PARENT STUDENT HANDBOOK

















Anderson 4
School District

2026-2027 Student Handbook

7324 SC-187
Anderson, SC 29625
Phone: 864-403-2200
www.rms.anderson4.org
Office Hours: 7:45 am - 4:00 pm



Our **mission** is to believe in our students enough to hold them to high expectations!

Our **vision** is to balance student engagement with academic excellence so that students want to be at school today and will be prepared for tomorrow.

ADMINISTRATION

Dr. Jennifer Roach, Principal
Mr. Kevin Brady, 7th-8th Grade Assistant Principal
Mr. Daniel Huggins, 6th Grade Assistant Principal

INSTRUCTIONAL COACH

Mrs. Kimberley Bright

SCHOOL COUNSELORS

Mrs. Jill McClain, Lead School Counselor
Mr. Jeffrey Rae, School Counselor

SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER

Mr. Travis Bolton

Riverside Middle School
7324 SC-187
Anderson, SC 29625

Main Line: 864-403-2200
Fax: 864-403-2299
rms.anderson4.org



Dear Riverside,

My name is Dr. Roach, and I am so excited to continue serving you as Principal of Riverside Middle School for the 2026-2027 school year. This year is our first year in our new home, the former Pendleton High School. Our theme is, "Not a location, a legacy." We want to embrace that while we have a new house, this is still home. While we have new halls, we will have the same hustle. We are Riverside!

One of our core beliefs is that all Riverside students are OUR students whether we teach them or not. Our mission is to believe in our students enough to hold them to high expectations! Our vision is to balance student engagement with academic excellence so that students want to be at school today and will be prepared for tomorrow.

Since my very first day in the classroom as a student teacher at Riverside, my favorite educational quote has been, "Kids don't care how much you know unless they know how much you care." I believe that in order to reach middle school students, we have to focus on two things. First, teachers and administrators must develop healthy, positive relationships with students. Secondly, we must set high expectations—both academically and behaviorally—for all students. All students can learn, and they each deserve the opportunity to come to a school where the environment is conducive to their learning!

The faculty and staff at Riverside are dedicated and committed to making sure that each student that we serve has a successful year. We encourage our parents, family members, and community members to partner with us. We welcome your involvement and participation in our Parent Teacher Organization, at our School Improvement Council meetings, and at various events throughout the year. To see a list of opportunities to visit our campus and get involved, check out the link on our monthly newsletter. Our goal is to work together to increase both student achievement and student engagement. We want our students to be excited about learning and to develop the desire to be lifelong learners.

Be on the lookout for our school-wide communications. Each month, you will receive our monthly newsletter called *The Riverside Report* which will give you information about what is coming up for the month. Each Thursday morning, students will receive *The Student Life Update* in their school emails, and it will be texted to parents on Thursday afternoons. This document will tell you what is happening the next week and who to contact with questions. Each Sunday afternoon, parents will receive *The RMS Current: Last Week in Review*, with information about what students learned the previous week. Be sure your email is up to date in PowerSchool so that you don't miss out on these communications!

Sincerely,

Jennifer Roach

Jennifer Roach, RMS Principal

"Every kid is one caring adult away from being a success story." – Josh Shipp

SCHOOL DAY

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

Morning Meeting starts daily at 8:00 am, and the instructional day is from 8:20 am - 3:20 pm. Car riders may be dropped off beginning at 7:30 am, and we welcome our first bus at 7:30 am. Students are not supervised until 7:30 am when the building is opened. When dropping off students in the mornings, there are a limited number of faculty members on duty since this is before teacher arrival time. As a result, the car line is one lane only so that students can be dropped off next to the building.

Please have your student at school no later than 8:00 am which is when our Morning Meeting will begin. During this time, students will receive important announcements. Our instructional day begins promptly at 8:20 am, and students are considered late after that time. Students that arrive at school after 8:20 am must be signed in at our front office by a parent or legal guardian.

Riverside Middle School will make every effort to ensure the safety of every child at afternoon dismissal. However, it is the responsibility of the parent to communicate to their child the appropriate transportation. For efficiency during afternoon pick-up, please display names in your windshield of all students that ride with you. **All students should be picked up from school by 3:45 pm. Due to traffic stacking lanes at RMS, parents may not sign a child out after 2:30 pm.**

CHANGE OF TRANSPORTATION

Should it be necessary for you to change your child's normal mode of transportation, please send a note with your child. If an emergency arises, a student's parent or legal guardian should call the school office. All phone requests should be made to the office prior to 2:00 pm in order for us to get the information to your child and the teacher. All students riding to the high school for an extracurricular activity must fill out a bus activity form at least two days before the date transportation is needed and will then be assigned a bus. **Students are only allowed to ride their assigned bus.** See Bus Transportation section for more information.

