



6-8 Student Parent Handbook

2026-2027



Ridgefield Public Schools
90 East Ridge Road
Ridgefield, CT 06877
<https://www.ridgefield.org/>



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WELCOME

We are looking forward to an exciting 2026-2027 academic year filled with memorable educational experiences for all of our students and families alike. As always we look to our mission and the vision of the graduate to guide us in our work with students and families.

We provide the 6-8 RPS Student-Parent Handbook as a helpful communication tool. In setting up each year for success, we ask our students and parents to carefully consider each section of the handbook in order to familiarize themselves with important information, procedures, guidelines, policies, and available resources that govern the daily operation of our middle schools. We pride ourselves on ensuring a safe, inclusive, and welcoming learning environment filled with robust learning opportunities across all of our schools.

In an effort to make the information in this handbook helpful we have summarized Board of Education policies and regulations. The complete Board of Education policies and regulations can be found on the [district website](#) at the following link: [Board of Education Policies](#).

Working collaboratively with all of the stakeholders in our district is important to us. Your regular review of the handbook is the start of our partnership in cultivating our Ridgefield learning community. Your support in acknowledging the expectations outlined in the handbook helps us continuously aim for the high standards and expectations we set out to fulfill each year.

We respectfully ask every member of our school community to commit themselves to the mission, guidelines, and expectations outlined in our handbook with an electronic 'sign off' to indicate an understanding and review of its contents. The sign-off is available in the PowerSchool Parent Portal.

We urge all of our students and families to take part in the many dynamic opportunities presented across the district this year. We wish you a most gratifying year and look forward to creating a partnership with you centered on the growth and development of your children.

Sincerely,

The Ridgefield Public Schools Administrative Team



RPS Mission Statement

Ridgefield Public Schools provides engaging, relevant, and personalized learning experiences so all students can pursue their interests and prepare for life, learning, and work as global citizens.

To accomplish this mission, our community including educators, students, and parents will partner to:

- Foster academic, social, and emotional growth for all students.
- Promote wellness of body and mind.
- Build an inclusive climate of trust, safety, and respect.
- Value diversity by cultivating global competencies.
- Attract, support, and retain talented educators who embrace continuous learning.

Vision of the Graduate

The skills and attributes that a Ridgefield graduate should possess upon completion of a Ridgefield Public Schools education.

Collaborative

Graduates who are collaborative contribute cooperatively and responsibly to a team when they are looking for solutions to rigorous and complex problems.

Innovative

Graduates who are innovative find creative solutions to authentic problems. They think flexibly and critically while gathering information to synthesize and apply what they have learned.

Mindful

Graduates who are mindful embrace empathy and advocate respect for themselves and others. Through self-reflection and awareness, they understand diverse cultures and perspectives. They model the conviction that ethics, leadership, and service to others are critical elements of responsible citizenship.

Communicative

Graduates who are communicative strategically navigate, construct, and articulate specific messages. They utilize their communication skills in an effective, clear, and precise manner across multiple formats of media literacy.

Knowledgeable

Graduates who are knowledgeable are independent learners who draw upon a wide range of skills for different purposes. They seek, gather and critique information from a variety of sources.

Resilient

Graduates who are resilient are adaptable and persistent in their journey toward growth on rigorous and complex problems. They embrace failure and are intellectual risk-takers. They are self-motivated, thoughtful, and independent decision-makers who value lifelong learning.



Calendars/Schedules/Important Dates

District Calendar

The district calendar is available on the district website at www.ridgefield.org/Calendar.

School Calendars

[East Ridge Middle School](#)

[Scotts Ridge Middle School](#)

Marking Period and Grade Reporting

The middle schools follow a quarterly model (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4). Parents can expect to receive communication about student progress at the middle and end of each quarter through Progress Reports. Parents can also support their child by monitoring grades or missed assignments through the Parent Portal on PowerSchool. Specific dates and information will be provided by the middle school principal.

6-8 Assessment Overview

In Ridgefield Public Schools all students in kindergarten through eighth grade are assessed in a variety of ways in order to ensure that instruction is tailored to each student's educational needs. Assessments take place in many different forms and can be standardized, curriculum based, or observational. Which assessments are used to access different information about student learning varies by grades and individual student needs.

All students take the standardized i-Ready assessment in math and literacy. This is the primary standardized assessment data that teachers use, alongside other classroom assessments, to measure student progress. The assessment is taken three times a year.

In addition, the State of Connecticut requires all districts to administer the Smarter Balanced Assessment in math and literacy to students in grades 6 through 8 and the Next Generation Science Assessment to students in 8th grade.



School Schedules

The starting, dismissal, and early dismissal times for each school are listed below. In the event of dismissal due to an emergency (e.g., power outage), the school dismissal time will be noted in the emergency notification statement.

School	REGULAR		DELAY		EARLY DISMISSAL	
	Start Time	Dismissal Time	2 Hour Delay Start Time	3 Hour Delay Start Time	Early Dismissal End Time	Extended Early Dismissal
Branchville Elementary	8:35	3:25	10:35	11:35	11:40	12:40
Barlow Mountain Elementary	9:10	4:00	11:10	12:10	12:15	1:15
Farmingville Elementary	9:10	4:00	11:10	12:10	12:15	1:15
Ridgebury Elementary	8:35	3:25	10:35	11:35	11:40	12:40
Scotland Elementary	8:35	3:25	10:35	11:35	11:40	12:40
Veterans Park Elementary	9:10	4:00	11:10	12:10	12:15	1:15
East Ridge Middle School	8:00	2:50	10:00	11:00	11:05	12:05
Scotts Ridge Middle School	8:00	2:50	10:00	11:00	11:05	12:05
Ridgefield High School	7:25	2:15	9:25	10:25	10:30	



RIDGEFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS 2026-27 SCHOOL CALENDAR

BOE approved on 9/8/25.

- New Teacher Orientation
- Teacher Prep Day
- No School/Teacher PD Day/*Para PD Day
- School in Session
- No School/Offices Closed
- No School/Offices Open
- Early Dismissal/ Teacher & Staff PD Day
- Early Dismissal for Students

KEY DATES

July 3	Fourth of July Observed
Aug 19 & 20	New Teacher Orientation
Aug 21	Prep Day for Teachers
Aug 24 & 25	Professional Dev Day for Teachers
Aug 25* & 26*	Professional Dev Day for Paraeducators
Aug 26	Building Day for Teachers
Aug 27	First Day for K-Gr 9 Students
Aug 28	First Day for Gr 10-12 Students
Sept 7	Labor Day
Sept 17	Early Dismissal/PD Day
Sept 21	Yom Kippur
Oct 9	Early Dismissal/PD Day
Oct 12	Columbus Day
Nov 3	Election Day/PD Day for Teachers
Nov 11	Veterans Day
Nov 25	Early Dismissal
Nov 26 & 27	Thanksgiving Recess
Dec 10	Early Dismissal/PD Day
Dec 23	Early Dismissal
Dec 24-31	Winter Recess
Dec 31	*Offices Open 1/2 day
Jan 1	New Year's Day
Jan 15	Early Dismissal/PD Day
Jan 18	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
Feb 12	PD Day for Teachers
Feb 15	Presidents' Day
Feb 16-19	February Recess
Mar 25	Early Dismissal/PD Day
March 26	Good Friday
April 9	Early Dismissal/PD Day
Apr 12 -Apr 16	Spring Recess
May 31	Memorial Day
June 15	* Last Day of School (Early Dismissal for Students)

*Weather related changes to the Last Day of School occur on a supplemental document.

Students: 181 days Teachers: 187 days

July 2026							19 Days
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	
			1	2	3	4	
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	
26	27	28	29	30	31		
August 2026							3 Days
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	
						1	
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	
23	24	25*	26*	27	28	29	
30	31						
September 2026							20 Days
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	
		1	2	3	4	5	
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	
27	28	29	30				
October 2026							21 Days
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	
				1	2	3	
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	
November 2026							18 Days
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	
29	30						
December 2026							16 Days
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	
		1	2	3	4	5	
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	
27	28	29	30	31*			
January 2027							19 Days
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	
					1	2	
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	
February 2027							14 Days
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	
31	1	2	3	4	5	6	
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	
28							
March 2027							22 Days
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	
28	29	30	31				
April 2027							17 Days
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	
				1	2	3	
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	
25	26	27	28	29	30		
May 2027							20 Days
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	
						1	
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	
23	24	25	26	27	28	29	
30	31						
June 2027							11 Days
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	
		1	2	3	4	5	
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
13	14	15*	16	17	18	19	
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	
27	28	29	30				



Daily Schedules

Middle School Schedules

All middle schools follow an alternating A/B day schedule. Special classes alternate on the A/B schedule. If there is an unexpected missed day of school (e.g. snow day) the day that was missed will occur on the day students return.

For example, if the last day students attended school (Monday) was an A day and Tuesday was an unexpected Snow day, students would return on Wednesday to follow the B-day schedule. The same is true if there are consecutive missed days. Students will return to school on the next letter day of the last day they attended.

All school calendars are updated after any unexpected school closures and sent out to students and parents accordingly. All middle schools maintain the same amount of instructional minutes per subject area of study (e.g. 48 mins for specials - art).

Our middle schools offer the following courses:

Team Academic: English Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, Science

Unified Arts: World Languages (Spanish/French), Visual art, music: band/orchestra/chorus/music elements, family consumer science (7th and 8th grade only), physical education, health, learning lab

Lunch and Recess: The lunch/recess block is 46 minutes (Approximately 23 minutes each for lunch and recess daily)

An example of a typical MS schedule is below.

Period	Time	A Day / B Day
Homeroom	8-8:08 AM	Homeroom
Period 1	8:08-8:56	Team Academic
Period 2	8:59-9:46	Team Academic
Period 3	9:49-10:36	Unified Arts
Period 4	10:39-11:26	P4--Recess/Lunch - Grade 6
Period 5	11:29-12:18 PM	Team Academic (P5--Recess/Lunch-Grades 7)
Period 6	12:21-1:10	Team Academic (P6--Recess/Lunch-Grade 8)
Period 7	1:13-2:00	Unified Arts
Period 8	2:03-2:50	Unified Arts/ Learning Lab
Dismissal	2:50 PM	End of Day



Arrival

The school day begins at 8:00 a.m. in homeroom. However, students should be given enough time to arrive at school, go to their locker, and walk to homeroom by 8:00. *Any student who arrives at school after 8:00 must sign-in at security (ERMS) or the front office (SRMS) as a late arrival to school.*

School Bell Schedules

ERMS Bell Schedules 2026-2027

Regular Bell Schedule

Homeroom	8:00 - 8:08	8
Period 1	8:12 - 8:58	46
Period 2	9:02 - 9:48	46
Period 3	9:52 - 10:38	46
Period 4	10:42 - 11:28	46
Lunch	10:42 - 11:05	
Recess	11:05 - 11:28	
Period 5	11:32 - 12:18	46
Lunch	11:32 - 11:55	
Recess	11:55 - 12:18	
Period 6	12:22 - 1:08	46
Lunch	12:22 - 12:45	
Recess	12:45 - 1:08	
Period 7	1:12 - 1:59	47
Period 8	2:03 - 2:50	47

Early Dismissal Bell Schedule - lunch served

Homeroom	8:00 - 8:05	5
Period 1	8:09 - 8:27	18
Period 2	8:31 - 8:50	19
Period 3	8:54 - 9:13	19
Period 4	9:17 - 9:36	19
Period 5	9:40 - 9:58	18
Period 6	10:02 - 10:20	18
Period 7	10:24 - 10:42	18
Period 8	10:46 - 11:05	19

Extended F.D. Bell Schedule - lunch served

Homeroom	8:00 - 8:05	5
Period 1	8:09 - 8:35	26
Period 2	8:39 - 9:05	26
Period 3	9:09 - 9:35	26
Period 4	9:39 - 10:05	26
Period 5	10:09 - 10:35	26
Period 6	10:39 - 11:05	26
Period 7	11:09 - 11:35	26
Period 8	11:39 - 12:05	26

2 Hour Delay Opening Bell Schedule

Homeroom	10:00 - 10:05	5
Period 2	10:09 - 10:40	31
Period 3	10:44 - 11:16	32
Period 4	11:20 - 11:51	31
Period 5	11:55 - 12:26	31
Period 6	12:30 - 1:01	31
Period 7	1:05 - 1:37	32
Period 8	1:41 - 2:13	32
Period 9	2:17 - 2:50	33

Pride Bell Schedule - A.M.

