

# Richards Elementary School Handbook



5812 North Santa Monica Blvd.  
Whitefish Bay, WI 53217

**Main Office:** 414-963-3951  
**Fax:** 414-963-3946  
**Health Room:** 414-962-6810  
**Website:** <http://www.wfbschools.com/schools/richards>

Welcome to Richards School!

The Whitefish Bay School Board has established the following Focus Plan to guide our efforts and ensure exceptional experiences for our students.

## The Whitefish Bay School District Focus Plan

Our Vision: The School District of Whitefish Bay, in partnership with families and community, is student-centered with a tradition of educational excellence. We will build upon this tradition by:

- Empowering students with the knowledge, skills, and character necessary to thrive in a changing, global society.
- Respecting the diversity of our students and engaging them as individual learners in an innovative learning community.
- Addressing the needs of the whole child in a caring, inclusive environment.

## **Our Goals & Key Strategies**

**Academic Achievement and Engaging 21st Century Learning: Every student will meet or exceed comprehensive learning standards to promote future success within our global society.**

1. Develop exemplary, standards-based curriculum and assessment.
2. Develop and implement data-driven, differentiated instruction across all grade levels and subject areas.
3. Develop and implement timely, comprehensive support systems to ensure success for every student.
4. Ensure access to reliable, secure and sufficiently robust technology infrastructure that facilitates transformational educational practice.

**Supportive Environment & Whole Child Development: Every student will experience a caring, inclusive learning environment that supports the development of the whole child with balanced attention to physical, social, emotional, and intellectual well-being.**

1. Conduct strengths and needs analysis, including the development of a student feedback process to inform the continuous improvement of a caring, inclusive and culturally responsive environment.
2. Provide professional development for all staff members about nurturing the whole child.
3. This Focus Plan provides the lens through which we plan and evaluate programs and developments at Richards School. We are committed to building strong partnerships with families as we do this work - it truly takes a village to provide our children with the best!

## Richards Shared Beliefs and Commitments

To give the Focus Plan life at Richards, the Richards Staff developed the following set of shared beliefs and commitments which act as our North Star and guide our short- and long-term work. It is our hope that you see evidence of these beliefs and commitments in our actions and decisions.

### We believe that:

- Educational Equity\* and excellence is possible for our school.
- All students bring valuable assets to our school community and are capable of success. Diversity strengthens our school.
- Disrupting inequity begins with our own beliefs and actions.
- All adults are educators. We have a collective responsibility to meet the needs of all students.

### We are committed to:

- Helping students recognize and value differences in one another.
- Advancing equity and access to rigorous and high quality instruction for all through proactive and collaborative curriculum design.
- Maximizing the varied expertise of staff in flexible learning environments that are reflective of the overall student population.
- Being driven by goals that are integrated and supported by formative assessment and reflection.
- Providing all students with choice, independence, and opportunities to pursue passion.

\*What do we mean by Educational Equity?

- Advancing the learning of literally all students in the school.
- Disrupting and attending to the entire range of inequalities across race, ethnicity, social class, ability, gender, sexual/gender identity, language and their intersections.

This handbook provides much information but if what you need is not here, please call the main office (963-3951) so that we can help. Please also look at our website [www.wfbschools.com](http://www.wfbschools.com), to access many useful updates and items including a Richard School page and the calendar.

We look forward to the joy of working with you and your child(ren) this year. Thank you for the trust you place in us. Here's to a successful 2023-24 school year for our students, staff, and families!

Chad Nelson, Principal  
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## **Student Attendance**

### **Health Room and Absence Reporting**

Health Room: Room 119 Telephone: 414-962-6810 Email: [richards.healthroom@wfbsschools.com](mailto:richards.healthroom@wfbsschools.com)

Regular school attendance is crucial for your child's success in school. Attendance is also required by state statute and WFB School Board Policy. Students are expected to arrive at school daily in time to line up and enter with their classes. When a child arrives late to school, they are considered tardy. Students displaying repeated tardiness will be referred to the administration. Whitefish Bay School Board Policy 431, including Rules, governs all attendance procedures in the District.

There is an absence call system in place as a safety measure for our families. Whenever your child is absent, please call the health room to report the absence at 414-962-6810 or email the health room at [Richards.health room@wfbsschools.com](mailto:Richards.healthroom@wfbsschools.com). Include your child's name and the reason for the absence. An answering machine allows calls to be made during non-school hours. In the case of unreported absences, the school will attempt to contact parents as early as possible. When a parent/guardian does not contact the health room, the absence is marked as unexcused.

