



Dear Friends and Families,

Welcome to the 2009-2010 academic year at Rockland Country Day School. At RCDS our students thrive academically and socially through our focus on the individual. This pedagogical devotion is the key to helping students at RCDS reach their highest potential, prepare for leadership opportunities, and excel in college and beyond.

At RCDS we understand this and work diligently to solidify the “fit” between our students and teachers, allowing all our students to experience high level classroom learning and to feel appreciated and celebrated for who they are. The intimacy of our school community provides teachers and administrators the opportunity to reach every student, never neglecting the importance of the individual. At RCDS we also enjoy a healthy partnership with our parents. Together we promote intellectual growth while supporting social and emotional development.

This year we celebrate our 50<sup>th</sup> year and continue to honor our founders’ shared vision for an institution of formal schooling that was forward looking and innovative, yet grounded in the independent school tradition of challenging intellectual work and character development. On campus you will see a school full of life with teachers and students working together with the kind of attention and focus that makes RCDS so special.

Sincerely yours,  
Brian Mahoney, Ed.D.  
Head of School

## Rockland Country Day School 2009 – 2010 Student and Parent Handbook

### **Mission Statement**

Rockland Country Day School brings forth the best in every student by knowing and educating each of them as an individual. The pillars of our college preparatory program are critical thinking, creative expression, and the cherishing of diversity. Our unique environment enables every child to thrive, both academically and socially.

### **The Honor Code**

I will act with respect, consideration, fairness, honesty and personal integrity towards all members of Rockland Country Day School’s community, follow the rules and procedures of the School, and treat the School’s campus and activities with care and respect. I will also encourage my classmates to follow the words and spirit of this honor code.

### **Expectations for Students**

Rockland Country Day School understands the advantages of encouraging constructive, positive independent behavior rather than the negative attitude implied in a long list of prohibitions. Nevertheless, we must distinguish between the freedom to act responsibly and open permissiveness.

Responsibilities for students include coming to School on time, ready for the day, arriving at class prepared and conducting oneself appropriately. Courtesy and respect are expected at all times. This includes:

- Avoidance of foul language, teasing, bullying or provoking others.
- Accepting responsibility for one's own behavior.
- Physical means to express anger or frustration will not be accepted.
- Refraining from any behaviors that disrupt the learning of others in the classroom.
- Honesty in dealing with all people.

### **Expectations for Parents**

Rockland Country Day School is a community of students, teachers, parents, administrators and staff. At the center of this community lie the best interests of the students; both individually and collectively. Parents play a crucial role in the education of their children and RCDS expects that parents:

- Become familiar with and support the School's mission, policies, guidelines and channels of communication.
- Read all materials sent home via backpack, email, and newsletter; attend parent-teacher conferences, concerts, back-to-School nights, and other presentations.
- Support the articulated values of the School, cooperate with the School in any matters of discipline or academic impediment, and deal promptly with any situations that may arise.
- Keep in close communication with the School about your child's physical and emotional health, allergies or any prescribed medications, inform the School about changes in the home environment – birth of a sibling, separation, death of a family member or close friend, or other conditions which may have an impact on your child's functioning.
- Provide a quiet place of study at home and encourage your child to be responsible for his or her work. Students need to know that their parents understand and value the need for homework; that their parents will help them when necessary to see that it is done, and done well; that reasonable time is set aside for its completion, and that other, more entertaining or pleasurable activities hold a clear second place to fulfilling the responsibilities of the School.
- Be respectful in all interactions with School personnel, as they will be in return.
- Seek information directly from the School when a situation seems problematic in any fashion, avoiding discussions with other parents that are based on partial information, gossip or rumor.
- Payments of all fees to RCDS must be made no later than the due date. Interest will be assessed after the due date.
- Health forms must be returned to RCDS as soon as possible or your child/children will not be admitted to school.

## **ACADEMIC POLICIES AND GUIDELINES**

The academic program provides a solid foundation in all major disciplines — the humanities (English and History), modern and classical languages, mathematics, science, and the visual and performing arts. The RCDS classroom is an exciting, dynamic, and interactive learning environment. We encourage all students to become invested actively in the learning process. Academic success in our community assumes that each student will value and embrace learning. Engagement in discussions and activities, attentiveness, note taking, working

collaboratively in small groups, respect for teachers and classmates are all learning components of a successful classroom. Emphasis is placed on project-oriented, hands-on work which challenges students to:

- Think critically
- Develop excellent written and spoken expression
- Reinforce and master mathematical concepts and skills
- Become scientifically and technologically literate individuals
- Move towards proficiency in other languages and gain appreciation for other cultures and peoples
- Understand the importance of embracing a lifestyle which promotes sound physical and emotional health
- Work cooperatively and collaboratively
- Use their imagination and creativity through the arts

### **Academic Achievement**

As part of the School's mission, we strive to create a culture of excellence, leadership and service. We recognize and celebrate the many contributions of our students. Scholastic, athletic, and personal excellence is honored annually at our closing awards assembly.

### **Academic Concern**

Students are placed on Academic Concern when their effort is less than acceptable, or their overall academic grade is below satisfactory. Students in grades six and seven receiving two Needs Improvement and students in grades 8-12 receiving one quarter or semester grade of C- or below be issued an Academic Concern. Teachers and administrators will regularly monitor students on Academic Concern letter. The advisor will relay any pertinent information to the family, and help to coordinate efforts between home and School. With the aid of the parents, faculty and staff, the student will be offered remediation. In addition to receiving reports from teachers in the relevant courses, a student on Academic Concern may have participation in extra-curricular activities curtailed including athletics. Seniors on Academic Concern may lose free study and open campus privileges as well.

### **Academic Probation**

Students are placed on Academic Probation when their effort is minimal, or their academic achievement is unsatisfactory. Students receiving one quarter or semester academic achievement evaluation of Unsatisfactory (F), or two academic achievement evaluations of Needs Improvement (C-/D) will be placed on Academic Probation. In addition, students receiving an Academic Concern for two consecutive marking periods will be placed on Academic Probation. Once students are placed on academic probation, a round-table conference will be held to discuss areas of concern, and to outline strategies to support the student's improvement when appropriate. The child's parent(s) and/or /guardian(s), advisor, learning/guidance consultant, Division Head and Head of School will attend this conference. The student's teacher(s) may also join the conference. Formal recommendations will be outlined clearly in a summary letter for the family. Students may be asked to receive significant tutoring and must demonstrate significant progress by the next marking period.

### **Additional Support Services**

RCDS understands that children have a range of learning styles and ways of viewing the world. We are committed to helping each child succeed. The School's learning/guidance staff provides on-going support for teachers, as we provide a vast array of learning styles and use varied teaching strategies.

There are occasions when the services the School can provide are not enough to fully understand the obstacles a student may encounter, either in learning or behavior. At such times, the School may recommend an assessment by a professional who is not a part of

RCDS. Parents are fully involved in such processes and it is expected that they will follow through on such recommendations in a timely fashion, so that the best interests of the student may be met.

### **Advanced Placement**

In addition to preparing students for the Scholastic Aptitude Test and subject tests administered by the College Board, many of the academic disciplines culminate in Advanced Placement courses. Each year RCDS students may earn college credit by achieving high scores on the College Entrance Examination Board Advanced Placement Examinations given in May. AP Courses continue as scheduled through 4<sup>th</sup> quarter. Students enrolled in AP courses must take the AP exam. Students who end the first quarter of an AP course with a less than satisfactory grade as determined by the instructor will have the option of continuing the course as an Honors Class.

### **Advised Withdrawal**

If after regular monitoring and support, the student receives a similar evaluation at the next assessment, the student's academic status will be re-evaluated, and a final conference will be held with the family, academic advisor, Division Head, and the Head of School. Next steps may include continued tutoring, working with a learning specialist, attending a summer school program or considering an appropriate alternate school setting which will best meet the student's needs.

