



Student/Parent Handbook

2020-2021

#OneTeamSharedDream

Cordaryl Middleton, Ed.D, Principal

Wendy May, M. Ed, Asst. Principal
Gregory Shields, Ed.S, Asst. Principal
Strei-Sann Sinkler, Ed.D, Asst. Principal

3420 Julia Avenue, Augusta, GA 30906
706-796-4944 (phone) / 706-796-4670 (fax)
<https://www.rcboe.org/richmondhill>

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Note: This handbook is not all inclusive. Changes may be made throughout the school year.

Vision

Our mission is to provide a structured and innovative learning environment which empowers students to identify their purpose, cultivate their individual strengths, and inspire them to be productive and responsible global citizens.

Mission

Ignite **P**urpose, Enrich **M**inds, Develop **C**haracter, and Build **C**ommunity

Collective Commitments

We are committed to...

- creating a safe, secure learning environment where respect, honesty, and appreciation of individual differences are fostered.
- cultivating and maintain partnerships with students, parents, staff and the community.
- maintaining rigorous standards and high expectations for all students as keys to academic excellence and life-long learning.
- motivating students to become independent learners who take responsibility for their own learning.
- offering a balanced curriculum aligned with quality instruction.
- inspiring and equipping all students to discover and develop their purpose and talents in order to express their unique potential as leaders, critical thinkers, and collaborators.
- instilling a sense of pride in our schools and community.

Academic Dishonesty

Coursework submitted by a student must be the student's own, original work. Students shall not cheat on any assignment by giving or receiving unauthorized assistance (parents completing assignments for students, etc.), or commit the act of plagiarism. Students who commit such acts are subject to receiving a grade of zero on the assignment in question as well as disciplinary actions.

Complete information regarding academic dishonesty can be found in the RCSS Code of Conduct.

Academic Policy

Students at Richmond Hill K-8 will be able to....

- Integrate the use of reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills, and communicate with clarity, purpose, and understanding.
- Demonstrate strong study skills, efficient use of time, and the ability to complete tasks, both individually and collaboratively.
- Demonstrate the ability to connect knowledge and experiences from all subject areas to solve real-life problems and to complete tasks.
- Use higher-order and creative thinking skills to evaluate and solve problems.
- Participate in learning experiences that enrich life, including an appreciation for the visual and performing arts, physical fitness, and wellness.
- Demonstrate competency in the use of current technologies and resources in order to acquire new knowledge, develop new skills, share ideas, and expand understanding.
- Respect authority, oneself, and others, take responsibility for personal actions, and act as a responsible citizen.
- Understand and appreciate the diversity of others and demonstrate the ability to constructively resolve conflicts.
- Reflect upon and evaluate his or her learning experiences for the purpose of continuous self-improvement.

Admission/Registration Requirements

1. Certified Birth Certificate---A child must be age five (5) on or before September 1 to enroll in kindergarten or age four (4) on or before September 1 to enroll in pre-kindergarten.
2. Student's Social Security Number or Copy of student's Social Security Card (optional)
3. Current Georgia Immunization Certificate---GA Form 3231
4. Certificate of Eye, Ear, and Dental Examination

5. Documentation of withdrawal from previous school (if applicable)
6. Legal Custody Papers (if appropriate)
7. Current Proof of Residence (must contain physical address of the property & must be within past 30 days)

Assemblies

Assemblies will be periodically held during the school year. All school-sponsored programs are under the direction and supervision of the teachers and administrators. Students are expected to enter and exit assemblies in a quiet, orderly manner and to sit in assigned areas. Whistling, heckling, and/or booing are not acceptable and will not be tolerated. Students who misbehave during assembly programs will be removed. Students may also be pulled from assemblies to complete academic work not finished in class. Extra events are privileges that are earned.

Athletics

We offer the following sports for students in grades 6-8:

Baseball	Football	Softball
Basketball (girls and boys)	Golf	
Cheerleading	Track & Field (girls and boys)	

All athletes and coaches are bound by the GHSA Rules with regard to eligibility, conduct, etc. (<https://www.ghsa.net>).

ALL student athletes must have a physical **prior** to trying out and participating in any school sport. Teams are under the guidance and direction of the coaches and school administrators. All athletes must have health insurance coverage in order to play any sport.

A Sports Banquet is held annually in the Spring to celebrate athletic accomplishments. Parents of athletes are encouraged to participate in fundraisers to help off-set the costs of tickets for the banquet.

***Students assigned to ISS or OSS **cannot** participate in extra-curricular activities such as sports, clubs, or academic competitions.

For more details, please review the RCSS Athletics Department Rules and Regulations at www.rcboe.rog/athletics.

Attendance

A school year consists of 180 school days. Georgia law requires that all students between six and sixteen years of age attend school regularly. The law states that absences may be considered legally excused for the following reasons only: 1) illness, 2) death in the family, and 3) religious holidays. A note from the parent explaining the child's absences is expected when the child returns to school. *After five (5) absences, a physician's excuse is required to excuse any further absence.* The Richmond County Promotion Policy states that any student who is absent without a legal excuse may not receive credit for the school year. In order to be counted present, a child must be at school for the majority of the school day. *Students should not arrive late or be picked up early as a common practice, as this causes students to miss instruction and is distracting for*

the class. In an effort to maximize instructional time and limit classroom interruptions students will not be dismissed after **3:45 p.m.** Teachers are not required to allow makeup work for unexcused absences or frequent tardies.

Tardy

All tardy students are to report to the front office for a tardy pass to class. A student is tardy when he/she enters the classroom/homeroom after the tardy bell rings at **9:05 am**. Promptness to class is very important! Parents are expected to ensure that the child arrives on time and must accompany them inside to sign in if they are tardy. Students who leave school before the end of the day are also counted tardy. If the early dismissal is excused for medical/appointment reasons, it will be listed as an excused tardy once documentation of the appointment is received. Students will be expected to report to classes promptly. Ample time is provided for class change. Homeroom tardiness is to be considered the same as class tardiness.

Early Dismissal

Parent/Guardian(s) who must pick students up early due to an emergency or unavoidable circumstance should report directly to the office, where students must be signed out. Parent/Guardian(s) must have ID. Students will be released only to persons listed on the registration card or as identified in written authorization. In an effort to maximize instructional time and limit classroom interruptions students will not be dismissed after **3:45 pm**. Students leaving early without legitimate excuse will be counted as tardy for attendance purposes. The student is responsible for all make-up assignments within five (5) days if credit is desired. In cases of unexcused absences, the student may not be given credit for make-up work. The Principal shall have exclusive jurisdiction in classifying excuses.

Special Note: Tardies and/or Early Dismissals on 10 or more days will disqualify a student for yearly Perfect Attendance awards

For detailed information regarding attendance, please refer to the RCSS Code of Student Conduct and Discipline.

******Incentives will be in place for good attendance.******

A.V.I.D (Advancement Via Individual Determination)

Equity

AVID is closing the opportunity gap in college graduation rates among diverse and underrepresented demographic groups.

Leadership

AVID leaders shift the campus culture to drive change and spread best practices.

Teacher Effectiveness

The AVID Effect is realized through the delivery of inquiry-based and student-centric instruction, which increases levels of effectiveness.

Student Learning

With AVID, teachers inspire students to take control over their own learning.

Regardless of students' life circumstances, AVID students overcome obstacles and achieve success. They graduate and attend college at higher rates, but more importantly, they can think critically, collaborate, and set high expectations to confidently conquer the challenges that await them.