Homeroom	8:00 - 8:08	8
Period 1	8:12 - 8:54	42
Pride Period	8:58 - 9:28	30
Period 2	9:32 - 10:14	42
Period 3	10:18 - 11:00	42
Period 4	11:04 - 11:46	42
Lunch	11:04 - 11:25	
Recess	11:25 - 11:46	
Period 5	11:50 - 12:32	42
Lunch	11:50 - 12:11	
Recess	12:11 - 12:32	
Period 6	12:36 - 1:18	42
Lunch	12:36 - 12:57	
Recess	12:57 - 1:18	
Period 7	1:22 - 2:04	42
Period 8	2:08 - 2:50	42

Pride Bell Schedule - P.M.

Homeroom	8:00 - 8:08	8
Period 1	8:12 - 8:54	42
Period 2	8:58 - 9:40	42
Period 3	9:44 - 10:26	42
Period 4	10:30 - 11:12	42
Lunch	10:30 - 10:51	
Recess	10:51 - 11:12	
Period 5	11:16 - 11:58	42
Lunch	11:16 - 11:37	
Recess	11:37 - 11:58	
Period 6	12:02 - 12:44	42
Lunch	12:02 - 12:23	
Recess	12:23 - 12:44	
Period 7	12:48 - 1:30	42
Period 8	1:34 - 2:16	42
Pride Period	2:20 - 2:50	30

3 Hour Delay Opening Bell Schedule

Homeroom	11:00 - 11:05	5
Period 2	11:09 - 11:33	24
Period 3	11:37 - 12:01	24
Period 4	12:05 - 12:29	24
Period 5	12:33 - 12:57	24
Period 6	1:01 - 1:25	24
Period 7	1:29 - 1:53	24
Period 8	1:57 - 2:21	24
Period 9	2:25 - 2:50	25



SRMS BELL SCHEDULE

2026-2027



<u>REGULAR SCHEDULE</u> Homeroom 8:00 - 8:08 Period 1 8:12 - 8:58 Period 2 9:02 - 9:48 Period 3 9:52 - 10:38 Period 4/G6 10:42 - 11:28 Period 5/G7 11:32 - 12:18 Period 6/G8 12:22 - 1:08 Period 7 1:12 - 1:59 Period 8 2:03 - 2:50
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Transportation

Parking

Parents and visitors should park in the designated parking area at each school. All school parking lots are equipped with surveillance video for safety. Cars should not be parked in undesignated areas (e.g. on the grass, in fire lanes, on the curb, etc.) at any time. Accessible parking spots are clearly marked and reserved solely for individuals eligible to park in these spots at each school building. This is monitored by our school security officers and violators will be asked to move their vehicle if parked illegally. At peak times in the year and during special events, schools on the same campus may share parking lots to help with the overflow of vehicles.

Parent Drop-Off and Pick-Up

Parents that opt to drop-off or pick up their child, please refer to individual school procedures. Parents are not permitted in the bus lane during arrival and dismissal. Parents picking up middle school students should NOT park and enter the building to pick up their child. Parents should wait in the parent pick-up line or allotted spaces and wait for their child to come out.

Bicycles

If students ride a bike to school, they are responsible to park and secure it properly at a designated area. For the best bike security, lock and chain the bike to one of the bike racks located at the front of each building.

Schools are not responsible for stolen or damaged bicycles.

Bus Routes and Bus Stops

All students will be notified of their bus stop and times for pick up and drop off via the PowerSchool portal prior to the start of school. Students and parents are asked to wait safely at their bus stop and abide by the road rules of the neighborhood to ensure the safety of all children waiting to board a bus.

School Bus Changes

If there are any changes to a bus route; cancellations; delays or emergencies in regards to a bus, parents will be notified immediately by the district via ConnectEd in the desired method of communication, selected by you in PowerSchool (text, email, or phone).



Bus Notes

Parent permission is required in order for your child to ride a different bus or their regular bus but stop at a different stop. You must enter this in SDM as an exception. **No bus notes will be accepted over the phone or via email.**

Transportation Coordinator

Mr. Billy Gramajo is the district transportation coordinator. If you have questions, comments or concerns regarding school transportation he can be reached at (203) 894-5550 x 1126 or RPSTransportation@ridgefieldps.net.

Security and Safety

School Resources Officers

The School Resource Officers (SROs) are members of the Ridgefield Police Department assigned to Ridgefield Public Schools to assist administrators in providing a safe and controlled climate for our students. In addition to providing protection and security, they are involved in intervention and prevention programs such as the D.A.R.E. School Resource Officers are also resources for students, parents, and teachers.

Security Personnel

Ridgefield Public Schools security personnel promote safety of the total school community. Members of the security team assist the administration and staff in providing a safe and controlled climate for our students as well as a secure campus. Security personnel are responsible for checking visitors in and out as well as monitoring the security cameras inside and outside of the school.

Visitors / Identification Badges

Any person on school premises is required to wear an identification badge. Parents and other visitors may obtain a temporary identification badge by showing a state-issued ID to the security officer located at the main entrance to the school.

Visitors affect the classroom environment, therefore, visitors and parents, including volunteers must receive authorization from the building principal to be in areas beyond the Main Office.



Video Surveillance Cameras

Video surveillance cameras are used in public areas and school buses for security and to assist in maintaining student safety.

Fire Drills and Emergency Preparedness

As required by the State of Connecticut, fire drills and emergency preparedness drills are held at periodic intervals throughout the year. Students must follow the directions of each drill during each practice simulation. Both middle schools will host both fire and lockdown drills throughout the year.

Communication

Website

Each school website has a variety of information about the Ridgefield school district and information specific for that school. Available information includes an events calendar, staff directory, staff email addresses and staff phone extensions. School website links are listed below.

[East Ridge Middle School](#)

[Scotts Ridge Middle School](#)

PowerSchool Portal

The Ridgefield Public Schools use PowerSchool as their student data management system. The PowerSchool Portal provides students and parents timely and secure access to student information including attendance, grade and progress reporting. Parents have access to information for all family members while students may access only their own records. Parents may update or change their demographic information and emergency contact information directly in the portal.

The PowerSchool Portal may be accessed through the district website at www.ridgefield.org under the Parent Quick Links. To access the PowerSchool Portal you will need a login ID and password. User accounts for new students and parents are created at the time of registration. Parents requesting support in accessing the PowerSchool Portal may use this [Support Link](#) to submit a Portal Help Request Form. Requests are responded to in the order they are received.



School Cancellation / Delayed Opening / Early Dismissal

In the case of hazardous conditions, school may be delayed, dismissed early or canceled for the day. This information will be communicated through the district website, district social media, local media outlets, and via email/text (if you have signed up to receive these communications).

Emergency Notification

The district uses an emergency phone notification system to notify students, parents and teachers of emergency information. The program uses phone numbers and email addresses on file in our PowerSchool system.

Please notify the school if there are any changes to your contact, email or phone information. This information will be communicated through our district website and via phone/email/text (if you have signed up to receive these communications). You can make changes to your emergency information right in the PowerSchool Portal.

Pick Up During School Hours

Any adult/parent/guardian picking up students from school during the school day must be listed in PowerSchool as an approved person at the start of each academic year. Parents/guardians can update PowerSchool by logging on with their username and password. Students will not be released to any persons coming to pick up if they are not listed in powerschool or appropriately listed on School Dismissal Manager. Permission for all adults who have access to pick up students must be granted by parents/guardians on PowerSchool and School Dismissal Manager.

School Lunches

Student wellness, including good nutrition, is promoted in all Ridgefield Public Schools' educational programs, school activities, and meal programs. All schools within the district offer healthy meal options for students every school day.

Free and Reduced Lunch Eligibility

Students may qualify for either free or reduced-price meals based on their overall family income. A link to the free and reduced lunch application can be found on the main district website at www.ridgefield.org in the 'Quick Links' menu bar under the 'Parents' tab. Only one application per family is required.

Activating and Filling Student Lunch Accounts

School Payment Portal is an online payment website used by schools to safely and securely receive payments for school related items such as athletic fees, cafeteria accounts, etc. This payment website allows parents to easily replenish student lunch accounts with a credit card safely and securely via any digital device with a web browser.



Students may also bring or check directly to their school's Main Office or cafeteria manager to replenish their account. A link to sign up for School Payment Portal can be found on the main district website in the 'Quick Links' menu bar under the 'Parents' tab in the 'Lunch Payment' link. If you need further assistance on how to sign up for a school payment portal contact your school's Main Office.

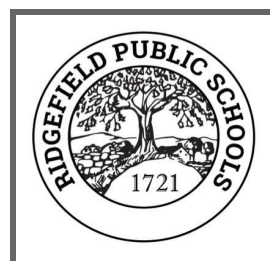
Lunch Menus

Lunch menus are posted each month on each school's district website.

Contacting the Schools

District Offices at the Board of Education

Address 90 East Ridge Road
Ridgefield, CT 06877
Phone 203-894-5550
Website <https://ridgefield.org>



East Ridge Middle School

Address 10 East Ridge Rd
Ridgefield, CT 06877
School Hours 8:00 a.m. - 2:50 p.m.
Phone 203-894-5500
Fax 203-431-2851
Nurse 203-894-5500 ext 4432
Attendance 203-894-5510
Website <https://erms.ridgefield.org>



Scotts Ridge Middle School

Address 750 North Salem Rd
Ridgefield, CT 06877
School Hours 8:00 a.m. - 2:50 p.m.
Phone 203-894-5725
Fax 203-894-3411
Nurse 203-894-5725
Attendance 203-894-5725
Website <https://srms.ridgefield.org>





Notifying the School of an Early Dismissal

See Attendance section.

Contacting Teachers

Teachers may be contacted either through voicemail or email. A staff directory and teacher phone extension numbers are available on each school's website. A teacher's email address consists of the first initial of the first name, last name and ridgefieldps.net. For example, if your teacher's name is Jane Doe, her email address will be *jdoe@ridgefieldps.net*. Please allow teachers 24 hours (during the school week) to respond to your email/voicemail. Substitute teachers do not have access to a teacher's email/voicemail. Staff are not expected to respond to messages over the weekend.

Please be aware that district policy prevents teachers from discussing confidential information in email correspondence. If you need to discuss a confidential issue with your child's teacher please call the teacher directly to discuss the issue over the phone or request a meeting.

Who to See for Questions and Concerns

<u>Concern</u>	<u>Contact</u>
Student Performance	Teacher
Counseling-related issues	School Counselor/Psychologist
Medical issues	School Nurse
Attendance	Guidance Administrative Assistant
Adult Personnel	Assistant Principal, then Principal
Lockers	School Counselor
Lost Items	Main Office Administrative Assistant
School Dismissal Manager	Guidance Administrative Assistant

If your question does not fall in any of the above categories, the first point of contact should be the Main Office administrative assistant at your child's school. These staff members can either help you or direct you to a person who can assist you. A parent/guardian's initial contact for any academic issue should be the teacher.

Emergency Messages for Students

We try to avoid interrupting classroom learning to deliver messages to students. If there is an emergency where a student must be contacted, please contact the Main Office administrative assistant.