TWO-HOUR DELAY FOR WEATHER

If there is a two-hour delay due to severe weather, school will begin two hours after the normal start time, and drop off will begin two hours after the normal drop off time. Here are the specific times:

9:30 am – Car rider drop off begins
9:30 am – Bus arrival begins
10:20 am – The instructional day begins

Note: No breakfast is served on a two-hour delay.

EARLY DISMISSAL OR WEATHER DELAYS

The following is a list of ways Anderson School District 4 will communicate with parents and guardians in the event of an emergency, early dismissal or weather delays.

- Search for us on Facebook:
  - Anderson School District 4
  - La France Elementary School
  - Mount Lebanon Elementary School

- Pendleton Elementary School
- Townville Elementary School, Anderson School District 4
- Riverside Middle School, Pendleton, SC
- Pendleton High School, SC

- District Twitter Account:
  - @AndersonSD4

- Emergency Notification Calling System
  - Calls home, mother's cell and work, father's cell and work only in cases of an emergency

Media Outlets

- Television Stations - Greenville (WYFF), Greenville (WHNS), Spartanburg (WSPA), and Asheville (WLOS)
- Radio Stations – Greenville (WMYI, WFBC, WESC, WSSL, WLFJ), Clemson (WJMZ), Anderson (WAIM/WCKN, WRIX)

  Note - TV and radio stations may be subject to errors in reporting. Always check our website for accurate information.

Note: General announcements, to include student absence, are handled differently in that calls are only made to the number listed as the home residence.

BELL SCHEDULES

6th Grade		7th Grade		8th Grade	
Morning Meeting	8:00 - 8:15	Morning Meeting	8:00 - 8:15	Morning Meeting	8:00 - 8:15
Homeroom	8:20 - 8:25	Homeroom	8:20 - 8:25	Homeroom	8:20 - 8:25
1st Period	8:25 - 9:18	1st Period	8:25 - 9:18	1st Period	8:25 - 9:18
2nd Period	9:21 - 10:14	2nd Period (Exploratory)	9:22 - 10:10	2nd Period	9:21 - 10:14
3rd Period (Exploratory)	10:18 - 11:06	3rd Period	10:14 - 11:07	3rd Period	10:17 - 11:10
4th Period	11:10 - 12:03	Lunch/Recess	11:10 - 11:40	4th Period (Exploratory)	11:14 - 12:03
Lunch/Recess	12:06 - 12:36	4th Period	11:43 - 12:36	5th Period (Exploratory)	12:06 - 12:55
5th Period	12:39 - 1:32	5th Period	12:39 - 1:32	Lunch/Recess	12:58 - 1:28
6th Period	1:35 - 2:28	6th Period (Exploratory)	1:36 - 2:24	6th Period	1:31 - 2:24
7th Period (Exploratory)	2:32 - 3:20	7th Period	2:27 - 3:20	7th Period	2:27 - 3:20

STUDENT DATA/INFORMATION

POWERSCHOOL & SCHOOLOGY STUDENT DATABASE

Parents will have access to their student's information such as grades, attendance, and fee balances and can activate the email notification system through both PowerSchool and Schoology. **Parents in need of their student's Schoology login information should contact the Instructional Coach.**

WITHDRAWAL FROM SCHOOL & PERMANENT RECORDS

A permanent record is maintained on each student. All information in the record is confidential and accessible only to the school staff, the student, and the student's parent or legal guardian. Information is protected by federal law by the Family Education Records Program Act (FERPA). We require that the parent come to the school office in order to officially withdraw their child. When a special education student transfers from this school to a school outside of Anderson School District 4, the Office of Special Education will send a copy of the student's special education information to the receiving school. This procedure will facilitate the exchange of records between school districts and prevent delays in the provision of free and appropriate public education. Please notify the office if you plan to withdraw your student to enroll in a private school, online program, or homeschool association. To complete the withdrawal process, a records request or an official proof of enrollment letter is required.

SCHOOL WEBSITE

Apptegy is our school website provider where you can find teacher contact information, school announcements, and important documents. Classroom files such as lesson plans can be found on Schoology.

THRILLSHARE (INFORMATION/EMERGENCY CONTACT SYSTEM)

Thrillshare is a parent-school communication system used by Anderson School District 4 to deliver valuable information regarding emergency notifications (such as school closings and general reminders). Parents can receive information via email, phone, and text message.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS & TELEPHONE

For your student's safety and emergency needs, the school must have your current address, home telephone, and cell phone numbers on file in the school office. Please notify the school of any changes as soon as they are made by submitting written documentation. The school will not release unlisted telephone numbers. If you do not have a telephone, please provide the school office with the number of someone who can be reached in case of your child's illness or an emergency. A change of address must include two proofs of residence (utility bill, lease agreement, etc.).

Please provide us with your email address if you would like to receive school updates via email. Remember to notify us if your email address changes during the year. This is a primary form of contact for general information. In addition, all progress reports and report cards will be emailed home.