Students in Grades 4th – 6th will participate in the AVID Program; however, AVID strategies will be implemented school wide.

Before School & Afterschool Care

Childcare is available before and after school at Richmond Hill K-8 through the Family Y of Augusta. Prime Time is available to students arriving before **8:30 am** and for students needing care after **4:30 pm**. The cost is reasonable. For more information, contact the Family Y of Augusta at 706-992-9656.

*****Please note that students who are not part of Prime Time must be picked up before 4:30 pm. If not, RCSS Public Safety will be contacted. DFACS may also be contacted if we are unable to reach someone.**

Birthday/Classroom Celebrations

Per Richmond County Board of Education policy, the only holidays/events that can be honored with a celebration in the classroom are Winter Celebration (end of the first semester) and End of School for students in grades PreK – 5 only. Classroom parties are scheduled at staggered times in order to accommodate our limited parking.

Parents are asked *not* to send birthday party invitations to school to be distributed in the classroom unless the entire class has been invited. Contact your child's teacher to make any necessary arrangements before sending any snacks/treats to the school. Snacks/treats must be individually wrapped. Birthday treats are only allowed during the lunch period so that instructional time is not interrupted. Teachers will distribute the treats inside of the lunchroom so that students can celebrate with their specific class. Please arrange this with the teacher in advance. To ensure the safety of our students with allergies, please consult your child's teacher prior to bringing in snacks for the class. The wellness policy sets guidelines concerning snacks served to students during the school day. We cannot accept deliveries of flowers or balloons for students at school as these pose a distraction to the mission of our school day. Additionally, no outside food from fast food restaurants or food deliveries are allowed for students during the school day.

Cafeteria

All students enrolled in Richmond County schools are eligible to have breakfast and lunch at no cost.

Breakfast: Starts at 8:30 am and ends at 9:00 am. Students on late buses are allowed to

eat prior to reporting to class.

Lunch: *Each class will have a designated lunchtime. Consult with your child's teacher in order to determine the designated lunchtime for your child's class.* At this time, parents are strongly discouraged from eating lunch with your child in order to alleviate the number of individuals within the building at one time. *Please do not bring in fast food for your child to eat during lunch (McDonalds, Burger King, Zaxby's, etc.). Students will not be able to eat this type of food in the cafeteria due to Nutrition Guidelines. Students are not permitted to bring glass bottles or canned goods as a part of their lunch. Students will not have access to a microwave for student lunches.*

Conduct and Discipline

Richmond Hill K-8 School students are expected to put forth their best effort at all times by behaving in a manner that will promote a safe and orderly learning environment. Any behavior which causes the learning atmosphere to be disrupted or which infringes upon the rights of others in the school will not be tolerated and may subject the student to corrective measures.

Conduct Rules:

Good student conduct sets the tone for other positive things to happen in school. As a result, a positive school climate plan has been developed and will be implemented. Parents will be an integral part of the plan and will be directly involved with its implementation. The students themselves play an important role in their own educational programming. In such an atmosphere, the class is neither teacher-dominated nor student-controlled; rather, it is a joint effort to learn, relate, and experience.

Our method of discipline shows the student three things that include:

- What they have done wrong;
- How to solve the problems they created; and
- How to assume responsibility for their own actions?

This method uses logical and realistic consequences and leaves the student's dignity intact. Self-discipline by students is the ultimate goal of the discipline program at Richmond Hill K-8.

The following are general rules of conduct for all students at Richmond Hill K-8 School during school hours, on a school campus whether or not during school hours, at school activities, whether at home or away, on a school bus, or at school bus stops:

1. Disturbances that disrupt the learning opportunities for others in class are prohibited.
2. Students are expected to obey reasonable commands of all school personnel.
3. Rude, discourteous, disobedient, or defiant behavior is prohibited.
4. Profanity, obscenities, and/or insulting remarks will not be tolerated in school or on school grounds.
5. Threatening and/or intimidating another student or adult is prohibited.
6. Hitting, roughing, fighting, and physical abuse with intent to hurt another student or adult is prohibited.
7. Assault and/or battery on school employee or another student is prohibited.
8. No student shall leave campus without permission.

9. Failure to tell the truth, forging or knowingly using a forged signature, stealing, cheating, and plagiarism (giving or receiving information) is prohibited.
10. Falsifying, misrepresenting, omitting, or erroneously reporting information regarding instances of alleged inappropriate behavior by a teacher, administrator, or other school personnel toward a student is prohibited.
11. The willful damage or destruction of property is prohibited.
12. Tampering with fire safety equipment and/or setting off a false alarm is prohibited.
13. Bullying in any form is prohibited.

Discipline/ Behavior

The discipline plans and procedures will be grade level/age appropriate and will be explained fully to students and parents at the beginning of the school year. Each teacher will send home his/her classroom rules and discipline measures to be followed. Parents are urged to go over these rules carefully with their children. Detailed discipline guidelines can be found in the Code of Student Conduct and Discipline handbook that will be sent home at the beginning of the school year. For detailed information regarding the **RCSS Code of Student Conduct and Discipline**, please visit www.rcboe.org.

Note:

- Students are expected to behave in a manner conducive to academic progress for themselves and for others. At all times, each student is expected to show respect for teachers, school personnel, and fellow students.
- Students assigned to OSS or ISS cannot take part in extra-curricular activities and attend any afterschool functions including, but not limited to, sports, academic competitions, and clubs.

Bus Discipline Policy

Riding the bus is a privilege, and students can be removed at any time for disruptive and unsatisfactory conduct. If bus rules are broken, the student will be subject to the same disciplinary action that would be taken if the behavior had happened on school grounds. All pupils being transported are under the authority of the bus driver and must obey his/her requests.

All school rules, as described in the **RCSS Code of Student Conduct and Discipline**, apply to students riding the bus. The following is a list of general expectations for our students:

1. Students are to be seated at all times while the bus is in motion. At no time should students have heads, hands, arms or feet outside the bus.
2. Students will maintain a low noise level. The bus driver needs to be able to hear while driving.
3. Abusive or obscene language will not be tolerated. Bus drivers will report any student who uses curse words.
4. Students shall not cause or attempt to cause physical injury, threaten bodily harm, or behave in such a way as could reasonably cause physical injury to a school employee or other students.
5. Students shall not cause or attempt to cause damage to the bus. Costs for the damages will be payable by the student and parent.

6. Use or possession of alcoholic beverages, drugs, weapons, or other objects (including toys) which can endanger other passengers is prohibited.
7. Students should show respect for bus drivers and other students on the bus.
8. Students should be at bus stop on time, load quickly and quietly in an orderly manner, and move away from the bus stop after exiting/unloading the bus.
9. Students are expected to obey the bus rules while waiting for and riding the bus. This includes following the rules at the bus stops in the morning and afternoon. Students who do not meet expectations will be referred to the appropriate school administrators.
10. The bus driver is in charge and may assign seats.
11. Students are videotaped while riding the bus in order to promote safety and to enforce good behavior.
12. Additional expectations may be established by the bus driver.

Counseling Department

Richmond Hill K-8 School has a comprehensive developmental guidance and counseling program with many components. Our counselors are available as a support system to help students experience educational success. Individual counseling, small group counseling, and classroom guidance opportunities are services provided to improve student performance, self-awareness, and interpersonal skills. In addition, the guidance counselors provide information on careers, study skills, decision-making skills, and other life skills. Through collaboration with educators, parents and community resources, our counselors assist with guiding students through their educational experience to ensure positive results.