Open House

Open House takes place at the beginning of the school year. It is a wonderful opportunity to visit your child's school and learn about what they do in each area of study throughout the day. Open House is also a time to see the work they have done to start the year. It is not a time where parent-teacher conferences take place. Refer to individual schools for specific information.

Parent-Teacher Conferences and Communication

In the middle schools the first parent-teacher conferences are in October/November. Parents/guardians also have the option to schedule additional conferences throughout the year as needed and may schedule these by reaching out to their child's counselor or teachers directly. Parents/guardians do not need to wait for parent-teacher conferences to discuss their child's progress. Please call or email a teacher to arrange a meeting at any time. Virtual conferences are available to parents/guardians as well.

Parents/guardians are asked to contact a teacher to seek early solutions to school-related problems. The administration is available to assist after efforts to resolve a concern have already been discussed with the teacher. While we encourage parent/guardian communication at any time, we also ask that you make an appointment. In this way, we can ensure that your child's teacher will be available to spend the necessary time with you.

Academics

Progress Reports

Grades are posted on the Parent Portal in PowerSchool quarterly for grades 6-8. In addition, and when the need arises, a teacher, or other school personnel, may provide parents with additional written or oral reports.

Grades

Students' academic performance is evaluated through numerical averages and indicated by letter grades on quarterly report cards. All teachers at the middle level use the same numerical ranges for letter grades as listed below:

A+ = 95 - 100	C+ = 75 - 79
A = 90 - 94	C = 70 - 74
B+ = 85 - 89	D = 65 - 69
B = 80 - 84	F = 0 - 64



Grades of 49 Average or Below

Students can receive a zero on homework and classwork assignments AFTER the student has been given a reasonable amount of time to make up/complete the assignment. Grade level/age appropriateness and missed work due to illness or extenuating circumstances will be considered by the teacher when arriving at the "reasonable" amount of time. Zeros can be given for missing/uncompleted work after that agreed upon time frame.

Students cannot receive lower than a 50 on tests, quizzes, projects or major/minor assessments. A note reflecting the original numerical grade will accompany the change. This allows all students the opportunity to redeem themselves academically after a challenging quarter.

Extra Help

At the middle school level, teachers are available to give extra help before or after school. Students are encouraged to see each teacher individually to make necessary arrangements to meet before, during, or after school to get extra help.

Keeping Track of Progress

We utilize a variety of tools to get a complete picture of how students are progressing and to guide our daily teaching. Assessments provide actionable feedback for teachers, students, and families, allowing the focus to remain on student growth over time.

- **Formative Assessments:** Teachers gather real-time data daily through active questioning, observation, and learning tasks.
- **Summative Assessments:** Teachers use mastery and performance outcomes to measure growth over time. These assessments may include unit tests, comprehensive projects, science labs, assured writing experiences, or standardized assessments.

To support students' growing independence and keep families informed, we utilize two platforms.

- **Google Classroom:** Used to manage assignments, resources, and course materials
- **PowerSchool:** Provides access to grades and overall academic progress

Promotion and Retention

It is expected that students in the Ridgefield Public Schools will progress from grade to grade each year based upon academic achievement. The principal, however, upon the recommendation of the teacher, may retain a student in the same grade. In making this decision the principal will consult with the parent/guardian, the child's teacher, and other staff specialists as needed. The principal will consider factors such as academic achievement and social maturity.



Course Selection

World Language and Music course selections are made when students are transitioning to sixth grade, and those choices will automatically continue year to year. Questions about selected courses should be directed to the student's school counselor.

Learning Lab

As your child acclimates to the new experiences of middle school, we wanted to share some information about a particular part of their learning experience, Learning Lab. Below is a description of the purpose, how students/teachers use it, and the structure of the Learning Lab. Every year, students will be scheduled into a Learning Lab based on their team assignment.

Purpose of Learning Lab: Provide students with academic as well as social- emotional support, acceleration, build transferable skills, enhance understanding, and promote learning across disciplines. Additionally, the learning lab activates student ownership of learning while supporting and promoting self-advocacy and enrichment.

What does Learning Lab “look like?”

- A teacher meeting with individual or small groups of students to provide feedback and/or targeted instruction, intervention, or enrichment
- Students work independently or in groups on teacher selected targeted practice to meet a specific instructional goal. The teacher monitors progress and offers support as needed.
- Students may have the opportunity to select their own targeted practice based on their own needs and priorities, check in with teachers or peers for help as needed, missing work, studying, projects, reading, organization, or enrichment.
- Opportunities to engage and collaborate on innovative projects
- Opportunities for independent reading or journaling/quick writes

Homework

Homework is meant to be a purposeful learning experience beyond the school day whose aim is:

- Develop the competencies and dispositions of the Vision of the Graduate.
- Practice, strengthen and further build the concepts and skills introduced in class.
- Prepare for new learning and class activities.
- Further examine and analyze concepts learned in class.
- Promote life skills such as organization, time management, initiation of task, long-term planning and study skills.



6-8 Homework Practices

- Homework is provided to students and assigned in class. Students are responsible for recording their homework assignments. Assignments are typically also posted on Google Classroom.
- Assignments will be posted on Google Classroom by 5 pm daily if applicable but will also be communicated during class.
- Students are responsible for managing their time in completing their assignments.
- Homework may be given in English Language Arts, Math, Social Studies, Science, World Language and Health.
- The percentage of homework that can be counted towards a student's grade is up to 5% at the 6-8 grade level.
- Homework is not assigned over school vacations.
- New work or homework is not assigned during school closures.
- Except for daily reading, homework should not be assigned on weekends, holidays or other days off as identified on the school calendar.
- Instrument practice is not included in homework times.
- Teachers are not required to assign homework every day.
- Team teachers communicate regularly with best efforts not to exceed total homework times.
- In the event of an absence, students will be allotted the same number of days they were absent to complete and submit missed assignments. If prolonged illness or emergency results in an extended absence, contact your child's school counselor, who will help you make arrangements to complete missed assignments.
- Board of Education policy discourages vacations during school time. Teachers are not expected to provide assignments in advance for students who take vacations at times other than school holidays.

Homework Times

Middle School			
Grade	Homework (minutes)	Reading	Total Time
Grade 6	40 minutes	20 min	60 min
Grade 7	50 minutes	20 min	70 min
Grade 8	60 minutes	20 min	80 min

Homework Suggestions and Tips

Homework at the middle school is an extension of classroom learning. We expect students to complete homework as it is assigned, and teachers will recognize their efforts. Here are a few suggestions to help your child with homework completion:



- Ensure your child always records assignments in their online planner or written planner of choice.
- Set aside regular, uninterrupted homework time each school night.
- Equip your child's homework space with good lighting, pens, pencils, erasers, paper, and other necessary supplies.
- Regularly monitor your child's Google Classroom assignments and work to ensure task completion, reinforcing accountability and supporting academic success.
- Encourage your child to speak to their teacher or school counselor if they are having difficulty completing their homework.
- Have your child complete their homework away from cell phone distraction.
- In case of absences, consider the following suggestions:
 - Have your child check their teachers' Google Classroom sites.
 - Encourage your child to call a classmate who can share assignments with them.

Academic Integrity

Cheating

Cheating is either giving or receiving unauthorized assistance on any type of school related work. In specific classroom or homework situations, individual teachers will determine what is or is not authorized as legitimate assistance.

Cheating includes, but is not limited to:

- copying or allowing someone to copy homework, a report, quiz, test, or any other assignment;
- asking someone else to write or rewrite an essay, do part or all of an assignment or report, or do research for a paper;
- using cheat sheets on a test or quiz, or inappropriately using any electronic device (e.g., storing unauthorized information in a retrievable form);
- using artificial intelligence in a manner outside of the parameters outlined by the instructor
- using either printed or electronic sources as substitutes for completing an assignment (e.g., watching a video, reading Cliff Notes®, Spark Notes®, Pink Monkey®, or any similar source instead of the literary work; reading an English translation of a work assigned to be read in a world language; etc.);
- using a translation site
- illicitly acquiring the answers to a quiz or test, or the quiz or test itself before taking it; and
- taking credit for group work without making the assigned contribution to that group's work.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism consists of copying or paraphrasing the words or ideas of others, including works generated using artificial intelligence (AI) and large language model (LLM) tools, without proper formal acknowledgement. No



student may legitimately submit work as their own if it is the work of another person or source, including AI. To help combat plagiarism, teachers may utilize tools to check on originality in assignments. Parents are encouraged to join us in supporting students to develop paraphrasing skills."

Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to:

- "Cuts and pastes" printed or electronic text (from the Internet or elsewhere) into his or her paper and presents it as his or her own
- Consults an Internet or print source to "get ideas" that he or she then incorporates into a paper, without proper attribution
- Submits a paper written by someone else, including a tutor or AI tool, while claiming to be the author
- Puts another person's or AI-generated ideas 'in his or her own words' without documenting the source
- Submits audio recordings or visual images, produced by someone else, while claiming to be the performer/artist
- Puts another person's ideas "in his or her own words," without documenting the source

Consequences for Cheating or Plagiarizing

Whenever a teacher determines that cheating or plagiarizing has taken place the following will occur:

STEP 1: The teacher will meet in private with the student or students and ask for the students to explain what occurred. At such a meeting the teacher will reinforce expectations from the ERMS PRIDE or SRMS STAR matrices of *personal responsibility* and *integrity*.

STEP 2: Teacher will determine (A) or (B):

A - Unknowingly cheated:

- Meet with the student and use it as a learning opportunity. Allow student(s) to re-do/ fix the original work for full credit.
- No further consequence

B - Purposefully Cheated*

First Offense Response:

1. The teacher will assign a grade of zero to the assignment on which the student has cheated or plagiarized.
2. Communicate with the parent/guardian to explain the situation and the response.



3. Re-do, re-write, alternative assignment, for the highest grade of 84% or a B. This will replace the grade of zero once completed. Note will be made in PowerSchool.
4. Teacher will notify the-grade-level counselor or SEL Dean to record the offense in PowerSchool. The grade and the communication home is the consequence.

Second Offense Response:

1. The teacher will assign a grade of zero to the assignment on which the student has cheated or plagiarized.
2. Communicate with the parent/guardian to explain the situation and the response.
3. Zero remains part of the student's gradebook. Teacher will allow a re-do, re-write, alternative assignment, for full credit in the same grading category. However, this will be an additional grade to offset the zero in the overall grade calculation.
4. Teacher will notify the grade-level counselor or SEL Dean to record the offense in PowerSchool. The grade and the communication home is the consequence.

Third + Offense:

1. Refer to the grade level administrator.
2. Communicate with the parent/guardian to explain the situation and the response.
3. Administrator will follow up with the teacher, student and family.

**Regardless of offense, the teacher will notify the parent to discuss next steps.*

Field Experiences and Field Trips

Field trips provide students with educational experiences that supplement and are an extension of classroom learning. Parents/guardians are responsible for reading any/all information provided by the school about a field trip/experience. By signing a permission form for a field trip, parents/guardians acknowledge their understanding of the activities and potential risks, outlined in the information provided by schools prior to a trip, and grant permission to their child to attend.

Students are expected to uphold the same behavior expectations as they would at school on field trips. All school rules apply on field trips. Students who attend a field trip, must remain on the trip and return from the field trip with their school, unless special arrangements were made prior to the trip with a building administrator and parent/guardian. See *Health Services regarding medications for field trips*.



Field trips often take the duration of a regular school day, taking students away from their other class periods. Although these are excused absences, students are expected and are responsible to manage any work due in those classes.

Families may seek financial assistance for field trips that require a fee by contacting the school's social worker/counselor, psychologist or principal. Financial assistance is based on financial requirements outlined by the school.