### **Student Injury or Illness**

If a student becomes ill or injured during the school day, they will report to the health room. If the child is unable to remain at school, parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified. The health room cannot treat serious injuries or illnesses. They will apply ice as needed and keep your child as comfortable as possible until parents/guardians arrive. The health aides will also contact parent(s)/guardian(s) if a child is visiting the health room on an unusually frequent basis.

Children are excluded from school with a fever, defined by the CDC and the NSHD, as a temperature of 100.4 or greater (axillary, orally, or tympanically). They may return to school after 24 hours being fever free without medication. This rule also pertains to students who vomit due to illness. Please comply with this Whitefish Bay Health Department protocol, as well as all additional protocols related to COVID-19.

When a child is home due to an illness, we expect that an adult will be supervising the child (Wisconsin State Statute 948.21). Administration will contact the parent(s) or guardian(s) of a child who is being left unsupervised at home when, in our judgment, the State Statute has been violated.

Unless we are provided with a doctor's excuse, we expect that when students return from an absence, they will be able to participate in all class activities including physical education, recess, and other class events.

Please notify the health room of the following: any specific health conditions or allergies, any communicable disease such as chicken pox, or any immunizations received by your child throughout the year.

## **Medication Administration**

Medications may be delivered to school by an adult or a parent/guardian may call the school health room on the day that the student will bring the medication to the health room. No medication is given to a student without completion of the medication permission form by a parent/guardian. The medication must be in a container with the current pharmacy label on it. Medication forms can be obtained from the health room or through a link at <http://www.wfbschools.com>. The information needed on these forms includes the prescription number, name of medication, strength of medication, amount of pills left at the health room and the dosage/frequency of the medication.

## **Medical/Dental Appointments**

We suggest that medical/dental appointments be scheduled, whenever possible, outside of the school day. If a child does need to leave school for an appointment during school hours, the parent needs to notify the classroom teacher and health room with the type of appointment and the time that they will be picking up the child.

For safety reasons, parents/guardians are required to come to the school office at the appointed time and sign the child out from school. If the child returns the same day, they check back in with the health room for a re-entry pass.

## **Family Trips**

We strongly encourage family vacations to be taken during scheduled school vacation periods, as in-class activities, experiences, and discussions cannot be replicated when missed. When a family trip does occur during school days, please send a written notice to the child's classroom teacher and notify the school health room.

No makeup work will be given prior to student absences with the exception of religious holiday observances. Necessary makeup work will be assigned upon the child's return to class with a time allotment reflective of the amount of school days that were missed. Absences will be marked in accordance with the Attendance Policy.

## **Student Entry and Dismissal**

All students will line up and enter with their classes and entry doors are supervised by staff members. Students are dismissed at the same doors. Please wait outside the building for your child to be dismissed at the end of the day.

## **Weather Conditions at Recess, Arrival, and Dismissal**

Students go outside for recess daily. When it is raining or below zero wind chill, students remain inside for recess. Students who are at school are required to go outside to recess unless a doctor's excuse is on file.

When it is raining or below zero wind chill before the first bell, signs will be posted on entry doors to inform students that they may enter the building and report to assigned areas to wait for the start

of the school day.

When the weather at dismissal time is potentially unsafe (tornado warning, thunder storm), the dismissal time may be delayed. Students will be kept inside the school until the threat of danger passes. When this decision is made, parent(s)/guardian(s) will be permitted to pick up children from their classrooms.

## **Behavior Expectations - The Richards Way**

Be Safe, Be Kind, Be Responsible

In order to provide a learning environment in which students feel safe, connected, and engaged, we use a Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS) framework. At Richards, this is referred to as *The Richards Way*. The Richards Way provides clear expectations, a common language, and a common approach to supporting and celebrating positive behavior throughout the building. We value the partnership of families in reinforcing the following expectations.

In accordance with Board Policy 443.7 all students in the School District of Whitefish Bay are expected to:

- Demonstrate respect for people, property, and the learning environment
- Show kindness and courtesy to others by treating them with dignity
- Be in class on time ready to begin learning
- Demonstrate effort by listening carefully and following instructions
- Make positive contributions to the school learning environment
- Follow all school rules

### **The Richards Way in the Classroom**

At the beginning of the school year, each class and their teacher will develop a list of class agreements, typically called a Class Contract. These agreements will vary from class to class but will reflect the school's philosophy of being respectful and kind, safe, and responsible through specific and age-appropriate expectations.