COVID-19 Preventative Recommendations

A few of the major points that we are asking you to commit to include the following:

- Keep your child at home if they are sick.
- Monitor Daily symptoms of COVID-19 such as:
 1. Fever over 100 F
 2. Chills
 3. Cough
 4. Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 5. Fatigue
 6. Muscle or body aches
 7. Headache
 8. New loss of taste or smell
 9. Sore throat
 10. Congestion or runny nose
 11. Nausea or vomiting
 12. Diarrhea
- Keep your child at home and inform the school if someone in the home test positive for COVID-19.

- Keep your child at home if they are awaiting COVID-19 test results for ANY reason.
- Report positive test results to the school immediately.
- We recommend wearing a mask and social distancing.
- Teach and practice good hygiene habits such as washing hands and using sanitizer.
- Refrain from large groups and congregating.

By doing these things, along with following the safety precautions in place, together we can have a safe school.

Curriculum and Instruction

Curriculum and instruction will be based on the full implementation of the Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE), STEM Frameworks of Instruction, and the RCK12 Curriculum. Therefore, the Richmond Hill K-8 Curriculum is built upon the premise of:

1. Literacy and numeracy will be the foundation upon which all other courses, projects, skills sets, applications, etc. are built
2. Interdisciplinary – formal, physical, life, social, & applied sciences
3. Challenging & rigorous curriculum driven by problem-solving, discovery, exploratory learning, active learning to find solutions
4. “A meta-discipline” that transforms subject matter by incorporating science, mathematics, technology & engineering
5. The force that creates an interest for elementary age students in mathematics and science that provides a foundation for middle school, high school and beyond
6. The provider of integration of hands-on, real-world learning tasks, coupled with academic theory, to help students master rigorous math and science concepts
7. The building blocks for greater capacity in teachers through content specific, rigorous and ongoing professional development and training
8. Use project-based learning to reinforce real world applications.

Detention

Some rule infractions will result in the assignment of detention. Detention procedures are as follows:

- Sign in with the assigned detention room by **4:30 pm** for afternoon detention.
- Detention is held Monday – Thursday.
- For afternoon detention, parents **MUST** pick-up student by **5:30 pm**. On occasions where students are continuously not being picked up on time, they will only be assigned morning detention.
- If a student does not serve an assigned detention (without prior approval), the student will be assigned an extra hour of detention. This will also result in an additional discipline infraction.
- If a student is disruptive in detention, then additional disciplinary actions will be assigned to the student.

Dress code

Students:

All students **are required** to adhere to the Richmond County School System’s dress code and grooming policy. Detailed dress code guidelines can be found in the Code of Student

Conduct and Discipline Handbook that will be sent home at the beginning of the school year. Students should come to school in clothing that is comfortable and suitable for all school activities. In the selection of clothes, parents are urged to use good judgment and select clothes that are appropriate for school. Students who are identified as being out of dress code will be assigned the appropriate consequence as outlined in the Code of Student Conduct and Discipline Handbook. In addition, students will be expected to call home in order to obtain appropriate clothing.

The following *are* acceptable and expected:

- Appropriate shoes must be worn at all times; Tennis shoes should be worn when participating in the school's physical education (PE) program.
- Shoelaces should be tied at all times.
- Pants with holes or cut-outs are permissible *only* if the holes/cut outs are *lower* than mid-thigh. In addition, tights, leggings, or gym shorts must be worn underneath pants with holes or cut-outs; there should be no visible skin.
- Tights and leggings *only* when worn under skirts or dresses at the appropriate length.
- All pants, jeans, shorts, etc. must be fastened at the waist at all times and are to be worn at the appropriate waist level.

The following are *NOT* acceptable:

- Slides, flip flops, and shower shoes;
- Clothing or accessories advertising alcoholic beverages, drugs, tobacco, or weapons;
- Clothing, hats, hairstyles or accessories containing inappropriate language, messages or designs;
- Sun dresses, tank tops, tube tops, halter tops, see-through shirts, fishnet or mesh material shirts, crop-tops, one-shoulder or off-the-shoulder blouses, and blouses with open backs;
- Tights with t-shirt;
- Shirts, tops, blouses, or sweaters which show cleavage;
- Bare midriffs – all shirts, blouses, etc. must cover the top of pants, slacks, shorts, etc., whether standing or sitting;
- Pants, shorts, skirts, etc. with writing on the buttock area, as well as lace-up legs;
- Any clothing item that is too tight or loose;
- Any clothing item that is too short (shorts, skirts, and dresses must be as long as the length of the middle finger when hands are down by the student's side AND at least mid-thigh);
- Any clothing item that shows a student's undergarments;
- Baggy or sagging pants;
- Heeled and/or high platform shoes (unsafe and inappropriate on normal school days or events);
- Combs, picks, hairnets, scarves, bandanas, headbands, hair rollers, etc. (it is acceptable for young ladies to wear hairbands to *ONLY* hold back their hair);

- Bandanas (colored or white) at any time or on any part of the body;
- Hats, caps, stocking caps, dew rags, etc., except on special designated “Hat Days”;
- Sunglasses or shades inside the building;
- Visible body piercings other than earrings;
- Extreme colored or dyed hair that causes a disruption to the instructional process in the classroom.

Parent/Guardian(s):

In an effort to maintain a learning environment that is conducive to learning, parent/guardian(s) are expected to be dressed appropriately when going beyond the front office (*i.e.* observing classrooms, having lunch with a student) to eliminate distractions and/or cause disruptions within the learning environment.

The following are *NOT* acceptable:

- Clothing or accessories advertising alcoholic beverages, drugs, tobacco, or weapons;
- Clothing, hats, hairstyles or accessories containing inappropriate language
- Tank tops, see-through shirts, fishnet or mesh material shirts;
- Shirts, tops, blouses, or sweaters which show majority of cleavage;
- Baggy or sagging pants;
- Any form of night clothing.

Emergency Contact Information

It is critical for the school to know where parents work, how to reach them or who to call in the case of an emergency. Any change in the status of the above-mentioned should be reported to the child’s teacher or the school office as soon as change occurs.

***** At least one (1) emergency telephone number is REQUIRED for every student.***

Extra Credit

Occasionally a teacher may offer the opportunity for a student to earn extra points or extra credit; however, this is not something we do as a general practice.

Family Changes

If the status of a student’s custody changes after the student is enrolled, the enrolling parent/guardian or agency shall notify the school of the new address and contact phone numbers. Parents/guardians may be required to facilitate and obtain appropriate guardianship or custody documentation of their child to avoid referral to an outside agency or withdrawal.

The school must have a current address and phone number on every student. In the event that you move, change employment, change phone numbers or contact people, you must notify the office and your child’s teacher in writing immediately.

Field Trips

During the school year, parents may be asked to give permission for their child to go on a class field trip. A Permission to Participate in Field Trip form will be sent home for the legal guardian's signature before a student will be permitted to go on a field trip. Any student who has not returned the signed permission form will remain at school under the supervision of another classroom teacher. Students who demonstrate repeated or chronic misbehavior or earn an "F" in conduct will be required to have a parent chaperone on field trips. Parent can choose to ride the bus with the student and be transported by the parent.

Field trips are for enrolled Richmond Hill K-8 students, not siblings that are younger and/or older. Siblings attending Richmond Hill K-8 are not allowed to go on field trips with a brother or sister in another class.

