumbar support device.
  - H. Reduce the weight of the laptop bag as much as possible by ensuring only the most needed items are included. Ensure the shoulder straps and handles have adequate padding. Switch shoulders and hands often

while carrying the laptop bag or try using a backpack or other bag which has two straps or wheels.

- I. Ergonomic exercises can be helpful for end users.

#### **VIII. Internet Safety**

- A. As required by the Children's Internet Protection Act, a current content filtering solution is maintained by River Mill Academy for school use on this laptop. This is a "good faith" effort to block all inappropriate content, but River Mill Academy cannot guarantee that access to all inappropriate sites will be blocked. It is the responsibility of the user and parent/guardian to follow guidelines for appropriate use of the network and the Internet. River Mill Academy will not be responsible for any problems suffered while on the network of the Internet. Use of any information obtained through the Internet is at the user's own risk.
- B. All Internet traffic will pass through the content filter. This filter will log all attempts to access inappropriate material.
- C. Specifically, as required by the Children's Internet Protection Act, blocking shall be applied to visual depictions of material deemed obscene or child pornography, or to any material deemed harmful to minors.
- D. Email accounts will be provided to students by River Mill Academy. To the extent practical, steps shall be taken to promote the safety and security of the RMA online computer network when using electronic mail, chat rooms, instant messaging, and other forms of direct electronic communications. Student email accounts provided by RMA utilize a SafeMail filtering system to filter and protect student communication tools.
- E. Specifically, as required by the Children's Internet Protection Act, prevention of inappropriate network usage includes: (a) unauthorized access, including so-called 'hacking,' and other unlawful activities; and (b) unauthorized disclosure, use, and determination of personal identification regarding minors.
- F. Attempting to disable or circumvent River Mill Academy's network and Internet content filters and firewalls, including using or attempting to use proxies to access sites that would otherwise be restricted is not permitted and may result in disciplinary action.
- G. River Mill Academy will not serve and the Internet service provider for home use. For a student to access the Internet, the parent/guardian must contract with an Internet service provider.

## IX. Education, Supervision and Monitoring

A. It shall be the sole responsibility of all members of the River Mill Academy staff to educate, supervise and monitor appropriate usage of the online computer network and access to the internet in accordance with this policy, the Children's Internet Protection Act, the Neighborhood Children's Internet Protection Act, and the protecting Children in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Act.

B. Procedures for the disabling or otherwise modifying any technology protection measures shall be the responsibility of the technology specialist or designated representatives.

C. The technology specialist or designated representatives will provide age-appropriate training for students who use RMA's internet facilities. The training provided will be designed to promote the school's commitment to student safety with regard to:

1. The standards and acceptable use of Internet services as set forth in RMA's Internet Safety Policy.
2. Safety on the Internet
3. Appropriate behavior while online, on social networking sites, and in chat rooms; and cyberbullying awareness and response.
4. Compliance with the E-rate requirements of the Children's Internet Protection Act ("CIPA").
- D. Following receipt of this training, the student will acknowledge that he/she received the training, understood it, and will follow the provisions of the school's acceptable use policies.

## X. Login Procedures

A. Students will log in with the school issued username. Students will create their own password which must be given to their homeroom teacher.

B. DO NOT share passwords. Students are responsible for anything done using their login.

## XI. Copyright

Compliance with federal copyright law is expected of all. "Copyright" is legal protection for creative intellectual works, which is broadly interpreted to cover just about any expression of an idea. Text (including email and Web information), graphics, art, photographs, music and software are examples of types of works protected by copyright. Copying, distributing, downloading, and uploading information on the Internet may infringe the copyright for that information. Even an innocent, unintentional infringement

violates the law.

## XII. Inappropriate/Unacceptable Use

A. **Tier 1: Inappropriate Use:** Includes but not limited to:

1. Using proxy sites
2. Using any browser other than the one(s) preinstalled on the laptop
3. Using computers not assigned to you (Teachers may allow students to look on with another student for instructional purposes only)
4. Videocasting or taping on school property is not permitted when not related to an assignment
5. Emailing or chatting during class (when not related to an assignment)
6. Profanity
7. Gaming

B. **Tier 2: Unacceptable Use:** Includes but not limited to:

1. Pornography (real life or cartoon) can be a felony offense and will be turned over to authorities, including but not limited to the possession, manufacturing, or distribution of pornography.
2. Images of weapons
3. Gang related files
4. Bootleg movies or music
5. Logging into a computer/application using someone else's login
6. Cheating
7. Using a computer to plan a fight, cause harm or commit a crime
8. Profanity directed to the faculty or staff
9. Threats and/or cyber bullying
10. Assisting, observing, or joining any unauthorized activity using the laptop, network or Internet

*Disciplinary Consequences will be as directed by the **Student Behavior and Conduct** policy in place at the time of the infraction.*



## Student Behavior and Conduct

(Board Policy approved 06/12/2025 rev.12)

I. **Rationale** – At River Mill Academy, we are entirely committed to maximizing the potential and success for each of our students. It is our responsibility to provide a positive and safe learning environment. To achieve that goal, our students must comply with all of the rules and regulations of the school and report all potential problems to school personnel.

II. **Scope:** Conduct and behavior (including the dress code) applies to students while on the school grounds of River Mill Academy and at any event where students are representing River Mill Academy off of the school grounds (i.e. athletic or academic events at other schools, field trips, etc.)

a. **School Grounds Defined:** The school grounds include all buildings, areas between buildings and the parking lots. It also includes any vehicles used for transportation to and from school or events (such as the school buses), as well as personal vehicles on school grounds.

III. **Behavior towards Faculty and Staff** – Students shall always comply with the instructions of all River Mill Academy personnel while on the school premises or while attending or participating in any school sponsored activity. Failure to do so will result in suspension.

a. No student shall strike, push, shove, or verbally abuse school personnel. Students and parents are reminded that school employees are considered state government officials and that there are specific laws in place to protect these individuals. Improper behavior toward faculty or staff may result in criminal prosecution of offenders.

IV. **North Carolina General Statute § 115C-391.** Corporal punishment, suspension, or expulsion of pupils sets forth the protocols that administration and staff of River Mill Academy will employ to punish, manage, and

disperse disruptive and/or dangerous student behavior. River Mill Academy administration and/or staff may incorporate any of these means to maintain and restore a safe and orderly environment. NOTE: In any situation where mechanical restraint is needed to restore safety and/or order, law enforcement shall be called.

V. **Infraction Definitions** – Inappropriate

Conduct is anything that interferes with the educational environment or teaching/learning process, including but not limited to, excessive talking, excessive laughing, disruptive behavior, horse playing, not following instructions, video game playing, card playing, eating and drinking in class.

VI. **Notification Process to Parents of Administrative Disciplinary Referrals and Suspensions** - When a student receives an administrative disciplinary referral and/or is suspended for either short-term or long-term, the Principal or an administrator shall:

- a. Make every effort to telephone the parent.
- b. Send a timely written notice that includes details of the infraction.
- c. Keep documentation of the infraction for possible future review. All disciplinary action will be administered in accordance with the guidelines of established laws, policies, rules, and regulations of the State of North Carolina and/or the Department of Public Instruction. Every possible offense cannot be anticipated; therefore, any matters not listed will be determined by the River Mill Academy administration. Note: Suspensions are “out of school” only (as opposed to detention or in-school suspension) for two reasons. First, it is essential that a disciplined atmosphere be maintained on campus at all times. Students who disrupt this environment lose the privilege to attend. Second, in-school suspension or detention drain precious resources of time, personnel, and space.

VIII. **Prohibited Conduct**

- a. **Criminal Offenses:** Any conduct committed by a student that would also be a crime under North Carolina Law is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct and disciplinary action will be taken including, but not limited to, suspension or expulsion. In addition, the appropriate Law Enforcement Agency may be contacted, and criminal charges may result. Criminal offenses that will result in disciplinary action include, but are not limited to:
  - i) **Possession of Weapons on**

**School Grounds** (NCGS § 14-269.2) – Weapons include, but are not limited to guns, rifles, pistols, any firearm of any sort, dynamite cartridges, bombs, grenades, mines or powerful explosives, BB guns, stun guns, air rifles, air pistols, bowie knives, dirks, daggers, knives of any sort, slung shots, leaded cane, switchblade knives, blackjacks, metal knuckles, razors, razor blades (except those for personal shaving), fireworks, etc.

- ii) **Arson** (NCGS § 14-58, et. seq.) – Setting fire to or any attempt to set fire to buildings located on the school grounds (or any other building where a school related event is taking place). This also includes marring and/or defacing any school’s real property by setting or attempting to set a fire.
- iii) **Burning of Personal Property** (NCGS § 14-56) – Setting fire to or burning any personal or private property on school grounds.
- iv) **Injury to Real Property** (NCGS § 14-127) – includes the willful marring or defacing of any school’s real property.
- v) **Injury to Personal Property** (NCGS § 14-160) – includes the willful destruction of the school’s personal property (such as books, computers, smart boards, desks, etc.).
- vi) **Assaults** (NCGS § 14-33 et. seq.) – The physical assault of any student, teacher, coach, etc. will not be tolerated. This includes fist fighting, pushing, slapping or any other harmful touching of another student.
- vii) **Communicating Threats** (NCGS § 14-277.1) – Threatening the physical safety of any student (or any of their family members) while in school or at any school related/sponsored event will not be tolerated. This includes any event or function when students are subject to the authority of River Mill Academy and the threatening behavior negatively affects the order, discipline and safety of our students and staff. Threats include those communicated verbally, electronically or through any other means.
- viii) **Sexual Battery** (NCGS § 14-27.5A) – the touching of another student, teacher, coach, etc. for gratification of sexual desire, etc. against that person’s will.
- ix) **Indecent Exposure** (NCGS § 14-190.9) – the exposure of the

private parts in the presence of any person(s) of the opposite sex.