### **The Richards Way in other areas of the school**

Expectations	Hallway	Outside/Recess	Lunchroom	Bathroom
<b>Be Safe</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Calm body</li> <li>● Face forward</li> <li>● Hands to self</li> <li>● One stair at a time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Safe body and no rough play (tackling, wrestling, pushing)</li> <li>● Use equipment safely</li> <li>● Leave trees, sticks &amp; dirt alone</li> <li>● Report unsafe behavior</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Calm body</li> <li>● Eat your own food</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Calm body</li> <li>● Wash hands</li> </ul>
<b>Be Kind</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Up to volume level 1</li> <li>● "Tight to the Right"</li> <li>● Close lockers quietly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Up to volume level 4</li> <li>● Enter/exit school quietly</li> <li>● Kind words and actions</li> <li>● Everyone is allowed to play</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Up to volume level 2</li> <li>● Use kind words</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Give others privacy</li> <li>● Wait your turn</li> </ul>
<b>Be Responsible</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Go straight to your destination</li> <li>● Be tidy with gear</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Use restroom before recess</li> <li>● Solve problems responsibly</li> <li>● Return equipment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Stay in your place</li> <li>● Follow adult directions</li> <li>● Raise your hand for help</li> <li>● "Leave no Trace"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● "Quick and Quiet"</li> <li>● "Leave no Trace"</li> </ul>

**The Richards Way to and from School**

Students are expected to:

- 🎬 Cooperate with crossing guards
- 🎬 Show respect for others and their property
- 🎬 Make safe choices

We expect the following from both parents/guardians and students:

- 🎬 Park safely, legally, and have students enter/ exit the curb-side of the vehicle
- 🎬 Cross the street only at crosswalks
- 🎬 Park only in the assigned areas for designated time limits
- 🎬 Set up a "safe route" to walk to school
- 🎬 Plan a family meeting place away from busy corners and congestion

Crossing guards are posted at corners close to school to help your child safely across the streets. Crossing guards are not on duty during the lunch periods in January and February. Crossing guards are assigned to the following intersections:

- 🎬 Santa Monica and Belle
- 🎬 Santa Monica and Silver Spring
- 🎬 Santa Monica and Day
- 🎬 Lake Drive and Silver Spring
- 🎬 Santa Monica and Lake View
- 🎬 Lake Drive and Day

Please do not drop off students on the north side of the Berkeley/Belle intersection; there is not a crossing guard at that corner and it is not a safe place to cross.

There is no student supervision on the playground before or after school. We ask that students arrive at school not more than 5 minutes before the first bell at 7:50am.

No dogs are allowed on school grounds due to allergies and the varying comfort levels of students. Walking your dog to school in the morning or waiting for your child with your dog on the sidewalk at dismissal time is discouraged as this increases congestion/disruption at a very busy time.

### **Parking**

The parking lot located at the south end of Richards School is for staff use only. No student pedestrian traffic is permitted in the parking lot. Please do not block the driveway to the parking area and do not drop off students in the driveway as this creates a safety hazard.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to identify a meeting spot with their child that is located one or two blocks from school or to organize carpools to alleviate congestion in the school area.

Buses have priority for drop-offs and pick-ups on Santa Monica Blvd. Please obey posted signs, as this area is monitored closely by the Whitefish Bay Police Department. Buses for students with exceptional needs also use a designated parking area on Belle Ave.

### **Bicycles/Scooters/Skateboards**

Students are expected to walk their bikes on playgrounds and sidewalk areas near school. Bikes should be secured with locks at the bike racks at the south end of the building and the north end of the back playground. The use of helmets is strongly encouraged. Scooters and skateboards must be locked at the bike racks and can only be brought into school if they can fit into the student locker.

### **Bullying, Harassment or Hazing**

The School Board seeks to provide a safe and positive learning environment for all students. Bullying, harassment, and/or hazing, disrupts both a student's ability to learn and the school's ability to educate its students in a safe environment. Therefore, the Board will not tolerate student bullying, harassment, and/or hazing, in any form while on District grounds or at any District sponsored events.