Voluntary out-of-town field trips that utilize a bus service will require complete support of parents. When a trip of this nature is planned, the cost will be the same for all students regardless of the mode of transportation used. Also, if a parent drives, other siblings are not allowed to attend the school sponsored trip. Remember, all field trips are classroom-related activities and are not intended to be family trips. Parents serving as chaperones are expected to provide their full attention to the supervision of students.

General School Rules:

Assembly

1. Enter and leave quietly.
2. Sit in your assigned area.
3. Be courteous during the program (Listen. Do not talk).
4. Show appreciation at the appropriate time by applause only.

Classroom *(These are general rules. Each classroom teacher has his/her own set of rules.)*

1. Listen to and follow all directions given by the teacher.
2. Talk only with permission and at appropriate times.
3. Control unnecessary movement.
4. Do not disrupt class.
5. Be prepared with necessary materials and assignments.

Hall

1. Walk only. No running.
2. Stay in line and remain on the right side of the hall.
3. Be quiet and courteous.
4. Stop at the restroom or water fountain only with permission.
5. Always have a hall pass.

Lunchroom

1. Stand in a straight line, not leaning on the wall.
2. Use quiet voices only.

3. Do not play with food.
4. Clean your personal space.
5. Place trays in trash once instructed to do so.
6. Walk only.
7. All students are strongly encouraged to get a tray or bring a lunch from home.
8. Students are not allowed to bring fast food items in their original containers.
9. Students should not bring non-nutritional food items, such as cookies, candy, chips, or drinks in place of a lunch. These items included in a lunch from home are acceptable.
10. Student lunches cannot be warmed at school.

Recess (*Pertain to elementary students ONLY.*)

In an effort to take safety precaution, recess will be held in the classroom. However, at times students may go outside. If students go outside, students need to remember the following:

1. Wait for your turn.
2. Do not throw rocks, sticks, dirt, etc.
3. Put all trash in trash cans. No littering!
4. No running on sidewalks.
5. Play only in your designated area.

Restroom

1. Emergency restroom breaks require student to be escorted by an adult.
2. Use facilities properly. Flush urinals and toilets after each use.
3. Wash hands before leaving restroom.
3. Behave quietly and safely.
4. Do not place foreign objects or excess paper in sinks or toilets.
5. Do not play in the water.

Gifted Education

Richmond County Schools provide programs for all qualifying system students in grades K-12 who exhibit superior performance, advanced learning needs and demonstrate higher level motivation and creativity. The identification process uses multiple criteria as mandated by the Georgia Department of Education.

Students may qualify based on mental abilities and achievement or on three (3) of four (4) components including mental abilities, academic achievement, creativity and motivation or mental abilities alone for grades K-2.

An automatic referral process requires all schools to screen intelligences and achievement test scores on their students twice annually. Students may also be referred by parents, teachers, principals or counselors. Referrals are solicited in May for August testing and in November for January testing. Parents of students referred are notified of test dates two or more weeks in advance by Gifted Program personnel.

Students entering the system who had prior placement in a gifted program will be placed at once if they meet the Georgia Department of Education eligibility requirements. Gifted Program

personnel will evaluate those who do not have the required eligibility documentation.

Qualifying students in K-5 are enrolled in a five to six (5-6) hours per week resource program which provides thematic units of study. Qualifying students in Grades 6-8 are enrolled in five or more hours per week inside their core content classes. Parents receive a progress report three (3) times per year.

Parents are invited to an annual review to evaluate student's progress in the program and are provided with the Curriculum Focus for the upcoming year. Continuation in the program is dependent upon maintenance of an overall 3.5 GPA in academic classes, satisfactory performance in both regular and gifted classes, motivation and behavior, attendance, attitude and completion of all assigned tasks. Students who meet these conditions will automatically continue in the program. Students who do not meet these terms at any time during the school year will be allowed a six (6) weeks probationary period. If satisfactory improvement is not shown, the student will be removed from the program. Parents will be notified by letter at the beginning and ending of the probationary period. Students who leave the program will be reassessed and must meet current criteria for re-entry.

Grading Policy

Students in Grades K-8 are required to perform on grade level in all content area classes. There will be four nine weeks grading periods each year.

Standards Based Report Card for Grades K-3

The purpose of Standards Based Report Card is to provide parents, teachers and students with more accurate information about students' progress toward meeting standards. Parent/Guardian(s) will be more aware of what their children should know and be able to do by the end of each grading period.

The standards-based report card for grades K-3 will include a grading scale (1-4).

- 1 - Beginning Learner
- 2 - Developing Learner
- 3 - Proficient Learner
- 4 - Distinguished Learner

If an indicator is not measured during the grading period, the student will NOT receive a mark on the report card.

Grading System for Grades 4 – 8

A = 90-100 B = 80-89 C = 75-79 D = 70-74 F = Below 70

Report Cards and Grade Reports

Report cards will be issued at nine-week intervals throughout the school year. A parent/guardian's signature is required before report cards are returned to the child's homeroom teacher.

Parents should contact the child's teacher if questions or concerns should arise concerning grades.

Hall Passes

At this time, no hall passes will not be given. The only exceptions to this rule are in the case of a medical emergency or during the scheduled class changes.

Health Issues

Early in the morning it is often difficult to make a decision about whether or not your child is sick enough to stay home from school. With minor symptoms, you often cannot tell whether he/she is going to get better or worse during the course of the day.

The main reasons for keeping your child home are:

- If he/she is too sick to be comfortable at school; and/or
- If he/she might spread a contagious disease to other children.

As a rule of thumb, a child should stay home if there is:

- A fever over 100.4° F;
- Vomiting more than once;
- Diarrhea;
- A very frequent cough;
- Persistent pain (ear, stomach, etc.); and/or
- A widespread rash.

If any of these symptoms occur during the school day, you will be notified and required to take your child home. If the parent cannot be contacted, the emergency number provided will be called. If no contact can be made, the student will be kept in class or in the nurse's station until contact is made or until dismissal time. Home, work, and emergency telephone numbers should be kept up to date with the school office and the homeroom teacher. This is for the safety of your child!

Most of the above listed problems need to be discussed with your child's pediatrician to determine if an office visit is needed. On the other hand, children who don't have a fever and only have a mild cough, runny nose, or other cold symptoms can usually be sent to school without harm to themselves or others.

The following guidelines apply:

- Minor cold or allergy symptoms should not be a reason to miss school.
- If your child's cough is worse than you might expect with a common cold, you may need to consult your child's doctor.
- A single episode of vomiting, without any other symptoms, may not be reason enough for the child to miss school, but be sure the school can reach you if symptoms occur again during the day.
- A single episode of watery diarrhea probably warrants not going to school.

- Children with fever (generally considered to be over 100.4°) should stay home until there is no fever for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications such as Tylenol or Motrin.
- Children diagnosed with strep throat or scarlet fever should remain out of school until they are without fever and have been on antibiotics for 24 hours.
- Children with pinkeye should see their doctor. If diagnosed, children should remain home until they have been on antibiotic eye drops at least 24 hours or until their doctor recommends their return.
- Middle ear infections are not contagious to others. Children should stay home if they have fever or pain.
- Children who have been diagnosed with the flu should stay home until symptoms improve (usually 5 to 7 days) or until the doctor recommends returning.
- Impetigo is contagious and is passed by direct contact. The child's physician will recommend the length of time to be out of school.
- Chickenpox is highly contagious. Children with chickenpox must stay home until all bumps are scabbed and no new bumps have appeared for 2 days. Your child is contagious at least 2 days before the rash started, so you need to notify the school and classmates.
- Ringworm is a contagious fungal infection. It may be treated with anti-fungal creams and should be covered during school hours.
- Scabies should be treated immediately.
- Head Lice: It is the policy of this administration that no child should have to endure or cause another child to endure public school nuisances such as pediculus capitis (head lice). Because this human parasitic insect can cause great annoyance to its host (children and adults), school medical personnel will routinely check students for infestation. If the school health professional determines that a student is infected, the student's parents or guardians will be contacted and requested to come to the school for a conference, and to remove the child from school for treatment and remediation of the condition. A student will be checked upon returning to school. The child will not be allowed to return to school until he/she is nit and/or bug free.