### **Advisory Program**

The Upper School advisory system is designed to provide regular support for students and to allow for regular communication between home and School. RCDS provides each student in grades 6-12 with an advisor; a teacher providing academic and personal guidance, support and discipline. The advisor also makes a special effort to follow each advisee's progress closely, to suggest ways that the faculty can provide support and guidance and to facilitate communication whenever it is appropriate and helpful. Each student meets with his or her advisor at least once each week. Parents are encouraged to contact their child's advisor with questions or concerns about academic or social progress prior to contacting the Upper School Head.

### **Assessment**

Each child's progress is assessed primarily through observation and careful, systematic collection of student work. Students are encouraged to become intellectual risk takers. This support, in conjunction with a stimulating curriculum, is vital for the development of a thinking, independent learner. Student portfolios are created in the beginning of the year and follow the students as they progress through the Children's School. Portfolios include work samples which reflect the child's strengths and weaknesses, informal assessments, artwork and teacher or student observations.

The Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) is a scientifically-based phonological awareness and literacy screening that measures preschoolers' developing knowledge of important literacy fundamentals and offers guidance to teachers for tailoring instruction to children's specific needs. The assessment reflects skills that are predictive of future reading success and measure: name writing ability, upper and lower-case alphabet recognition, letter sound and beginning sound production, print and word awareness, rhyme awareness and nursery rhyme awareness. Research shows the areas targeted in the sub-tests are all important contributors to literacy development. The assessment is designed to be administered in the fall to Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten students in order to guide instruction during the year. A second administration in the spring serves to evaluate progress.

All students in grades 3 through 10 are given the ERB every spring. Although standardized tests do not reveal the complexity of any individual learner they can be useful additional sources of information. These tests are administered as one way to provide feedback to both parents and teachers. While children are familiarized with the format of the test, teachers devote some time to preparing the students specifically for a test. Such preparation will not drain important classroom time, but will hopefully enhance student preparedness for the ERB's. Standardized test results provide teachers, parents and administrators with information, which may be useful for programming and curriculum development and for analyzing students' educational growth over time. We do not use test results as report cards or for "tracking" children into particular skills groups for instruction. Keep in mind that the results on any given test reflect only how well a child performed on one test, on one particular day. When evaluating overall student achievement and potential, teachers and administrators strongly consider daily classroom performance, long-term assignments, parental input, and formal and informal.

### **College Guidance**

Beginning in the tenth grade, each student receives personal help in selecting and applying to appropriate colleges. A detailed description of these procedures is available in the College Admissions Organizer distributed to juniors. In addition to advising and informing students about procedures and opportunities, the Director of College Guidance helps all students select and register for the necessary College Board Examinations and sees that all necessary documentation is sent to the colleges.

### **Grades and Honors Classes (Ranking)**

RCDS does not rank students, but the School does compute grade point averages for students' transcripts after the junior year. The GPA is computed only for academic courses. Enrollment in designated Honors and AP Classes is also noted on students' transcripts. To safeguard the integrity of the School's grading system and on the advice of several college admissions officers, RCDS does not weigh grades in Honors Classes.

### **Grading System**

#### **Children's School Grading System**

The academic year in the Children's School is divided into trimesters.

#### Grading Scale

Grade	Criteria for Grade
S = Secure	Student has mastered this skill
D = Developing at Grade Level	Approaches mastery for this grade level skill. Making progress. No concern at this time.
N = Needs Reinforcement	Needs some additional strategies and one-on-one support.
C = Area of Concern	Not meeting expectations for this grade level skill.
Y = Not Yet Evaluated	Child(ren) have not yet received instruction relating to this skill. These skills will be covered later in the year.

#### **Middle and Upper School Grading System**

The year is divided into two semesters comprised of two quarters each in the Upper Division.

Beginning in 8<sup>th</sup> grade, students receive letter grades for their academic performance. The letter grades, their numerical equivalents, and the grade point equivalent of each used for computation of grade point average are as follows:

A+	98 - 100	4.3
A	93 – 97	4.0
A-	90 - 92	3.7
B+	87 – 89	3.3
B	83 – 86	3.0
B-	80 – 82	2.7
C+	77 - 79	2.3
C	73 - 76	2.0
C-	70 – 72	1.7
D+	68 – 69	1.3
D	65 – 67	1.0
F	Below 65	0.0

Mid-year examinations, for grades 8-12, are at the end of the first semester and final examinations at the end of the second semester, with the exception of certain courses. In Senior and Advanced Placement level courses, teachers may substitute substantial papers or projects in place of final examinations for seniors, with the approval of the Upper School Head. Each term contains two marking periods, with grades issued after each marking period. Report card letter grades range from A+ to F and are accompanied by comments, which are meant to put the grades in their proper perspective. Students receive comments first and third marking periods.

In the Upper School, final grades are calculated as follows:

- First semester grade is determined by averaging together the first and second quarter grades, then adding the mid-year examination grade, if applicable.
- The exam grade is weighted from one-fifth to one-fourth of the semester grade.
- The second semester grade is factored in the same way: after averaging the third and fourth quarter grades, the exam grade is weighted as one-fifth to one-fourth of the second semester grade.
- The final year grade is calculated by counting the first semester as 50% and the second semester as 50%.
- The transcript shows the final grades for the ninth, tenth, and eleventh grades and the first semester in the twelfth grade. Upon completion of the senior year, the final transcript that goes out to the college that a student will be attending includes the final grades for that senior year.

### **Graduation Requirements**

To receive an RCDS diploma, a student must fulfill the following minimum departmental requirements:

- 4 credits in English
- 4 credits in History (or social science)
- 3 credits in Mathematics
- 3 credits (or 2&2) in Foreign Language(s) [except in special circumstances]
- 3 credits in Lab Science (including Biology or an equivalent course)
- 1 credit in Visual Arts
- 1 credit in Performing Arts
- 2 credits in Physical Education
- .5 credits in Health
- .5 credits in Community Service
- .5 credits in Computer Science (or a demonstrated proficiency in computer science)
- Successful completion of a WISE Senior Project

## High Honor Roll

In the Upper Division, students in grades 8-12 earn a place on the High Honor Roll by earning grades of A with no more than one A- in any course.

## Honor Roll

In the Upper Division, students in grades 8-12 earn a place on the Honor Roll with a B+ average or higher and no more than one grade of B- in any course. Participation in the Honor Roll is determined separately for first quarter, first semester, third quarter, and second semester. Sixth and seventh graders demonstrating excellent academic achievement and personal excellence earn a place on the Honor Roll, as a result of receiving an overall evaluative rating of Excellent and overall exemplary effort.

## Homework

Homework is an essential component of the Academic Program and is assigned regularly. Students and parents will be able to find homework posted on the school's website. The purpose of homework is to give students the opportunity to review, practice, and reinforce concepts and skills learned in class. Students also establish independent work and study habits, gain experience with self-monitoring and time-management and use homework as preparation for in-class tests and quizzes. Homework is a very important corollary to class work.

Homework should be a meaningful extension of a child's day. In general, the time spent on homework increases as a child gets older. In the younger grades, homework is often a practice of what was learned in School or a preparation for work, which is to come. Many projects are done within the School day so that the teacher can guide the process.

The amount of homework varies and might include both short and long term assignments. Children in the higher grades are expected to have an assignment pad to record assignments. If children have difficulty completing homework consistently, parents will be notified and a system of organization and accountability will be arranged. Teachers will not make homework adjustments due to participation in extra-curricular activities, such as sports, but they will help a student plan his time to accommodate those extra burdens. Students need to know that their parents understand and value the need for homework; that their parents will help them when necessary to see that it is done, and done well; that a reasonable time is set aside for completion, and that other, more entertaining and pleasurable activities hold a second place to fulfilling the academic responsibilities of the School. If your child spends an excessive amount of time on homework, please contact the teacher as this may indicate a problem.