Field Trip Alignment SRMS/ERMS

The purpose of our middle school field trips is to provide students with enriching and experiential learning opportunities that deepen their understanding of the curriculum while fostering a sense of community. These trips are designed to connect classroom learning with real-world experiences, allowing students to explore curricular connections in a dynamic setting. These experiences spark curiosity, foster creativity, and promote lifelong learners.

In establishing guidelines for our field trips, we recognize the importance of balancing the desire to offer meaningful experiences with the financial considerations that families face. We carefully evaluate the costs associated with each trip and try to keep expenses as low as possible.

Guidelines

6-8 Grade	Team Building Activity Day (Individual School Decision)	Off campus or in-house
	1-2 field trips* <i>Field Trips are decided in the Spring for the following year - ERMS/SRMS Grade level teams will meet to decide trips based on curricular connections.</i>	• Field trips are off campus
	End of Year Celebration (Individual School Decision)	Off Campus

*Please note in-house curricular experiences are not included in the trip range. Assembly programs at other schools in the district (ie. RHS Musical, Beyond the Blues) are not included in this category.



Student Support

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) 6 - 8

Middle schools in Ridgefield Public Schools draw on the philosophy of PBIS. The philosophy is that when students are taught to effectively use relevant expected social skills for themselves, and with others, school climates are described as more positive, learning environments are designated as safer, and student-educator relationships are referred to as more trusting and respectful. PBIS establishes a positive climate in which appropriate behavior is the norm. Teaching behavioral expectations and rewarding students for following them is a much more positive approach than waiting for misbehavior to occur before responding. www.pbis.org

[ERMS Matrix](#)

[SRMS Matrix](#)

Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence: RULER 6-8

Both middle schools utilize resources and draw on the RULER approach to (1) increase the emotional intelligence of students, faculty, and the larger Ridgefield community and (2) to apply Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports in each of their schools. RULER is an acronym that stands for the five skills of emotional intelligence: recognizing, understanding, labeling, expressing and regulating emotions. RULER is an evidence-based approach for integrating social and emotional learning into schools, developed at the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence. More information can be found at www.rulerapproach.org.

No Place for Hate (NPFH)

NPFH is a program sponsored by the Anti-Defamation League and is designed to empower students to make their school a safe and inclusive space where all students feel valued, respected, and have a sense of belonging. Students participate in various activities that are designed to address instances of bias, prejudice, bullying, mean spirited behavior etc. with the goal of supporting students in developing realistic action steps and the tools necessary to create a positive outcome for their school community. Students can participate by becoming NPFH Student Ambassadors where they will help design activities and participate in leadership training.

Advisory Program

All students take part in an advisory group led by a faculty member. The goal of this program is to promote students' social-emotional and academic well-being and encourage students to form relationships and to be responsible members of the community. Advisory groups meet throughout the year to review and discuss important topics pertaining to the school, specific grade level, or individual growth. Topics include information



about new procedures, handling stress, organization, and grade level related topics such as transition to high school. There will also be opportunities throughout the year to participate in advisory activity blocks where students choose an activity such as ping pong, making friendship bracelets, board games, drawing, etc.

Restorative Practices

Integrated throughout our Response to Challenging Behavior Guidelines and Procedures are opportunities for students to learn from their mistakes while also being held accountable for their actions. We utilize **Restorative Practices** and processes that proactively build healthy relationships and a sense of community to prevent and address conflict and wrongdoing. **Restorative Practices** allow individuals who may have committed harm to take full responsibility for their behavior which requires understanding the impact of their behavior, repairing the harm that the behavior may have caused, and making changes necessary to avoid such behavior in the future. While sometimes there are assigned consequences such as detentions or suspensions, our restorative approach to behavior may also include reflection forms, peer mediations, working with school staff (counselors, teachers, behavior lead, etc), community service, restorative conferences, or other responses that may assist the student in learning from their mistakes. This holistic approach to supporting students in their growth as well rounded young people will not only help students learn from their mistakes but will help them thrive.

Child Find

As required by law, the Ridgfield Public Schools makes all efforts to locate, evaluate, and identify students with disabilities. Any parent/guardian who has suspicion that his or her child may have a disability and require special education and/or related services has a right to make a referral to the Planning and Placement Team. The Planning and Placement Team is a group of school professionals, along with parents/guardians, who review referrals and determine if an evaluation is warranted. Parents/guardians wishing to make a referral should notify the Principal in writing.

Student Support Services

Ridgfield Public Schools student support services provide intervention and support for students, families and staff. These include consultation, assessment, counseling and liaison with community professionals to design appropriate educational and social interventions.

The school psychologist aids in the assessment of a student's educational and/or behavioral needs. The continuum of services available to students can include observation in the classroom; consultation with students, families and outside professionals; and interpretation of comprehensive psychological evaluations. The school psychologist formally reviews and reassesses students placed in special education programs and services.



Counseling Center

Students at the middle level will be assigned a school counselor for the three years they attend school. The Counseling Center is next to the Main Office. Students are encouraged to make appointments with their counselors by dropping by and setting a time with the secretary on duty. Parents/guardians are also welcome to call the Counseling Center with questions or concerns. All students who need to see their counselor must get a pass from the teacher of the class they are missing. Parents/guardians of students who are withdrawing from a middle school must see the Counseling Center secretary for withdrawal information and forwarding information to the student's next school.

Multi-Tiered Support Systems (MTSS)

Our middle schools have an internal *Multi-Tiered Support System* (MTSS) process to support learning for students who meet the requirements for tiered support during the school day. For additional information on MTSS at your school see the link on the school based web page or contact your classroom teacher, counselor or building administrator.

Multi-Language Learner Services

For students whose primary language is one other than English, the Ridgefield Public Schools has an assessment and eligibility process for English Learner services. New families to the district are asked questions during the registration process regarding their child's primary language. If necessary, the English Learner coordinator will assess students, and share results with parents as part of the eligibility determination process. Students found eligible can receive English Learner services in their school.

Health Services and Wellness

Emergency Information

Emergency contacts and contact phone numbers are important when a student is injured or becomes ill. It is the family's responsibility to provide up-to-date medical information, emergency contacts and telephone numbers. Please contact the Ridgefield Board of Education to make changes to information.



Care of Students

The health office is staffed with Registered Nurses. Health services are provided for students who require nursing and emergency care. Individualized health services are provided for students with acute, chronic, and mental health conditions. School nurses collaborate with students, families, and staff regarding student health concerns. Nurses work closely with the guidance department and participate in Planning and Placement Teams, Section 504 Teams, and School Crisis Teams to support student learning and success.

In compliance with state regulations, the school health office will perform state mandated health screenings during the academic year. Comprehensive details regarding these screenings are available [here](#), and further information can be found in the RPS Board of Education Policy.

Vision and Hearing—Screenings are performed in grades 1, 3, 4, and 5.

Scoliosis - Screenings are performed for female students in grades 5 and 7; Male students are screened in grade 8. If any concerns are observed during the screenings, parents/guardians will be notified by a referral letter.

If a family determines that their child will not participate in these screenings, they must notify the school nurse in writing annually.

Lice Information and Resources

As parents of school-aged children, staying informed about head lice is crucial for maintaining a healthy and comfortable environment for your family. Head lice are common and can spread quickly in school settings, so understanding their signs, symptoms, and effective treatment methods is essential. Proactive measures, such as regular head checks and open communication with your children about avoiding head-to-head contact, can significantly reduce the risk of infestation. Keeping up-to-date with your school's lice policies and readily available resources will empower you to address any potential outbreaks promptly and effectively, minimizing disruption and discomfort for everyone involved.

- [American Academy of Pediatrics](#)
- [Center for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#)
- [Harvard School of Public Health – Head Lice](#)
- [Mayo Clinic](#)

More information is available from the [Harvard School of Public Health](#) and the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#). You can also find the [RPS Head Lice Protocol](#) along with [FAQs](#) here and on the Ridgfield Public School Health Services webpage.



Special Health Needs

A student with a medical/psychological condition, allergies, or daily medication should be known to the health office prior to the student entering school. Ridgefield Public Schools are committed to ensuring that students who have special health care needs receive the support and services necessary. Parents who have a child with special health care needs are encouraged to speak with the school nurse.

Privacy

The health offices at each school are committed to ensuring student privacy. Health information will be shared with faculty and staff members on a need to know basis.

Student Medication

For students who must take medication during school hours, the nurse must have written authorization from both a health care provider and parent. A completed “Medication Authorization Form” must be signed by the student’s physician and parent. If the student requires an EpiPen an “Emergency Health Care Plan” form will also need to be completed. “Authorization for the Administration of Medicine by School Personnel” forms are available in the nurse’s office and on the school website. The medication must be in its original container, clearly labeled with the student’s name, authorized prescriber’s name, date it was ordered, name of the medication, dosage and directions for administration. Parents should notify the nurse concerning any changes in the prescribed dosage. A new Medication Authorization form is required annually.

Acetaminophen and ibuprofen may be administered by the school nurse with completion of the parental consent form found on the parent portal. Students are not permitted to carry any medication during the school day without approval. The health office has a list of approved medications for self administration by students provided authorization from the parent and physician is on file in the health office. State law requires that a parent or a responsible adult must pick up unused medication within one week of its completion or by the last day of school, or it will be disposed of by the school nurse.

Medication on Field Trips

The same state regulations and school policies apply to medication on field trips as in school during the day. Students who have a self-administration plan must carry their own medication on a field trip, just as they do during the school day. These requirements include over-the-counter medications. It is best to speak with the school nurse two to three weeks in advance of a field trip to make sure that your child will have access to appropriate medication and assistance, if needed, during a field trip.



Ill or Injured Students

Students exhibiting signs of contagious disease are best cared for at home to facilitate recovery and to prevent the spread of illness to other students. The school nurse will ask a parent/guardian/emergency contact to pick up any student who becomes ill during school hours or who has an illness or injury that, in the professional judgment of the school nurse, needs to be observed at home or evaluated by a medical doctor. 9-1-1 will be called in a health or mental health emergency for immediate transportation of a student to the hospital.

Health Assessments/Physical Examinations

In accordance with the Ridgefield Board of Education and Connecticut state requirements, students new to the school and students in preschool, Kindergarten, and Grade 6 are required to have a health assessment. This mandated health assessment must be completed and performed by a legally qualified practitioner. The results of this exam must be recorded on the blue State of Connecticut Health Assessment Record (HAR-3) and returned to the school nurse. A physical exam is considered current if it has been completed within 12 months before the date the student enters school. New students of any grade level are also required by Connecticut State Law to have a physical examination documented on the HAR-3 form.

Immunizations

New students, including kindergarteners, must provide proof of immunizations before entering school. Students cannot begin classes without required immunizations. Please refer to the Ridgefield Public Schools website or contact the Health Office with any questions regarding immunization requirements.

Board of Education policy requires that a record of immunizations and Health Assessment Physical be provided prior to the student's first day at school to assure that all students are adequately protected from preventable communicable diseases. Connecticut law states that students who are not in compliance with these health requirements must be excluded from school until the immunizations and health records are submitted.

Medical Excuse - Physical Education

If a student is to be medically excused from physical education, parents should notify the school nurse. A medical note must be provided to the school nurse from the treating physician with a specific start and end date. No open-ended exclusions are permitted.



School Parties

Ridgefield Public Schools encourages the use of nutrient-dense food for all school functions and activities. Nutrient-dense foods are those foods that provide substantial amounts of vitamins and minerals and relatively few calories. At any school function (parties, celebrations, feasts, etc.) healthy food choices should be made available. School parties/functions are limited to one food that does not meet nutritional standards. Questions about food that is acceptable and safe for school events can be directed to the Principal, classroom teacher, or school nurse.

Technology

Acceptable Technology Use Policy

Ridgefield Public Schools provides reliable digital infrastructure and resources so that students and staff can become ethical, skilled users of information, media, and technology. At the middle school level, district technology supports students as they communicate, collaborate, create, solve problems, and demonstrate their learning in ways aligned to curriculum expectations and the increasing independence of grades 6 through 8.