- x) **False Fire Alarm** (NCGS § 14-286) – pulling, engaging or otherwise reporting a fire when one does not exist. Students shall not activate any fire or other alarm system unless authorized to do so by school employees (unless there are reasonable grounds to believe that an actual emergency situation exists).
- xi) **Trespassing** (NCGS § 14-159.12-.13) - Any student who has been suspended from school is not allowed on school property or at school events during the period of the suspension. Entry onto school property or attendance at school events will be prosecuted as trespassing. Any student who is asked to leave school property by an administrator is expected to do so immediately. Failure to do so may be prosecuted as trespassing.
- xii) **Larceny/Theft** (NCGS § 14-72 et. seq.) – The stealing or taking of another’s personal property without their consent will not be tolerated.
- xiii) **Possession, Use or Sale of Controlled Substances or Related Paraphernalia:**
  - a. (NCGS § 90-89 et. seq.) and N.C.G.S. § 90-113.22)– No controlled substances are allowed on campus at any time or at any off-campus events.
    - i. **Exception:** Prescription Medications (including those that are over the counter) are only allowed when proper documentation is on file with the office.
  - b. Definitions- For purpose of this policy, Controlled Substances and Related Paraphernalia are defined as follows:
    - i. Any drugs listed in the North Carolina Controlled Substances Act including but not limited to; narcotics, depressants, stimulants, hallucinogens, and cannabis, which drugs are commonly known or referred to as: marijuana, acid, LSD, speed, quaaludes, valium, cocaine, crack, PCP, ice, steroids, and other names.
    - ii. Any prescription drug or medication that is not listed as a Controlled Substance under the North Carolina Controlled Substances Act, (NCGS § 90-86 et. seq.),

which has not been lawfully prescribed for the particular student possessing or using the medication.

iii. Any counterfeit controlled substance.

iv. **Possession of Drug Paraphernalia** (NCGS § 113.21) – such as rolling papers, pipes, tweezers, roach clips, etc. are not allowed on school property or at any school event.

v. **Possession of Alcohol** – on school grounds and at school events is strictly forbidden. Any student found in possession of any alcoholic beverage (on school grounds or at any school event) faces punishment (and may be in violation of NCGS § 18B-302).

vi. **Possession/Use of Tobacco or Nicotine Products** – No student, regardless of age, who attends River Mill Academy, is allowed to smoke, chew, dip, possess or otherwise use any tobacco or nicotine product, including but not limited to electronic cigarettes and/or any vaping products on school grounds or during a school sponsored event. This includes within cars on school grounds. Any student found in possession of any tobacco or nicotine product (on school grounds or at any school event) faces punishment (and may be in violation of NCGS § 115C-407)

xiv) **Possession, Use or Sale of Prohibited Substances:**

a) Definitions- For purposes of this policy, the following definitions will apply:

- i). Prohibited Substances are substances deemed inappropriate or potentially hazardous by River Mill Academy but do not necessarily constitute a criminal offense, as defined above, that include, but are not limited to, the following:
1. Any natural or synthetic supplements or vitamins not already blended into or otherwise dispersed in commonly consumed foods and beverages. Students shall not be permitted to possess, use,

sale or distribute any natural or synthetic supplements, vitamins, gels, gummies, powders or other substances including but not limited to (Honey Stinger, Extreme Energy Sport Beans, Caffeine Pouches, Nitric Oxide Booster, Military Energy Gum) that are designed to alter or enhance bodily functions while on campus at any time or at any off-campus event without proper medical documentation and approval by school administrators.

2. Any chemical compound which will induce a condition of intoxication when consumed or inhaled for that purpose including, but not limited to, the following:
  - a) Recreational substances such as synthetic marijuana (K2 or Spice), Mephedrone (meow-meow) or any similar substance.
3. Any over the counter (OTC) medication.
  - a) **Exception:** OTC medications are only allowed when proper documentation is on file with the office.

b) **Disciplinary Measures:**

Students found to be in violation of this policy as described above will face disciplinary consequences up to and including suspension or expulsion.

b. **Attendance -**

- i. **Truancy** (Skipping Class / School) - At River Mill Academy, we are committed to student success. Skipping class is strictly prohibited and may result in suspension.
- ii. **Tardiness** (All Students)
  1. Students must be in the building by 7:44 am (middle school and high school) / 7:59 am (elementary school) each day.
  2. Parents will receive a warning after three (3) unexcused tardy arrivals to class.
  3. Multiple unexcused tardy arrivals will result in disciplinary action.
- iii. Individual Class Tardiness (Middle and High School)
- iv. Students must be in the instructional area at the assigned time.
- v. Students must be in class at least

one-half of the allotted instructional time to be counted as present.

c. **Bus Behavior** –Bus transportation is provided for many of the students at River Mill Academy. Riding a bus is a privilege. Students who ride a bus shall follow the same rules and regulations that are enforced within the school building.

i. **Food and Beverages** – Shall be kept in backpacks or lunch boxes. There is to be no eating or drinking on the buses. Exceptions may be made by the bus driver.

ii. **Safety Rules** – There are four important safety rules for students and parents:

1. All students must obey the bus driver at all times.
2. Students are to remain seated at all times while the bus is moving.
3. Students may only talk in a low voice to the students sitting in his/her seat.
4. Aisles must be kept clear at all times. This includes book bags and student's feet.

iii. **Bus Assignments** – A student is only to ride the bus to which he/she has been assigned. Any change to the assigned bus (temporary or permanent), must be made in writing by the parent/guardian and must be submitted to the Principal for approval.

iv. **Punishments** – Misbehavior and/or violation of the Code of Conduct while on the bus may result in the short or long-term suspension of bus riding privileges and/or suspension from school. When a student is suspended from riding the bus, school administrators must:

1. Make every effort to telephone the parent.
2. Send a timely written notice that includes details of the infraction.
3. Keep documentation of the infraction for possible future reference.

d. **Inappropriate Literature,**

**Illustrations, or Websites**– The possession of literature or illustrations which disrupts the educational process are prohibited. Pornographic, obscene, and/or sexually suggestive materials are prohibited and possession of such will result in immediate suspension.

i. **General Internet Access** – Students must have permission from a faculty member to use the Internet. The internet is for educational purposes only and any other use is prohibited. Students are prohibited from accessing chat rooms, instant messaging

programs, pornographic web sites, and any type of Internet games (including non-violent games). The exclusion to this policy is games that are educational in nature and are played with teacher permission, under his/her direct supervision.

- ii. **Network:** Attempting to disable or circumvent River Mill Academy's network and internet content filters and firewalls, including using or attempting to use proxies to access sites that would otherwise be restricted is not permitted.
- e. **Gambling and Related Activities** – Students shall not participate in any event which provides the chance for monetary advantage of one participant at the expense of the others. Activities include, but are not limited to: card playing, trading cards, dice, matching, coin tossing or pitching, selling CDs, or trading items for money. Some of these activities provide participants with the opportunity for later monetary settlement, and therefore must be included.

- f. **Mechanical/Electronic/Digital Devices** – With the exception of River Mill Academy issued laptops, students must not possess any type of electronic or mechanical device that disrupts or impedes the educational process (i.e., use within the classroom). These items include, but are not limited to cell phones, iPhones, radios, cassette and CD players, beepers, phones, electronic games, iPods, MP3 players, BlackBerry's, cameras, etc. These items must not be displayed or used between the hours of 7:45 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. An exception shall be made for High School students ONLY to use their phone during lunch, so long as the remainder of the policy is upheld at all times. This privilege may be rescinded at any time by the Principal. It is not appropriate for students to use these items while on the school bus. Exceptions may be made by the bus driver during travel to and from sporting events. River Mill Academy is not responsible for the damage, loss or recovery of any personal property that is brought to campus.

- i. **Violations-** Any violations will result in confiscation of these items. The Principal will take possession of these items and only return them to a parent/guardian. Items confiscated more than one time may be held until the end of the year at which time parents must pick them up.

#### IX. Other Prohibited Conduct

- a. **Public Displays of Affection** –

Public display of affection by students disrupts the educational process by distracting the attention and focus of others. Therefore, it is prohibited at school, on school property, and at school-related events. This includes, but is not limited to embracing, kissing, hand holding.

- b. **Inappropriate Touching** – Any form of physical contact that is sexually blatant or is otherwise sexually suggestive is prohibited.
- c. **Eating / Drinking** – Eating and drinking in class is not allowed for Middle School and High School students except for a water bottle. Elementary snack time will be held at the teacher's discretion.
- d. **Pets and Animals** – For health and safety reasons, **all** pets and animals must have prior, written approval from the Principal **before** being brought on school grounds.
- e. **Other Prohibited Items** – Mace, pepper spray and Tasers.
- f. **Inappropriate Exposure-** Blatant exposure of sex organs to members of the same sex with the intent to harass or demean another is prohibited.

**NOTE:** Teachers and staff members must enforce and abide by these rules. Teachers may, however, choose to have additional rules that apply within their specific classrooms.