ATTENDANCE AND TRUANCY *(Refer to District Policy JBD Student Absences and Excuses Issued 9/04)*

Attendance

South Carolina Law, section 59-65-10, requires students to attend school. Excused or lawful absences are as follows:

- Illness of the student documented by a doctor's statement (Note: A medical excuse must include specific date(s) of the absence.)
- Death or serious illness in the family
- Recognized religious holidays of the student's faith
- Principal's emergency discretion

All other absences are unexcused unless a valid excuse is provided within five days of the student's return to school. Acceptance of excuses submitted after the five days will be at the discretion of the administration.

The following format should be used for parent excuses:

Student's Name (First and Last Name)

Date of Absence _____

Reason for Absence_____

Parent or legal guardian Signature_____

Absences due to school-related clubs such as archery, fishing, etc. as well as activities not affiliated with the district such as dog shows, rodeos, pageants, club or recreational sports, etc. will require a parent note to be excused. If a parent note is not submitted, the absence will be considered unexcused.

Each student is allowed up to five daily absences that may be excused by a parent note per school year. Periodic phone calls and letters will be sent to parents to keep them aware of student absences.

Period Attendance

Riverside Middle School teachers take attendance during each period of the day. Since period attendance is counted for each student, it is critical that parents limit early sign outs and late arrivals as these absences count as an absence against a student.

Seat Time

Students must attend school a minimum of 170 days of the school year to fulfill seat time requirements. Students may not miss more than 10 days **total** including both excused and unexcused absences combined. Students who miss more than 10 days may be required to attend summer school even if academic requirements are met.

Truancy

By South Carolina Compulsory School Attendance Law (59-65-90), if a student accumulates 3 consecutive unlawful absences or a total of 5 unlawful absences, an Attendance Intervention Plan must be completed. Our Data Entry Clerk will contact parents concerning attendance interventions**.**

The State Attendance Law requires parents to keep their children in school. The school is required to report students to the County Attendance (Truancy) Officer if unexcused absences, tardies or discipline infractions become excessive. Such reports may result in parents being required to explain in court why children are not in school and/or pay fines for violation of the State Attendance Law.

Tardies

Being on time is a necessary part of our students' learning process. Classes start at 8:20 am and students arriving at 8:21 am or later will be counted as tardy.

Tardies and early sign-outs count toward our chronic absenteeism rating with the South Carolina Department of Education. Excessive unexcused tardies or early sign-outs (10 or more) may result in a meeting with school and/or district administration.

Note: Students arriving to school late due to bus schedules are not counted tardy.

Early Dismissal

Students may not leave the school grounds without being signed out by a parent or legal guardian. Written permission of the parent/guardian must be given for students being signed out by anyone other than the parent/guardian. Students must be at school at least ½ day to participate in after school activities. Students should not be signed out after 2:30 pm.

Students being signed out due to a doctor's appointment must submit a medical excuse from the doctor in order for it to be excused. In cases of doctor appointments, we encourage students to come and stay as long as possible or to sign out and then return, if time permits. If it is an early morning appointment, students may sign in afterwards and be counted present. Excessive unexcused sign-outs (10 or more) may result in a meeting with school and/or district administration, as this affects the amount of "seat" time required by South Carolina law for the classes missed.
Please try to avoid signing your child out early unless he/she becomes ill, a family emergency occurs, or a medical appointment cannot be scheduled after school hours. In the event that your child needs to be dismissed early, the parent or authorized representative must sign the child out in the office. Be aware that accumulated sign-outs will affect attendance and may result in consequences pursuant to the SC Compulsory Attendance Law.

ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Student academic success is supported by communication, partnership, and shared responsibility between teachers, parents, and students.

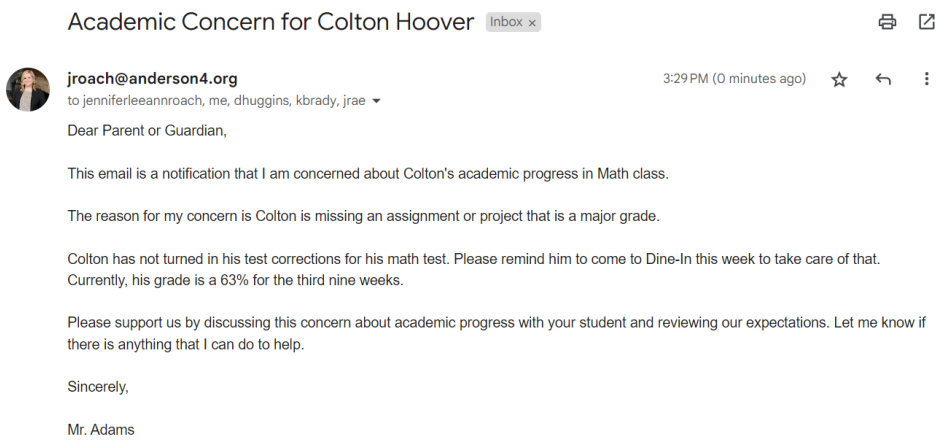
PARENT-TEACHER COMMUNICATION *(Refer to District Policy KB Parent Involvement in Education)*

