



Sept. 14, 2018

Dear Families of RVS,

I wanted to connect to say thank you for persevering with us as we navigate the new safe & secure processes in the building. Change is never easy! I have connected with a number of you about concerns, and we have continued to modify things/ consider how to navigate some of the “grey” areas, and we will continue to do so in the weeks ahead. Needless to say I am sorry if there have been some sleepless nights for some of you – I have had a few of my own as well, as we have worked through some of the humps & bumps ☺. Please take a few minutes to read through the attached pages which clarify some changes due to many of my conversations, or perhaps offer some answers for other questions you may have. I wish I could say this will be the last of the changes, but school life, like life in general is a work in progress. I appreciate your patience, and ask for your understanding as we continue to go down this road together. If you are a parent losing sleep over something, please do give me a call and we can arrange an opportunity to talk it through. Thanks again for trusting us to do the best we can for your children.

Yours in learning,

Leslie Cooper-Shand

Principal, RVS



Basic Safety & Security Policies & Processes to be aware of:

- ❖ volunteers please complete a school volunteer form, criminal record & vulnerable sector check, use ID lanyards when in the school, and follow the sign in/ sign out process at the main office – forms can be accessed at the office or found at: <http://www.rivervalleysundre.ca/view.php?action=documents&id=2301>
- ❖ parents dropping off items during the school day are asked to please leave items with the main office for delivery; children can be called down to the office if parents need to connect with them directly. Alternately office staff can go with parents to a classroom, as only school personnel and on-duty volunteers can be in hallways during the school day
- ❖ to ensure only authorized individuals can access a child during the day, adults may be asked to present ID
- ❖ exterior doors (other than the front doors which will be open at 8:00) will open only a few minutes prior to each recess bell in the day (includes first bell and dismissal bell)
- ❖ children and parents are asked to please wait outside their grade’s boot room doors until the first bell. Students in K-6 are lining up outside their doors in the morning to ease the boot room chaos. In cases of extreme weather, there may be access to the boot rooms earlier, but as always, it is important to dress for the Alberta weather ☺. There is access to hallways/ classrooms prior to the first bell in the morning for parents who have an appointment with someone in the school. Generally there is not access to the Common Area before school as this is an area where teachers may be meeting to prepare for the day. We would ask that prior to the last bell adults please wait outside boot rooms, or just inside the main doors rather than the Common Area, as this is an area where students/ staff work throughout the day. Common Area access after the last bell does work, as the student learning in the building is done for the day.
- ❖ school drop off loops may not have unattended vehicles, but we would encourage parking in the arena lot, which will have a staff member managing the cross walk before and after school. You may also park/drop off behind the ball diamonds to the north of the school, which means no streets for kids to cross – great!
- ❖ if parking in the school lot, please do not block anyone in. Please remember that it is unsafe to have young children access the school parking lot without a parent as traffic is constantly on the move in this area. We do have staff managing the front entrance crosswalk but they are not always able to help kids navigate through the parking lot.
- ❖ our youngest students (Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten) may have slightly different pick-up/ drop-off routines to accommodate their needs – please see the following page.
- ❖ supervision is in place on the playground during recesses, as well as before and after school at buses, the arena crosswalk, and in boot room areas to help ensure safety and security
- ❖ please remember that pictures/ videos at school can only be taken by staff members, and these will only be posted with adherence to FOIPP (Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy) guidelines

Pre-Kindergarten Morning Program

Drop off: please arrive outside the **east** boot room doors at 8:20 and a staff member will meet your child

Pick Up: please arrive at the same boot room doors at 11:15 and a staff member will deliver your child to you

Pre-Kindergarten Afternoon Program

Drop off: please arrive outside the **east** boot room doors at 12:10 and a staff member will meet your child

Pick Up: please arrive outside the same boot room doors at 3:00 and a staff member will deliver your child to you

**We are asking for no unattended vehicles in the drop-off loop but recognize the unique needs of many of our youngest students which require them to have more adult support and easy access to the building – if you are in this loop, please try not to leave your vehicle unattended for lengthy periods of time. Alternately, if you stand beside your vehicle, but on the sidewalk/ passenger side of it, staff will help your child navigate to you.

Kindergarten

Drop off – Students being dropped off by parents should access the playground until the first bell and then proceed to line up outside the **west** boot room doors. There is supervision on the playground starting at 8:15. If you wish to remain with your child, feel free to wait outside these boot room doors until the first bell at 8:25. We would ask that hugs/ goodbyes occur before kids head into the building – thank you. Students in Grades K-6 are lining up in the morning so we have a smoother entry into the building, facilitated by a supervisor.