## Dress Code

(Board Policy 06/20/2024 rev 7)

At River Mill Academy, our focus is to allow our students to concentrate on academic and character education that is of the highest quality. Students are not allowed to dress in such a manner that draws attention away from the teachers, staff, and other students. River Mill Academy will continue to place the educational emphasis on character building and learning.

All students, staff, and visitors are responsible for knowing our dress code policy and are held accountable. As with the other rules in this student handbook, students are expected to follow the dress code while on the campus of River Mill Academy as well as in other locations where they represent our school, such as field trips, sporting events, etc.

## GENERAL CLOTHING GUIDELINES

- Outer garments must completely cover undergarments at all times. Undergarments must not be visible at any time.
- All clothing must be neat and clean.
- Sheer, see-through or fishnet material must cover or be covered by a garment that meets all dress code requirements.
- No clothing that exposes bare midriffs and/or cleavage is acceptable.
- No halter shirts may be worn.
- Athletic and PE uniforms must meet dress code if they are to be worn during the instructional day.
- Student clothing should not be a distraction to the learning process. Students wearing questionable attire will be required to change into clothing meeting dress code requirements.

## LOGOS AND WORDS ON CLOTHING

- All clothing must be free from sexually suggestive content.
- All clothing must be free from drug, tobacco, or alcohol content.
- Words or images that demean race, religion, gender, national origin, handicapping condition or intellectual ability are unacceptable.
- Content that suggests, implies, or supports violence is unacceptable.
- Content that could offend, frighten or intimidate others is unacceptable.

## SHIRTS AND TOPS

- Upper body garments must be long enough to cover the body at all times.
- Shirts and tops may not fall below the knees.
- Shirt sleeves must be at least 2 adult fingers width wide.
- Students who wear vests or athletic jerseys must also wear at least a tank top underneath.

## PANTS, SHORTS, SKIRTS AND DRESSES

- Pants must be properly fitted. Extremely tight or extremely loose-legged pants are not allowed.
- Hems must not drag the ground.
- Shorts, skirts, and dresses must extend below the longest fingertip when the student's arms are extended down. This includes slits, splits, or wrapped items of clothing. Longer skirts and dresses are permissible as long as they do not drag the ground.
- Any holes in the pants/shorts/skirts that expose the skin, must begin below the longest fingertip when the student's arms are extended down.
- Bike/spandex shorts are not permitted.

## SHOES

- Appropriate shoes for daily activities must be worn.
- Athletic shoes are required for P.E. classes.
- Bedroom shoes may not be worn.

## HATS, HOODS, HEADWEAR

- Hats, hoods, bandannas, scarves, handkerchiefs, sweat bands, novelty headbands, etc., shall not be worn on the body, including the head and arms, inside the school building at any time.
- Hats, bandannas, scarves, and handkerchiefs may not be visible or worn on any article or clothing, book bags, purses, or on the body.
- Hats may be worn by students on our campus at athletic events and at school sponsored dances only. All other clothing and behavior must adhere to existing school rules and regulations.

## EYE WEAR

- No one may wear sunglasses inside the school building, unless documentation is submitted to front office staff, from a physician or from an ophthalmologist.

## JEWELRY

- Necklaces may be no longer than 36 inches in length and ½ inch in width.
- Pendants must be in compliance with the logos and word requirements.
- State law prohibits any kind of chains, including wallets with chains.

## PIERCINGS/TATTOOS

- Pierced jewelry is limited to ears only and must not be longer than 3 inches. Nose piercings, lip piercings, gauges, or any other visible body modifications are not permitted at school.
- No form of body art, including drawings and tattoos (permanent or transfer) may be visible at any time.
- Exceptions may be granted, on a case-by-case basis, for bona fide cultural and/or religious beliefs at the sole discretion of the Principal or his/her designee.

## PURSES AND BACKPACKS

- These items must be in compliance with logo and word requirements.
- No rolling book bags are allowed on the bus or in the school building without medical documentation.

**DRESS CODE INFRACTIONS:** Students found guilty of dress code policy violations will be held accountable in the following manner:

## DISCIPLINARY MEASURES

- First Offense: The student will be given the opportunity to change into clothes that meet school dress code policy. If the student cannot comply with personal clothing, the student will remain with an administrator until a parent is contacted to provide a change of clothing.
- Second & any additional offense: Any student found in further violation will be referred to administration for insubordinate behavior.

**In matters of opinion, the judgment of teachers and administrators will prevail. The Principal and administrators have the final authority in all rulings pertaining to the dress code.**



## Harassment and Bullying Policy

(Board Policy approved 06/20/2024 rev 5)

River Mill Academy is committed to providing a nondiscriminatory environment that is conducive to learning. To this end, the school specifically prohibits harassment on the basis of race, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, national origin or disability.

Harassment and/or bullying, as defined in Section B, is prohibited at all levels: between students, between employees and students, between peers or coworkers, between supervisors and subordinates, or between non-employees, employees and/or students.

Any student who believes that he/she has been harassed and/or bullied in violation of this policy should report such behavior immediately to a teacher, counselor or administrator at his/her school. A school employee who is notified of or otherwise becomes aware of conduct which may violate this policy shall report the matter to the Principal. Failure to do so may subject the employee to disciplinary action.

Any employee who believes that he or she has been harassed and/or bullied in violation of this policy should report such

behavior to the Principal, and/or to our River Mill Academy Board of Directors.

All complaints of harassment and/or bullying shall be promptly and thoroughly investigated. Conclusive evidence of such may result in disciplinary action being taken, up to and including dismissal in the case of employees, or up to and including long-term suspension or expulsion in the case of students.

Conversely, consequences and appropriate remedial action for a person found to have falsely accused another as a means of harassment, intimidation or bullying range from peer and administrative counseling up to and including suspension/expulsion, or termination in the case of faculty.

River Mill Academy prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of harassment, intimidation or bullying. The consequence and appropriate remedial action for a person who engages in reprisal or retaliation range from suspension/expulsion, or termination in the case of faculty.

## Prohibition of discrimination and harassment

Any violation of this policy is considered serious and appropriate action will be taken.

### A. Application of policy

All persons, agencies, vendors, contractors and other persons and organizations doing business with or performing services for the school district must comply with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations regarding nondiscrimination. Visitors also are expected to comply with applicable laws, including the prohibition against harassment and bullying of students or harassment of employees. This includes electronic bullying.

This policy will apply in the following circumstances:

1. While in any school building or on any school premises before, during or after school hours;
2. While on any bus or other vehicle as part of any school activity;
3. While waiting at any bus stop;
4. During any school function, extracurricular activity, or other school activity or event.
5. When subject to the authority of school personnel; and

6. Any time or place when the behavior has a direct and immediate effect on maintaining order and discipline in the schools.

B. Definitions - For purposes of this policy, the following definitions will apply:

1. Discrimination means any act that unreasonably and unfavorably differentiates treatment of others based solely on their membership in a socially distinct group or category, such as race, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, religion, age, or disability. Discrimination may be intentional or unintentional.
2. Harassment means any offensive verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct that is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive to interfere with a student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity, or to alter the conditions of an employee's employment and create a hostile working environment. Harassment is unwanted, unwelcome, and uninvited behavior that demeans, threatens or offends the victim and results in a hostile environment for the victim. The hostile environment can be created through pervasive or persistent misbehavior or a single incident, if sufficiently severe.
3. Harassing behavior may include but is not limited to epithets, derogatory comments or slurs and lewd propositions, assault, impeding or blocking movement, offensive touching or any physical interference with normal work or movement, and visual insults, such as derogatory posters or cartoons. Legitimate age-appropriate pedagogical techniques are not considered harassing behavior. It is possible for harassment to occur at various levels; between fellow students or co-workers, between employees and students, or imposed by non-employees, including visitors, on employees and/or students.
4. Bullying shall mean unwelcome verbal, written or physical conduct directed at a person by another person that has the effect of:
  - a) Physically, emotionally or mentally harming a person;
  - b) Damaging, extorting or taking anyone's personal property;
  - c) Placing a person in reasonable fear of physical, emotional or mental harm;
  - d) Placing a person in reasonable fear of damage to or loss of personal property;
  - e) Creating an intimidating or hostile environment.

5. Electronic bullying includes, but is not limited to, the following misuses of technology: harassing, teasing, intimidating, threatening, or terrorizing another person by way of any technological tool, such as sending or posting inappropriate or derogatory email messages, instant messages, text messages, digital pictures or images, or website postings (including blogs) which has the effect of:
  - a) Physically, emotionally or mentally harming a person;
  - b) Placing a person in reasonable fear of physical, emotional or mental harm;
  - c) Placing a person in reasonable fear of damage to or loss of personal property; or
  - d) Creating an intimidating or hostile environment.
6. Sexual Harassment includes any unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favors, or sexually suggestive comments when:
  - a) Submission to the conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or education;
  - b) Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for student or employment decisions affecting such individual; or
  - c) Such conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with an individual's academic or work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or educational environment.

Romantic or sexual advances toward students by employees or romantic or sexual relationships between school employees and students is prohibited by North Carolina law and shall be reported to law enforcement.