“Bullying” refers to severe, systematic, or repeated actions that involve the threatened, attempted, or actual infliction of physical harm or psychological/emotional distress on one or more students. Bullying usually (but not always) involves an actual or a reasonable perception of an imbalance of power between the bully and the victim/target.

“Cyber-bullying” is defined as bullying that involves the use of digital technologies, including but not limited to, e-mail, cell phones, text messages, instant messages, chat rooms, and social media. Cyber-bullying is prohibited and treated the same as all other types of bullying.

“Harassment” means behavior directed towards another person which is based in whole or in part, on any legally protected characteristic or classification, including (with respect to a student victim/target) a student's sex, race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, creed, pregnancy, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, disability, physical attributes, gender identity or expression, or social, economic or family status.



"Conflict" is characterized by interactions that generally happen in the heat of the moment. Conflict often arises from a difference of opinion and most of the time both parties involved are equally engaged and upset. As opposed to the chronic nature of bullying, harassment, and/or hazing, conflict is neither planned nor ongoing; it tends to occur intermittently, and those involved have shared interest and ability to find resolution. If it is determined to be conflict and not bullying, harassment, and/or hazing, the administration will attempt to work with all parties to eliminate the conflict.

(Excerpted from the WFB Board Prohibition of Bullying Policy 411.1)

Any student who (1) is the target of bullying or harassment; (2) who observes/witnesses any incident involving bullying or harassment; or (3) obtains knowledge of possible bullying or harassment that the student finds credible or upsetting, is strongly encouraged to report the incident(s) to District staff using any of the procedures identified in this rule. Parents, guardians, and others with relevant knowledge/information/concerns related to incidents involving students are similarly encouraged to report such concerns/incidents to the District.

There are several different ways that students, parents and guardians, and others can report concerns related to bullying and/or harassment:

1. At the Building/School Level:

- a. Making an informal verbal or written report (e.g., via a parent/guardian email) to a building principal, teacher, activity supervisor (e.g. a head coach), or other school staff member; or
- b. Completing a [“Report of Bullying, Harassment and/or Hazing” form](#) and delivering the form to a building principal, teacher, student services staff member, or other school staff member.

2. At the District Level:

- a. Completing a [“Report of Bullying, Harassment and/or Hazing” form](#) and delivering the form to the office of the District Administrator; or
- b. Pursuing a District-level complaint using the District’s student discrimination complaint procedures. When using these procedures, the complaint may be initially filed with the District’s designated Equal Educational Opportunities Compliance Officer.

(Excerpted from the WFB Board Policy on Reporting Bullying, Harassment and/or Hazing 411.1 Rule 1)

### **Threatening Behavior**

In 2017, Wisconsin passed Act 143, further requiring all employees of Wisconsin public school districts to report potential threats of violence to local law enforcement. If a staff member believes in good faith that a student(s) made a serious or imminent threat(s) which jeopardizes the health and safety of others, it is their legal obligation to immediately report the facts and circumstances to the

police. While “serious or imminent” may imply some discretion, school employees will always err on the side of caution in order to ensure the safety of all school community members.

It has been our observation that at times students use threatening words casually, such as between friends when playing at recess. Other times, students use threatening words impulsively, when they are in an emotionally charged situation. And, on rare occasions, an elementary student uses threatening words purposefully and intentionally. When students use this language on social media, nuance and intent cannot be easily determined.

Students must refrain from any language or gesture that may seem threatening to school personnel or to others, as that very likely could result in a call to the police. We strongly encourage parents/guardians to discuss this with students at home so that they are aware of this new legal requirement. At school, age-appropriate specific teaching about this requirement is embedded into guidance lessons each fall.

If you become aware of any potential threat to students or staff while the school office is closed, please call the WFB Police Department directly at 414-962-3830 or use the Speak Up Speak Out Wisconsin reporting system. Created by the Office of School Safety, SPEAK UP, SPEAK OUT allows students and community members to confidentially report tips on potential harm or criminal activities directed at school students, school employees, and schools. This [link](#) takes you to their website.

For all emergencies, call 911.

## **Weapons and Drugs**

School Board policy 443.6 states that no student shall possess, use, store, transfer or make accessible to another person any weapon while the student is (a) at school or under the supervision of a school district authority, regardless of the student’s location; (b) in any building or facility or on grounds or premises owned, occupied or controlled by the District, at any time; (c) in any District-owned vehicle or on any form of District-provided transportation, at any time; and/or (d) participating in or attending any District-sponsored program or activity. No student shall falsely represent as a weapon anything that, although not actually a weapon, has (or has been given) the appearance of a weapon (e.g., to intimidate or threaten another person).