Bus students will initially be met by supervisors and taken to line up outside the boot room doors until the first bell – as the year and their skills progress, they will learn to head to the playground on their own and line up at the bell. We do have general bus supervision throughout the year.

Pick up – Students being picked up by parents will be taken to their boot rooms at 3:00. Parking is available behind the ball diamonds to the north, in the arena lot, and occasionally in the school parking lot –if parking here please be mindful to not block anyone in – thank you.

Bus students will be taken to their buses before 3:00 each day.

Picking up other children not in Pre-K/K/ Multiple kids gathering to go home

If you have children in both Pre-K or K AND Grades 1-8 whom you wish to pick up, the best option is to have all your children meet you outside the Pre-K or K boot room. The other option is to take your littlest, travel outside the building back through the front doors, and to the Common Area – it does seem like more work, but unfortunately we can only have school staff and students navigating through hallways – thanks for your understanding.

If you are not picking up your children, but have a bundle of kids that need to find each other to head home, the best practice is to either commit to a boot room, or alternately to arrange a place in the Common Area (e.g. by the piano etc.).

Thank you for your willingness to follow protocols that make RVS the safest, most productive learning environment for your child that it can be – we appreciate it!

Pre Kindergarten Program



We are so excited to have begun a Pre-Kindergarten program last year. Service is provided to 3 and 4 year olds who will benefit tremendously from specialist support in the areas of speech, fine and gross motor skills, and social-emotional wellness.

Key to the program are personalized learning goals, and a literacy rich, learn through play environment.



What about those “Grey” Areas?

Kilometre Club: Why can I be outside during Km Club at lunch time, but not on the playground during other recesses?

During general recesses we continue to have Chinook’s Edge employees working in a supervisory capacity. They are trained, aware of students with unique needs, and understand the behaviour protocols we have in place to facilitate all kids building skills on the playground.

KM club occurs for about 20 days at the beginning of the year. Students and parents follow a set routine of moving around the track, and we have extra supervision on at this time as many teachers go out to participate, and they are extra eyes/ ears to ensure everything is happening as it should. KM club is a wonderful part of RVS culture, and physical exercise is good for kids on so many levels – we want to see this continue. This is a grey area, as parents in theory do have access to children who are not their own. We hope that because of the unique nature of this activity and increased staff supervision that we can continue to have parents access their children and enjoy the time together being active, while also respecting the regular guidelines. Kindergarten Leader day is also a similar situation, with similar guidelines.

After School Common Area: How is the Common Area safe after school when everyone heads in there to access their kids?

There are numerous staff members navigating through that area near the end of the day, as well as supervisors managing front doors and boot room doors. It is hoped that if there were an issue with an unauthorized adult picking up a child that an adult would recognize a child’s potential distress and intervene. That said, no system is 100%, but we are doing the very best we can at this time. If you have a concern that someone else may try to access your child please let the office know immediately.

I’m running late, and my child’s boot room doors might be locked by time we go around – plus, going around makes them even later...now what?

If you are bringing a young child in and the first bell has gone, you can access the school through the front doors. Either drop them at the office, or alternately, sign in and a staff member can accompany you and your child to the classroom. If it is an older student and there is time for them to reach their boot room before the second bell at 8:30, they will likely be sent around to their boot room – if the second bell has gone, the child can come in the front doors, sign in, pick up a late slip and head to class.

It’s cold outside...how long will my child have to wait before they can come in the building in the morning?

Please do not drop your child off before 8:15 in the morning. School buses begin to arrive around this time and this is also when supervision outside is in place. On cold mornings we use the following as general guidelines for bringing kids in before the bell: - 15C with a wind or -20/ no wind – of course other factors can be at play – at last recess if it is -23 and sunny, kids can likely manage outside for 15 minutes if they are properly dressed. Just a reminder to send appropriate winter clothing with your child, as we all know what the changeable Alberta weather is like ☺

What about sporting events –your front door locks at 4:00...

Front doors are unlocked by administrators or caretakers on the days of sports games so all teams and their families are able to access the gym. On practice days, kids are asked to meet their parents outside – if as a parent you are running late and it is chilly outside, students can wait inside the front entrance until you arrive.

We are new and my child is anxious (and as a parent I am a little bit too)...what does our start up process look like? OR – We have had a unique situation arise and the regular process isn’t working for us – now what?