There are numerous times when teachers and parents interact. In order to improve our communication with parents, Riverside has developed the following communication tools:

- Direct email, phone calls, and notes to parents from teachers as needed
- PowerSchool Parent Portal
- Schoology
- Progress Reports Once Per Nine Weeks
- Marquee, District Website, and RMS Website
- Report Cards Once Per Nine Weeks
- Thrillshare Phone Messaging System
- Rooms Parent Messaging System
- Parent Teacher Conferences
- Open House
- Student HQ
- The Riverside Report (Monthly Newsletter from the Principal)
- Student Life Updates (Weekly Student Activity Update)
- The RMS Current: Last Week in Review (Weekly Instructional Update)
- School Improvement Council Meetings

Please note that Student HQ is an online system created by our principal. While you will see her email attached to the notification, you can determine who sent the message by reading the teacher's name at the bottom of the message. Multiple people such as your student's school counselor, assistant

principal, and/or instructional coach are automatically copied on these emails so that we can take a team approach to helping our students. Please see the fictional example below for the student, Colton Hoover. While it looks as if the email is from Dr. Roach, the email has been sent by Mr. Adams using the Student HQ system. Since this is an academic concern, the student's school counselor, assistant principal, and instructional coach are all automatically copied by the system. As the parent or legal guardian receiving this message, you can choose to either reply directly to the teacher or to reply to all of the faculty members that are copied.



Academic Concern for Colton Hoover Inbox ×

jroach@anderson4.org 3:29 PM (0 minutes ago)
to jenniferleeannroach, me, dhuggins, kbrady, jrae

Dear Parent or Guardian,

This email is a notification that I am concerned about Colton's academic progress in Math class.

The reason for my concern is Colton is missing an assignment or project that is a major grade.

Colton has not turned in his test corrections for his math test. Please remind him to come to Dine-In this week to take care of that. Currently, his grade is a 63% for the third nine weeks.

Please support us by discussing this concern about academic progress with your student and reviewing our expectations. Let me know if there is anything that I can do to help.

Sincerely,

Mr. Adams

We kindly request that parents follow the chain of command. For concerns about a classroom issue, please reach out to the teacher first. Open communication between teachers, parents, and students can usually solve any simple misunderstandings or concerns. Faculty members are encouraged to respond to emails and telephone calls from both students and parents within 24 business hours excluding weekends and holidays. If you do not get a response to an email within that time frame or if you still need assistance after that conversation, please reach out to the following:

- Discipline Concerns - Grade Level Assistant Principal
- Academic Concerns - Instructional Coach
- Social Concerns - School Counselors

We invite all parents to visit our school and to volunteer when you are able to do so. You may make appointments for conferences with teachers, counselors, or administrators by calling the front office.

Please note that profanity toward faculty and staff will not be permitted. If profanity occurs during a conference or telephone call, you will be asked to reschedule your phone call or conference for a later date.

GRADES *(Refer to District Policies IKA, IJNDAA, and IKD-R)*

The following numerical-letter grading system is used in Anderson School District 4:

A = 90 – 100	B = 80 – 89	C = 70 – 79
D = 60 – 69	F = 0 – 59	P = Participation

At Riverside, we allow students to make up major assignments within the same nine weeks up until a final deadline which is typically about a week before the end of the quarter. Students must complete

remediation assigned by the teacher before a retake. Benchmarks including SC Ready Practice Tests and Student Learning Objective (SLO) Assessments are excluded from retakes. This deadline usually coincides with our Block Party. The published date for the end of a quarter signifies a deadline for teachers to have all grading done, not a deadline for students to have work turned in. For minor grades, teachers have the autonomy to create their own late work policies. These policies are communicated on each teacher's Course Information Overview (Long Range Plan) and can be found on their Schoology pages.

SC READY PRACTICE TESTS

Riverside students will take benchmarks in 6th Grade Science, 6th-8th Grade Math, and 6th-8th Grade ELA up to two times per year called SC Ready Practice Tests in order to prepare students for the stamina needed for their state assessment. These tests are considered exams in that they are cumulative reviews of material that has been studied in the course so far. They are called SC Ready Practice Tests because the test questions are modeled after released items for our state assessment. For the English test, our teachers will create a test that includes cold-read passages, requiring students to apply their skills to new texts—an essential component of standardized assessments. For the math test, our teachers will create test questions similar to what students will be expected to solve on SC Ready, which may also involve a calculator portion and a no-calculator portion.

The mission of Anderson School District 4 is to prepare every student for their next step. Grading these tests not only helps students take them seriously but also prepares them for high school where exams will be graded and counted as 10% of the final grade and where End-of-Course (EOC) exams will count as 20% of their overall grade in certain courses. Essentially, they help hold students accountable for a semester of learning.