Students are responsible for taking reasonable steps, in advance, to ensure that any item in their possession or control is not prohibited by this policy. Students who have questions about whether an item is covered by this policy should contact their principal. If any student has reason to believe that any student, District employee, volunteer, visitor or other person possesses, or has used or stored a weapon, the student should immediately report that belief to a teacher, building principal or other responsible adult.

Students determined to have violated the weapons policy are subject to appropriate disciplinary action, which may include referral to the School Board for possible expulsion.

Please review Board Policy 443.4 for information on student use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.

## **Vandalism**

Disciplinary action for vandalism will be taken, and costs will be assessed to students who willfully break, damage, or deface school property, facilities or equipment. Board Policy 731.1 provides more guidance.

## **Electronic Devices**

Technology resources provided by the School District are for educational purposes only. Acceptable uses are those which support the District mission. The District emphasizes to all users that access to the technology system is a privilege not a right; and the user will be held responsible for his/her actions on the technology system. Inappropriate use of electronic information resources can be a violation of local, state, and federal laws and lead to prosecution under those laws.

Students shall not electronically live stream or record by audio, video, or other means any conversations, meetings in or out of the class setting during the school day. Students wishing to record for school or instructional purposes can do it under the discretion of school staff for approved ed tech purposes. If the district is in remote/virtual learning, students need to follow the District's video-conferencing guidelines.

Students failing to abide by the Appropriate Use Policy may lose network/computer privileges and experience consequences that may arise from violations of normal school rules, up to and including expulsion.

(Excerpted from WFB Board Policy 363.2: Acceptable Use)

The District may grant limited permission to possess and use personal electronic devices (PED) at school for the primary goal of encouraging responsible use of technology for educational purposes. For purposes of this policy, "personal electronic device" includes computers, tablets, electronic readers, cell phones, and/or other web-enabled devices of any type. This permission may be for before, during and/or after the normal school day and in/or in other school supervised settings.

The District shall not be responsible for the safety or security of personal electronic equipment that students choose to bring to school. Students who bring any personal electronic device(s) to school do so at their own risk to possible theft, damage, misappropriation of data/equipment, or other loss.

(Excerpted from WFB Board Policy 443.5 Student Use of Personal Electronic Devices)

At Richards School, SMART watches are permitted unless they become a distraction to learning. SMART watches are not to be used for texting, calls, taking photos, videos or emailing during school hours. Cell phones and any other devices that have not been deemed appropriate by a school staff member to support learning should be turned off and kept in the student's backpack during the school day.

In the event a SMARTwatch or cell phone is not used as permitted, families will be contacted and progressive steps will be taken including the creation of a student specific plan as needed.

### **Dress Code Guidelines**

The School Board believes that appropriate student dress is an important part of creating a school environment that is safe, conducive to learning and free from disruption. With that in mind, in accordance with School Board Policy 443.1, the following student dress code standards shall be enforced in the District during the school day and at all school-supervised activities and functions.

1. Students shall dress appropriately for the school environment. Student attire that causes, or is likely to cause, a material interference with school operations or a substantial disruption to the school environment will not be permitted.
2. No student shall be permitted to wear any clothing that depicts, promotes, or advertises alcohol, illegal drugs, tobacco, or nicotine products, criminal activity that would threaten any person's health, safety or property, criminal gang affiliation/activity, profanity, pornography, or violence that would constitute a violation of law or school rules.
3. Clothing and/or accessories that can reasonably be expected to cause excessive maintenance problems, injury, or property damage may not be worn.
4. All students go outside for recess when the wind chill is above zero, and students should be dressed to remain outside comfortably for 25 minutes.
5. Clothing must cover the majority of the torso and buttocks.
6. No caps, hats or hoods are allowed to be worn inside the building/classroom except when transitioning in and out of the building, or on specific school-based event days. Exceptions or accommodations may be granted by an administrator on an individual basis for medical, religious, or other student-specific reasons.
7. Shoes should be safe for playground running and play. Athletic shoes and non-restrictive clothing are required for physical education classes.
8. Students participating in activities or events representing the District shall be expected to dress appropriately, including adhering to any applicable directives, so as not to detract from the group or the occasion.