Use of district technology is governed by Board Policy 6141.321, Acceptable Use, and the accompanying Student Acceptable Use Procedures. Student use of personally owned devices is governed separately by Board Policy 5131.8, Use of Private Technology Devices by Students.

Families acknowledge these expectations through the annual handbook sign-off in the PowerSchool Parent Portal.

Student Device Access

All students in grades 6–8 are issued a district Chromebook for the school year. Chromebooks support learning across all subject areas and are intended for educational use aligned to classroom instruction and assignments.

Students may bring their Chromebook home each day and are responsible for returning it charged and in good condition. Unlike elementary school devices, middle school Chromebooks are retained by students through the summer for summer assignments and learning opportunities. Students are expected to return their Chromebook in working order at the start of the following school year.

Students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan may have modified device access or assistive technology provisions specified in their plan. Families with questions about accommodations should contact the student's case manager. Families are responsible for damage, loss, or theft of district-issued devices. See the Device Fee Schedule below for applicable charges.



District-Provided Personal Learning Devices

Chromebooks assigned to 6th, 7th and 8th grade students remain the property of Ridgefield Public Schools. Families are asked to help students care for their devices, and students are expected to handle them responsibly.

Device fees. Each student receives one no-cost replacement per school year for accidental damage or loss. The charges below apply to additional incidents within the same year, and to damage determined to be intentional by administrators. These charges apply to both assigned Chromebooks and loaner devices.

Lost or non-repairable Chromebook	\$300
Lost charger	\$30
Partial damage	Varies by repair needed, not to exceed \$250
Cleaning	\$15 (stickers or heavy soiling)
Loaner returned late	\$15 per school day

If a device is damaged or lost. Report the problem to the classroom teacher or main office as soon as possible so the device can be repaired or replaced without interrupting learning. If a device is stolen, contact the main office; families should not be charged for a theft documented by a police or school incident report.

Customizing the device. Please do not apply stickers to the Chromebook. Removing them can damage the frame, and a cleaning fee will apply if a device is returned with stickers on it. Students who would like to personalize their device are welcome to decorate a protective case or sleeve instead.

Leaving the district. Students who leave Ridgefield Public Schools for any reason must return their Chromebook and all accessories on their last day. Devices not returned are billed at the replacement cost listed above.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) at The Middle School Level

Ridgefield Public Schools recognizes that artificial intelligence tools are increasingly present in students' academic and personal lives. The district's approach to AI is developmentally intentional. What is appropriate for middle schoolers differs from both elementary and high school expectations, and those distinctions are grounded in Board Policy 6141.321, Acceptable Use.



At the middle school level, students in Innovation Lab classes use Magic School AI as part of a structured curriculum focused on how AI functions, basic prompting, and responsible use. Outside of Innovation Lab and other explicitly teacher-directed contexts, AI tools are not accessible in general classroom settings. Students are expected to complete academic work independently. Submitting AI-generated content as one's own work violates the district's Academic Integrity policy and the expectations of Board Policy 6141.321.

Students should never enter personal information, including their name, student ID, grade, or any information about another student, into any AI tool, including approved platforms. Magic School AI has been reviewed by the district and has a signed Student Data Privacy Agreement in accordance with the Connecticut Student Data Privacy Act (C.G.S. §§ 10-234aa through 10-234dd). Use of any AI platform not approved by the district is prohibited.

RPS's Artificial Intelligence Vision Statement guides how the district introduces and governs AI tools across grade levels. A copy is available on the district website.

Personal Smart Devices and Privately Owned Technology

Under Board Policy 5131.8, Use of Private Technology Devices by Students, students in grades 6 through 8 are not permitted to use privately owned technological devices during the school day, at District facilities, or on District transportation. This includes cellular phones, smartphones, smartwatches, tablets, earbuds, personal gaming systems, Bluetooth speakers, e-readers, and other electronic devices.

If a parent or guardian permits a student to bring a privately owned device to school, the device must remain powered off and stored in the student's backpack, not on their person, at all times, including during transportation to and from school.

Students are responsible for the safety of any device they bring to school. The Board is not liable for privately owned devices that are stolen, lost, or damaged on school property or during school-sponsored activities. Students are strongly advised to use good judgment when deciding whether to bring personal devices to school, and should not share or loan devices to other students.

Assistive technology. Students whose IEP, Section 504, or documented accommodation identifies technology as necessary for access to the educational experience may use such technology as specifically outlined in their plan. Families with questions should contact the student's case manager.

Smart Devices (Cell Phones), Earbuds, and Smartwatches

Research and experience consistently show that these devices, while useful in many contexts, can significantly disrupt student attention, reduce academic performance, and interfere with social development when students have access to these devices while in school. Notifications, messaging apps, and internet access can easily draw students away from meaningful engagement in class activities, discussions and engagement with peers.



Students with smart devices at the middle school level are not permitted to use them during the school day or on district provided transportation. If a parent makes the decision to permit their child to have a cell phone, smartwatch, or similar device at school, **it is expected that the smart device, smartwatch or wearable technology be turned off and in the child's backpack or locker at all times.**

The only exceptions are as follows:

Earbuds: Earbuds may only be used when a teacher explicitly permits their use for educational purposes. In such cases, the teacher will manage when the earbuds can be taken out and when they should be put away.

If a student is found with their device visible in violation of this rule, the following will occur:

1. **First Offense:** The teacher will confiscate the device, will turn it into the office, home will be contacted, and parents/ guardians will need to pick up their child's device.
2. **Subsequent Offenses:** Parents will need to pick up their child's device and additional disciplinary consequences may be given. This can include having the child place their device in the main office at the start of each day.

We ask for your support in this expectation by recognizing that students will not be able to answer your calls or texts during the school day. If there is an emergency that requires immediate attention, you can call the main office and they can reach the student. Students also have the ability to go to the main office and call home if needed. However, please keep in mind that forgetting papers, changes in pick-up plans, and other situations are not "emergencies" - students will have time to check their phones for updates as soon as the day is over.

Photos, video recordings, audio recordings, or posting to social media are not permitted in classrooms, on school grounds, or school transportation. Disciplinary consequences may be given as a result.

Student Responsibilities

Students in grades 6 through 8 are expected to use district technology resources responsibly, legally, and for educational purposes. By using district technology, students agree to the following:

- Use technology resources for legitimate, educationally relevant purposes and access only content that is appropriate in a school setting.
- Handle all devices with care, and access, modify, or move technology resources only with permission.
- Keep login credentials private. Use only your own account and protect your username and password.
- Respect the privacy of others and treat their files, work, and information as their own.
- Communicate respectfully and professionally using district tools such as email and collaboration platforms.
- Access only content that is appropriate, legal, and suitable for a middle school environment.



- Use the district network as intended and support the security and integrity of district systems.
- Respect copyright and fair use laws. Plagiarism is prohibited in all forms, including digital contexts.
- Return all district-assigned devices and accessories promptly upon request or upon leaving the district.

These expectations apply to district technology used both on school grounds and off-site, including at home.

All digital tools and applications used in Ridgefield Public Schools have been reviewed by the district and have signed Student Data Privacy Agreements in accordance with the Connecticut Student Data Privacy Act (C.G.S. §§ 10-234aa through 10-234dd). Approved tools are listed in the district's Technology Applications and Services directory on the RPS website. Students should not create accounts with or use applications not included on the approved list.

When expectations are not met. Students who misuse district technology resources or use them in ways inconsistent with Board Policy 6141.321 may lose access privileges, face restrictions on device use, or be subject to additional disciplinary action in accordance with the district's student discipline policies. Serious violations, including illegal activity, unauthorized access, or intentional damage to district systems, may be referred to law enforcement. Students and families are responsible for any costs or damages to district technology resulting from misuse or neglect.

Student technology use is governed by Board Policy 6141.321, Acceptable Use, and the accompanying Student Acceptable Use Procedures. Families acknowledge these expectations annually through the PowerSchool Parent Portal. The district acts as an agent for parents in the collection of student information within the school context in accordance with the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA).

Attendance

Parent Requirements

It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure compliance with the State of Connecticut's compulsory school attendance requirements (Connecticut General Statute 10-184). Students are required to attend school on a regular basis. Regular class attendance increases the student's probability for a successful educational performance both now and for the future.

A child who is absent from school may not participate in any school activities on the day they are absent.



School Dismissal Manager (SDM) Program

Both middle schools use School Dismissal Manager (SDM), a website application and mobile app that allows middle school parents/guardians to electronically report absence and dismissal instructions to their child's school.

Parents/guardians of returning students should use their current log in information. Parent/guardian log in can be found at <https://www.schooldismissalmanager.com>. Parents/guardians experiencing technical issues should speak with the administrative assistant at their child's school. Parents/guardians of new students will receive login instructions prior to their first day of school.

Using SDM with your smartphone or computer, you can quickly report when your child will be **absent, tardy, leaving early coming back, leaving early not coming back, or riding a bus to a friend's house** (no more notes or phone calls required).

Notifying the School of Child's Default Dismissal Plan and Exceptions: *Absence, Tardy, Leaving Early, or Riding a Bus to a Different Stop*

Default: Each year, upon initial login into SDM your child's default will be their assigned bus. If you normally pick them up after school or they walk home, please click "Update Main Default" and choose the correct default ("Pickup" or "Walker").

Exceptions: If there are times when your child's dismissal plan (at 2:50) differs from the default, you do NOT need to report it. At the middle school level, we begin to set the path to independence and personal responsibility. Middle school students are expected to know and follow their after school plan. This can include taking the bus, walking, staying at school for a club or extra help, or being picked up by a parent. Please communicate directly with your child. At the middle school level the only time you need to put an exception in SDM is if you are picking your child up early, or if they will be absent, tardy or riding a bus to a friend's house.

Please report absences and tardies before 9:00a.m. When your student is tardy (which is any time after 8:00 a.m.), he/she will sign in at the security desk before reporting to class.

We strongly suggest planning ahead to create any dismissal exception in SDM before 9:00 a.m. as well. However, please note that the cut-off time for same day entries is 1:45 p.m. on regular days and 10:15 a.m. on early release days. Calls are discouraged after cut-off times unless it is an emergency.

Our expectation is that parents/guardians will primarily enter this information into School Dismissal Manager (SDM). Parents/guardians may alternatively leave a message on the school's attendance line to report the absence.

East Ridge Middle School
Scotts Ridge Middle School

Attendance: 203-894-5500, option 1
Attendance: 203-894-5725, option 1



Late Arrival to School

Students should sign in at ERMS at the security desk or at SRMS in the front office. If a parent/guardian did not call the attendance line prior to the student's arrival, students must also have a written excuse from a parent/guardian.

Notifying the School of an Early Dismissal

If your child must leave school early for an appointment please use the School Dismissal Manager (SDM) website or app to notify the school.

Long-Term Absences

If your child will be absent from school for a long period of time for reasons such as contracting a communicable disease (e.g., COVID-19, strep throat or a concussion), surgery, or other long-term health situations, please notify the school nurse as soon as possible. Please also notify the school nurse when your child is due to return to school.

Family Vacations

Connecticut statutes prevent schools from excusing students from school for family vacations. Loss of instruction caused by such absences is primarily the responsibility of the parent/guardian. Teachers will not provide lesson and assignment topics for work that will be covered while the student is absent. Students are expected to make up missed work. If a child is absent from school, they may not participate in any school activities that day.

Truancy

The State of Connecticut considers any student between the ages of five and eighteen truant who has four unexcused absences from school in any one month or ten unexcused absences from school in any school year.

Students considered truant and their parents/guardians will be invited to a truancy meeting with school administrators, and they will be referred to State agencies under the category of "Family with Service Needs." If you wish to know more, [this State of Connecticut document provides](#) a thorough explanation of the expectations of public schools in Connecticut.