**Guidelines for homework assignments are as follows:**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Suggested Amount of Homework to Assign</b>
K - 2	Up to 20 minutes daily
3	Up to 45 minutes daily, including independent reading
4	Up to 60 minutes, including independent reading
5	1 - 1 ½ hours daily for homework and reading
6 - 8	45 minutes studying, reading or writing per subject & class period each day
9 - 12	45 minutes studying, reading or writing per subject & class period each day

## Missing Homework Policy

Homework assignments will be reduced one letter grade for each day the assignment is late. Students have 5 academic days to complete late assignments. Homework still not completed after this period will be graded as a zero, and will affect the student's quarterly grade. Exceptions will only be made in cases of illness (doctor's note required) or family emergency.

The School cannot be expected to compile or forward daily homework assignments on short notice. Except in the case of extended absences, students should call classmates for homework assignments or check websites designated by teacher(s).

### **Right of Privacy**

Official school records pertaining to individual students may be made available for inspection or review by the student's parents or guardians or to a student who is 18 years or older. The Head of School, Director of the Upper School, or Director of College Guidance may grant access to student records.

### **Tutoring**

There may be times when the School recommends tutoring for a student. This is a carefully considered recommendation. Sometimes tutors are professional learning specialists and at other times they may be more subject or grade focused. Some RCDS teachers provide private tutoring, although a teacher may not work with a child he or she is currently teaching.

### **Visits to Colleges**

The Upper School Head must approve absences from School for the purpose of college visits. Teachers should be notified well in advance, and students are responsible for any assignments or information given during their absence.

### **WISE Senior Projects**

WISE is a program designed to help seniors design and complete projects that may include internships in the larger community, intensive individual research projects or cultural, artistic or craft-based performance projects. **WISE credit-** one full academic credit for Senior Seminar/Project- is awarded to all seniors who successfully complete both their remaining academic obligations and their WISE project. Program components include: the project, meeting and working with a faculty/staff mentor, the journal that is kept from the beginning of the program to the end which includes a typed final journal submitted for the presentation, research, annotated bibliography and presentation and evaluation.

## **ATTENDANCE, ARRIVAL, DISMISSAL, AND PUNCTUALITY**

Punctual arrival at School is an important aspect of student and classroom effectiveness. Please make every effort to have your child(ren) at RCDS on time. **Buildings open at 7:30 a.m. Children arriving by car or by bus report to a designated classroom where there is adult supervision.** They wait there until their classroom teachers have arrived and are ready for students to enter. **All students should arrive at School and be ready to begin the day no later than 7:45 a.m.** Dismissal is at 3:30 p.m. Monday–Thursday. School ends at 1:30 p.m. on Fridays. Children's and Middle School students who have not been picked up by 3:30 p.m. will go to After School Care. Parents will be charged for these services.

### **Absences**

Parents or guardian must notify the school (845-268-6802 ext 215) before 7:50 a.m. whenever their child is absent, giving the reason for the absence. Calling the school on the day of the absence is a serious obligation of the parent and a means of protection and safety for the child. The School will call the home of students who have not been reported absent by their parents. Following every absence, the parent or guardian must write a note to the nurse stating the reason for the absence. When a child is absent on account of a contagious disease, he/she will not be readmitted without a note from the attending physician and with the permission of the school nurse.

A student who is absent due to non-medical reasons more than ten days and/or has a pattern of tardiness will require a parent conference. In addition, a letter will be sent to parents and a copy will be placed in the student's file. **A student who is absent more than twenty days during the school year may not be promoted to the next grade, or summer school may be required.** Parents should contact the Division Head in advance if extenuating circumstances other than illness require a student's absence. In addition to affecting a student's grade(s) in particular classes, repeated lateness or lack of preparation for class will result in contacting the family and/or detention, loss of privileges, and the lowering of the student's overall achievement evaluation as a result of excessive lateness or unexcused absences. **A conference will be scheduled if tardiness becomes chronic. Students may not stay home to complete an assignment. Encouragement of such behavior is counterproductive to the learning process and sends the wrong message to students. In such cases, assignments will be considered late.**

### **After School Care**

Students in grades Pre-K–8 are eligible to stay in After School Care (ASC). The program is offered every day until 6:00 p.m., for a fee of \$10.00 per child per hour, billed in 30-minute increments. **The late fee for pick up after 6:00 p.m. is \$50.00.** Students in grades Pre-K – 8 play outside, enjoy a snack and have structured homework and free play time. **Parents must call the School and advise us when their child will stay for the program.** You will be billed monthly for ASC. Students may not stay after school unless they have arranged for one of the following: extra help after school with a faculty member, involvement in a school-sponsored activity. Parent/caregivers who are late picking up their child/children will be suspended from the program.

### **Arranging Play Dates**

Our students come from all over Rockland County and beyond, and each School district has its own regulations about transporting additional children on the bus. If you are planning a play date, please arrange for your own transportation. A note should be sent in with your child and given to the teacher or administrative assistant. Children will not be allowed to arrange play dates at the last moment. These "impromptu" events are exciting for the children but create havoc for the School. Children need to know that they may use the phone only in emergency situations. Help them learn to plan responsibly. If parents have made arrangements during the School day, they must call the School.

### **Arrival or Pick-up by Car**

For safety reasons, there are some important rules for parents who drive their children to and from School. In the mornings please do not park your car in front of the buildings; these are unloading areas for School buses. No child may be dropped off before 7:30 a.m.

If you plan to pick your child up instead of using the bus, please notify the School by 1:00 p.m. Calls at the end of the day are very difficult to handle. You will not be allowed to park your car near the building. You must park your car in the first parking lot and walk over to pick-up your child. Students in grades 9-12 may meet their parents/guardians in the parking lot. If you arrive after 3:45 p.m. you may park near the building as long as the buses have left.

### **Bus Transportation**

Students must wait in a designated bus area for their bus at the end of the day. Transportation by bus may be provided for children of Kindergarten age or older by each child's local School district. The district transportation office decides the route and pick-up time to ensure the child's arrival at School by 8 a.m. any incident of misbehavior on the bus should be reported to the School. Complaints about drivers and routes should be directed to the district transportation office. Transportation must be requested annually. Parents are responsible for annually arranging bus transportation through their home school district.

**RCDS is not responsible for providing or arranging your child's bus transportation to/from school.**

### **Cancellation and Emergency School Closings**

Circumstances such as snow, ice or other emergency conditions may make it necessary to delay or cancel School. In addition there may be other emergencies that arise which would make it impossible to open School, such as loss of electricity, heat or water. Notices of School closings are broadcast by 6:00 a.m. via a recorded message delivered to family phone numbers. The School uses an automated calling system that will deliver a pre-recorded message to all the phone numbers you have listed with the Business Office. Always be sure that the Business Office has your most current emergency contact telephone numbers. Cancellations will also be broadcast by 6:30 a.m. over WLIR 1300 AM, WHUD 100.7 FM, and on the school's website [www.rocklandeds.org](http://www.rocklandeds.org) and web at [www.cancellations.com](http://www.cancellations.com).

In the event School must be closed in the middle of the day, the School will send an automated telephone message-notifying parents of the situation and that their child is being sent home. Please keep your emergency phone numbers current.

### **Emergencies**

The RCDS Emergency Safety Plan was developed in consultation with local emergency response agencies and with the Office of Fire and Emergency Services for Rockland County. It includes detailed procedures to follow for fire, severe weather conditions and natural disasters, Indian Point Radiological Emergency, as well as other possible emergencies on campus.

Among the many elements included are evacuation procedures for children and staff. A manual has been developed by the Administration to aid in the implementation of our emergency procedures. For security purposes, we do not circulate this manual. Parents are welcome to come to the Business Office and view the manual on-site.