Since these tests are our benchmark exams, they are excluded from our retake policy. Students will receive a major grade for the exam. For our on-grade level courses, teachers will follow the grading scale below. In our accelerated classes, each student's actual score will be recorded as their grade. Please allow on-grade level teachers at least one week from the date of the test to update grades using the grading scale below.

On Grade Level Grading Scale:

- 90-100 (Exceeds Expectations): Recorded as actual score
- 80-89 (Exceeds Expectations): Recorded as 90
- 70-79 (Meets Expectations): Recorded as 80
- 60-69 (Meets Expectations): Recorded as 70
- 40-59 (Approaches Expectations): Recorded as 60
- 0-39 (Does Not Meet Expectations): Recorded as 50

Students should prepare for this test like any other exam: by reviewing notes from the units studied so far this year, by reviewing missed items on old assessments, and by listening in class during the exam

review. Finally, use this link to find test items from our state department of education for additional practice. For more information about how to prepare, reach out to your Math and ELA teachers.

i-READY MYPATH EXPECTATIONS

To help your student stay on track with i-Ready MyPath, please remind them to regularly check their progress in both Math and ELA by clicking here to view a short how-to video. Each week, Anderson School District 4 middle school students are expected to complete **45 minutes in math and 45 minutes in ELA**, with time built into the school day during **Math Lab and ELA Elevation classes alongside grade-level instruction**. The expectation for these courses is that students pass two lessons per week in each subject. If lessons are not passed during the week—even on a short week—students should use additional time after finishing classwork, during downtime (such as before Morning Meeting), or at home. Any student who has not met their weekly requirement of two passed lessons and/or 45 minutes in each subject by the end of the school day on Thursday, will have a final opportunity to catch up during **Dine-In**, but our goal is for all students to stay on track and enjoy **Fun Friday Recess**.

MATH LAB AND ELA ELEVATION

At Riverside, we believe every student can grow. Math Lab is where we strengthen our problem-solving skills. ELA Elevation is where we elevate our reading, writing, and thinking. These classes meet every other day on an A/B-day schedule and are about building confidence, mastering grade-level standards, and preparing for your next step.

What We Do Each Week

- Step 1: Personalized Learning (Required – Not Graded)
    - Complete two passed lessons of i-Ready Math myPath and two passed lessons of i-Ready Reading myPath each week.
    - This is your personalized skill workout. We don't skip workouts—growth takes practice!
    - If minutes are not completed on the first day of class, you will attend Dine-In to finish your work.
    - If you have to attend Dine-In for failure to complete i-Ready myPath multiple times in a quarter, you may lose time at quarterly incentives.
- Step 2: Grade-Level Practice & Assignments
    - After myPath, we move into grade-level standards work in math and ELA. This work determines your class average. Teachers may assign i-Ready Standards Mastery assignments for areas of individual student weakness that will be counted as minor grades.

Grading:

- Minor Grades (40%) - An average of all assignments other than i-Ready myPath to include at least 4 minor grades
- Major Grade (60%) - Your score on the Math Lab / ELA Elevation Performance Checks #1 and #2

What Success Looks Like:

- Complete 2 passed lessons of myPath weekly in both subjects
- Keep your pass rate (mastery level) at 70% or higher
- Stay engaged and focused
- Complete assignments
- Ask questions
- Take feedback seriously
- Keep growing

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Academic integrity is an essential concept that you should understand as a Riverside Middle School student. It means being honest, fair, and responsible in your academic work. When you have academic integrity, you follow specific rules and principles to ensure you do your schoolwork correctly. Here are some key points to help you understand academic integrity:

- **Original Work:** Academic integrity means doing your work to the best of your abilities. It's important to avoid copying or plagiarizing other people's work without giving them credit. Plagiarism is like taking someone else's ideas or words and pretending they are your own. So, always make sure to use your own words and give credit to the sources you use.
- **Citing Sources:** When you use information or ideas from books, articles, websites, or any other sources, it's essential to give credit to the original author or creator. This is called citing sources. You can do this by mentioning the author's name, the work's title, and where you found it. Citing sources shows that you respect other people's work and ideas.
- **Proper Collaboration:** Collaboration is when you work on projects or assignments with others. While it's great to work with classmates and learn from each other, knowing when collaboration is allowed and when it's not is essential. Sometimes, you may need to complete assignments independently to show your understanding. Be sure to follow your teacher's guidelines and ask for permission to collaborate.
- **Honesty in Assessments:** When you take tests, quizzes, or exams, it's crucial to be honest and do your work. Cheating is when you use unauthorized materials, such as notes or electronic devices, or receive help from others when it's not allowed. Cheating doesn't help you learn and can lead to severe consequences.
- **Using Technology Responsibly:** Technology, including AI systems like ChatGPT, can be helpful for learning. However, it's essential to use them responsibly. If you use an AI system, make sure you understand the information it provides and use it to enhance your learning rather than replace your thinking and understanding. Always give credit to AI-generated content if you use it in your work.