Mental Health Days

Effective July 1, 2021, as per Public Act 21-46, all students are allowed two Mental Health Wellness (MHW) Days in a school year. Similar to absences one through nine, parents/guardians will need to notify their child's school that their child will be utilizing one of these MHW days and are not required to provide any additional documentation. Please note that MHW can not be taken on consecutive school days.



CT Attendance Guidelines

The state of Connecticut has guidelines of which schools must follow regarding student attendance. Absences are categorized as either excused or unexcused according to the guidelines. A student's absence from school is considered unexcused unless they meet one of the following criteria:

- A. the absence meets the definition for an excused absence (including documentation requirements); or
- B. the absence meets the definition of a disciplinary absence.

For absences, there are two levels that pertain to a student. The first nine absences in a school year can be excused by a parent or guardian for any reason the parent chooses by contacting the school within 48 hours of the absence. Our expectation is that the parent/guardian will enter the absence in School Dismissal Manager (SDM) or leave a message on the school's attendance line, ERMS (203) 894-5500, option 1, or SRMS (203) 894-5725, option 1, to report an absence. After 48 hours, a written note from the parent/guardian must be provided. Any absence above the ninth absence is in level 2 and must fall into a particular category with additional documentation in order to be approved. The chart below gives more detailed information regarding the possibilities.

The State Board of Education definitions establish two levels of criteria for an absence to be considered an excused absence (see chart below).

Level	Total # of Days Absent*	Acceptable Reasons for a Student Absence to be Considered Excused	Documentation Required within 10 Days
1	One through nine	Any reason that the student's parent or guardian approves.	Parent or guardian note only.
2	10 and above	- Student illness (Note: to be deemed excused, an appropriately licensed medical professional must verify all student illness absences, regardless of the absence's length.) - Student's observance of a religious holiday. - Death in the student's family or other emergency beyond the control of the student's family. - Mandated court appearances (additional documentation required). - The lack of transportation that is normally provided by a district other than the one the student attends (parental documentation is not required for this reason). - Extraordinary educational opportunities pre-approved by district administrators. (Opportunities must meet certain criteria).	Parent or guardian note and in some cases additional documentation (see details of the specific reason).

***Note: The total number of days absent includes both excused and unexcused absences.**

Students may be asked to provide documentation explaining the reason for any absence. In these cases, please provide a medical professional's note.



Parents/guardians must provide a medical professional's note for excused absences in excess of 10 days. Documentation must be submitted to the Attendance Office upon the return to school.

School Community and Commitment

Bullying and Cyberbullying

Bullying behavior by any student in the Ridgefield Public Schools is strictly prohibited, and such conduct may result in disciplinary action, including suspension and/or expulsion from school.

"Bullying" means unwanted and aggressive behavior among children in grades kindergarten to twelve, inclusive, that involves a real or perceived power imbalance.

Bullying shall include, but need not be limited to, a written, verbal or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or physical, mental, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics.

"Cyberbullying" means any act of bullying through the use of the Internet, interactive and digital technologies, cellular mobile telephone or other mobile electronic devices or any electronic communications.

Teen dating violence means any act of physical, emotional or sexual abuse, including stalking, harassing and threatening that occurs between two students who are currently in or have recently been in a dating relationship.

Students who engage in any act of bullying or teen dating violence, on school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by the Board of Education, or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the Board of Education, and outside of the school setting if such bullying:

- A. Creates a hostile environment at school for the victim,
- B. Infringes on the rights of the victim at school, or
- C. Substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Students and/or parents may file verbal or written complaints concerning suspected bullying behavior or teen dating violence behavior, and students shall be permitted to anonymously report acts of bullying or teen dating violence to school employees. Any report of suspected bullying behavior or teen dating violence will be promptly reviewed. If acts of bullying and/or teen dating violence are verified, prompt disciplinary action may be taken against the



perpetrator, consistent with his/her rights of due process. Board policy and regulation #5131.911 set forth this prohibition and the related procedures in detail, and are available to students and their parents/guardians upon request.

Safe School Climate

The Ridgefield Board of Education is committed to creating and maintaining a physically, emotionally, and intellectually safe educational environment free from bullying, teen dating violence, harassment and discrimination. In order to foster an atmosphere conducive to learning, the Board has developed the following Safe School Climate Plan, consistent with state law and Board Policy. This Plan represents a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying, cyberbullying, and teen dating violence and sets forth the Board's expectations for creating a positive school climate and thus preventing, intervening, and responding to incidents of bullying and teen dating violence. [The Safe School Climate Plan](#) can be viewed here or on the Ridgefield Public Schools Website.

Bus Conduct

Students are expected to behave in a safe manner and follow all school rules while riding the bus. From time to time it is necessary for us to deal with behavior problems. Drivers know our expectations and guidelines for reporting unsatisfactory conduct. We appreciate your support and cooperation in disciplinary issues that arise. Cameras are installed on all school buses to assist with orderly conduct and discipline issues. All complaints concerning school transportation safety are to be made to the Transportation Coordinator/District Business Manager. A written record of all complaints will be maintained and an investigation of the allegations will take place.

Student Dress Guidelines

Any clothing students wear to school that breaks one of the following rules is prohibited:

1. Students' clothes should not impair safety or increase risks of danger or injury to themselves or other students.
2. Students' clothes should not cause distraction from the learning environment.
3. Students' clothes should not show any inappropriate messages or images.

Gum

Students are not permitted to chew gum during school. Chewing gum is a distraction in the classroom and leads to a great amount of extra cleanup for the custodial staff.



Food Delivery

Students are not permitted to have food delivered by a service such as Uber Eats, Grub Hub, etc. or the restaurant or food service provider located in town. If a student forgets lunch, they can still purchase items in the cafeteria, including a hot lunch or grill lunch. Or, if you forget your homemade lunch, that of course can be dropped off by a parent and you can pick it from the desk by the front door before lunch.

Fidgets and Food

Students should not bring snacks, toys, collectibles, squishy items, trading items, or fidget tools unless the item is specifically identified as a support within a documented accommodation plan (such as a 504 Plan or IEP), or has been approved by staff for an identified educational need.

This expectation is intended to:

- Minimize distractions during instruction.
- Support student focus and engagement.
- Prevent disruptions related to sharing, trading, or loss of personal items.
- Maintain a safe and productive learning environment for all students.

If an item becomes a distraction, staff will ask the student to put it away. If the distraction persists, the item will be taken and held until the end of the school day, with communication home as needed. Existing accommodations remain in place; questions about a specific plan should go to the student's case manager or counselor.

Drugs and Vaping

Our middle schools are proud to be drug-free zones. Due to this, drugs of any kind, such as vaporizers, chewing tobacco, e-cigarettes, alcohol, or any other tobacco/nicotine delivery device, are not permitted at any time on campus, on any school transportation vehicle, or at any off-campus school activity. These drugs and devices pose a hazard to health by both use and subsequent disposal. Students found with any of these drugs or devices are subject to disciplinary action as smokers.

Electronic Hall Passes and Permissions

Electronic hall passes are utilized to provide student permission to travel to an approved location throughout the day. If students arrive late to class, they should have an active "late pass" from another teacher or staff member explaining their tardiness. Additionally, students must have electronic hall passes created when leaving a classroom during class time or transitioning to a different location. For students with medical needs impacting mobility, parents should contact the school nurse to arrange a special pass for navigating between classes and avoiding corridor traffic. Only students with an elevator pass may utilize the elevator.



Backpacks and Lockers

Students will be using backpacks to carry their books/materials from class to class throughout the day. They will NOT be allowed to go to their lockers in between classes or during instructional time. At the start of each year, students are issued a personal locker with its own unique combination. **Students may only access their locker three times a day, upon arrival at school, on their way to lunch, and at the end of the day at dismissal.** They are told not to share their combination with anyone, and to ensure their locker is closed and locked whenever they aren't using it. Students should keep their lockers clean and orderly, and should not place decals or stickers on them or write on them. A student's locker is school property- school administrators may open a locker at any time with "reasonable cause" if they believe that the locker contains items which are prohibited by school rules or state laws.

Lost and Found

ERMS: Lost and found areas can be found by security, both locker rooms in the gym, the cafeteria and occasionally the Main Office for smaller items. If your child loses an object, they must report it at once to the secretary in the Main Office and look through the previously specified departments either during their lunch or at the end of the school day. Please do not have your child bring valuables or large sums of money to school where they may be lost. We do everything we can to safeguard private property, but the school cannot be responsible for lost items. Please remind your child not to give out their locker combination to others so it remains a safe place for your child to store their property.

SRMS: A lost and found area is situated outside the Main Office for retrieving lost items. If your child misplaces a valuable object, please notify the Main Office immediately. To prevent potential loss, we recommend refraining from bringing valuables or large sums of money to school. While we take measures to safeguard personal belongings, the school cannot assume responsibility for lost items. Kindly assist fellow students by returning any found objects to the Main Office.

Obligation

Students are expected to take care of the school's books, technology, materials, and property. Returning items on time and in good condition is very important. Students will be expected to replace any lost or damaged school equipment.



Telephone Use and Messages

If a student needs to make an emergency telephone call, they may use the Main Office telephone. Please understand that the Main Office is often busy, so it's important to limit non-emergency calls to this location. Students should refrain from using classroom telephones to contact parents. In cases where parents need to relay a message to their child, please note that the Main Office can only accommodate messages of a very serious nature due to its high volume of activities.

Items Left at Home

Occasionally, your child may forget their lunch, their instrument or a book at home. You may call and arrange for the item to be dropped off at the Main Office. Please remind your child that it is their responsibility to visit the Main Office at an appropriate time to retrieve the item. If a secretary needs to call into the classroom to remind them, it disrupts the entire class and interrupts instruction.

If your child forgets something at home such as their lunch, a book or instrument, a parent/guardian may drop it off at Security by the main entrance for the student to pick up during their lunch period or during passing time. One of our goals as middle schools is to develop student personal responsibility and independence. In order to decrease the amount of interrupted class time, students will only be able to pick up their items at security during lunch/recess time or after school. There are bins in the front of the school for each grade level. Any valuable items should not be left at security or in the grade-level bins. Please do not text or call your child during the day to inform them that the item was dropped off, they can check during recess/or lunch. Texting or calling during the student day causes disruptions to the students. The security guard will give a list of names to teachers on lunch duty to remind them to check for the item.

Afterschool and Social Activities

During the year, the PTA will be sponsoring evening “social” activities. (Check the PTA newsletters for specific events.) Administrators and teachers typically chaperone these events and will be assisted by parents. Students may not leave during school-sponsored events for any reason unless they have a note from their parent or guardian. These activities are only for the students enrolled in that middle school. No guests may attend. After school clubs will be offered throughout the school year.

For more information, please visit the information page for your respective middle school:

[East Ridge Extracurricular Activities](#)

[Scotts Ridge Extracurricular Activities](#)



Storm Announcements

When school is canceled or delayed due to inclement weather, we like to let everyone know as soon as possible. The quickest way for you to find out is by signing up for the *Superintendent's News Service* by going to www.ridgefield.org or by listening to one of the following radio/TV stations for school cancellations: WEBE (108 FM), WEZN (99.9FM), WLAD (800AM/98.3FM), WCBS (880AM), WFSB TV (Channel 3), WTNH TV (Channel 8), WVIT (Channel 30). Parents should be aware that changing weather conditions may require additional delays or other changes after the initial notification is made. It is best to continue monitoring information sources for updated delays or cancellations.

Response to Behavior Guidelines and Procedures

Both middle schools strive to support our students in becoming thoughtful, caring, kind, and responsible members of our community. We prioritize facilitating an inclusive school community where all students and staff feel valued, respected, connected, and supported. Our programs, curriculum, and behavioral interventions support a whole child approach. The programs we implement to support the growth and development were discussed previously in this handbook: *NPFH*, *Advisory*, *RULER*, *PBIS*, *Restorative Practices*.