In the event of a radiological emergency at Indian Point, the School would be notified via the Emergency Alert System Network that is set up in the Business Office. Depending on the level of emergency, students may be evacuated to a School Reception Center by County buses. Our School Reception Center will be St. Thomas Aquinas College, 125 Route 340, Sparkill. In the event of a campus evacuation, students will be brought by foot to the staging areas at Kings Park or Congers Volunteer Ambulance Bldg at 122 Kings Highway. Students will then be evacuated on foot to Congers Elementary School located at 9 Lake Road West, Congers (845) 639-6330.

At RCDS, we are committed to the safety and well being of your children. In the event that there is a crisis that makes it impossible for some parents to travel to the School to pick up their children, we will utilize the student emergency form you filled out at the beginning of the school year, listing a neighbor or nearby relative who can assume temporary responsibility for your child. (Please confirm all of your arrangements with the designated parties you listed on the emergency form.)

### **Family Vacations**

Family vacations should be scheduled around the School calendar. It is not the School's policy to provide work missed due to non-illness related absences. Absences due to extensions of vacation periods create tremendous difficulties for the classroom teacher and negatively impact the student's success. The School has provided vacations of normal or greater length so that no one should need to extend their vacations beyond the designated time. If a major test, midyear, or final is given during the unauthorized vacation, no make-ups are given; however, by giving a written notice to the Upper School Head one month ahead of the planned absence, the student may be allowed to take the exam before leaving for vacation. If

the student neglects to arrange for these opportunities in advance, all missed work (including tests and exams) will count as an F. However, in the event of illness or family emergency, RCDS will work with the family to ensure the student is kept current with the academic program.

### **Field Trips and Athletics**

As a key part of hands-on learning, classes take many field trips throughout the year. **Students are expected to attend all day and overnight trips.** Parents are often asked for help in providing additional supervision. Although RCDS has acquired an activity bus to be driven by faculty for field trips and athletics, there may be occasions where a full bus is required or parents may be asked to drive. In the event that a full bus is rented, the cost will be distributed among the participants. Parents will receive notification of a planned field trip in advance of the trip. A signed permission slip and any money involved must be turned in to the teacher prior to the field trip. All field trip fees should be paid by check made payable to RCDS. **Children who do not have either the permission slip or the field trip money will not be allowed to go on the trip.**

### **Homeroom**

Consistent attendance, punctuality and preparation for class are essential for effective learning. **Students must be at RCDS in their homerooms by 7:50 a.m.** Students are required to be at School for at least half of their academic courses on the day of an after-school activity to be eligible to participate on that day. This includes all rehearsals, practices, games or performances. Students in AP classes may only miss 3 classes before their AP status is put in jeopardy. Within 7 days of the 3<sup>rd</sup> absence, parents will be called to a meeting and continuation in the AP class will be determined.

### **Late Arrival and Early Departure**

In the event of an emergency, we need to know who is on campus at any given moment. The purpose of this system is to help RCDS ensure everyone's safety.

- **All students arriving late** (after **7:50 a.m.**) must obtain a pass from the Administrative Support Coordinator, who is located in the CS lobby. Bus lateness is automatically excused.
- **Faculty** will not accept late students to class unless they have a pass issued by the Administrative Support Coordinator, a faculty member or administrator.
- **Parents** of absent students must notify the Administrative Support Coordinator at ext. 206. Absences without notification will result in student detention.
- Parents taking children from School before 3:30 p.m. **must** sign out with the receptionist in the Children's school.
- Students in grades 9-12 with more than **3 late arrivals** receive after-school detention. Repeat offenders will lose extracurricular activities/privileges.
- **Visitors** including parents/guardians **must** get a pass from the Administrative Support Coordinator who is located in the CS lobby

### **Release of Student to Non-custodial Parent**

When there are custody arrangements that impact which parent may pick up a student from School, it is imperative the School have a copy of the court order. If such arrangements are changed, the School must be immediately notified. The School cannot enforce verbal instructions from one parent without a copy of the decree.

## HEALTH AND WELLNESS POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

### Absences

Parents or guardian must notify the school (845-268-6802 ext 206) before 7:50 a.m. whenever their child is absent, giving the reason for the absence. Calling the school on the day of the absence is a serious obligation of the parent and a means of protection and safety for the child. The School will call the home of students who have not been reported absent by their parents. Following every absence, the parent or guardian must write a note to the nurse stating the reason for the absence. When a child is absent on account of a contagious disease, he/she will not be readmitted without a note from the attending physician and with the permission of the school nurse.

### Communicable Diseases

It is particularly important that any communicable diseases be reported to the School nurse immediately so that we can take any necessary precautions. After an absence of three (3) or more days due to illness, a student must bring a doctor's note before he/she can return to School. A student may leave School during the day due to illness only with the permission of the School's nurse and notification of the appropriate School Head.

### Please note the following policies regarding specific diseases:

- **Chicken Pox-** Chicken pox is acquired primarily by breathing in the virus of an infected person and/or (to a lesser degree) by direct contact with open, oozing vesicles (sores). Crusted-over scabs vesicles (scabs) are not infectious. Your child cannot return to School until the vesicles have completely crusted over for at least 24 hours and the School nurse has cleared him. When you bring your child back to School after the chicken pox, bring the child to the School nurse's office before taking him/her to the classroom.
- **Conjunctivitis-** (Pink Eye) Conjunctivitis (an inflammation of the lining of the eye) is highly contagious and very easily spread among school-age children. The most common symptom is a discharge of yellow/greenish pus from the infected eye(s). The eyelids are often swollen and/or crusted over when the child wakes up. A doctor's note must be presented upon the return of the child to School.
- **Fever-** Children develop a fever for a variety of reasons. Please do not send your child to School unless they have been fever free for the previous 24 hours.
- **Lyme's Disease-** Rockland County has reported a high number of cases of Lyme's disease transmitted by infectious deer ticks. Children are checked after they hike the RCDS nature trail. Each day, parents should carefully check their children for ticks at bedtime.
- **Head Lice-** Head lice are highly contagious and are a recurring problem in every school and every child, no matter how clean his/her home, is susceptible to it. Lice are only about 1/8 inch long, brown and may be difficult to detect in some hair colors. The eggs are silver/gray and are attached to the hair shafts. During lice season (typically late summer/early fall) it is advisable to check your child's hair for lice. Do not use a lice shampoo as a preventative measure - only use it if your child actually has lice. Teach your child to avoid sharing

personal items like hairbrushes, combs, hats, scarves, towels, sweaters, etc., with other children, as this kind of sharing can easily spread lice.

Please do not send your child to School if you suspect he/she has lice. Your child's doctor and/or the School nurse can advise you about appropriate treatment if your child contracts head lice. If the teacher and/or the School nurse determine that a child does have lice, that child will be removed from class and parents will be notified to pick up their child and begin treatment at once. A child who has been out of School due to lice will not be readmitted to class unless the nurse has determined that all the nits have been removed.

- **Strep Throat-** A student must stay home while waiting for the results of a throat culture, even if a quick strep test has a negative result. A child who tests positive must also be receiving antibiotics for 48 hours before returning to School. If your physician feels your child may come back earlier than this, please have him/her write a note. Your child must be fever free for 24 hours before returning to School.

### **Emergency Contact**

The School requires annual updated emergency cards on file for every student; emergency cards will be mailed to students prior to Opening Day. If there is a change in emergency card information at any time in the academic year, it is imperative that this information be submitted in writing to the Business Office.

**Students who do not have an emergency card and/or health records on file by August 26, 2009 will not be permitted on campus for any reason.**

### **Health Forms**

Summer is the best time to schedule appointments for required physicals, immunizations, dental appointments, and sports physicals. Starting this school year, **all documents must be submitted no later than August 26, 2009.** Medical forms may be downloaded from the RCDS website. If you have any questions please contact school nurse Cait Ruppen RN,BC, at [cruppen@rocklandcde.org](mailto:cruppen@rocklandcde.org).