Remember, academic integrity is about honesty, respecting others' work, and taking pride in your abilities. It helps you develop important skills and prepares you for future academic and professional success. Ask your teacher for guidance if you are unsure about what's allowed or have questions about academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

a. Copying or plagiarizing someone else's work, ideas, or words without proper attribution.
b. Cheating on tests, quizzes, or assignments using unauthorized materials, information, or assistance.
c. Sharing answers or allowing others to copy my work during assessments or assignments.
d. Fabricating or inventing information, data, or sources to deceive teachers or gain an unfair advantage.
e. Impersonating another student or allowing someone else to complete my work on my behalf.
f. Engaging in any other form of academic dishonesty as defined by Riverside Middle School.

Engaging in academic dishonesty will result in the following disciplinary actions:

1. 1st offense - parent notification, verbal warning, and the opportunity to re-do the assignment during Dine-In
2. 2nd offense - parent notification, a zero on the test or assignment, and 1 day of ISS to accumulate by offense

MAKE UP WORK DUE TO ABSENCE

Each student is responsible for seeing that make-up work is completed. Until missed work is made up, teachers will enter a 0, with a comment of "missing." The student and his/her team of teachers should work on appropriate due dates for the missed work. Once the missed work is made up, the 0 is updated with the true grade, as entered by the teacher.

REPORT CARDS

We communicate student progress regularly. All fees must be paid before final report cards are issued. Report cards are emailed home at the end of each nine weeks period and a midterm progress report is emailed home at the middle of each nine-weeks. Parents are encouraged to check Schoology for live classroom grades. Report cards will be emailed home. To obtain a hard copy, please stop by the main office.

BINDERS AND STUDENT AGENDA PAGES

Riverside is an AVID school, and one of our goals is to teach students the organizational skills necessary to be successful in college and/or careers. All students will need a 2" 3-ring binder, eight tabbed dividers, and a pencil pouch that clips into the binder. Students will participate in binder checks throughout the year. If you cannot afford to purchase a binder and need assistance, please call the counseling office. All students will be provided with agenda pages such as a monthly calendar and goal-setting sheets. All students must keep their binder with them at school every day.

HOMEWORK

Homework can take the form of reinforcement of the class lesson, preparation for new learning, or an enrichment activity. Homework does not necessarily have to be a written assignment. The teacher will assign homework when necessary to meet the above criteria. Homework will be considered in the evaluation process as part of each quarterly grade. At the beginning of each year or semester, each teacher will explain their grading procedures regarding homework to students. **When a student is absent, it is the student's responsibility to make up missed assignments including homework.** If a

parent is unsure of an assignment, please check the teacher's Schoology page, your child's binder and agenda pages, or reach out to the teacher by email.

STUDENT RECESS & DINE-IN

The bell schedule at Riverside Middle School allows students thirty minutes per day for lunch/recess. During this time, we also afford our students the privilege of an outdoor recess. Our first priority is student safety. As a result, the administration reserves the right to cancel recess for individuals or the entire grade-level if student behavior does not align with our expectations. For example, in the event of a fight at recess, the grade level may lose recess for a period of time. Dine-In is an intervention held during lunch where students are able to get extra help from content teachers during a working lunch period. If a student is assigned Dine-In, attendance is mandatory and takes precedence over recess.

AWARDS AND INCENTIVE PROGRAMS

RMS has a variety of motivational and reward programs to encourage students to do their best. Each teacher has built-in opportunities to earn rewards, but in middle school, we strive for students to begin developing intrinsic motivation. This is the personal satisfaction felt with an internal drive and desire to do their best with or without external rewards.

Riverside Middle School offers a variety of free and paid events throughout the year. Throughout the year, our staff challenges students, classes, and grade levels and offers students opportunities to earn rewards such as extra recess, pizza parties, dance parties, block parties, and even field trip opportunities.

Many schoolwide experiences—such as block parties, Honor Roll celebrations, the Orange Crush Testing Incentive, Field Day, Ag & Arts Day, our Double Exceeds Field Trip, our All A Field Trip, and our Career Fair—are completely free for students. Some events include a small admission fee because they are approved fundraisers that directly support student programs or experiences. For example, The Masked Singer, is a fundraiser for our chorus program, and our Dodgeball Tournaments are fundraisers for our physical education program. For any event with a cost, financial assistance is always available and handled confidentially; students or families may speak with a school counselor or any trusted adult on campus. We work proactively to ensure that no student is ever excluded due to financial need.

Many school incentives are earned based on meeting expectations related to academics, behavior, and attendance. For incentives tied to attendance or participation, students must be present at school to qualify. Excused absences, including medical absences, do not count toward attendance-based incentive eligibility. This practice aligns with the definitions used by the South Carolina Department of Education regarding perfect attendance and chronic absenteeism. Under state guidelines, a student is considered chronically absent after missing 10% of enrolled school days, regardless of whether the absences are excused or unexcused.