When responding to behaviors that do not align with our school values and expectations, restorative responses will be used which can include, but are not limited to reflections, meetings, intervention and learning activities.

For the complete Response to Behavior Guidelines please refer to [this document](#), which will also be posted to the schools' websites.

Definitions

Level I Behavior: Classroom-managed behavior (e.g. talking in class, minor horseplay, etc.)

Level II Behavior: Multiple classroom infractions (3 Level I behaviors or more) **OR**

Level III Behavior: Office managed behavior (e.g. harassment, physical altercations, bullying, threats, more severe classroom disruptions, use of substances, obscene language, more severe inappropriate behavior)

Restorative Responses:



- **Restorative Reflection:** Written reflection where students are asked to reflect on their behavior in connection to the ERMS/SRMS PBIS Matrix and/or the No Place for Hate pledge.
- **Restorative Meeting:** Facilitated conversation designed to repair harm, rebuild relationships, and restore a sense of community following a conflict or incident. Restorative meetings include but are not limited to peer mediation, student-staff mediation, or supported conversation with an adult staff member, such as a counselor, advisor, or administrator, who helps participants process their feelings, understand the impact of their actions, and identify steps toward repair.
- **Restorative Assignment:** A short lesson, reading, or activity completed with guidance from adult support staff, including the SEL Dean, to help a student reflect on their actions and their impact on others. The focus is on growth, accountability, and developing social-emotional skills rather than punishment.

Additional Supportive Measures: Students who are exhibiting patterns of behavior may be referred to MTSS-SEB Intervention or counseling services in order to provide targeted instruction to address the area of concern.

Behavior Definitions and Responses			
Offense	Definition	Possible Disciplinary Action	Days
Acts of Hate-Based conduct (Racial Slurs/Hate Crimes)	An incident involving characteristics or perceived characteristics of the victim including race, gender, religion, color, sexual orientation, ethnicity, ancestry, national origin, political beliefs, marital status, social or family background, linguistic preference, or disability.	Level II or III- Administrative Detention and/or ISS/OSS, possible police referral	1-10
AWOL(skipping class)/Unauthorized location	Not being where student is supposed to be or failure to notify teacher where they are going prior to going.	Level I - depending on offense and severity of behavior, action by teacher can include: written reflection; lunch/recess detention, office referral. <i>Refer to flow chart</i> Level II or III	1-2



		1st Offense - Administrator Detention 1-3 days 2nd offense - ISS	
Bullying	unwanted and aggressive behavior among children in grades kindergarten to twelve, inclusive, that involves a real or perceived power imbalance.	Level II or III- *Administrative investigation, ISS/OSS, possible services/intervention, possible police referral	1-10
Damaging Chromebook or other property belonging to another individual	Destruction or disfigurement of property.	Level III - ISS, restitution	1-3
Defiance/ Insubordination	refusal to respond to a reasonable request or talking back when given a direction.	Level I - depending on offense and severity of behavior, action by teacher can include: written reflection; lunch/recess detention, office referral. <i>Refer to flow chart</i> Level II or III- Administrative Detention and/or ISS	1-3
Disruption of Educational Process	A significant interruption to a class or school activity.	Level III 1st Offense - Administrator Detention 1-3 days 2nd offense - ISS	1-5
False alarms	Falsely pulling fire alarm, lock down alarm, bomb threats, etc.	Level III - OSS, referral to counselor, possible police referral	5-10
Fighting	Participation in an incident that involved a physical confrontation between two or more individuals.	Level III - ISS/OSS, possible police referral	1-5
Harassment (Sexual)	Inappropriate and unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, other	Level II or III- Administrative Detention and/or ISS/OSS, possible police referral	1-10



	physical or verbal conduct, or communication of a sexual nature		
Inappropriate behavior	All other behavior not otherwise specified that do not align with the school expectations matrix	Level I - depending on offense and severity of behavior, action by teacher can include: written reflection; lunch/recess detention, office referral. <i>Refer to flow chart on pg 2.</i> Level II or III- Administrative Detention and/or ISS	1-10
Inappropriate Language/ Obscene Language or behavior	Harmful/Hurtful communication. This can include cursing, lewd, offensive, or vulgar language or gestures, whether physical, written or spoken	Level I - depending on offense and severity of behavior, action by teacher can include: written reflection; lunch/recess detention, office referral. <i>Refer to flow chart</i> Level II or III- Administrative Detention and/or ISS/OSS	1-3
Inappropriate sales	Inappropriate sale of snacks, or other materials (does not include drugs, prescription drugs, stolen property, or other contraband).	Level II or III 1st Offense - Administrator Detention 1-3 days 2nd offense - ISS	1-3
Irresponsible physical behavior or horseplay	Non-serious, physical contact that violates school guidelines.	Level I - depending on offense and severity of behavior, action by teacher can include: written reflection; lunch/recess detention, office referral. <i>Refer to flow chart</i> Level II or III- Administrative Detention and/or ISS	1-3
Leaving School Grounds	In an area outside of the school or activity boundaries (as defined by school).	Level III - ISS	1-3
Misrepresentation of the truth, false information	Non-serious, untrue message which violates rules.	Level I - depending on offense and severity of behavior, action by teacher can include: written reflection; lunch/recess detention, office referral. <i>Refer to flow chart</i> Level II or III- Administrative Detention and/or ISS	1-3



Physical aggression/assault	Making contact with or attempt to make contact with another person with the intent of causing serious bodily harm to the individual.	Level II or III- Administrative Detention and/or ISS/OSS, possible police referral	1-10
Property Aggression	Physical contact or threats of contact with an object where injury may occur	Level III - ISS/OSS, possible police referral	1-10
Retaliatory behavior	Act of reprisal against students who were part of a disciplinary investigation.	Level II or III- Administrative investigation, ISS/OSS	1-10
Stealing/Theft	In possession of, has passed on, or is responsible for removing property that is not their own without permission.	Level III - ISS/OSS, possible police referral	1-10
Teasing	Making fun of or attempting to provoke a person in a playful way which results in a negative impact	Level I - depending on offense and severity of behavior, action by teacher can include: written reflection; lunch/recess detention, office referral. <i>Refer to flow chart</i> Level II or III 1st Offense - Administrator Detention 1-3 days 2nd offense - ISS	1-3
Technology - Unauthorized use of/unauthorized access of school computer networks and/ or recordings	Serious use of an electronic device that violates school guidelines. This includes recording individuals without their knowledge or permission or looking up inappropriate content.	Level III - ISS/OSS, referral to counselor, possible police referral - see Technology - Acceptable Use Policy	1-10
Threats/ intimidation/Harassment (nonsexual)	Physical, verbal, written, or electronic communication (without physical contact)	Level III - ISS/OSS, referral to counselor, possible police referral	1-10



	which results in fear of harm or discomfort.		
Tobacco/Vape/Alcohol/ drugs- possession, sale, use, intent to sell, distribution, paraphernalia	Possession or use of drugs, medications, or other substances that are limited, controlled, or banned; misuse of allowed substances in an unapproved way.	Level III - ISS/OSS, referral to counselor, possible police referral, possible referral for expulsion	1-10
Vandalism	Willful destruction or defacement of school property (destroying school computers, carving a desk, spray painting walls, damaging vehicles, etc.).	Level III - ISS/OSS; possible police referral	1-10
Verbal altercation	Participation in an incident involving a verbal confrontation (shouting match, yelling etc.).	Level I - depending on offense and severity of behavior, action by teacher can include: written reflection; lunch/recess detention, office referral. <i>Refer to flow chart</i> Level II or III 1st Offense - Administrator Detention 1-3 days 2nd offense - ISS	1-3
Weapons - possession/use	Possession or use of knives, guns, or other objects readily capable of causing bodily harm.	Level III - ISS/OSS, possible police referral, mandatory referral for expulsion	1-10

Field Trip Participation

- Field trips are educational privileges that enhance classroom learning through hands-on experiences. Participation in field trips is not guaranteed and may be revoked at the discretion of school administrators based on student behavior or disciplinary concerns. Administrators reserve the right to exclude students from field trips as a disciplinary measure when necessary.
- During field trips, students serve as representatives of our school community. Safety remains our highest priority, and all participants must adhere to established safety protocols and behavioral



expectations. Students who cannot meet these standards may be prohibited from future field trip opportunities.

- Parents will be notified in advance if their child's field trip participation is in question due to behavioral concerns. We encourage families to work with school staff to address any issues so that all students can benefit from these valuable learning experiences.

Discipline Considerations

- The disciplinary guidelines outlined here are not meant to be all-inclusive or restrictive, but rather to provide students and parents with relative information as to how various disciplinary situations are typically actioned.
- Connecticut schools are responsible for addressing social media posts that pose a threat to student safety and well-being.
- *Lunch/Recess Detention issued by a teacher must be accompanied by a phone call home and inform the ~~school counselor for PS Log entry~~ SEL Dean for restorative response and documentation.
- **ISS** = In School Suspension - All student work delivered to the office or posted to Google Classroom. Student is responsible for all missed work.
- **OSS** = Out of School Suspension - All student work posted in Google Classroom, student is responsible for all missed work.
- Student can not participate in school sponsored activities during suspension for both ISS and OSS.
- For all offenses at all levels, additional disciplinary action up to and including possible expulsion as indicated by Board policy, may be required depending on the nature, severity or frequency of the offense. Incidents involving police referral may result in arrest.
- Incidents involving damages, theft, cleanup or other services require restitution.
- A student whose discipline record shows habitual and repeated behavior infractions of at least five (5) individual suspension actions or 15 total days of suspension within one year may be brought before the school administration team for review. The team may also consider for review any student who has accumulated eight suspension actions or a total of 24 days of suspension within a two-year span.
- **Expulsion** - Any student whose conduct on school grounds or at a school-sponsored activity violates a publicized policy of the Board, or seriously disrupts the educational process or endangers persons or property may be expelled. Expulsion proceedings are required (Conn. Gen. State Statutes, Sec. 10-233d) when there is reason to believe that a pupil 1) possessed or used a



firearm, deadly weapon, dangerous instrument or martial arts weapon on school grounds or at a school-sponsored activity; 2) off school grounds possessed a firearm or used or possessed a firearm, instrument or weapon in the commission of a crime; or 3) on or off school grounds offered for sale or distribution of a controlled substance. Any such exclusion shall take place in accordance with sections 10-233a to 10-233h of the Conn. Gen. State Statutes. Cases of possession of controlled substances shall be brought to the Superintendent for consideration of additional action including the initiation of expulsion proceedings. The Superintendent may also recommend expulsion proceedings for other serious violations of school policy or for any student referred by the principal through the Disciplinary Review process.

Student Rights

Nondiscrimination Statement

The Ridgefield Public Schools are committed to a policy of equal opportunity/affirmative action for all qualified persons. The District does not discriminate in any employment practice, education program, or educational activity on the basis of race, color, religious creed, sex, age, national origin, ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability (including, but not limited to, intellectual disability, past or present history of mental disorder, physical disability or learning disability), genetic information, or any other basis prohibited by Connecticut state and/or federal nondiscrimination laws. Inquiries regarding the District's nondiscrimination policies should be directed to:

Karen Dewing, Title IX Coordinator Ridgefield Public Schools
90 East Ridge Road
Ridgefield, CT 06877
203-894-5550 or email: kdewing@ridgefieldps.net

Section 504 questions should be directed to: Director of Pupil Personnel Services, (203) 894-5551

Equality of Opportunity Statement

Ridgefield Public Schools recognizes and accepts the need to prepare students to live and work productively in an increasingly diverse society. This is an integral part of our commitment to offer an educational program of excellence, which includes teaching our students awareness and understanding of the diverse cultures and heritages that form our society.