Unique situations sometimes call for unique solutions. If it is Day 1 and you want to introduce your child to the process they will follow for the remainder of the year, a supervisor should be able to direct you to your regular entry/ exit doors – time & staff permitting they may even be able to walk you around to that area. Alternately, feel free to enter on Day 1 through the front door – advise the supervisors that it is your first day, and they will direct you to the office. Someone at the office will continue with you to your child’s classroom. At that point you may be able to speak with the teacher and hopefully set up a plan for the next few days. Speak with your child’s teacher if something comes up during the year and we need to consider some accommodations to the process. We are currently considering a “pass” system of a sort that individuals in unique situations may be able to have to quickly indicate to staff that there are accommodations in place regarding access and so on. These would be used quite infrequently and we continue to consider that this process might look like.

We have had a last minute emergency arise and I need to see my child and/ or their teacher...

Unfortunately these things can happen – inform the first staff member you encounter, and they will help you get to where you need to go.

Where are my child’s boot room doors??

Please follow this link to a map indicating boot room doors, and classes/ grades of students that use them to enter and exit the building.

<http://www.rivervalleysundre.ca/documents/general/school%20map%20with%20entrances.pdf>



A safe and secure place to learn...

Sept 14, 2018

We value your involvement in your child's education. As the world changes however, we must consider what changes we need to make to ensure we can continue to effectively provide a safe, caring and optimal learning environment for your children. We truly appreciate your understanding and willingness to change along with us to make this a continuing reality at RVS – thank you.

What challenges are we trying to address?

Challenge: There is a fire drill and we need to account for everyone in the building...

The Fix: Volunteers sign in and out at the office so we have a complete and up to date list at any time of the day of who is in RVS.

Challenge: Difficult Custody Issues or Stranger Danger...something no one wants to think about but which is a reality.

The Fix: Increased security around entrance/ exit points in the school, which includes new access policies, as well as increased vigilance when allowing adults to access children – this could include asking for ID, requiring adults to wait at the office to meet their child, criminal & vulnerable sector checks, and so on. We also have increased security camera surveillance in and out of the building.

Challenge: We sometimes have students in conflict with one another, and parents may want to address the issue with a child that is not their own. Unfortunately, we have had parents address a child that was not their own in a negative manner.

The Fix: School staff should be made aware of any issues, and we will navigate finding solutions to the problem. We understand that when your child has been hurt, that you will be frustrated and want this behaviour to stop; even emotions of adults can run high when it comes to protecting our children. However, no student should be at risk of being addressed in a negative way by a visitor to the school. To that end, only school personnel and on-duty volunteers are allowed in hallways and classrooms during the school day. In unique circumstances a parent may be in a hallway, but would be accompanied by school personnel.

Challenge: Students need uninterrupted work time to focus, learn, and reach their potential...as well as to practice independence...

The Fix: We ask parents needing to drop off items during the day to leave them with office staff who can determine an appropriate time to deliver things. On skating and swimming days for example, there can be 10+ drop-offs for a single classroom. As well, we ask parents to please remain in designated areas (outside boot-rooms for Gr 1-8, or in the front door foyer area) until the first bell in the morning and/or the dismissal bell at the end of the day. This also allows students to do their own unpacking/packing up at the beginning and end of the day which builds their independence. PreK, K & Gr 1 have slightly earlier pack up times to ease the boot room rush at the end of the day.

Challenge: Some classes are quite large and can benefit from spreading out, particularly if working on projects that require group work/ more space...As well, some students need 1:1 or small group support outside of the classroom.

The Fix: The Common Area provides extra work room for students, as do hallways. In fact, all areas of the school are instructional spaces. Students need to be able to access these potential work areas throughout the school day, which means we would ask adults to wait in designated areas until school is dismissed.

Challenge: Drop-off loops that become parking loops do not work effectively, and can be unsafe for students...

The Fix: Signage and supervision on drop-off loops will remind people that vehicles are not to be left unattended, which should result in smoother drop-off and pick-up processes and fewer parking issues. It also helps students get safely in and out of the building. Parking is available in the arena lot, or alternately behind the ball diamonds to the north of the building.

Challenge: Simultaneously teaching digital citizenship skills and protecting the digital privacy of children...

The Fix: Only school staff are able to take and post pictures of students, which means students, parents, and other guest adults are not able to do so. Pictures posted on the school website generally do not have names attached in order to protect privacy. The school strives to teach solid digital citizenship skills throughout the year in classrooms and through various presentations. Consequences for students breaching digital citizenship rules are significant, which reinforces the importance of these rules.

To determine these safe and secure policies and processes, we have examined protocols in other schools within Chinook's Edge and beyond, and have collaborated with our RCMP school liaison to help us determine what changes we can make to be sure we are doing all we can to keep your children safe, happy, and fully engaged in their learning. We value your commitment to being part of your child's education, and appreciate your willingness to make the changes necessary to make RVS the safest, most productive learning environment for your child that it can be – thank you!