#### **Physical examinations are required for:**

- All new students
- All students entering Pre-K, Kindergarten, or grades 2, 4, 7 and 10.
- All students planning to participate in competitive team sports/activities (including cheerleading). Your physician must complete the athletics portion on the physical form.
- All physicals must include the new state required BMI information including the weight status report.

#### **Dental certificates are required for:**

- All new students
- All students entering Pre-K, Kindergarten, or grades 2, 4, 7 and 10 dated less than six months from the start of school.

#### **Immunizations are required for:**

- All new students
- All students entering Kindergarten need two doses of a vaccine containing measles.
- All students born after January 1, 1994 and entering grades 6, 7 or 8 require the Vermicelli vaccine (chickenpox) or a physician's note as proof of illness. Parent recall is not proof of immunity

- All students entering grade 6 require the vaccine Tdap (Tetanus toxoid, diphtheria and acellular pertussis). If they have received a TD vaccine within the last 2 years, please consult your physician. Any student-entering grade 6 as a 10 year old is required to receive the vaccine when they turn 11 years old.

#### **Potassium Iodide (KI) Administration forms:**

- Required every school year. All students must have a signed form with their parent or guardian's decision to medicate or withhold medication in the event of a radiological emergency.

#### **Food Allergies**

Based on the guidelines presented by the New York State Association of Independent Schools as well as discussions with medical experts, representatives of other schools and parents of allergic children, Rockland Country Day School has established a food allergy policy. The foods most likely to cause allergic reactions are peanuts, tree nuts, dairy products, eggs, soy, wheat, fish and shellfish. While most food allergies produce symptoms that are uncomfortable, for some people, allergic reactions are life threatening.

This policy focuses particular attention on peanuts because they present a special problem: They are the most common culprits in severe food allergies. The peanut's oily residue is easily spread from hand to hand, and around kitchen surfaces and lunch tables.

This policy is designed to prevent severe allergic reactions, to prepare faculty and staff to deal with allergy emergencies, and to minimize anxiety on the part of all students, faculty and staff around the issue of food allergies. Specific measures include:

- No peanut butter or peanut products are served in the cafeteria.
- No snacks containing peanuts are used in the Children's School.
- Children's School parents are instructed not to send baked goods or snacks containing peanut butter, peanuts, or peanut oil to the School.
- Hand washing before and after meals and snacks is part of the daily routine.
- Tables will be washed with soap and water after snacks and meals. This is the teachers' responsibility in classrooms where food is eaten; kitchen staff handles this task in the cafeteria.
- **Parents of children with life-threatening allergies must provide the School with a written medical treatment protocol for their child and/or a School district Section 504 plan, along with two sets of emergency medication; one to be kept in the nurse's office, the other for the child's back pack or fanny pack.**
- The School nurse will educate faculty and staff at the beginning of each semester about the recognition and emergency treatment of severe food allergies.
- The School nurse coordinates the overall allergy prevention and treatment program.

This food allergy policy does not guarantee that a student will never experience an allergy-related event at School. We believe, however, that these measures significantly decrease the risk to allergic children, and that they reflect the strong value that our School places on respect for individual differences.

#### **Lunch and Recess**

The School will serve breakfast and lunch Monday through Friday. Sandwiches, salads, beverages, snacks and hot dishes are available.

There are two daily recesses. In the morning, students will have a breakfast snack and then go outside for recess. In the afternoon the Children's School will have lunch recess before eating lunch. The Upper Division recess will follow the lunch period. **Since participation in the food program is mandatory, students are not permitted to order food to be delivered to RCDS during the school day.**

### **Medication**

Any student requiring medication during School hours must have a **written prescription from the doctor as well as parental permission**. This includes prescription medication, all over the counter medications and all PRN (as needed) medication. This is a NYS mandate. Parents must inform the School of all prescribed medications.

Medication must be sent to School in its original container. You may request a second prescription bottle from your pharmacy explaining that it is needed for home and School. Over-the-counter medication should be in its original container. A label with your child's name can be placed on the bottle. Students with asthma are allowed to carry a personal inhaler; however, they must adhere to the medication policy and complete the required forms. Back-up inhalers must also be maintained in the nursing office.

At no time should medication be brought to School without the knowledge of the RCDS nursing office. All medications will be properly stored in the nursing office.

In addition, a note is required from your child's physician should they be unable to participate in PE class due to illness or injury. The note should state the nature of the illness/injury and the expected date the child will be able to participate in class.

### **Medication Administration in School form**

If your child requires prescription or over-the-counter medication, RCDS needs a completed consent form, the medication in a proper container, and a doctor's order. This includes Tylenol, Motrin, Advil, and Benadryl. **NO medication may be given without a doctor's note. (See below for explanation)**

## **BEHAVIOR POLICIES AND GUIDELINES**

### **Alcohol, Drugs, Tobacco**

RCDS is a drug, alcohol and tobacco free campus. Any student or group of students confirmed to be in possession of alcohol or drugs on campus will be expelled. If there is a suspicion of the use of illegal substances on campus, the student(s) may be given a drug or Breathalyzer test. Parents will then be notified. If these tests are positive, the student(s) will be expelled from RCDS.

Students may not use tobacco products while on campus or under School jurisdiction. Students who violate this policy can expect referral to a tobacco education program, parent notification, or suspension.

### **Behavior Consequences**

Minor infractions of the Honor Code, School rules or procedures will result in a meeting with the appropriate School Head and may include consequences such as: curtailing certain privileges and contacting parents.

**Examples of minor infractions include, but are not limited to, the following:**

- Tardy to School and/or class.
- Failure to sign in or out of School.

- inappropriate behavior in the classroom, on campus, or at School-related events, including gum-chewing, excessive talking during class, repeated lack of preparation, or poor sportsmanship at recreation or during athletic events.
- Non-compliance with the School's dress code.
- Littering and/or lack of respect for the campus and other shared spaces.
- Food and drink should only be consumed in the cafeteria, unless under the supervision of a teacher. Consuming food and drink outside the cafeteria without permission.
- Failing to report to the designated area before School, during recess, lunch and after School.
- Using laptops, walkmans, iPods, headphones, cell phones, video games, etc. during the School day, except at designated times.
- Driving violations on campus.
- Disrespectful behavior towards any adult or child in the community, including bullying.

Failure to correct a persistent pattern of minor infractions may be considered an intentional circumvention of School procedures or rules. This pattern would then be considered a major infraction and warrant more serious disciplinary action.

### **Major Rule Infractions**

Major infractions of the Honor Code, School rules or policies will include formal disciplinary warning followed by: in-school or at-home suspension, disciplinary probation or expulsion.

### **Formal Disciplinary Warning**

These warnings will result in a conference with the appropriate School Head and possibly Head of School followed by a parent conference. The student may serve detention, in-school suspension or lose privileges.

### **After School Detention**

A student will receive an after School detention if there is:

- Conduct not becoming an RCDS student including but not limited to: disrespect, rudeness, teasing and bullying.
- Three missed homework assignments per teacher per quarter.
- More than three late arrivals per quarter.

### **In-School Suspension**

A major infraction or pattern of unacceptable conduct may result in in-school suspension. In-school suspension lasts for one or more days, and is meant to be a social time-out not resulting in significant academic penalty. Students serve the suspension in the Division Head's office or a separate designated space. Students may be required to complete a written project assigned by the appropriate School Head. In addition, Students are still responsible for completing their daily school work, including tests or quizzes.

Students:

- Are not allowed to attend recess
- Must eat lunch and snack in the office
- May not attend any trips
- May not participate in co-curricular activities including sports practice/games, play/band rehearsal/performance, etc.
- In-house suspension does not go on the student's official record, unless it is followed by further disciplinary action.