Whenever there is doubt about sending your child to school, consult your child's doctor before doing so. A phone conversation may be all that is necessary.

Note:

- Remember to send a written excuse or doctor's note when appropriate when your child is absent due to illness per the Attendance Policy.

Homework

Homework is assigned almost every night in all grade levels. Teachers assign homework as practice for the skills being taught at school. These assignments reinforce what the students are learning each day in the classroom. Thus, it is very important for parent/guardian(s) to work with students to complete the assigned homework. Taking the assignment home, completing the work, remembering to bring it back to school the following day (or as directed by the teacher) are all important processes of developing responsibility. Homework is a part of the child's total evaluation. We value our instructional time and want to foster responsibility in our students; therefore, *we will not disturb classrooms for homework left at home. Homework will not be*

accepted from the fax machine.

Honors and Awards

Student recognition is a valuable part of the school program at Richmond Hill K-8. Honors and awards presented to students are as follows:

- **Achievement Award** – recognizes students who successfully passed to the next grade level. This only applies to students in Kindergarten.
- **Participation Award** – recognizes students who participated but were earned an overall unsatisfactory rating in the current grade level. This only applies to students in Kindergarten.
- **Distinguished Scholar Award** – this only applies to students in Grades K – 8.
 - Reading – Student has scored above grade level requirements on the Spring i-Ready Reading Test
 - Math – Student has scored above grade level requirements on the Spring i-Ready Math Test
- **Scholar Award** - this only applies to students in Grades K – 8.
 - Reading – Student has obtained grade level requirements on Spring i-Ready Reading Test.
 - Math – Student has obtained grade level requirements on Spring i-Ready Math Test.
- **i-Ready Highest Growth Math Award** – presented to one student in each homeroom class who has achieved the highest growth in math based on i-Ready. This only applies to students in Grades K – 8.
- **i-Ready Highest Growth Reading Award** – presented to one student in each homeroom class who has achieved the highest growth in math based on i-Ready. This only applies to students in Grades K – 8.
- **Citizenship Award** – presented to one student in each homeroom class who demonstrates the highest level of citizenship and personal embodiment of Character Words emphasized this school term. This only applies to students in Grades 1 – 8.
- **“A” Honor Roll** – recognizes students working on grade level who earned all A’s in all subjects except conduct. This only applies to students in Grades 4 - 8.
- **“AB” Honor Roll** – recognizes students working on grade level who earned an 80.0 overall average except conduct. This only applies to students in Grades 4 - 8.
- **Highest GPA in core academic and enrichment classes** - for students in Grades 6 - 8.
- **Special Recognitions** – awards for miscellaneous outstanding accomplishments.
- **Perfect Attendance Award** – to encourage students to be at school every day. (Tardies and/or Early Releases in excess of ten (10) times will disqualify a student from receiving the Perfect Attendance Award for the year.)
- **Principal Award** – recognizes one student with the highest cumulative GPA in core academics and connections in elementary (4th – 5th) and middle (6th – 8th).
- **Principal Choice Award** – recognizes one student per grade level who has worked diligently all year long towards the school’s vision: Ignite Purpose, Enrich Minds, Develop Character, Build Community.

A separate Sports Banquet is held annually in Spring to celebrate athletic accomplishments.

Parents of athletes are encouraged to participate in fundraisers to help off-set the cost of tickets for the banquet.

Hospital/Home Bound Program

The Hospital/Home Bound Program will provide a teacher for students who are ill at home for ten (10) or more days with physician approval. Proper procedures must be followed to receive these services. Contact the school counselor for more information if these services are likely to be needed.

Lost and Found

Articles that have been found at school should be turned into the Main Office. Lost articles can be claimed by properly identifying the lost item. We recommend that parents mark all personal items with the student's name so they can be quickly identified and returned to the owner without delay. All unclaimed items over an extended period of time will be donated to a charitable organization or discarded.

Make-Up Work

Students are responsible for making arrangements. As required by the Code of Conduct, students must arrange for make-up work on their first day back from an absence. For extended illnesses, additional time will be allowed to make up all work missed during excused absences. Any student who is absent due to suspension will be allowed to make up the work within one week after returning to school.

Media Center

Our state-of-the-art Media Center is designed to support the school curriculum by enhancing learning through informational skills instruction, and technology instruction aimed at a 21st Century education. The media center functions as the hub of the school, providing students, staff, and parents with a multitude of materials to support and enrich learning.

The media center follows an Open Schedule concept, students must go to the media center as class between the hours of **9:00 am until 3:50 pm**. Teachers may also schedule class times for research, skills instruction, book check out, and other activities. Parents are encouraged to contact the media specialist for assistance with school-based software programs or other curriculum needs, allowing every parent the opportunity to fully integrate the home/school learning connection.

The media center offers a wide variety of materials. Recent reference book sets are also available, and periodicals are updated monthly. There are many technology resources, as well as a desktop computer lab and a mobile laptop computer lab.

Students are personally responsible for textbooks, computers, iPads, library books, instructional material, and desks assigned to them. Students must pay for any damages. Assessment of damage will be determined by the school administration. **ALL** lost or damaged items must be paid for by the student/parent who checked the items out of the Media Center. Any student who fails to or refuses to pay for lost or damaged items at the replacement cost shall be denied the issuing of additional textbooks, library books, or media materials, as well as report cards,

diplomas, or certificates until full restitution is made.

Medical Care (School Clinic & Nurse)

There will be a school nurse on duty for several hours each day. All prescription medications should be sent to school in the original prescription bottle that has the doctor's name and pharmacy, the name of the student, the name of the medication, and dosage directions on it. Over-the-counter medications such as Tums or Tylenol need to be sent in the original container as well. The school nurse needs a note from the parent giving permission and instructions for all medications to be administered at school. An *Authorization of Medication Administration* form must be completed for those children receiving medications. Students should report to the clinic at the proper time to receive their medication.

The first dose of any new medication should be given to the child by the parent/guardian at home before sending it to the school. We want to make sure the child has no adverse or allergic reaction(s) to any new medication(s).

The school nurse will maintain first aid supplies at the school. Tylenol **WILL NOT** be administered to any student unless the student has a Permission Form on file with the nurse. If your child is not able to swallow a caplet or tablet, you will need to send either a liquid or chewable form of the medication for the nurse to administer.

If your child suffers from asthma and requires an inhaler or special medication, parents are required to provide the Principal or his designee a statement or copy of the prescription from the student's physician specifying the name of the medication and its purpose in order for the student to have this medication on his/her person at school while participating in school-sponsored activities, while under the supervision of school faculty/staff members, or while participating in before or after-school activities and to administer the medication to him/herself. An Asthma Action Plan needs to be developed and parent must submit a medical authorization form.

It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian of a student to inform the school of any changes in dosage, time of dispensing, etc. If a question arises about the medication, the parent and/or physician whose name appears on the prescription will be called for clarification.