C. Procedures for Handling a Reported Incident

1. Any student who believes s/he is the victim of harassment, bullying, and/or discrimination should immediately inform a trusted teacher, advisor or the Principal.
2. Any adult (faculty, parent volunteer, visitor, et al) who believes s/he is the victim of harassment, bullying and/or discrimination should immediately inform a member of the core administrative team (Principal or Assistant Principal).
3. When anyone reports harassment, bullying, and/or discrimination to a school employee, that employee shall notify the Principal within 24 hours.

4. If the Principal is involved in the allegation, then the Assistant Principal will immediately inform the Chairman of the Board of Directors who will chair the investigation, working together with the other members of the Board of Directors. In all other cases, the Principal will be immediately informed and will chair the investigation or appoint a designee to chair the investigation.
5. The Investigation Chair will conduct an investigation of the matter using the Incident Report Form (Attachment A). The Chair may convene a group, including some or all of the following: teachers, other members of the administrators, and/or the school counselor; as appropriate. The Investigation Chair will balance confidentiality and the need to gather facts as all times during the investigation.

## Driving and Parking on School Grounds

(Board Policy Approved 07/15/2021 rev 4)



Students wishing to drive to school must obtain a Drive-to-School permission form from the main office and have it signed by a parent/guardian. We have a limited number of available spaces which will be given out on a first-come, first-served basis to Seniors. Remaining parking permits will be offered to Juniors and Sophomores. Students must possess a valid NC Driver's License in order to purchase a parking permit. Parking permits cost \$30 per year, or \$20 per semester. Unauthorized vehicles – parking on streets or adjacent businesses, parking without a permit – will be towed at the owner's expense. Students must adhere to the policies for driving to school. Any student violating these policies will lose his/her privilege to drive to school. No refunds will be given.

Rules and Regulations for driving on the River Mill Academy campus:

- No speeding in the school zones.
- Students will not loiter in vehicles upon arriving to school.
- No student is permitted to transport other students without written permission from parents.
- No student is allowed to sit in his/her vehicle during the school day.
- Drivers must obey all traffic laws and noise ordinances – no spinning of wheels or loud music (being able to hear your music with car windows rolled up).

- Student drivers must notify the administration immediately if they are involved in an accident on school grounds. This includes any minor damage to another vehicle.
- Students must secure written permission to enter their vehicle during the school day. No student is allowed in a vehicle that does not belong to him or her.
- Students will park in the designated areas assigned to students. Parking spaces are limited.

**Early release students must vacate the premises immediately upon dismissal.** Questions and concerns regarding student parking should be directed to the main office.



## ATHLETICS

### Athletic Department

(Board Policy Approved 06/12/2025 rev 7)

River Mill Academy students have the opportunity to participate on school sponsored athletic teams. Students participating in athletics are expected to maintain standards of conduct both on and off the athletic field. All students, regardless of age or grade, must maintain good grades to participate. Students who are involved in high school athletic teams must meet the standards of the North Carolina High School Athletic Association.

The following North Carolina High School Athletic Association (NCHSAA) policies must be followed:

1. A student must have passed a minimum of 70% of their classes from the previous semester. This policy applies to our middle school as well.
2. The student must take a minimum academic course load each semester and must fulfill this for the entire semester. (must be credited courses).
3. The student must meet local promotional standards and any local GPA requirement. Local promotional standards can be found in the student handbook.
4. A student must not turn 15 (middle school) or 19 (high school) years of age

on or before August 31<sup>st</sup> of the current year.

5. A student cannot exceed 3 (middle school) or 4 (high school) consecutive seasons in the same sport.

Additional NCHSAA policies are found in the NCHSAA handbook, which can be found in the Athletic Directors' office. Detailed information can also be found on the association's website [www.nchsa.org](http://www.nchsa.org). We encourage student athletes and their parent/guardian to visit this site and familiarize yourself with the regulations.

The following policies are in place for River Mill Academy Middle and High School students:

1. A player must have been in attendance for at least 85% of the previous semester.
2. A student must be in school at least 50% of the school day to be eligible to participate in an athletic event scheduled for that day. A late arriving student in grades 6-11 must be in the building by 11:00am until dismissal. A high school senior approved for early release must be in the building by 10:00am until dismissal. Students leaving the building early for an excused reason are still required to be in school for 50% of the day. A school sponsored field trip does not affect participation status.
3. Students may not practice or participate in athletic events while suspended from school.
4. Student athletes receiving an overall grade below 70% will be required to attend tutoring by the teacher, as needed. The student may not participate in practice or athletic events until the next weekly grade check and the student has obtained an overall grade of 70% or above. A weekly grade report from each teacher will be emailed to the Athletic Director or his/her designee. The information is then given to the coach, by the Athletic Director, before the student athlete can return to practice and/or athletic event.
5. The sportsmanship policy will be enforced. This policy can be found in the student handbook and on the school website.
6. Attendance at a pre-season meeting led by the Athletic Department is mandatory for any potential student athlete and a parent/guardian prior to participating in a sport. The meeting will be announced on the school website in addition to announcements at school.

### Structure of the Athletic Department

1. The Athletic Directors are responsible for coaching assignments, processing background checks, budget projections, scheduling games, finding referees, bus drivers, ensuring academic eligibility, and keeping parents and players informed of events.
2. The Principal must approve all activities and events before they are put into a schedule.
3. The Athletic Directors will submit a budget projection to the Principal by May 1<sup>st</sup> of each year.
4. Coaches are to contact the Athletic Directors with all requests such as uniforms, equipment, or any special requests.
5. All equipment and uniforms purchased by River Mill Academy shall become the property of River Mill Academy and entrusted to the care of the Athletic Department.

### How You Can Help:

Every year the Athletic Department needs talented, motivated individuals to help coach. Talk to the Athletic Directors to see where you can help. Be sure to participate in fund raisers sponsored by the Athletic Department or individual teams and attend athletic events showing support to our student athletes.

### Participation Fee

The Athletic Department will charge a fee, per student, to participate in any school sponsored sport. The fee will be determined by the Athletic Directors upon completion of fundraising and budget determinations. The Registration Payment Form and other athletic associated documents can be found under the Athletics section of the River Mill Academy website at [www.rivermill-academy.org](http://www.rivermill-academy.org). All fees owed to the school must be paid prior to the start of the first scheduled athletic contest for all in-season athletes.

### Uniforms and Equipment

Uniforms and equipment will be distributed to coaches at the start of each season. Each coach will be responsible for the distribution of uniforms and equipment. It is the responsibility of each coach to return all items received to the designated Athletic Director at the end of the sports season. Individual athletes will be held financially responsible for any uniform item or equipment not returned.

In the event that a team would like to purchase supplemental uniforms or equipment (i.e. warmup suits, team sweatshirts, etc.), parents of the team are encouraged to coordinate with their team's

head coach to set up individual team fund raising. All individual team fund raising requests must be submitted by the head coach in writing to the Athletic Director for approval at least two weeks prior to the anticipated start date.

#### Incident and Accident Procedures

In the event of an incident or accident at an athletic event on or off campus, the supervising coach or RMA staff member must report said incident or accident to an RMA Administrator as soon as possible.

#### Multi-Sport Athletes

Student athletes are permitted to participate in more than one (1) sport during the same season, only if all coaches are in mutual agreement. All NCHAA rules must be complied with.



## Sportsmanship Policy

(Board Policy Approved 06/21/2018 rev 2)

- I. **Rationale:** Since the inception of River Mill Academy, character and ethics have been foundational goals for the instruction of our students. These goals apply equally to our student athletes. Athletic competition is an educational opportunity that teaches valuable lessons, skills, and attitudes that are not possible in the classroom.
- II. **Sportsmanship Defined:** It is expected that our athletes be gracious in victory, dignified in defeat, and at all times treat game officials, coaches, and opponent athletes with the utmost of courtesy and respect.
- III. **Participation in Athletics:** It is a privilege and should be treated as an honor to represent River Mill Academy in any athletic activity.
- IV. **Unsportsmanlike Behaviors:** These apply during practices, as well as before, during, after all games/competitions.
  - a. **Profanity:** Use of profanity, foul language, or obscene gestures demonstrates a lack of self-control and will not be tolerated.
  - b. **Fighting:** Is prohibited at all times, regardless of who threw the first

punch.

- c. **Trash Talking:** Use of any derogatory language that threatens or verbally abuses any opponent (or game official) is not allowed.
  - d. **Inappropriate Physical Contact:** Such as slapping, pushing, shoving, tripping, throwing punches, etc. is forbidden.
  - e. **Arguing with Game Officials:** Respectfully accept their call, even if you do not agree with it. Do not argue with him/her. Immature outbursts (such as throwing balls, kicking chairs, etc.) will not be tolerated.
- V. **Violations:** Violations of these policies will be handled in the following manner and punishments shall be issued whether or not a game official issues a penalty of unsportsmanlike or ejectable nature. Offenses may result in a suspension from school at the Principal's discretion:
- a. **1st Offense:** The athlete will be suspended from the current game. Then, the athlete, accompanied by a parent or guardian, will attend a meeting with a school administrator prior to returning to the team activity.
  - b. **2nd Offense:** The athlete will be suspended from the current contest as well as the next scheduled contest. (If the offense occurred during a practice, the athlete will be suspended from the next game.) Then, the athlete, accompanied by a parent or guardian, will attend a meeting with a school administrator again prior to returning to the team activity. They will also receive a written notice of prior and future actions.
  - c. **3rd Offense:** The athlete and a parent/guardian will attend a meeting with a school administrator and will receive a written notice and be suspended from the team for the rest of the season.
- VI. Other Punishments:
- a. If a River Mill Academy athlete starts a fight, he/she will be immediately ejected from the game and may be suspended from the team for the remainder of the season.
  - b. If administration determines a pattern is occurring over the sporting season or years, administration may impose additional sanctions.
- VII. **Documentation:** The Coach shall keep written documentation of any/all violations of this policy.