Students are expected to know and abide by these expectations. Students who are dressed in a manner that does not fit within these guidelines may be asked by school staff to change their

clothing or address the dress code violation. If the student refuses, the student will be subject to discipline.

School staff shall be responsible for enforcing student dress code standards on a fair, consistent, and nondiscriminatory basis.

Wisconsin Statutes 120.13

### **Communication & School Consequences Related to Behavior Expectations**

We believe that students will be people of strong character who will treat others with respect. Through our PBIS framework, we have defined which behaviors are handled at the teacher/classroom level and which are handled at the office/administration level.

At the classroom level, the teacher involved will work with the student(s) to reteach and rehearse the specific behavior. Parents/guardians will be notified when a pattern of behavior is observed. It is our hope that this communication will prompt a conversation at home. We know a school-home partnership is crucial for student success!

In the event of behavior handled at the office level, the administration will work with the student(s) to reflect on what happened and develop a plan for moving forward. Other steps will include information gathering from all involved, restorative steps if/when appropriate, educational opportunities and consequences as necessary. Consequences are focused on reinforcing desired behaviors and are typically progressive.

Serious cases of misbehavior that are unsafe, significantly disruptive or inappropriate or in violation of policy may result in suspension in or out of school.








Parents/guardians will be notified.

### **Parent/Guardian Involvement and Communication**

#### **Orientation**

Parent/guardian Orientation occurs during the evening in the first month of school. Times will be communicated in mid-August.

During Orientation, your child's teacher will provide detailed information concerning:

-  Core academic curriculum
-  Daily instructional schedules
-  Homework expectations
-  Assessment information
-  Specific classroom procedures
-  Art, music, physical education, library, and world language schedules
-  Other relevant information

Children should not accompany their parents/guardians to school this evening. This is an adults only event.

## **Thursday Folders**

Each Thursday, an electronic Thursday Folder is posted on our school website and sent to parent/guardian email accounts. This Folder includes timely information related to school and district news, events, etc. If your family does not have access to email, please inform the office so that we can send a hard copy home in your child's physical Thursday Folder.

Only Whitefish Bay School District-sponsored and co-sponsored events and information (this does include PTO) can be included in the Thursday Folder.

## **Communication with Teachers**

Parents/guardians are encouraged to contact their child's Classroom Teacher or Encore/Support Teachers regarding any questions or concerns via note, email or telephone call. Email is generally the most efficient. Staff email addresses are available on the [Richards School website](#). Staff email addresses are [firstname.lastname@wfbsschools.com](mailto:firstname.lastname@wfbsschools.com). For example, Stephanie Haupt's email address is [stephanie.haupt@wfbsschools.com](mailto:stephanie.haupt@wfbsschools.com). Phone voice mail messages can also be left during non-school hours by calling 414-963-3951.

Our goal is to partner with families in order to support all learners. Our teachers' work day is spent working directly with students and/or planning learning activities. Elementary teachers plan instruction and review assessment information for six subject areas in addition to tending to the real time physical, social, and emotional needs of students. Responding in real time to phone messages or emails limits the capacity to fully engage in this primary work. To best support students and families, we will target a 24-48-hour work day response to communications from students and parents / guardians. For matters of public safety or emergencies please contact the Police Department. For all other matters that require immediate attention, please contact the school office directly.

## **Two Household Families**

As we focus our work on your child, it is our protocol for all communication to go to both households. In this way, all adults working with the child have the same information at the same time. Please note that when a teacher gets a question from one household, they will send the response to both.

As a school, we believe all adults from school and home are working with the child's best interest in mind. Together, we are the strongest team.

## **Parent-Guardian/Teacher Conferences**

Two scheduled conference periods take place during each school year to discuss student progress. Fall conferences, which take place in October, are designed for all students' parents/guardians to attend. Spring conferences, scheduled in April, are optional and can be requested by either the teacher or the parent/guardian. Open and honest communication between home and school is an integral part of any successful school experience.

Two household parents/guardians sometimes request separate conferences. This is often problematic as the dialogue, discussion, and conclusions in each conference may vary. Therefore, parents/guardians are asked to attend one conference together and to sign up accordingly.