Health Concerns and Issues:

Parents should inform their child's teacher of any health problems that the student has. These health problems include, but are not limited to, asthma, blood disorders, seizures, food allergies, substance allergies, medication allergies, reaction to bee stings, etc. If a child is on any daily medication for a certain medical condition or has special medication for an emergency-type situation, the school, especially the child's teacher(s), needs to be aware of these conditions and provided with the appropriate medication(s).

Chicken Pox, Mumps, Measles, Head Lice, Scabies and Ringworm are just some of the extremely contagious diseases that appear at school from time to time. If your child contracts one of these contagious diseases, we would ask that the child remain out of school until he/she is free of the disease and fever before returning to school. If your child is found to have one of these diseases while at school or the child returns to school

before the disease runs its course, you will be contacted and asked to pick up your child from school.

Health and Immunization Records:

State law requires that each student have proof of proper immunization of childhood and/or other diseases. All students must present a statement from the Health Department or a doctor, which indicates that all immunizations are up-to-date. Students whose immunization records are not current will be unable to enter school until this situation is rectified. All children entering the 6th Grade will be required to have the chicken pox vaccination or proof of immunity.

For more information or to get *Form 3189*, contact the local Health Department or your doctor.

Using Prescription Auto-Injectable Epinephrine:

Like asthma medication, a student may carry or possess and self-administer a prescription auto-injectable epinephrine while in school, at a school-sponsored activity, while under the supervision of school personnel, or while in before school or after school care on school operated property. Under Georgia law, however, a student is only permitted to do so if the student's parents or guardians fulfill the following:

- (a) Provide the school with a written statement from a physician appropriately licensed under Georgia law detailing the name of the medication, method, amount, and time schedule by which the medication needs to be taken, and confirming that the student is able to self-administer the auto-injectable epinephrine; and
- (b) Provide the school with a written statement by the parent or guardian consenting to the self-administration, and
- (c) Providing a release for the school nurse or other designated school personnel to consult with the physician regarding any questions that may arise with regard to the medication, and releasing the school system and its employees and agents from civil liability if the self-administering student suffers an adverse reaction as a result of self-administering auto-injectable epinephrine.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, a student may be subject to disciplinary action if he or she uses auto-injectable epinephrine other than as prescribed or violates any of the other provisions in this handbook which apply to the possession, use, transfer, or sale of prescription drugs with the auto-injectable epinephrine.

Insurance

The Richmond County Board of Education does not carry insurance for students; however, student insurance is offered to parents on an optional basis. If interested, please contact the front office. Parents are strongly advised to consider coverage for their student(s).

Mobile Devices and/or Personal Computers

The use of mobile devices or personal computers on campus is a privilege that the school grants to students who are willing to assume the responsibilities outlined in the Richmond County

Acceptable Use Policy and Procedures. The usage policy also applies to the mobile devices checked out by the school and the RCSS Mobile Device/BYOT Agreement must be signed by the student and parent. All guidelines in the Richmond County Board of Education Acceptable Use Policy and Procedures continue to apply when a student brings a personal laptop computer or other mobile device for use on campus.

Due to the technology that is present at the school, students in grades **Pre-K through 5th** will **NOT be allowed** to bring a mobile device or any other personal technology devices for use on campus. Students in **Grades 6th through 8th** **ARE allowed to bring a mobile device on campus** as long as the technology device is not seen. Devices should be put away once entering the school building. Students can access device after 4:30pm daily. Students who decide to bring their device to school understand that they are responsible for their devices. The school cannot conduct a search for lost items.

First Offense: If a cell phone or mobile device is taken, it will remain in the possession of Richmond Hill K-8 for a total of one calendar day. Parent/Guardian of the student will have three (3) school days to pick up the device or cell with proper documentation. After the expiration of such three (3) school days, any cell phone shall be donated to a charitable organization, recycled or discarded without further notice to the parent or guardian.

Second Offense: After a violation of the policy by a student, any cell phone will be held at the school for thirty (30) calendar days from the date of taking; after such thirty-day period the Parent/Guardian of the student will have ten (10) days to pick-up the beeper or cell phone at the school with proper ownership documentation. At the end of the 10-day period (41st calendar day) any cell phone or mobile device will be donated to a charitable organization, recycled or discarded without further notice to the parent or guardian.

Third Offense: Any cell phone or mobile device will be held in possession for a school calendar year.

Money

On occasion it may be necessary for students to bring money to school. *Always send money in a sealed envelope with the following information written on the outside of the envelope: student's name, teacher's name, and room number, amount of money enclosed and purpose of money (i.e.: lunch money, book money, field trip...).* Please send the exact amount to the bookkeeper.

If checks are returned to the school due to insufficient funds, the person writing the check will incur a fee plus the bank's returned check fee at the time.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Teachers are willing and available to meet with parents on a continuing basis throughout the year. Conferences may be initiated by teachers, parents, guidance counselors, assistant principal or the principal. *Parents are asked to contact Guidance to schedule conferences.* Conferences are not to be held during instructional time. All visitors are to sign-in and get a visitor's badge before going to the classrooms at the office. Please sign-out and return the badge before leaving the school. *Teachers have collaborative professional learning and/or planning on Mondays,*

Wednesdays, and Fridays. Parent/Teacher Conferences will be scheduled on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Response to Intervention (RTI)

The RTI is a regular education, problem-solving process at Richmond Hill. The RTI committee also known as the Student Support Team (SST) is established to review referrals of students who are experiencing academic and/or behavioral difficulties. The purpose is to provide support to students, parents, and teachers with the outcome being improved student performance. The RTI committee may include an administrator, guidance counselor, regular education teacher, special education teacher, school social worker, parent, school psychologist, and others, as appropriate for the case under review. The RTI process seeks to identify specific needs of individual students and plan alternative instructional strategies for children prior to or in lieu of referral for special services.

The RTI process is a tiered approach that provides layers of intervention for students needing support. Richmond Hill's RTI process includes several key components:

- A 3-Tier delivery model designed to provide support matched to student need through the implementation of standards-based classrooms.
- Evidence-based instruction as the core of classroom pedagogy.
- Evidence-based interventions utilized with increasing levels of intensity based on progress monitoring.
- The use of a variety of on-going assessment data to determine which students are not meeting success academically and/or behaviorally.

Students requiring interventions to meet individual learning expectations will receive support through a systematic and purposeful process.

Responsibilities of the Home

- The family is primarily responsible for developing the traits of motivation, ambition, and appreciation for efforts that are necessary for the development of talent.
- The family is primarily responsible for supporting and reinforcing the school's code of conduct and dress, homework requirements, and other expectations such as regular attendance and promptness.
- The family should subscribe to the belief that productive work, whether physical or intellectual, is a meaningful and natural activity. The family should strive to encourage the development of positive attitudes toward work and school.
- The opportunities for self-improvement, the development of personal interests, and the importance of participation must be a part of the home environment, as well as of the school program.
- Teaching is the responsibility of the professional staff. Within the framework of the traditional concept, opinions of parents and others are welcome. This will include

voluntary participation in the activities of the school.

- The family and home should be the place where standards, expectations, and the goals for learning are present and respected. A supervised study time should be a part of the everyday life in the home.
- The family and home should encourage the development of the proper use of language in all its forms. There should be access to ample and diverse reading materials (books, newspapers, and magazines), and the home should be the place where expression of opinions and conversations between parents and children are encouraged.
- The family needs to work closely with the teacher(s) in determining ways and means for implementing the educational program. Parents are encouraged to attend conferences, as needed.
- The family is a part of a larger society, and the school should be one place where people from different backgrounds meet and work together. The home, as well as the school, provides an environment that encourages the understanding of diversity.