VIII. **Implementation:** All coaches shall enforce this policy. Oversight of the coaches' execution of this policy rests solely in the hands of the Principal. If the Principal finds that this policy is not being implemented, the Principal shall have the authority to enforce this policy against any student athlete who violates it.

## SAFE SCHOOLS

### Emergency Procedures information

At the beginning of the school year, parents must update their child's emergency procedure information by completing and returning the *Student Information and Emergency Form*. The purpose of the form is to identify persons to be contacted in case of an emergency involving the student. It is imperative that this form be completed in a timely manner.



### Inclement Weather Plan

(Board Policy Approved 06/20/2019 rev 5)

During extremely bad weather it may become necessary to cancel school, delay the opening, or close school early. The decision to cancel school or delay the opening will be made as early as possible. When the decision is made to close or delay school, parents/guardians and students are advised of that decision through the following television announcements:

TV – WFMY Channel 2 (CBS), WGHP Channel 8 (Fox), WTVD Channel 11 (ABC), WXII Channel 12 (NBC), News 14 Carolina

Parents and students are reminded **not** to call the TV stations and are asked **not** to call school officials, as such calls tie up telephone lines and may delay the announcement.

A decision to close school early will be made with every effort to balance appropriate notification time for parents with road conditions and safety.

**PARENTS ARE ENCOURAGED TO KEEP THEIR STUDENT(S) HOME IF THEY FEEL THE ROADS ARE UNSAFE FOR TRAVEL. TEENAGERS SHOULD BE DISCOURAGED FROM DRIVING TO/FROM SCHOOL DURING INCLEMENT WEATHER.**

Parents and students *must* have made necessary arrangements in the event that school is cancelled, delayed, or closed early. Students *may not* stay on campus after the buses leave, if the school closes early. The school building is not open to students during the times of delayed opening or early closing, nor is it open to students if school is cancelled for the day.

Before-school care will not operate on delayed opening days; after-school care will not operate during emergency closing days. On days when the school closes early or is closed for the day, all extra-curricular activities, athletic meetings, games and practices shall be cancelled. Likewise, any meetings of the Board of Directors, PTT, or any of their associated committees shall be cancelled.

The Principal may excuse individual student absences if parents elect to keep their student(s) home from school due to safety concerns regarding inclement weather.

If a parent elects to keep his/her student(s) home due to inclement weather, but River Mill Academy remains open, the student's absence is excused *only if* the parent note requesting an excused absence is turned in to the Principal *immediately* upon the student's return.

## No Student First Responders

No student will be allowed to participate as a first responder on River Mill Academy premises or at any River Mill Academy sponsored event.

## HEALTH



## Communicable Diseases Policy

(Board Policy Approved 05/26/2020 rev 1)

The Board strives to provide a safe and healthy environment for all students and employees. The Board also strives to maintain a balance among the needs to educate all eligible students, to protect students' and employees' rights, and to control communicable diseases, including HIV and AIDS.

Under certain circumstances, students with communicable diseases may pose a threat to the health and safety of other students and employees. Decisions regarding the educational status of students with communicable diseases will be made on a case-by-case basis in accordance with this policy. Nothing in this policy is intended to grant or confer any school attendance or education right beyond those existing by law. This policy will be shared with school employees annually and with new employees as part of any initial orientation.

### A. Definition of Communicable Disease

A communicable disease is defined as an illness due to an infectious agent, or its toxic products, that is transmitted directly or indirectly to a person from an infected person or animal.

### B. Precautions

In order to prevent the spread of communicable diseases, school system officials shall distribute guidelines for necessary health and safety precautions that all school system employees must follow. Employees are also required to follow the school system's blood borne pathogens exposure control plan that contains universal precautions and specific work practice controls relating to the handling, disposal, and cleanup of blood and other potentially infectious materials.

### C. Curriculum

The curriculum will include health, hygiene, and safety education, including age-appropriate information concerning safe health practices that inhibit and prevent the spread of diseases, including HIV and AIDS.

### D. Reporting and Notice Requirements

In accordance with G.S. 130A-136, school principals shall report suspected cases of communicable diseases to the county health department. Confidentiality of such reports is protected by law. School principals are presumed by law to be immune from liability for making such reports in good faith. Additionally, parent or guardians will be notified in a timely manner when their child has potentially been exposed to a communicable disease through the exchange of blood with another

individual and will be encouraged to contact their private physician or the county health department for consultation.

If the local health director determines that there is significant risk of HIV transmission, the local health director is responsible for deciding which school personnel will be informed of the identity of a student with AIDS or HIV infection. The health director is also responsible for determining which school personnel will be informed of the identity of students with other communicable diseases required to be reported.

Any employee who is informed of or becomes aware of the student's condition shall respect and maintain that student's right of privacy and the confidentiality of his or her records and may not share that information unless specifically permitted to do so by the health director or the student's parent or guardian or by other applicable state or federal laws or regulations. Permission from a parent or guardian to share a student's HIV status with other school personnel must be in writing. Any documents relating to a student's HIV or AIDS infection will be retained in a locked cabinet separate from the student's other school records and medical records and will be released or shared only as necessary to comply with this policy. Employees who are informed of the student's condition will also be provided with appropriate information concerning necessary precautions and will be made aware of the strict confidentiality requirements. If an employee releases this type of confidential information or record, except as permitted by law, the employee will have committed a misdemeanor and may be subject to further discipline.

In order to address the needs of the student within the school environment, school employees are required to notify the Principal if they are aware or become aware of any student suffering from a communicable disease other than HIV infection. Parents will be encouraged to notify the Principal as well.

Students who are immunodeficient, whether due to AIDS or other causes, face an increased risk of severe complications from exposure to communicable diseases that appear in the school setting. Although students with an HIV infection are not

required to notify school staff of their HIV status, students and their parents or guardians are encouraged to inform the Principal if a student suffers from this immunodeficiency. Students who are immunodeficient because of other communicable diseases, and their parents, are also encouraged to inform the Principal.

If notified that a student suffers from an immunodeficiency, the Principal should request that the notifying party provide information about what types of exposures might put the student at risk and what reasonable practices can be taken in the school setting to minimize risk to the student. Whenever possible, the Principal of a school should notify the parents or guardians of an infected or immunodeficient student (or the student himself or herself, where appropriate) about the presence of chicken pox, influenza, meningococcus, measles, tuberculosis, or other contagious diseases occurring in the school that may present a serious threat to the student's health. Students who are removed from school as a result of such conditions will be provided instruction in an appropriate alternative educational setting.

E. Education/School Attendance for Students with AIDS/HIV Infection  
Students with AIDS or HIV infection will be permitted to attend school without special restrictions except in accordance with 10A N.C.A.C 41A.0202-.0204 and this subsection.

When the local health director notifies the Principal that a student with AIDS or HIV infection may pose a significant risk for transmission, the Principal, in consultation with the local health director, shall appoint an interdisciplinary committee in accordance with state health regulations and procedures established by the Principal. The committee shall consult with the local health director regarding the risk of transmission and advise the Principal regarding the placement of the student. The committee will include appropriate school system personnel, medical personnel, and the student's parent or guardian and may include legal counsel. The parent may request additional participants as necessary to appropriately evaluate the risk. The health director will be responsible for determining whether to add additional members as requested by the parents. The Principal shall inform the board whenever a committee has

been formed and shall advise the board of the professional composition of the committee.

The interdisciplinary committee shall review each case individually in consultation with the local health director to determine (1) the degree to which the student's conduct or presence in school exposes others to possible transmission or other harm and (2) what risk the school environment may pose to the infected student. If the local health director concludes that a significant risk of transmission exists in the student's current placement, the committee must determine whether an appropriate adjustment can be made to the student's school program to eliminate this risk. If that is not possible, the student will be provided instruction in an appropriate alternative educational setting that incorporates protective measures required by the local health director.

If the administrative or instructional personnel on the committee determine that the student has limited strength, vitality, or alertness due to a chronic or acute health problem that adversely affects the student's educational performance, they must refer the student for possible identification and placement as a student with special needs.

All deliberations of the interdisciplinary committee will be kept strictly confidential and shared only as allowed by law. Any student records related to the deliberations of the committee will be retained in a locked cabinet separate from the student's other school records and medical records.

Legal References: B.S. 115C-36, 130A-136, -142 to -144, -152 to -157, 10A N.C.A.C 41A .0202 through .0204.



## Medications

(Board Policy Approved 08/16/2012 rev 1)

No student may have medication of any kind (prescription or over-the-counter) in his/her possession at any time. If your child must have medication of any type given during school hours, including over-the-counter drugs, you have the following choices:

1. You can come to the school and give the medication to your child at the appropriate time(s).
2. You may obtain a copy of a medication form from the school secretary. Take the form to your child's doctor or health care provider and have him/her complete the form by listing the medication(s) needed, dosage, and number of times per day the medication is to be administered. **This form must be completed and signed by the authorized medical professional prescribing both prescription and over-the-counter drugs.** The parent or guardian must also sign the form. Prescription medicines must be brought to school in a pharmacy-labeled bottle, which contains instructions on how and when the medication is to be given. Over-the-counter drugs must be received in the original container and will be administered according to the written instructions by the authorized medical professional.
3. You may discuss with your doctor an alternative schedule for administering medication (e.g. outside of school hours).