### **Parent Teacher Organization**

The Richards PTO is an integral part of our school life. We have a strong culture of volunteerism at Richards. The PTO provides many valuable services, programs, and supports, including fundraising. All parents/guardians are encouraged to join the PTO and participate in ways that work for them.

### **Volunteer and Service Opportunities**

There are many ways to volunteer to support Richards School. Volunteering is completely optional and we are grateful for the thousands of hours of volunteer service families provide during school. We also recognize that many parents/guardians work during the day or have other responsibilities that prevent them from volunteering during the school day. Service to and support of the school can happen outside the school day in multiple ways. These include becoming a member of the PTO, volunteering at a PTO event, creating materials for a classroom teacher, helping your child with homework, staying current with Thursday Folder information, attending Parent/Teacher Conferences, attending a School Board meeting, and coming to student concerts and other performances.

Parents/guardians are asked to communicate with their child's teacher ahead of time regarding their interest in classroom volunteering/visiting during the school day. While in your child's classroom, please be sure that cell phones are turned off. Drop-in visits to meet with the teacher or observe the classroom can be disruptive to the learning process and are not allowed. (WFB Board Policy 860)

### **Out of School Event Invitations**

We recognize that families host parties or events for a variety of occasions. To avoid students feeling excluded or pressured to attend an out-of-school party/event, invitations may not be handed out to students at school for any non-school sponsored event.

### **Additional Information, Organized Alphabetically**

#### **Balloons**

Latex balloons are not permitted on the school campus or in the building due to allergies. It is recommended that Mylar balloons are used when balloons are needed.

#### **School Counselors**

School counseling services are available for all students and are an integral part of the total school regular education program. Counselors work with students, teachers, administrators, and parents/guardians in a variety of ways with the goal of helping students reach their full potential.

School counselors can be reached by calling the main office.

### **Class Placement Protocol**

The development of class lists is a complex and collaborative process. We consider the needs of individual students and strive to create classes that are balanced in terms of gender, academic and social/emotional skills, learning styles, and language development. Among other factors in the mix are class size, number of sections, and levels of support needed. The process of creating these groupings is taken very seriously and begins early in the spring with the child's current grade level team, supported by specials and support staff.

Parents/guardians are welcome to share information regarding their student's learning styles and needs in order to assist this process. The Optional Placement Information Form is made available on the Richards School website each spring. To better understand this process, our guiding principles are listed below.

#### Guiding Principles Related to Student Placements:

- All teachers in the building are skilled professionals who are able to differentiate to meet a wide range of student learning needs.
- Grade level teams, the guidance department, special education and support teachers, Encore teachers, and administration work closely together to ensure consistency of curriculum across all classrooms.
- Children benefit from exposure to a range of teaching styles and structures.
- The current classroom teacher has worked daily with the student throughout much of the school year and has a deep body of knowledge about the student's academic, social, and emotional strengths and opportunities.
- Children continually change and grow, ready for new experiences each year.

Please know that we make a substantial investment of time and thought into creating each year's class groupings. The Placement Information Form is completely optional and whether we receive a form or not, your child's needs are carefully considered.

### **Emergency School Closing**

Occasionally, it is necessary to close schools due to a snowstorm or other emergency. The policy of the Whitefish Bay School District is to close schools when the weather conditions present a serious threat to the health and safety of the children and staff.

In the event of an emergency during the school day requiring evacuation of the school, students will be relocated to a nearby, pre-established location. Parents/guardians will be notified via an automatic phone call system and/or school email.

When a storm occurs during the night and the Whitefish Bay Schools are to be closed, a repeated announcement will be made over the local radio stations: WISN (1130 AM), WOKY (902 AM), WTMJ (620 AM), W MYX (99.1 FM), and W KLH (96.5 FM). Parents/guardians will be notified via



an automatic phone call and this information will be posted on our district website as well.

## **Homework**

One of our goals is to ensure that all students develop effective strategies for continuous learning. This includes attention to how homework contributes to learning. Homework provides meaningful opportunities for students to reinforce skills, foster individual interests, enrich classroom learning, and strengthen independent application of student learning.

Homework is introduced on a limited basis in grade one (i.e. short mathematics or reading assignments) and increased through grade five. Homework may take as little as 20 minutes in second grade and up to one hour in fifth grade. Homework is expected to be completed and returned to school on the specified due date. In addition to assigned work, students are expected to read at home on a daily basis, as appropriate to their age. If parents/guardians feel that their child is spending an inordinate amount of time on homework, they should contact the teacher to discuss this concern.