To this end, the school will not tolerate behavior by students which insults, degrades or stereotypes any race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, handicap, physical or mental condition, or ethnic group. Students engaged in this type of behavior may be assigned to counseling session(s) or behavior intervention in addition to any disciplinary action that may be taken.

Family Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Ridgefield Board of Education, in compliance with the requirements of federal law and regulations, shall inform parents annually of their rights in regard to their children's records.

The Ridgefield Board of Education provides you with the following notice:

Notification of Rights Under FERPA for Elementary and Secondary Institutions

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

The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the District receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit a written request to the school principal that identifies the record(s) that they wish to inspect. The principal will make arrangements for access and notify the parents or eligible students of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

The right to request the amendment of the student's records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate or misleading. Parents or eligible students may ask Ridgefield Public Schools to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write to the school principal (or director of Special Education in situations that involve special education records), and clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the District decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the District will notify the parent or eligible student in writing of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception which permits disclosure without consent is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the District as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement personnel); a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom the District has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist) or a parent or student serving on an official committee such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her task. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. Upon request, Ridgefield Schools will disclose educational records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.



The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the District to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA is:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
600 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-4605

Student Records

Student records shall be maintained to record information about students and their families for legitimate educational purposes, including instruction, counseling, research and compliance with statutory requirements. The information gathered is intended to be useful in indicating the student's progress and achievement to those who must make judgments about a student's further education opportunities or employment. All such records shall be considered the confidential property of the school system.

All student records shall be stored and maintained in such a manner as to make them secure from inspection by unauthorized persons. Central to all procedures shall be the intention to protect the welfare of the individual within the constraints of the educational process. Within each student's folder there shall be a record of all individuals who have consulted the records, with the reason for inspection of the record and the date. Only those school personnel who are immediately responsible for the student's education will be exempt. Personally identifiable information from student records shall not be released without parental consent.

A frequently asked question about materials, files, and documents maintained by schools is: "What if parents want to see a teacher's grade book?" Answer: They have access only to the records of their own child. The teacher can transcribe grades onto a separate sheet of paper. Parents are not entitled to have access to other students' grades.

Directory Information

The Ridgefield Public Schools take every reasonable effort to protect the privacy rights of students and their families. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), allows directory information to be released unless the student or student's parent/guardian objects. Directory information means information contained in an education record which would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed.

The Ridgefield Schools will disclose directory information unless the student or student's parent/guardian objects. Directory information includes such information as the student name, street address, email address, telephone number, grade and homeroom class, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, degrees and awards received, videotaping/broadcasting, photographs for local newspapers, school web pages and displays, and name of parent or guardian. Parents must indicate, in writing, their



desire to have any or all of the directory information pertaining to their children withheld from being considered directory information.

Directory information will be released solely for the legitimate educational reasons at the discretion of the Superintendent or his designee.

The National Defense Authorization Act of 2002 requires, upon a request made by military recruiters or an institution of higher education, access to secondary school students' names, addresses and telephone listings.

However, a parent of a secondary school student or the student himself/herself if he/she has reached the age of majority ("eligible student") may object to the release of the student's name, address or telephone listing to military recruiters or an institution of higher education without prior written parental consent. A parent or eligible student who objects to disclosure of such information without prior consent may file a notice in writing of said objection to the high school principal at any time.

Annually, the Ridgefield Schools shall notify parents of the district's right to disclose directory information as defined herein. Parents shall be provided ten (10) school days to indicate in writing, their desire to have any and all of the directory information pertaining to their children withheld from being considered directory information.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is illegal and is forbidden by Ridgefield Board of Education policy. Sexual harassment is generally defined as any unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal, visual or physical conduct of a sexual nature, made by someone from or in the education setting.

Students are legally protected against sex discrimination and sexual harassment by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, a federal law prohibiting discrimination in schools on the basis of sex. Sex discrimination is also covered under Connecticut state law. Students have a right to participate in all school and classroom activities in an atmosphere free from sexual harassment, and they have a responsibility not to engage in sexual behavior that is unwelcome or offensive to others.

If a student believes that he or she is a victim of sexual harassment, the student or parent should immediately inform a teacher, counselor, or administrator. The administration will take action to investigate the allegations.

Social Services Agencies

Periodically, social service agencies, law enforcement officials, courts, and state agencies providing human services ask us for assistance in the prevention, identification, and treatment of abuse. Section 17-106 of the Connecticut General Statutes authorizes our cooperation with these agencies. Teachers, principals, paraprofessionals and other professional school staff are obligated by law (Conn. Gen. Stat. 17a-101) to report suspected child abuse or



neglect to the Connecticut State Department of Children and Families Services. Specific procedures governing the reporting of abuse and neglect are in effect.

Surveys

Your child will not be required to participate without parental consent in any survey, analysis, or evaluation that concerns:

1. political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student's parent;
2. mental or psychological problems of the student or the student's family;
3. sex attitudes or behaviors;
4. illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating and demeaning behavior;
5. critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships;
6. legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians and ministers;
7. income; or
8. religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or the student's parents.

In addition, parents have the right to inspect, upon request, a survey that is to be administered by a school to a student, prior to its use. Parents will be notified at least two weeks in advance of any survey that will be given to their children. Click [here](#) for the complete privacy policies.

The District will not collect, disclose or use personal information gathered from students for the purpose of marketing or selling that information or providing it to others for that purpose.

Annual Notifications

Ridgfield Public Schools are required to notify parents of the following at the beginning of each school year.

Title I Comparability of Services

All district schools, regardless of whether they receive Federal Title I funds, provide services that, taken as a whole, are substantially comparable. Staff, curriculum materials and instructional supplies are provided in a manner to ensure equivalency among district schools.



Limited English Proficient (LEP) Students

Parents of Limited English Proficient (LEP) Students participating in a language instructional program will be notified within 30 days of their child's placement in the program. The notification will include an explanation of why, a description of the program, and the parent's rights to remove their child from the LEP program. In addition, the notification will explain how the program will help the child to develop academically, learn English and achieve the standards necessary for promotion.

Students not meeting the English mastery standard or demonstrating limited progress will be provided with additional language support services which may include, but are not limited to, English as a Second Language program, sheltered English programs, English Immersion programs, summer school, after-school assistance, homework assistance, and tutoring. After 30 months in a bilingual program, students will not be offered additional bilingual education.

Migrant Students

The district has a program to address the needs of migrant students. A full range of services will be provided to migrant students, including applicable Title I programs, special education, gifted education, vocational education, language programs, counseling programs and elective classes. Parents/guardians of migrant students will be involved in and regularly consulted about the development, implementation, operation and evaluation of the migrant program.

Homeless Students

Children who meet the Federal definition of "homeless" will be provided a free and appropriate public education in the same manner as all other students of the District and will not be stigmatized or segregated on the basis of their status as homeless. No homeless student will be denied enrollment based on lack of proof of residency. No Board policy, administrative guideline, or practice will be interpreted or applied in such a way as to inhibit the enrollment, attendance, or school success of homeless children.

Homeless students will be provided services comparable to other students in the District in compliance with federal and state law. Homeless students, as defined by federal and state legislation, will have all programs, services, and transportation that other students enjoy and may continue to attend the school of origin. The McKinney Vento Act requires homeless student liaisons to provide public notice of the education rights of homeless students. Notices will be created in a manner and form understandable to homeless students and their parents/guardians and, to the extent possible, be in their native language(s). The local liaison for homeless children is Dr. Christine Sipala at (203) 894-5550 x 1131.



As part of the Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010 we are providing notice to parents, students, and the community of the existence of the School Wellness Policy # 6142.101. Schools within the district that offer free or reduced pricing in conjunction with participation in the National School Lunch Program will provide information and applications when necessary.

Smoking, Alcohol and Drugs

The Ridgfield Public Schools expect and encourage students to respect themselves and others. We also expect and encourage students to help us achieve a safe school environment. Accordingly, and in compliance with federal and state laws, no alcoholic beverages or controlled drugs, as defined by Connecticut law, are permitted on school property. Any student found in possession or under the influence of such substances are subject to disciplinary actions and/or referred to the police and/or an appropriate agency. (For students taking prescribed medication, arrangements may be made with the school nurse who will administer that medication during school hours.) Students may not smoke or use tobacco products, including electronic nicotine-delivery systems and vapor products, on school property or at any school-related or school-sanctioned activity, on or off school property.

Smoking is prohibited in all district facilities.

Psychotropic Drug Use

The Ridgfield Board of Education believes that the use of psychotropic drugs by students is a personal decision to be made by the parents/guardians of students and health care providers of students. In conformity with state statute, the Ridgfield Board of Education prohibits all school personnel from recommending the use of psychotropic drugs for any student enrolled within the school system. For the purposes of this policy, the term “recommend” shall mean to directly or indirectly suggest that a child use psychotropic drugs.

Psychotropic drugs are defined as prescription medications for behavioral or social-emotional concerns, such as attention deficits, impulsivity, anxiety, depression and thought disorders and include, but are not limited to, stimulant medications and antidepressants.

However, school health or mental health personnel, including school nurses or nurse practitioners, the District’s Medical Advisor, school psychologists, school social workers, school counselors or the District’s Director of Special Services/Special Education may recommend that a student be evaluated by an appropriate medical practitioner.

Child Abuse and Neglect

The Board of Education has a legal and ethical obligation to report suspected child abuse and neglect. Any person applying for employment with the Board shall submit to a record check of the Department of Children and Families child abuse and neglect registry before the person may be hired. Mandated reporters include all school employees, specifically the superintendent, administrators, teachers, substitute teachers, guidance counselors, psychologists,



social workers, nurses, physicians, paraprofessionals and coaches either employed by the Board or working in one of the Board's schools, or any other person who, in the performance of his or her duties, has regular contact with students and who provides services to or on behalf of students enrolled in the Board's schools.

When there is reasonable cause to suspect or believe that a child under the age of eighteen (18) years has been abused or neglected, has had non-accidental physical injury, or injury which is at variance with the history given of such injury, or is placed at imminent risk of serious harm, mandated reporters are required to report in accordance with the law and this policy.

Suicide Prevention Intervention

It is the policy of the Ridgefield Board of Education that staff will respond to any situation in which school staff become aware that a student has indicated intent to attempt suicide or to physically harm himself/herself.

As prescribed by state law, the Board's program of instruction shall include teaching on mental and emotional health, including youth suicide prevention. Through such education, students will be strongly encouraged to report any information regarding a suicide threat or intent. Board staff will receive in-service training on health and mental health risk reduction education, including but not limited to, youth suicide.

Asbestos

Legislation requires all school buildings to be reevaluated to determine if asbestos is present and if it poses a significant health hazard to the building's occupants. The district has plans on file showing the location of asbestos in each building and measures undertaken to comply with regulations to maintain a safe school environment. Requests to review these plans should be made to the Business Manager and/or Director of Facilities.

Pesticide Application

It is the policy of the Ridgefield Board of Education to implement an integrated pest management plan to reduce the amount of pesticides applied in any building, or the grounds of any Ridgefield public school, by using all available pest control techniques including judicious use of pesticides, when warranted, to maintain a pest population at or below an acceptable level, while decreasing the use of pesticides.

The decision to apply pesticide in any building, or the grounds of any Ridgefield public school is dependent on the results of periodic monitoring for pest populations to determine if a pest problem exists that exceeds acceptable threshold levels. No application of pesticide shall be made in any building, or the grounds of any Ridgefield public school during regular school hours or during planned activities at any school except as provided by Connecticut statute or regulation.



Parents or guardians of children in any school and/or staff members in any school may register for prior notice of pesticide application at their school. Each school shall maintain a registry of persons requesting such notice, and shall provide notice to registered individuals in accordance with applicable Connecticut statutory and regulatory provisions.