NOTE: Some medications such as inhalers or emergency injections can be self-administered and kept by the student **with written medical provider permission.**

*School personnel will not administer any medication to students unless they have received a medication form properly completed and signed by the authorized medical professional who has prescribed the medication, and the medication has been received in an appropriate labeled container. In fairness to those giving the medication and to protect the safety of the child, there will be no exceptions to this policy.*

## Student Illness

**Students must be fever free and vomit free for 24 hours before they may return to school.** Please do not send your child to school if he/she is running a fever over 100 degrees. If your child begins to run a fever over 100 degrees, you will be called

to come and pick up your child.

## Head Lice

If lice or nits are detected, the parent/guardian will be notified and will pick up the student from school. Written instructions will be given to the parent/guardian regarding treatment of head lice infestation. When a student is sent home for lice or nits, the parent must accompany the child upon return to school. The student must be rechecked by trained school personnel prior to returning to class. Students must be lice and nit free to return to class.

## School Wellness Policy

(Board Policy Approved 06/16/2016 rev 1)

River Mill Academy is committed to providing an environment that enhances the development of lifelong wellness practices and ensures that all students are fit, healthy and ready to learn. River Mill Academy recognizes its responsibility to promote healthy eating habits and fitness in students through curriculum and provision of healthy and nutritious meals and snacks to students during the school day. The purpose of the child nutrition program is to give students adequate nutrition during the school day and to teach them, by example, good nutrition practices and how those contribute to their health - and indirectly to their learning. River Mill Academy also is concerned about the prevalence of childhood obesity and consequent health implications during the remainder of the students' lives. In the short- term, overweight children may exhibit compromised health, with effects on school attendance and academic performance. At the same time that we nourish our children's bodies with nutritious food, we need to ensure their physical fitness with an outstanding program of physical education and activity. An essential purpose of the physical education curriculum is to teach the importance of lifelong personal fitness goals and help enable our students to reach those goals.

Strategies for Implementation of the Wellness Policy

### Nutrition Education

Building nutrition knowledge and skills help children make healthy eating and physical activity choices. To make a difference, nutrition education for children should be appropriate for the students' ages, reflect their cultures, and provide opportunities for them to practice nutrition skills and have

fun.

### Physical Activity

Physical activity is critical to a child's healthy weight and healthy lifestyle, as well as to his/her ability to focus in the classroom. To ensure that all children are staying active, physical activity needs to be incorporated into the daily school curriculum and prioritized as essential to each child's social and academic achievement.

### Child Health As A Community

#### Responsibility

While schools need to promote health and physical activity through education and focused programs, children need encouragement and reinforcement from family, the community and all other areas of their lives. To ensure life lasting healthy behavior habits, schools need to equip students with skills and tools that extend beyond the classroom.

### Food Safety/Food Security

The food offered to students must not only be nutritious but must also comply with state and local food safety and sanitation regulations. The quality of the food is determined both by the foods' nutrient value and by the standards by which it was prepared.

- A. All foods made available on campus comply with the state and local food safety and sanitation regulations. Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) plans and guidelines shall be implemented in order to avoid food illness in schools.
- B. For the safety and security of the food and facility, access to the food service operations is limited to Child Nutrition staff and personnel authorized by the Principal or designee.

## FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

### Visitors Policy

(Board Policy Approved 06/16/2022 rev 1)

Parents and other legitimate visitors are welcome on this campus. Persons who are here to interrupt the intended functions of the school are not welcome.

**ALL VISITORS, INCLUDING PARENTS, MUST CHECK IN WITH THE FRONT OFFICE AS SOON AS THEY ARRIVE ON CAMPUS AND RECEIVE A VISITOR PASS.**

Individuals who do not adhere to this

policy will be dealt with in an appropriate manner, including, but not limited to, letters of trespass, warnings issued, local authorities called. **RIVER MILL ACADEMY IS A CLOSED CAMPUS.** Students may not have friends who have graduated or attend other schools visit them during the day, including lunch.



## Parental Involvement

(Board Policy Approved 04/19/2018 rev 4)

Family participation and volunteerism is a vital component of the success of River Mill Academy and our students. Multiple volunteer opportunities exist throughout the year. We encourage you to reach out to your student's teacher(s) and various other faculty members to find ways to be involved. Opportunities include, but certainly are not limited to, athletics, PTT, fundraisers, book fairs, and the RMA Board of Directors.

## Parents-Teachers-Together (PTT)

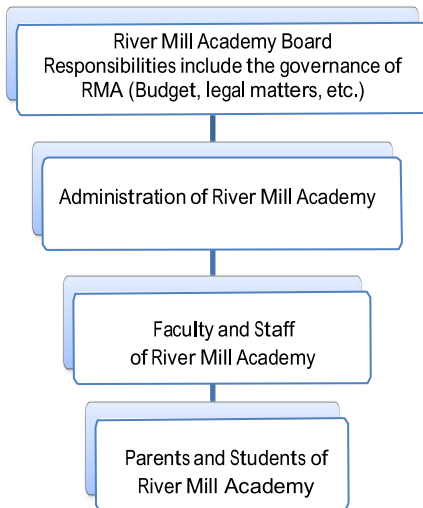


PTT is an amazing group of parent and teacher volunteers who help provide exciting programs and opportunities that enhance our children's education. Our goal is to provide funds for extra materials and programs in addition to what is provided by the school's budget so that classrooms have those extras that so many of the public schools take for granted. A \$20 membership fee per family helps us to fulfill this goal. In addition, we are responsible for hosting events to promote fellowship among parents, students, and teachers. With your support and input, we can continue to support quality educational experiences for our children. You can contact us at [ptt@rivermill-academy.org](mailto:ptt@rivermill-academy.org) for more information.

## Parental Concerns (Chain of Command)

(Board Policy Approved 05/16/2013 rev 1)

For every organization to run effectively there needs to be a chain of command. Listed below is the chain of command for River Mill Academy.



The teacher should first handle parental concerns. In the event that the concern is not resolved following this intervention, the Principal will intercede. The Principal may choose to take the concern to the RMA Board in order to resolve the situation. Teachers should remind parents to follow the proper chain of command when dealing with school policy. The Grievance Policy for parents and students is included in the Student Handbook.

## Communication Protocol

(Board Policy approved 08/03/2011)

In an effort to increase effective communication between students, parents, teachers and administrators, we ask that everyone adhere to the following procedures.

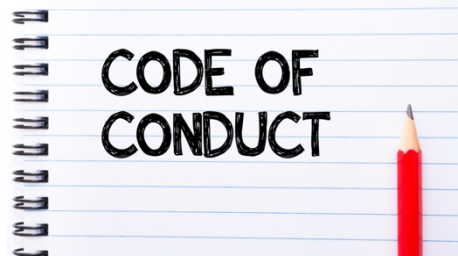
Contact the classroom teacher for the following:

- Student progress
- Classroom management and/or disciplinary concerns
- Field Trips
- Grades
- Projects and Assignments and Attendance
- Conferences
- Curriculum concerns

If you still have questions after meeting with the classroom teacher, you may contact an administrator about your concerns.

Contact the school office for the following:

- School schedule
- Volunteer program
- Student records
- Medical documentation
- General questions



## Community Code of Conduct Policy

(Board Policy Approved 08/18/2011)

### ***River Mill Academy Mission Statement:***

*To allow serious students the opportunity to become confident, well-rounded individuals, prepared for a successful future while providing a safe and positive environment.*

River Mill Academy is a school that promotes responsibility, respect, civility and academic excellence in a safe learning and teaching environment - one free of disruptions and fear. This endeavor requires the help of our students and parents. Our school maintains a strong discipline code and only offers a college preparatory curriculum. Because of these things, we hold ourselves and our members to a higher standard of ethics and behavior.

***All student, parent, guardian and volunteer participants involved in River Mill are included in this Code of Conduct whether they are on school property, on school buses or at school-authorized events or activities.***

Guiding Principles

- All members of the school community are to be treated with respect and dignity, especially persons in positions

of authority

- Members of the school community are expected to use non-violent means to resolve conflict. Physically or verbally aggressive behavior is not an acceptable way to interact with others
- All conferences and communication between members of the school community must be conveyed in a respectful tone using appropriate language

By signing the acknowledgement form included with the orientation materials distributed to students and parent/guardians at the Open House, you agree to follow this Code of Conduct.



## Parent/Student Grievance Policy

(Board Policy Approved 06/20/2019 rev 4)

The Board seeks to provide students, parents, and guardians an opportunity to address concerns in a timely and orderly fashion. The purpose of this policy is to set out procedures for addressing concerns or disputes so as to reach resolution and ensure that all parties' rights are protected. Students, parents, and guardians should attempt to discuss concerns informally with the persons involved before invoking the grievance procedure, except in cases concerning allegations of harassment. If the student, parent, or guardian feels that their issue is still a concern after speaking with the persons involved and that the issue has risen to the level of a grievance, then the student, parent, or guardian may utilize the grievance procedures as described below. The goal of filing a formal grievance is to use the process to reach an equitable solution.