Homework Roles and Responsibilities for Students and Parents/Guardians (WFB Policy 345.3).

Expectations for parents/guardians are as follows:

- Promote a positive attitude toward homework as part of the learning process
- Understand and reinforce expectations for the quality of student work
- Provide a structure, a place, and resources needed to help students complete homework
- Provide supervision and support, but do not do the assignments or projects for the student
- Support the need for balance among the many learning activities in the life of a student, including homework

Expectations for students are as follows:

- Set a time each day to do homework.
- Complete homework assignments, checking for work quality and accuracy
- If possible, explain the work that has been done to an adult
- Ask questions of your teacher if procedures for assignments or the actual content of assignments are not clear
- Plan ahead to make efficient use of the time that has been allotted to complete long term assignments

## **Lost and Found**

Throughout the year, we accumulate many items in the Lost and Found, located in the Great Hall. These items often include lunch boxes, coats, snow pants, shoes and other things that students may or may not notice are missing. Smaller items, like jewelry, keys, hair bands, etc. are kept in the office. Unclaimed items are periodically donated to need-based organizations throughout the school year.

## **Lunch**

All students in grades 5K-5<sup>th</sup> bring lunch from home. Milk (1% and skim) is sold on a daily basis for ten cents with chocolate milk available on Monday and Thursdays to students in grades 1-5. Milk punch cards are available for \$2.00 (20 punches) and can be purchased in the office or in the

lunchroom during lunch periods. Ice cream is available for grades 1-5 on the second Tuesday of each month. Ice cream punch cards are available for \$5.00 (9 punches). Fun lunches are organized by the PTO at scheduled times throughout the year for students in grades 5K-5.

We ask that parents/guardians help children make healthy choices for lunch. Please do not send soda or lunch packs with soda; juice and fruit drinks are allowed. Please send lunches/items in containers that the child can open on their own. We ask that glass containers not be included in student lunches.

The health room has lunch items available for students, and these are primarily reserved for situations of financial need.

### **Photographs**

Related to photographing students, we strive to balance the ability of families to capture special times with meeting privacy and policy limitations. All of our families are given the opportunity to opt out of photographs through registration each year.

- When acting as a classroom volunteer, i.e. listening to readers, running a center, etc., parents/guardians should take no photographs.
- At parties and on field trips, parents/guardians may take photos of their own individual child - not with any other students.
- At public performances and events such as music performances, art shows, etc., parents/guardians can take photos at will. Please do not post photos of anyone else's child on social media without permission.

### **Security Cameras and Electronic Monitoring Equipment**

Please review Policy 731.3 Use of Security Cameras and Electronic Monitoring Equipment, which in accordance with Wisconsin Statutes, Family and Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) Regulations, and the Electronic Communication Privacy Act of 1986, notifies parents/guardians, students, and employees that surveillance cameras are being used on, in, and around district facilities.

### **Snacks & Treats**

Many students benefit from a nutritional snack during the morning or afternoon (dependent on lunch time) in order to optimize their learning. A brief time (approximately 10 minutes) will be allotted in 5K through 5th grade classrooms during which the students can eat a snack if they choose to do so. The students will continue to be involved in class activities or individual work as they are eating their snacks. We ask that parents/guardians send a nutritious snack that can be eaten as finger food without being too messy. No beverages are allowed and no gum is allowed. Suggestions for snacks include: fresh or dried fruits or vegetables, pretzels, popcorn, raisins, cheese, etc. We discourage sending a snack that contains peanuts or tree nuts due to student allergies.

The office has extra snacks available for students, but these are primarily reserved for situations of

financial need.

Students are welcome to celebrate birthdays at school with a non-food activity or treat. Some of the ways that students have celebrated birthdays include donating a book to the classroom library, having a family member come in to read to the class, bringing in small items to share (i.e. stickers, pencils, bookmarks, etc.), or being allowed to sit in a special place in the classroom. Food treats are not allowed. Shared snacks/treats may be provided by teachers or teacher-appointed volunteers for all-class celebrations, but these will be selected carefully based on allergies in each individual classroom.

### **Visitors**

All visitors must enter through the main door, Door 1, during school hours and sign in through the Raptor system if entering school.

**Thank you for your review of the Richards Handbook and for the support you provide to our students!**

Handbook Revised July 2023