Safety

A sincere effort has been put forth to make our school as safe as possible. Protective measures and procedures have been established with the safety of each child in mind. In order to enhance safety, everyone must abide by the following:

1. All exterior doors and lobby doors are locked.
2. To enter the building, visitors must show ID prior to gaining admittance in the school. From there, visitors may enter the Front Office to sign in and receive a Visitor's Pass.
3. Students will not be released to persons who are not listed on the student's information sheet. Persons picking up students will need to be prepared to show ID.
4. Tornado drills, fire drills and other safety activities are conducted frequently to enhance safety.
5. Blocking the bus area, driveways and fire lanes is restricted.

Accidents

In the event of a serious accident, parents will be notified immediately. For students' security, it is very important that the office have updated phone numbers on file at all times. Every effort will be made to render emergency treatment until parents arrive. However, the school will not be responsible for subsequent treatment.

Fire Drills

State law requires that a fire drill be conducted at least once each month. All drills will be unannounced. At the sound of the alarm bell, students are to leave the classroom/building via designated routes and exits to their class' designated location on the school property. An exit plan is posted in each classroom. Students are to walk quickly in a single file line, remain calm, quiet, and listen to and comply with the teacher's instructions. Teachers will ensure that all students are familiar with the exit route to be followed in each classroom.

Tornado Drills

Tornado drills will be held at least twice per year. Once a tornado or natural disaster drill has been announced, students are to proceed to the hallway outside the classroom, staying clear of exit doors and glass windows. Each person should crouch on his/her knees with head down facing the wall and hands locked at the back of the neck. Any students that are in the auditorium or outside must proceed indoors to a position in the halls outside the classrooms.

Lockdown Drills

Lockdown drills are an important safety precaution and will be announced over the intercom. All teachers and staff are trained in Lockdown procedures to secure the safety of students and staff. It is essential that everyone obeys promptly. Teachers and students will move to designated areas and assume safety positions. Students are to be quiet and follow specific instructions and procedures given by the teachers until the all clear signal sounds. Lockdown Drills are conducted throughout the school year.

Inclement Weather

In the event that school is canceled or delayed due to inclement weather, school closures or delays will be broadcasted on the local news channels as well as announced on our district's website.

School Council

School councils are designed to provide advice, recommendations and assistance, and represent the community of parents and businesses. The Council must consist of at least seven (7) members. The Principal, two (2) teachers, and four (4) parents will serve on the Council.

School Social Worker

School social work services are offered to all Richmond County students and families. Requests for services may be made by referral. The school social worker assists both parents and students with problems related to attendance, health, behavior, economic or social problems and hospital/homebound activities. The school social worker coordinates referrals to other community agencies when necessary.

Smoke Free Environment

Staff and all visitors are prohibited from smoking or using tobacco or smokeless tobacco products while on school property during the regular school day or while attending any school sponsored function. This includes parents waiting on students in the carpool lane.

State and Standardized Testing

State mandates require student participation in a wide array of assessments. The purpose of the testing program includes monitoring student progress, assessing program effectiveness, planning for instructional improvement, and making placement decisions for special programming. Several of the assessments are utilized as part of the system's promotion/retention policy. The following specific tests will be administered at Richmond Hill during the 2019-2020 school year:

Kindergarten: GKIDS
Grades 1 and 4: Cog AT (Cognitive Abilities Test)
Grades 3 – 8: Georgia Milestones Assessment
Grade 8: End of Course (EOC) Assessment in Algebra I, American Government,
Physical Science.

Individual test results will be provided to parents as soon as possible after the results are returned to the school. The GA Milestones results will be used to guide and direct us in our instructional planning and is a part of the Richmond County School System’s Promotion/Retention policy.

The school Principal or Assistant Principal(s) shall annually notify parents or guardians that placement or promotion of a student into a grade, class, or program will be based on the academic achievement of the student on criterion-referenced assessments and other criteria established by the school. Promotion and retention of students in Grades 3 and 5 are based on meeting standards on the required portions of the GA Milestones Assessments.

End-of-Course (EOC) Assessments

Local school systems shall assess students at the completion of core high school courses specified by the BOE, in accordance with O.C.G.A. 20-2-281 (a), to measure student achievement in the four content areas of English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies.

1. With the exception of the following courses, Ninth Grade Literature and Composition, Algebra I, Coordinate Algebra, and Biology, a student shall be exempt from taking the end-of-course assessment for a core subject course if he or she earns a post-secondary credit in that course through dual enrollment pursuant to O.C.G.A. 20-2-149.2 or 20-2-161.3. Postsecondary grades earned, in this situation, shall be used in the state accountability system. *All students enrolled in Ninth Literature and Composition, Algebra I, Coordinate Algebra, and Biology must take the EOC.*

S.T.E.M. (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math)

The Many Benefits of STEM Learning

The good news is that STEM covers a multitude of necessary skills: hands-on, critical thinking, problem solving, student-driven, creativity, innovation, collaboration, inquiry, leadership, and teamwork. STEM integrates the curriculum—teachers are no longer just presenting a math lesson, a science lesson, a reading lesson, etc. Classrooms are implementing units or themes centered around different science subject matter. For example, kindergarteners are learning about structure and design through literature such as *The Three Little Pigs*. The story is read, and students ask questions such as how could those little pigs have built a more secure structure so that nasty wolf couldn’t have blown down those poorly constructed houses? Then students design and build their own structure and the big bad wolf (accompanied by a leaf blower/hair dryer) tries to blow it down. All content area subjects are needed for this unit: reading and writing are required for the basic premise and design, math is needed to calculate measurements or supplies, soft skills such as collaboration and communication are needed to build the structures, technology can be used throughout by videoing before and after attempts so students can go back and redesign—all under the umbrella of a science-driven theme. Students

are engaged and problem solving throughout, and they love it.

Another benefit of STEM education is brain development. The human brain functions best by making connections. The brain needs both socio-emotional and cognition to function. STEM teaches many soft skills such as teamwork, problem solving, communication, and self-confidence.

STEM also allows for hands-on experiences for students. Using more sensory experiences maximizes these connections and takes the learning process to a higher level. This kind of engagement and integration stimulates brain development, allowing for more depth in a shorter amount of time. The earlier that STEM can be brought into the classroom, the better—it can lay the foundation for optimum learning and brain growth.

Everything on this planet is somehow related to science—most decisions and designs involve some type of STEM. STEM education is all about creating innovative, critical thinkers in a global society. It strives to integrate these concepts to make learning more meaningful and engaging. In doing so, students will be able to ask questions, problem solve, obtain, evaluate, and interpret information, as well as have the perseverance needed to get the job done.

STEM Labs - are special places where students are able to explore their world using a hands-on learning approach. Students at our school will experience the STEM Lab one or more class periods each week.

Lessons are approached from a comprehensive variety of learning experiences including problem based, project based, and inquiry-based learning activities. Our students are encouraged to engage in authentic scientific inquiry and problem solving using real world experiences. Elements of Technology, Math, and Engineering are integrated into lessons at every grade level. Through group work and various creative projects, we also offer many opportunities for students to improve their 21st Century Skills: Creativity and Innovation, Critical Thinking and Problem Solving, Communication and Collaboration, Global Awareness, Initiative and Self-direction, Flexibility and Adaptability & Effective Interaction with others.