## **Out-of-School Suspension**

If a student's conduct warrants out-of-school suspension, the School notifies the parents and sends the student home from one to five class days or more, if warranted. This is an academic/social suspension during which time the student loses all social privileges from school-sponsored events and activities and receives no credit for missed work. The student may also be asked to write a reflective essay concerning the ethical issues arising from his/her actions.

A mandatory conference with parents and appropriate School Head and the Head of School will be scheduled and probation letter will be put into the student's record. This must precede the student's return to classes. If problems persist, or if the student poses an immediate or serious threat to others or themselves the student may be expelled from School.

If a student serves an out-of-school suspension he/she is monitored closely for the remainder of the School year, with the expectation that no further serious infraction or pattern of disruptive behavior will occur. It is the School's hope that the student will be in good standing at the end of the School year. However, if the inappropriate behavior persists the School may recommend withdrawal and/or expulsion. The Head of School/Division Head may recommend an withdrawal to the student's parents when there are reasonable grounds for considering a student's withdrawal. An expulsion will result from a major violation of the School's rules or a continued pattern of misconduct following disciplinary probation.

## **Computer Acceptable Use Policy**

The use of computer and media technology and Internet access are integral components of Rockland Country Day School's educational mission. The goal of the School is to integrate computer use into the established educational philosophy and pedagogy. We expect that our students will use digital resources as tools to enhance learning, support research and for solving meaningful educational problems in all of their academic classes. They will continue to learn to discern and evaluate resources as they explore the vast sea of data available in this "age of information", develop the skills necessary to express themselves using the latest multimedia software applications and using the network, and exchange their thoughts with each other and with students worldwide via the Internet. Our integration of technology into the curriculum will provide extensive opportunities for RCDS students to improve their ability to think abstractly, analytically and systematically.

### **Access**

All members of the School's technology network will be given access to as many network services as their technology and level of skill may allow. For example, there will be consistency within each grade and within the respective division. Age appropriate restrictions may apply for use of specific software programs, Internet access and use, and level of required adult supervision or the use of e-mail accounts.

The School reserves the right to exercise the active use of filters (to prevent the inappropriate access of Internet sites) and firewalls. Users must adhere to all copyright laws, and not infringe upon the intellectual rights of other Users, sources provided by the School or obtained through Internet access.

### **Computer Safety**

All community members are expected to comply with the rules regarding use of the Internet in order to avoid visiting inappropriate sites and are asked to exercise good judgment when using this resource.

To the greatest extent possible, members of the community will be protected from harassment and/or unwanted or unsolicited contact.

Students using the School's on-line access may not agree to meet/communicate with anyone they do not know.

### **Controversial Material**

Users may encounter material, which is controversial or considered to be inappropriate by parents, teachers, other students or administrators. Because the Internet is a global network, it is impossible to screen/filter effectively all inappropriate information. Therefore, we must caution Users of the Internet to be aware of the fact that the School's network may not screen all offensive material. Anyone receiving unwelcome communications should bring this to the attention of a teacher or administrator immediately.

### **Network Etiquette**

All Users are expected to abide by the generally accepted rules of network etiquette. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Being polite. (Users should not use abusive language in their messages to others.)
- Use appropriate language. (Users should not swear or use vulgar or inappropriate language.)
- Of networked computers, peripherals (such as scanners, printers, etc.) and the Internet

### **Respect the rights of others to have equitable access to use Privacy**

All members of the network expect to have privacy in their communications, however, this privacy has limitations. The School does have the ability to access any community member files and e-mail correspondence. If a User has violated the guidelines of this policy, a system administrator or teacher may use this ability to gain access to private correspondence or files. It is also understood that the system administrator may also have to access private files as part of maintenance of the system. Before maintenance, every attempt will be made to notify the User when appropriate.

### **Responsibilities and Guidelines for Computer Use**

Each community member is responsible for his/her password, personal information, and assumes full responsibility for technological use, as well as network and Internet access. Users may not assume anonymity, pseudonyms or impersonate others. This is inappropriate in an educational setting and does not embody the spirit of the Honor Code. Like all School activities, electronic learning necessitates good judgment on the part of students, teachers and administrators. As reflected in the Honor Code, students will be expected to monitor their behavior and will be held accountable.

In order to adhere to these guidelines, a **User should never:**

- Give out his/her password, name, address, home/cell phone number or arrange meetings with individuals he/she does not know who has contacted them while using the Internet.
- Plagiarize information downloaded (gathered) using the Internet.
- Deviate from honoring all copyright restrictions. See your teacher if you need assistance to learn how to cite properly an on-line source, whether using a direct quote or paraphrasing source material.
- Download or copy any programs, including games, onto the hard-drive of a PC computer or into your network file.
- Use inappropriate language, including profanity when using the School's technological resources.
- Print excessive copies or monopolize the computer or its peripherals.
- Attempt to crash computers, inhibit the network, vandalize, damage, destroy, or hack any of the School's technological systems including computer hardware and software, audio-visual equipment and video equipment. All of

- these actions will be considered serious infractions and may result in an accompanying fee to repair/restore the system to proper functioning order.
- Bother, harass or send unwanted communications via the Internet or the School network.
  - Invade the privacy of others, including their computer files.
  - Access, transmit, display, or publish inflammatory material of any kind including demeaning messages, insults, violent or degrading material, racist, sexist, homophobic or pornographic material.
  - Participate in any “chat groups,” social network sites including twitter, facebook.com, myspace.com etc. when using the Internet access of the School.
  - Engage in actions that will lead to the deliberate or inadvertent spread of computer viruses.

Students are expected to apply the spirit of the Honor Code when using the School’s computers for in-house projects or when accessing or utilizing the Internet. Students are also asked to remember the following:

- No food or drink (including water) may be taken into the computer labs.
- Behavior in the labs must be calm and work directed. Any rough behavior endangers the equipment and distracts those who are trying to concentrate on their work.
- Students need to take all books, papers and other belongings with them when they leave the lab. The lab should be clean and tidy for the next users.

### **Harassment**

Rockland Country Day School Board will not tolerate harassment in any form, including harassment on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, pregnancy, race, religion, age, national origin, citizenship, veteran status, disability or other basis prohibited by law. This policy applies to all employees, including staff, faculty, consultants and administration, regardless of position, and to all students, parents, board members and visitors to the School. Gender-based harassment is any unwelcome verbal, physical or other conduct of a sexual nature that focuses attention on another person’s sexual identity or characteristics in a way that makes him/her feel uncomfortable, helpless, demeaned or isolated. Unlawful sexual harassment may include gestures, touching or other uninvited physical contact, unwelcome requests for sexual activity, or verbal, written or graphic forms of communication such as verbal abuse or unwelcome and repeated remarks with sexual implications. Sexual harassment can be blatant or subtle. It can come about due to conscious intent, or as a result of ingrained, improper patterns of behavior.

Three basic criteria determine whether conduct constitutes unlawful sexual harassment:

- Submission to the conduct is a basis for a student’s participation or advancement in a School program or activity;
- Submission to or rejection of the conduct is a factor in determining a person’s academic standing;
- The conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with a student’s performance in the classroom or other School sponsored activity or of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational environment.

**Unlawful sexual harassment is subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the School.**

### **Laptops**

School-owned laptops will be provided on a standard platform for some students on an as-needed basis. RCDS-issued laptops will remain on site and will be stored by the School. Eighth graders who own laptops may only bring them to school at faculty request for in-class projects and/or writing assignments.

## **Off Campus Behavior**

While on school-sponsored trips or athletic activities, students are expected to be on their best behavior and to show consideration for others at all times. Students whose conduct subjects the school to adverse public notoriety may be subject to disciplinary action even though the conduct had no necessary connection with RCDS. This also applies to any use of technology, such as social networking websites.