1. **Definition.** A grievance is a formal written complaint by a student, parent, or guardian, that a specific action has violated a School policy, Board policy, law, or regulation. Complaints that do not raise an alleged violation of a School policy, Board policy, law, or regulation, do not constitute a grievance and are not subject to these procedures. This policy does not apply in the case of long-term

suspension or expulsion where the process set forth in N.C. Gen. Stat. §115C-390.1 *et seq* shall apply. In addition, a grievance does not include a complaint of harassment, discrimination, or retaliation which shall be handled pursuant to other applicable Board policies and consistent with state and federal laws.

2. **Time Limits.** A grievance will only be heard if it is submitted within thirty (30) calendar days after the act that is being reported. This 30-day limitation may be extended at the discretion of the Principal.
3. **Prior Attempt at Resolution.** Disputes between students, parents, and classroom teachers may only be made after a meeting with the parent or guardian, teacher, and administration regarding the dispute has occurred, except in cases concerning allegations of harassment.
4. **Grievance Process.**

Step 1. The student, parent, or guardian must submit the grievance in writing stating the School policy, Board policy, law, or regulation that was violated including details of the action and the place, date, and time of the violation. The Complainant should make all efforts to include any details about the event that may be helpful in the decision-making process. The grievance should be submitted to the Principal. If the Principal is implicated in the grievance, the grievance should be submitted to the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Board of Directors.

Step 2. The Principal will hold a meeting with the student, parent, and/or guardian within five (5) business days of receiving the grievance. Only the parent, guardian, or someone acting in loco parentis shall be permitted to join or represent the student in the meeting with the Principal. The Principal shall provide a written response to the grievance within five (5) business days after the meeting. If the student, parent, or guardian is satisfied with the Principal's decision, the grievance is considered resolved. The student, parent, or guardian shall notify the Principal in writing that the grievance has been resolved.

Step 3. If the student, parent, or guardian is not satisfied with the decision of the Principal, they may submit an appeal to the Board of Directors. The appeal must be

submitted in writing to the Board Chair within five (5) business days of the response from the Principal.

Step 4. Where the grievance is submitted directly to the Board as set forth above or after receiving an appeal, the Board shall consider the matter at its next regularly scheduled meeting, provided such meeting is more than seven (7) days after the submission of the grievance/appeal by the student, parent, or guardian. The Board will consider the grievance/appeal at a meeting in accordance with its Bylaws and the North Carolina Open Meetings Law. Prior to the meeting, at the Board's sole discretion, the Board may request that an investigation be conducted, or additional information gathered regarding the grievance. The student, parent, and/or guardian may attend the Board meeting. The Board will review the written documentation including the decision of the Principal and will issue a final decision within fifteen (15) business days of receiving the grievance or appeal. The Board's decision concerning the grievance is final.



## PARENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS

On August 16, 2023, the North Carolina General Assembly ratified N.C. Sess. Law.2023-106, commonly known as the "Parents' Bill of Rights." The law enumerates rights of parents to participate in and direct the education of their children. It also requires public school units, including charter schools, to adopt numerous policies implementing its provisions. The River Mill Academy Board of Directors approved the following group of policies on June 20, 2024, to comply with the legislation.

### Parental Rights

(Board Policy Approved 06/20/2024)

#### Parents' Bill of Rights

Pursuant to State and federal law, a parent has the right to the following:

1. To direct the education and care of his or her child
2. To direct the upbringing and moral or religious training of his or her child
3. To enroll his or her child in a public or nonpublic school and any school choice option available to the parent for which the child is otherwise eligible
4. To access and review all education records relating to his or her child, as authorized by the Federal Educational Right and Privacy Act ("FERPA"), 20 U.S.C. § 1232g
5. To make health care decisions for his or her child, unless otherwise provided by law
6. To access and review all medical records of his or her child, as authorized by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 ("HIPAA"), P.L. 104-191, as amended, except as follows:
  - If an authorized investigator requests that information not be release to a parent because the parent is subject to an investigation of either (i) a crime committed against the child or (ii) an abuse and neglect complaint; or when otherwise prohibited by law
7. To prohibit the creation sharing, or storage of a biometric scan of his or her child without the parent's prior written consent, except as authorized pursuant to a court order or otherwise required by law
8. To prohibit the creation, sharing, or storage of his or her child's blood or DNA without the parent's prior written consent, unless otherwise authorized by law
9. To prohibit the creation by the State, or the school, of a video or voice recording of his or her child without the parent's prior written consent, unless such record is made in connection with:
  - A court proceeding
  - An investigation into alleged neglect or abuse of the child
  - A safety demonstration
  - An academic or extracurricular activity
  - Classroom instruction
  - A photo identification card
  - Security or surveillance of buildings, grounds, or school transportation
10. To be promptly notified if the school, or any employee of the school, suspects that a criminal offense has been committed against his or her child, unless doing so would impede an investigation by law enforcement or a county welfare agency

#### Specific Rights Related to Child's Education

Pursuant to G.S. 115C-76.25, a parent or legal guardian's rights with regard to his or her child's education include the following:

- The right to consent or withhold consent for participating in reproductive health and safety educational programs, consistent with the requirements of G.S. 115C-81.30
- The right to seek a medical or religious exemption from immunization requirements consistent with the requirements of G.S. 130A-156 and G.S. 130A-157
- The right to review statewide standardized assessment results as part of the State report card
- The right to request an evaluation of their child for an academically or intellectually gifted program, or for identification as a child with a disability, as provided by State and federal law
- The right to inspect and purchase public school unit textbooks and other supplementary instructional materials, when available
- The right to access information relating to policies for promotion or retention, including high school graduation requirements
- The right to receive student report cards on a regular basis that clearly depict and grade the student's academic performance in each class or course, the student's conduct, and the student's attendance
- The right to access information relating to the State public education system, State standards, report card requirements, attendance requirements, and textbook requirements
- The right to participate in any parent-teacher organizations
- The right to be informed of, and to opt-in to, any survey of protected information under G.S. 115C-76.65
- The right to opt into certain data collection for their child, as provided in Part 5 of Article 7B and Article 29 of Chapter 115C the North Carolina General Statutes
- The right to review all available records of materials their child has borrowed from a school library

#### **Definitions**

As used in these policies, "parent" shall mean a person who has legal custody of a child, including a natural parent, adoptive parent, or legal guardian.

#### **Miscellaneous Provisions**

- Nothing in this policy authorizes a parent or guardian to engage in unlawful conduct, or to abuse or neglect a child.
- Nothing in this policy shall prohibit or otherwise limit a State official, law enforcement, or a court of competent jurisdiction from acting pursuant to pursuant to legal authority granted under local, state, or federal law.
- An employee who encourages, coerces, or attempts to encourage or coerce a

child to withhold information from his or her parent may be subject to disciplinary action.

- A copy of this policy shall be posted on the school's website.

Ref.: G.S. 114A-10; G.S. 114A-15; G.S. 115C-76.25

## **Parent Involvement Policy**

(Board Policy Approved 06/20/2024)

### **Purpose**

The school believes that parental involvement and empowerment is fundamental to the successful education of all students. It is the responsibility of all teachers, administrators, and staff to (i) strengthen partnerships with parents and families and (ii) develop and implement a well-planned, comprehensive program to assist parents and families in effectively participating in their child's education.

To that end, the school has developed this and other policies to (i) inform parents of their legal rights and responsibilities with regards to their parent education; (ii) provide a parent's guide for student achievement on an annual basis; and (iii) effectively involve parents in the school and their child's education.

Ref. G.S. 115C-76.20

### **Parental Guide**

Each year, the school shall distribute a written parental guide to student achievement that (i) includes, at minimum, the information required by the State Board of Education and (ii) is understandable to students and parents. The parental guide shall be discussed at the beginning of each school year in meetings with parents, students, and teachers.

Ref. G.S. 115C-76.30

### **Links to Community Services**

The school shall provide on its website links to community services available to students and their families.

Ref. G.S. 115C-76.25(a)(1)

### **Parent Input/Parent Advisory Councils**

Each year, the school shall solicit input from parents regarding development, implementation, and evaluation of parent involvement programs.

The principal may form one or more parent advisory councils to assist the school in fostering cooperation among parents, teachers, administration, and staff. The principal shall inform parents about opportunities to participate in such parent

advisory councils, as well as other volunteer programs and other activities, as they become available.

Ref. G.S. 115C-76.35(a)(2) and (3)

### **Information Regarding School Assignments and Progress**

At the beginning of each year, the principal and teachers shall communicate to parents how textbooks are used to implement the curricular objectives in their child's classes. Teachers shall also provide a syllabus or other information explaining the major topics to be covered over the course of the class and identifying the textbooks and primary supplementary materials that will be used in the class. Teachers shall periodically update parents regarding changes in the curriculum and additional materials used in the class.

Parents may access information regarding their child's assignments, including homework assignments, and their child's attendance and progress through the student data management system, teacher to parent communication tools, and online platforms used by teachers.

Ref. G.S. 115C-76.35(b)(1), (2), and (3)

### **Information Regarding Clubs and Activities**

At the beginning of each year, the school shall provide information to parents regarding clubs, as well as curricular and extracurricular activities available to children at the school, including the purpose and nature of such clubs and activities. Information regarding clubs and extracurricular activities will be communicated to parents through mediums such as the school's website.