Classroom Integration - Our classroom teachers and STEM Labs also collaborate on long term projects. Additionally, our classroom teachers integrate Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math into their daily schedules. Each grade level has the flexibility to integrate these topics in a manner that is appropriate to the learning needs of their students.

Computer Programming/Coding & Engineering - On a rotating nine-weeks basis, students will be given opportunities to learn computer programming and engineering starting in Kindergarten and building in rigor with each grade level.

STEM Skills:

- Using analytical skills to research a topic, develop a project and timeline, and draw conclusions from research results;
- Using science skills to break down a complex scientific system into smaller parts, recognize cause and effect relationships, and defend opinions using facts;

- Using mathematical skills for calculations and measurements;
- Attention to detail by following technical directions, recording data accurately, formative and summative assessment;
- Technical skills, troubleshooting, repairing, and utilizing software and modern equipment;
- Communication and cooperation skills to listen to others' needs or interact with project partners;
- Teamwork skills for successful project completion;
- Creativity to solve problems and develop new ideas;
- Leadership skills to lead projects or help others;
- Organization skills to keep track of lots of different information;
- Time management skills to function efficiently.

Focus on 21st Century Skills

- Core subjects and 21st Century themes:
 - Global awareness
 - Financial, economic, business, and entrepreneurial literacy
 - Civic literacy
 - Health literacy
 - Environmental literacy
- Learning and innovation skills:
 - Creativity and innovation
 - Critical thinking and problem solving
 - Communication and collaboration
 - Information, media, and technology skills
 - Life and career skills

Soft Skills - personal qualities, habits, attitudes and social behaviors that make an individual a good employee.

- Verbal/written communication skills
- Leadership skills
- Organization skills
- Curiosity & imagination
- Technology experience
- Teamwork skills
- Time management
- Following directions
- Desire to learn
- Creative problem-solving skills

Technology

Students in Grades K-2 will have an iPad to work on during the school day. They will not be allowed to take the devices home. Students in Grades 3-8 will have a laptop to use during the day and are not allowed to take the devices home.

Damage to the devices will result in fines. Failure to pay fines, repeated damage to the device, and/or violation of the RCSS Acceptable Use Policy will result in a student not being allowed to use the device other than at home or during school hours.

Telephone

The office telephone is for conducting school business. Students will only be permitted to use the telephone for emergency purposes. Parents may call the office and leave a message for teachers to return calls during their planning period, but instruction will not be interrupted unless deemed an emergency.

Textbooks

Textbooks are issued to students at no charge. Students are expected to take reasonable care of textbooks and return the books upon withdrawal or at the end of the school term. Each child is held responsible for his/her textbooks. Students who damage, lose, or deface, through willful intent or neglect, textbooks, library books and/or media materials must replace these items at replacement costs. Students are encouraged to keep books covered.

Title I Program

Title I is a federally funded program designed to provide additional educational services in designated schools to students in core curriculum. There are two types of Title I programs: Targeted Assistance and School-wide. Richmond Hill has carefully developed an instructional plan to provide a research-based, well sequenced, and timely improvement program. Parents are encouraged to become involved in parent activities held throughout the year. Questions regarding Title I program services may be directed to the Principal, Assistant Principal or to the Program Director at the RCSS Board Office 706-860-1000.

Transportation

Parents should instruct students before they leave home as to where to go in the afternoon and should refrain from calling the school office to make arrangements unless it is an emergency. Transportation changes must be provided to the school office in written form. Written, signed notes may be sent with the student, delivered to the front 30 minutes prior to dismissal or faxed to the school office. Emails or text messages to your child's homeroom teacher are also acceptable.

Telephone calls will not be accepted except in case of extreme emergencies. In case of an emergency, parents/guardians must speak with an administrator in order for transportation changes to be made over the telephone.

If a written, signed note is not received and no emergency change has been approved, the student will go home the regularly scheduled way.

Students will **not** be removed from buses after they are loaded or have left the school.

Morning Arrival

Parents should drop-off students utilizing the Car Loading Zone in the front of the school ONLY. Staff will be on duty to supervise students exiting from cars and to monitor

traffic. Students who arrive in private vehicles must either report directly to their hallways in which students will have an opportunity to receive breakfast. There will not be any staff on duty prior to **8:30 am** to supervise your child; therefore, **do not drop your child off prior to 8:30 am. During the morning take in process, parents are not allowed to escort their child into the school building.** If you would like to walk your child up to the front door you may do so. Please be sure to park in the designated parking spaces and not in the car line. If you wish to speak with a teacher, please call for a conference or send your child's teacher a note indicating this.

If you arrive after **9:05 am**, your child must report to the front office to pick up a Tardy Slip for admittance to class.

Afternoon Departure

Please do *not* come into the school to wait for your student(s) to be dismissed prior to dismissal time. Parent/guardian(s) is not allowed to the classrooms to get their student(s). All car riders will be dismissed at **4:00 pm**. Younger children will be dismissed before older children (elementary before middle). Large numbers of parents coming into the school and waiting for dismissal creates additional noise, distractions, and safety concerns.

Parents are asked to assemble in the Car Loading Zone to pick students up. Please remain in the designated car lanes for your child to be brought to you. **Please post the names of the students that ride with grade (car rider tag) on the passenger side of the windshield or hang from the rearview mirror. If the parent/guardian(s) does not have a car rider tag, then the parent will be required to park, come inside, show ID prior to picking up student.**

PLEASE do not leave your vehicles unattended in these lanes.

If parent/guardian parks in the parking lot, the parent/guardian must get out of the car and cross the street to pick up the child from his/her waiting area.

Visitors/Classroom Observations

It is MANDATORY for all visitors to our school to wear a mask in order to enter. In addition, visitor must receive permission and a pass from the main office before going to any area of the school when students are present. Visitors will be accompanied by an escort throughout the visitor's duration within the school building. Your cooperation with this is appreciated and expected. Visitors must dress within dress code as outline in the dress code section of this handbook prior to moving pass the main office.

Parents are welcome to visit and encouraged to volunteer. The classroom teacher will invite/schedule volunteers to fit his/her classroom. Classroom observations will be limited to observing from the classroom door. *Classroom Observations should only consist of the parent/guardian(s) only.* Siblings and other small children are not allowed while a parent visits,

observes or volunteers. Parents are not allowed to interact with children other than their own during these observations. Parents must refrain from correcting, questioning, or disturbing other children for any reason. It is imperative that instructional time be protected, and it is the intent of the administrators and office staff of Richmond Hill K-8 to do so.

Conferences should always be pre-arranged during the teacher's planning time. In order to provide teachers time to plan in grade levels and collaboratively, Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays are designated teacher planning days. No parent conferences will be held during those days. Tuesdays and Thursdays are set aside for parent conferences.

Volunteers

Parents and teachers have a tremendous impact on a student's success in school and in life. When parents are involved, students achieve more, and they exhibit more positive attitudes and behavior. In addition to volunteering for specific committees, you will be able to sign-up to volunteer in the classrooms with the teachers and other academic support areas. All volunteers must complete a volunteer training program provided by the school (includes a background check). If interested contact the school for further information.

Withdrawal Procedures for Students

At least one day's notice (24 hours) is requested to withdraw a student from school. Parents are asked to notify the school as soon as possible of the student's expected withdrawal date. All textbooks and library books must be returned, and any outstanding debts to the school must be cleared before the withdrawal can be completed.