## **Sexual Harassment Procedure**

Any student who feels that he/she has been sexually harassed should inform a teacher, CS Head, MS Head, US Head, or Head of School, nurse or any adult in the School community with whom the student feels comfortable. If the report is made to a person other than an administrator, that person must immediately forward the report to the Head of School. Any adult who feels that he/she has been sexually harassed should inform an administrator of his/her choice. That administrator must then bring the report to the Head of School. Where appropriate, RCDS administration will forward the complaint to either EEOC or the State Division of Human Rights. Reports of sexual harassment will be treated as discreetly as possible, consistent with the School's responsibility to investigate and take appropriate action. The School will not retaliate against anyone who reports harassment and will take disciplinary action against anyone who retaliates against a victim of harassment. The RCDS sexual harassment officer is the Business Manager, 268-6802 ext. 207. RCDS is committed to promoting a safe environment for all of our students, faculty, staff and parents.

## **GENERAL GUIDELINES AND INFORMATION**

### **Back-to-School Nights**

Back-to-School Nights occur for each division near the start of the School year, usually at the end of September or early October. These are evenings when the teachers present an outline of the programs, curriculum and expectations for your child. This is a time to ask questions about the content and skills that will be taught over the course of the academic year. This is not a time for parents to discuss concerns about their individual child.

### **Birthday Celebrations and Social Gatherings**

Birthdays are wonderful events for children and we enjoy sharing in their excitement with a celebration at School. You are welcome to send in or bring in a treat to share with your child's class for his/her birthday. Please discuss the timing of this party with the classroom teacher beforehand, as surprise interruptions are difficult for the continuity of our program. Some of our children have significant food allergies and for this reason we ask that you familiarize yourself with the ingredients in the treats that you are sharing. This will allow teachers to determine whether they can eat the food. We care deeply about the feelings of our students and request that you follow this simple rule of thumb: if you are inviting the entire class to an out-of-School party, you may distribute invitations in School. However, if you choose a smaller party, please mail invitations directly to those students. Make every effort not to exclude one boy or one girl.

### **Board of Trustees**

A Board of Trustees governs RCDS. The Board does not intervene in the daily affairs of the School, but is responsible for keeping the Mission, planning for the future, and ensuring the financial sustainability of the school. While membership on the Board is voluntary, the Board composition reflects the strategic expertise, resources, and perspectives needed to achieve the mission and strategic objectives of the school.

## **Calendar**

School events are listed on the school's website [www.rocklandcds.org](http://www.rocklandcds.org).

## **Clothing**

Students have recess outside in all but the most inclement weather. During the winter, children need to bring snow pants, boots, a hat and mittens/gloves daily. Children in grades Pre-K, K, and 1 should have a complete change of clothes available at School; please make sure that this extra set is rotated as the seasons change. In addition, sneakers are required for Physical Education classes.

## **Communication**

A strong working relationship between School and family is vital to your child's/children's success at RCDS. Parents who have questions or concerns about their child's academic or behavioral performance should first contact the child's teacher or, in grades 6-12, the child's advisor. If the situation is not resolved, the parent should contact the appropriate Division Head. Parents should contact the Head of School only when other attempts to resolve the matter through the appropriate channels have not been successful. This approach will facilitate prompt feedback and follow-through.

## **Dress Code**

Students are expected to be neat and clean, and dress in a manner which does not offend the character of the School. In situations requiring interpretation, final judgment will be made by the Administration. It is the basic responsibility of the parents/guardians to control the type of clothing worn by their children. Any clothing that is torn, excessively tight or loose, suggestive or offensive in any way, or that has profanity or other offensive wording or symbols is prohibited. Students may not wear midriff blouses, spaghetti strap tees, very short or tight clothing, anything revealing undergarments. Sturdy shoes or sneakers are best for the School's outdoor setting. Due to health and safety concerns, wearing flip flops or other backless shoes is strongly discouraged.

## **Electronics Devices**

Students in the Children's School are not permitted to bring electronic devices of any kind to School. Students in grades 6-12 are permitted to bring cell phones and iPods to School, but may only use them

- **Before 7:50 a.m.**
- **During lunch recess and**
- **after 3:25 p.m. They must be switched off at all other times.**

Any electronic device that is a distraction to the academic process may not be used at RCDS. These devices may be confiscated for the remainder of the school day. Repeated infractions may result in detention, a parent meeting and/or revocation of student privileges. Phones are not to be used as calculators. Engaging in texting is prohibited. Headphones are not to be worn as a fashion accessory.

Students may not use cell phones to call parents to pick them up early; parents must speak with the School Nurse and/or Division Head before early dismissal can be authorized. Even when permission for early pickup has been given, parents must still sign students in/out with the Children's School receptionist.

## **Enrollment Contracts and Billing**

Re-enrollment contracts are sent out in February and are due back on March 1. A \$2,500 deposit is due upon submission of the enrollment contract.

There is a choice of four payment options:

- Ten month- Tuition is due May - February.

- Quarterly- Tuition is due May, August, November, and February
- Semester- Tuition is due July and December
- Single Payment- Tuition is due in full July 1<sup>st</sup> made payable to RCDS

Tuition payments are made through Tuition Management Systems (TMS) and are due no later than the first of every month. All additional fees billed throughout the year are due within 15 days of receipt. A 1.5% late fee will be charged per month for all outstanding delinquent balances. Please note there are no exceptions for late fees. **If there are substantial balances over 90 days past due, your child will not be allowed to attend School until the balance is paid in full.** All families who do not select the single payment option for tuition are encouraged to obtain tuition refund insurance. This policy covers the balance of unpaid tuition in the event your child withdraws for any reason during the School year. Please contact the Business Office at ext. 207 for information on tuition refund insurance.

Division Heads, Director of Student Activities and teachers have the right to confiscate any electronic device from a student at any time.

### **Environment**

As a community, RCDS will work toward promoting energy conservation and environmental awareness and responsibility.

Students should assume responsibility for helping to maintain a clean, attractive environment and are expected to keep classrooms, halls, dining areas, common areas, and outside areas in order. Littering is unacceptable at RCDS. Food should be consumed in designated areas only. All trash should be disposed of in proper receptacles. Students may use classrooms for gatherings with permission and under the supervision of a teacher. **Students may not use the staff rooms or the copier machines in any of the buildings. Parents/guardians are financially obligated for the costs of repair or replacement of property damaged by their child.**

### **Fire Drills**

As required by New York State law, periodic fire drills are conducted throughout the year. When the fire alarm sounds, students and all adults are expected to exit buildings in an orderly fashion and meet in the designated area; exits are posted throughout all school buildings.

### **Flyers, Notes, Emails and Weekly Newsletter**

In an effort to lessen our mailing costs, we rely heavily on e-mail as a way to send and receive information. **Please make sure your email address is up to date with the Business Office.** RCDS posts a weekly newsletter, The Recorder, on the website at [www.rocklandcde.org](http://www.rocklandcde.org). Please make sure to check every Friday for important announcements and an overview of exciting events for the upcoming week.

### **Informal Conferences and Conversations**

You may leave a voice mail message for teachers by contacting the main RCDS phone number and following the voice prompts given or by being transferred by any receptionist. Voice mail messages will be returned within 24 hours, unless the message is left over the weekend, during holiday breaks or teacher illness.

The email address of each RCDS faculty member is the first letter of the first name followed by the full last name followed by @rocklandcde.org. While all administrators check their email frequently, faculty members' response time may vary. At Back-to-School night, teachers will let parents know how to best contact them. Faculty contact information is provided at the end of the handbook. Another consideration to keep in mind is that it is very difficult to have a meaningful conversation about a student at the classroom door. Teachers

need to be attentive to the students in their class and are wary of discussing a student's progress in the hallway with little privacy or preparation.