Ref. G.S. 115C-76.35(b)(6)

## **Parental Information Requests Policy**

(Board Policy Approved 06/20/2024)

A parent may request any information any information that the parent has a right to access under Article 7B, Part 1, of Chapter 115C of the North Carolina General Statutes, including the information set out in the school's policies governing Parent Rights, Parent Involvement, Parent Review of Instructional Materials, and Notifications Regarding Student Health. Parents requesting information under this section must submit their request in writing to the principal or designee.

### **Process for Responding to Requests**

If a parent submits such a written request for information pursuant to this policy:

1. Within 10 business days of receiving the request, the principal shall either (i) provide the requested information to the parent or (ii) provide a notice that an extension of no more than 20 business days is necessary to respond to the request due to either its volume or complexity.
2. If the principal fails to respond to the request or provide the information within the time frames set forth above, the parent may contact the President of the school's Board of Directors to request such information. In such case the President shall ensure that a response is provided to the parent within 10 business days.
3. If the President of the Board denies the request or does not respond to the request for information within 10 business days, the parent may appeal the denial or lack of response to the Board of Directors. The parent must submit such an appeal within 20 business days of the date the request was submitted to the President.
4. If an information request is appealed to the Board of Directors within the time limit set forth in step 3, above, the Board shall place the parent's appeal on its agenda for the next board meeting. Pursuant to G.S. 115C-76.40, the Board's decision under this policy is final and is not subject to judicial review.

**Publication**

A copy of this policy shall be posted on the school's website.

Ref. G.S. 115C-76.40

## Parent Review of Instructional Materials Policy

(Board Policy Approved 06/20/2024)

**Inspection of Textbooks and Supplementary Materials**

Parents have a right to inspect all textbooks and supplementary instructional materials used in their child's classroom. Parents who wish to inspect materials may submit their request in writing to the child's teacher. If the teacher does not respond or denies the request, the parent may forward the request to the principal using the procedures set out in policy for Parent Information Requests.

**Objections to Textbooks and Supplementary Materials**

If a parent objects to textbooks or supplementary instructional materials used in their child's classroom, they shall share that objection with their child's teacher, who shall work to accommodate the objection to the extent practicable. A parent who is not satisfied with the

teacher's response may then raise the objection with the principal using the same procedures set out in the school's policy for Resolution of Parent Concerns.

**Publication**

A copy of this policy shall be made available at the school site and on the school's website.

Ref. G.S. 115C-76.40

## Resolution of Parent Concerns Policy

(Board Policy Approved 06/20/2024)

This policy governs the resolution of parent concerns regarding the school's compliance with the requirements of Article 7B, Part 1, of Chapter 115C of the North Carolina General Statutes, or the school's policies governing Parent Rights, Parent Involvement, Parent Review of Inspection Materials, or Notifications Regarding Student Health. This policy does not govern the resolution of other parental concerns.

Parents are encouraged to communicate and seek to cooperatively resolve any concerns regarding their student's education with their student's individual classroom teachers before seeking to use the procedures set forth in this policy. This often serves as the quickest and most efficient way to address a parent's concerns.

**Process for Responding to Parent Concerns**

Parent concerns raised shall be submitted in writing to the principal and shall be resolved using the following procedure:

1. Within 10 business days of receiving the request, the principal shall either (i) provide a response to the parent's concern or (ii) inform the parent that additional time, up to 20 days, is required to respond to the parent's concern.
2. If the principal fails to respond within the time frames set forth above, the parent may raise the concern in writing with the President of the school's Board of Directors. In such case the President shall ensure that a response is provided to the parent within 10 business days.
3. If the Chair does not resolve the parent's concern, the parent may submit an appeal to the school's Board of Directors. The parent must submit such an appeal within 20 business days of the date the concern was submitted to the President.
4. If a concern is appealed to the Board of Directors within the time limit set forth in step 3, above, the Board shall place the parent's appeal on its agenda for the

next board meeting.

**Notice to the Board of Directors**

The principal shall inform the Board of Directors of any concerns submitted by a parent in this section.

**Applicable Law**

Nothing herein shall prevent or limit a parent's ability to utilize the remedies set forth in G.S. 115C-76.60.

Ref. G.S. 115C-76.60

## Student Surveys Policy

(Board Policy Approved 06/20/2024)

**Protected Information**

The following shall constitute "Protected Information" for the purpose of this policy:

- Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student's parent
- Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student's family
- Sex behavior or attitudes
- Illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior
- Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships
- Legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, and ministers
- Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or student's parent
- Income, other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such program

**Collection of Protected Information**

Parents shall be notified before any survey or evaluation collecting or revealing protected information is conducted. The notice shall include the full text of the survey or evaluation.

No student shall be permitted to participate in a survey or evaluation collecting or revealing Protected Information unless the child's parent provides prior written consent.

Ref. G.S. 115C-76.65

## Notification Regarding Student Health Policy

(Board Policy Approved 06/20/2024)

**Annual Notice of Health Care Services**

The school shall notify parents at the beginning of each school year of each health care service offered at the school, if any, and the means for the parent to consent to such service.

**Well-Being Questionnaires and Health Screenings**

No well-being questionnaire or health screening shall be administered to a student in grades kindergarten through third grade without consent from the child's parent or legal guardian.

Prior to the administration to students in kindergarten through third grade, the school shall provide a copy of any student well-being questionnaire or health screening form. The notice shall include the method for the parent to consent to the use of the questionnaire or form for his or her child.

**Changes in Services**

The school shall notify parents of any changes in services related their child's mental, emotional, or physical health or well-being, or a change in the school's ability to provide a safe and supportive learning environment for the child. Such notice shall be provided prior to, or at least at the same time as, the change is made.

**Parental Involvement**

Teachers and staff shall encourage children to discuss issues related to their well-being with their parents, and, when appropriate, shall facilitate discussions of such issues with a child's parents.

No teacher or employee of the school shall prohibit or encourage a child to withhold information about the child's mental, emotional, or physical health or well-being, or changes in services related to the child's health, or well-being, from the child's parent.

Nothing in this policy shall prohibit parents from accessing their child's health or education records, unless school personnel, in consultation with the principal, reasonably believe that such disclosure would result in the child being subject to abuse or neglect.

**Name Changes/Changes in Pronouns**

The school shall notify a child's parent before changing the name or pronouns used for a child, either by the school's personnel or in the student's records. This policy does not apply to common

nicknames or shortened versions of a child's first or middle name (such as using "Rob" for "Robert," or "Jane" for a child named "Sarah Jane")

**Age-Appropriate Instruction for Children in Grades K-4**

Instruction on gender identity, sexual activity, or sexuality shall not be included in the curriculum provided in kindergarten through fourth grade, regardless of whether the information is provided by school personnel or third parties.

This policy does not prohibit teachers or school personnel from responding to student-initiated questions.

**Consent for Instruction Regarding Reproductive Health**

The school shall notify parents before providing instruction regarding reproductive health, including instruction regarding health and safety provided to students in seventh grade. Parents may opt-out of this instruction by informing their child's classroom teacher.

Ref. G.S. 115C-76.45

# *River Mill Academy* - Calendar for 2025-2026

August 1	Optional Teacher Workday
August 4,5 & 6	Mandatory Teacher Workdays
August 7	First Day for Students / Orientation
August 29	Early Release for Students – 11:30 am
September 1	Labor Day Holiday
September 5	Progress Reports Issued
October 9	End of the 1 <sup>st</sup> 9-week grading period
October 10	Optional Teacher Workday
October 16 & 17	Early Release / Face-to-Face Conferences
November 11	Veterans' Day Holiday
November 14	Progress Reports Issued
November 26	Optional Teacher Workday
November 27 & 28	Thanksgiving Holidays
December 19	End of the Second Grading Period
December 19	Early Release for Students—11:30 am
December 22	Optional Teacher Workday
December 23-31	Christmas Holidays
January 1	New Year's Day Holiday
January 2	Optional Teacher Workdays
January 9	Report Cards Issued
January 19	Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday
February 5	Progress Reports Issued
February 6	Optional Teacher Workday
March 5	End of the 3 <sup>rd</sup> 9-week grading period
March 6	Optional Teacher Workday
March 12 & 13	Early Release / Face-to-Face Conferences
April 3	Optional Teacher Workday
April 6-10	Spring Break
April 17	Progress Reports Issued
May 20	Early Release for Students—11:30 am
May 21	Mandatory Teacher Workday
May 22	Optional Teacher Workday
May 25	Memorial Day Holiday
May 26 & 27	Optional Teacher Workday

## Dates to Remember

### **End of the Grading Period**

October 9, 2025  
 December 19, 2025  
 March 5, 2026  
 May 20, 2026

### **Report Cards Issued**

October 16 & 17, 2025\*  
 January 9, 2026  
 March 12 & 13, 2026\*  
 May 20, 2026

\*Face-to-Face Conferences

### **Progress Reports**

September 5, 2025  
 November 14, 2025  
 February 5, 2026  
 April 17, 2026

### **Teacher Workdays (No School for Students)**

August 1,4,5 & 6, 2025  
 October 10, 2025  
 November 26, 2025  
 December 22, 2025  
 January 2, 2026  
 February 6, 2026  
 March 6, 2026  
 April 3, 2026  
 May 21,22,26 & 28, 2026

### **Early Release Days**

August 29, 2025  
 October 16 & 17, 2025  
 December 19, 2025  
 March 12 & 13, 2026  
 May 20, 2026

### **Inclement Weather Make-up Days**

February 6, 2026  
 March 6, 2026  
 Additional days as needed

## Notes