### **Parent Conferences and Progress Reports**

Parent/teacher conferences are held twice per year. Additional conferences may be requested by the School or parents at any time. Children's School parents receive a complete progress report in the fall, in February and again at the end of the year. Upper School parents receive progress reports quarterly. These reports indicate the level of mastery of both academic and personal skills. Written comments accompany these developmental assessments, putting the student's strengths and weaknesses in context. Parents will be notified of any areas of concern well in advance. Progress reports should not contain any "surprises".

### **Parent's Association (PA)**

The PA at RCDS is vital to a successful relationship between home and School. The role of the PA is to host events and provide services that enhance the School's programs. A \$50 PA fee will be required from each family. The PA president can be contacted by leaving a message at School or at home. Attending the PA's monthly meetings is a great way to become involved and get to know people. Kelly Frye is the PA President for the 2009-2010 School Year.

### **Parents, Faculty and Administration**

Parents play an essential and positive role in the life of an Independent School. Not only are parents advocates for their children, they also support the faculty and administration through volunteer activities and events. The relationship between parents and the faculty and administration is formally governed by the School's written enrollment contract and handbook, in which its procedures are spelled out. When parents choose to enroll their child in an Independent School, they agree to subscribe to its mission, follow its rules, and abide by its decisions. However, most teachers and administrators would agree that trust and mutual respect are the most essential underpinnings of effective working relationships with parents.

### **Personal Property**

Students are expected to respect the property of others. They should not touch, move or deface in any way books, bags, or other property belonging to another student, a teacher, or the School. Please check the Lost and Found. Please label all clothing and personal belongings. Young children often have difficulty keeping track of their belongings and sometimes fail to even recognize their own things. There is a lost and found box in the CS and MS lobby. Please check it regularly and encourage your child to do the same. Remaining items will be donated to charity.

Students should not bring large amounts of money or valuable items to School. If a student needs to bring a particularly valuable object to School as part of a School project, please notify the Division Head so that arrangements can be made to insure the safety of valuable items.

Students may not bring any weapons, fireworks, explosive devices, or other dangerous items to School.

### **School Policies**

RCDS prizes and depends on personal honor and trust and the School is particularly sensitive to its ethical culture. Such a culture requires each of us to respect others and the School itself; this is the basic principle of a successful and harmonious community.

It is possible for every student to stay in good standing at RCDS. Occasionally, a student violates the rights or property of others or of the School, or contravenes an important policy.

In such a rare case the School must consider and respond to that violation, doing what is necessary to deter that student - and others - from compromising the trust of the community. While consistency and equity are important facets of the disciplinary climate of the School, situations are also considered on a case by case basis, taking into account the age and distinctive circumstances of each student.

### **Student Fundraising**

Student fundraising should be for causes and organizations that are broad-based and universal in nature so that all in the school community are comfortable in participating. Fundraising should be student-driven, but students must obtain a faculty or administrative advisor who will guide them through the fundraising activity. Furthermore, all fundraising activities must be coordinated with the Director of Student Activities.

### **Student Leadership**

Throughout their stay at RCDS, students have many opportunities to assume leadership roles. The school asks students to behave honorably and responsibly while in any leadership role. Any student who, in the judgment of the Head of School, does not exhibit such behavior may be removed from their role.

### **Use of School Telephones**

The School telephones are not available for student use, except in emergency situations with the permission of an administrator.

### **Visitors**

Prospective students and their families are welcome to visit the school throughout the year. Appointments for campus tours and student interviews may be arranged through the Admissions Office.

Current students who are interested in bringing friends to school with them must make advance arrangements with the Admissions Office. Students are responsible for ensuring that their friends abide by all schools rules during their visit; visitors who are unannounced or misbehave may be asked to leave.

## **SENIORS**

### **Automobiles**

After returning parental permission slips, Seniors may drive or ride in cars driven by other students. Students must comply with the School's parking and driving regulations, including signing in and out properly at the Children's School receptionist. If a student is determined to have been careless, reckless or unsafe in driving, that student will have their driving privileges suspended. Failure to drive safely or observe School **procedures will result in the suspension of driving privileges**. Students are not to use their cars during the day, except as permitted by the School. The School can assume no responsibility for students who drive to and from School or who leave campus during lunch. Unless specifically authorized in writing by parents/guardians. Students including siblings are not allowed to drive to or from school, or ride with other students to school activities.

### **Senior Privileges**

Senior privileges are designed to foster independence and responsibility. Students are expected to handle their freedoms responsibly; **those seniors who show a pattern of irresponsibility will have their privileges suspended and/or revoked**.

Seniors who do not have a first period class must arrive at School by 8:45 a.m. They must sign in at the Children's School reception as soon as they arrive.

If a senior has an after school activity, they are not allowed to leave campus between dismissal and the activity. Seniors who are in good standing and who, in the opinion of the faculty, their advisor, and the Upper School Head, are sufficiently self-reliant in their completion of academic work, have free study privileges when not in class. At any time during the year, those students who do not meet their academic and/or social obligations will have this privilege rescinded and will be placed in supervised study halls.

Seniors in good standing are awarded open campus privileges. Missing or being late for School obligations, failure to follow specified procedures for signing in or out, or irresponsible driving will result in suspension of these privileges. If a student is late returning from lunch more than two times their off-campus lunch privilege will be revoked for the rest of the semester.

### **Seniors**

Seniors who complete the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter in good standing and are engaged in WISE projects are excused from non-AP classes for the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter.

## **SUPPORTING RCDS**

At most Independent Schools, tuition cannot cover the full cost of educating students, so families are asked to participate in annual giving to provide the extra dollars needed to run the School. At RCDS, funds are needed to provide the most enriched program possible, to pay our faculty competitively, to ensure diversity through financial aid grants and to maintain our beautiful campus. This is only possible through the additional money that parents, grandparents, alumni/ae and friends of the School provide through annual giving.

### **There are several ways you can help support RCDS:**

**The Magnolia Fund** - Named for the magnificent tree that grows outside the Head of School's office, the Fund represents unrestricted gifts to the School in the form of cash, stocks, annuities or real estate. **All gifts to the Magnolia Fund are fully tax deductible as allowed by law.** Giving stocks which have been held for more than a year further allows the donor to avoid paying the capital gains tax on the valuation of the stock.

**Fundraising Events** - Through the generous support and involvement of parents and Board of Trustees, RCDS holds several fundraising events during the year. These events raise significant money with funds earmarked to support various areas of our program, such as technology, arts, and scholarships. In the spring, we celebrate our school year at the annual benefit.

**Dedicated Giving** - Donors can choose to give an annual gift earmarked for one of our annual awards to students and faculty, such as the **Lee and Jerry Johnson Scholarship Fund**, founded by Lee and the late Jerome "Jerry" Johnson, who were among the School's original founders. This fund was established to support Financial Aid at RCDS. The Pennypacker family gives money every year to the **Kendall and Ruth Pennypacker Memorial Fund**, established by alumna Kathryn Pennypacker, daughter of the School's first Head of School and Head Librarian. **The Michael Fauci Scholarship Fund** was established by Carmine and Margaret Fauci, parents of this RCDS student who died tragically while skiing in the Alps in the winter of his senior year. This fund is awarded every year to a student in the graduating class for use in his/her continuing education expenses. Money can be given in honor of or in memory of someone significant in your family's life and will be recorded as such.

## 2009 - 2010 FACULTY & ADMINISTRATION

### **Brian Mahoney, Head of School**

B.A., Siena College; M.S.T., Fordham University; Ed.D., Fordham University

Mayra Bloom, Ph. D  
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B.A., Major: English Literature, New York University,  
MS.Ed. Child Development and Education, Sarah Lawrence College,  
NYS Permanent Teaching Certificate, N-6.  
Ph.D., Educational Studies, The Union Institute

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BA, MA Amherst College;  
MS Columbia University;  
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Ron Breland  
Adjunct Science Instructor – Organic Garden

Victor Catano  
Chief Operating Officer  
BA Haverford College; MBA, City College of New York

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BA State University of New York Potsdam;  
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