For quarterly Block Parties, students who are not eligible due to failing grades, missing assignments, or other unmet expectations will be assigned to a supervised study hall or intervention session to complete academic work and receive support. Because this time is intended to help students improve academically, parents are strongly encouraged not to sign students out during Block Parties.

Academic Awards
Students are recognized for academic achievement once per semester for the following awards. Please note the specific requirements for Distinguished A/B and Distinguished all A Honor Roll.

- **Distinguished All A Honor Roll:** These students have made a 90 or above in all their core classes and exploratory classes for Quarters 1, 2, and 3.
- **Distinguished A/B Honor Roll:** These students have made an 80 or above in all their core classes and exploratory classes for Quarters 1, 2, and 3. Students who maintain an A-B average are also invited to join the National Junior Beta Club in 7th Grade.
- **Most Improved:** These students are recognized for hard work and overall improvement academically, behaviorally, or both.
- **i-Ready Awards**: These awards will be based on achievement and growth on the i-Ready diagnostic.
- **Highest Average Award:** This award is given each semester to the student who has the overall highest average in each academic class. In the case of a tie, scores on the SC Ready and/or i-Ready will be used to break the tie.

Field Trips

We believe that extracurricular activities are an important part of the middle school experience, and we want our students to have many opportunities to participate. At the same time, we are committed to ensuring that students remain successful academically. Our expectation is that students must be in good academic standing and maintain appropriate attendance in order to attend a field trip. We will continue to work with students to provide the support they need to meet these expectations.

Teachers who are trip planners have the discretion to establish specific expectations for participation, including academic, attendance, and behavior requirements. These expectations will be clearly communicated in course syllabi and/or field trip information packets. All teachers have the right to request administrative approval to restrict a student's participation in a field trip due to academic, attendance, or behavioral concerns.

For school-wide, grade-level field trips, the following guidelines will apply:

- **6th Grade (Day Trip):** Students may not attend if they have accumulated five (5) or more days of ISS, any OSS, or if they have been referred to the Anderson County Department of Education for truancy.
- **7th Grade (Overnight Trip) and 8th Grade (Two-Night Trip):** Students may not attend if they have accumulated three (3) or more days of ISS, any OSS, or if they have been referred to the Anderson County Department of Education for truancy.

Additionally, if a student demonstrates inappropriate behavior during a grade-level field trip, administration reserves the right to revoke that student's privilege to attend the trip the following school year.

Please note that payments for grade-level field trips are distributed to vendors such as hotels, transportation companies, and venues once they are received. As a result, if a student becomes ineligible due to behavior or disciplinary consequences, a refund is not guaranteed unless another student is able to fill the spot and submit payment.

If an assignment was given prior to the field trip and is due on the day of departure, students are expected to either submit the work in advance or turn it in on the day they return to school. For assignments introduced during the field trip, students will have five school days upon their return to complete and submit all coursework. After that five-day window, minor assignments will no longer be accepted, and major assignments will be accepted only with a late penalty.

PROMOTION AND RETENTION *(Refer to District Policies IKE and IKE-R issued April 2021)*

Anderson School District 4 affirms academic excellence for students. The policy for Promotion, Retention, and Acceleration of Students describes the standards our students must meet in order to maintain academic excellence and to be considered for promotion from one grade to the next. The policy will be applicable to all students who are in the regular school program. Students functioning in special education programs will be governed by their Individualized Educational Programs (IEPs). The district will administer this policy fairly, equitably, and consistently in schools.

Students in grades 6-8 will be promoted based on the following criteria:

- Mastery of standards at a level determined by the Education Oversight Committee and the State Board of Education.
- Teacher team and administrative recommendations based on the final grade in each subject.
- Principal recommendation.

Students in grades 6-8 may be retained based on the following criteria:

- Teacher team and administrative recommendations based on the final grade in each subject.
- Failure to complete summer school.
- Absences totaling more than 10 days during the school year.

TEXTBOOKS and CHROMEBOOKS

Textbooks are the responsibility of the students. They are issued for the use of students and are the property of Anderson 4 and the State Department of Education. Students will be required to pay for lost or damaged books before final report cards are issued. A replacement book will not be issued for a lost book during the school year until payment for the lost book has been received. Chromebooks are available to every student, and students are expected to take care of them. Any loss of or damage to the Chromebook is the financial responsibility of the student and parent.

CURRICULUM

Any questions concerning curriculum and instruction may be directed to the classroom teacher first. If you need assistance beyond that conversation, please contact our Instructional Coach.

MEASURING GROWTH IN LEARNING

This year, our district will be using i-Ready as the state-approved diagnostic assessment for all middle school students. This online tool provides valuable insight into each student's strengths and areas for growth in reading and math, allowing teachers to personalize instruction. Families will receive progress reports after each testing window to help support learning at home. If you have questions regarding testing, please contact our Instructional Coach.

MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORTS

Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) is a process that schools use to help students who are not making sufficient progress toward their learning goals. MTSS supports academic growth and achievement, but it also supports many other areas such as behavior. The Anderson School District 4

model is a three-tiered approach of engaging all learners with every opportunity to achieve academic success through

- Early intervention
- Progress monitoring
- Increasingly intensive, research-based instructional interventions

GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAM

The gifted education program serves students beginning in third grade. The following description of the identification process reflects the South Carolina definition of gifted and talented and is in keeping with the *National Excellence Report* (1995) which states:

> *Children and youth with outstanding talent or who show the potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared with others of their age, experience, or environment. They exhibit high performance capability in intellectual, creative, and/or artistic areas, possess an unusual leadership capacity, or excel in specific academic fields. Outstanding academic achievement is present in children and youth from all cultural groups, across all economic strata, and in all areas of human endeavor.*

Identification of Gifted and Talented Students

The purpose of the identification process is (1) to find students who display characteristics of the gifted and talented (i.e., ability or potential for high performance in academic areas); (2) to assess the aptitudes, attributes, and behaviors of each student; (3) to evaluate each student for the purpose of placement; and (4) to provide academic programs and services to meet their needs. *Students do not have to re-qualify each grade-level promotion.*

Referrals to the Gifted and Talented

Gifted and talented students may be found within any racial, ethnic, or socio-economic group; within any nationality; within both genders; and within populations with disabilities.

Referrals may be made by administrators, parents, teachers, and by students to the Anderson School District 4 Gifted and Talented Program. Anyone wishing to make a referral to the program should contact the school counselor to obtain a referral form.

Gifted and Talented Services

Students who are academically gifted and have GT Reading or GT Math status based on SC criteria will be served through the special class model, in a self-contained gifted and talented class organized around the academic discipline of Science. Gifted and Talented Science delivers services to identified students through a curriculum accelerated to meet their needs and tailored to their areas of giftedness. In addition, GT students are eligible to take accelerated courses in both ELA and Math based on readiness indicators such as scores on i-Ready and SC Ready.

Students who are artistically gifted and have GT Art or GT Music status will be served through both in class instruction and through the extension model, in an independent study program that supplements their regular services. GT Art and GT Music may have optional meetings after school.

STANDARDIZED TESTING

Middle school students participate in all district and statewide testing programs including i-Ready and SC Ready for ELA and Math.

HIGH SCHOOL CREDIT BEARING CLASSES

Riverside offers the following courses for students to earn high school credit: Honors Geometry with Statistics, Honors English 1, and Fundamentals of Computing. Grades for these classes count towards the student's high school GPA. These grades may be replaced only by retaking the same course at the same level the following year. For example, if a student receives a low grade in Honors Geometry in 8th grade but then retakes Geometry at the College Prep level instead of at the Honors level in 9th grade, both grades will remain on the high school transcript. A student who drops a high school credit class after 10 days of enrollment in the class will receive a withdrawn fail on their transcript. A student may not receive credit if he or she has more than 10 unexcused absences.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

At Riverside Middle School, various extracurricular activities are offered. These activities are geared toward student success and based on students' interests.

MEDIA CENTER

The library/media center is open each day at 8:20 am and remains open until 3:15 pm each afternoon. Students may check out up to two books at a time for 10 school days. Books may be renewed if needed. Fees will be charged for lost or damaged books and Chromebooks.

ATHLETICS

Riverside Middle School offers organized sports teams under the guidelines of the South Carolina High School League, the governing body of all public high school sports in the state. Any seventh and eighth grader who was academically promoted to their current grade and will not be 15 years of age before July 1 is eligible to try out. We offer football, boys basketball, girls basketball, volleyball, and cheerleading. Specific information will be provided during the school year and before tryouts are held. <u>All students must have a physical and a copy of the front and back of their birth certificate in order to try out.</u>

In conjunction with Pendleton High School, any sport not offered at Riverside Middle and offered at the high school, will be open to seventh and eighth graders. These sports include track, soccer, baseball, softball, cross country, wrestling, golf, and swim. The expectation is that RMS students participate in athletic programs offered at the middle school.

The approved method of communication between student athletes and coaches in Anderson School District 4 is through Rooms or Sports U. Please contact the coach for help getting your account set up.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

SCHOOL COUNSELING

Riverside Middle School will focus on the well-being of the whole child by helping them to develop academically, socially, and emotionally. The School Counseling Department is available to serve both students and parents through a variety of services such as individual and group counseling, serving as a liaison between students, parents, teachers and administrators, career exploration assessments, Individual Graduation Plans, scheduling and placement, orientation of new students, student records, consulting with outside agencies to assist families in need, and awards and incentive programs.

Several other services are made available through collaboration of Anderson School District 4 and various agencies in Anderson County.

- Mental Health Counseling - school-based mental health services are available through the SC Department of Mental Health or Anderson County Board of Education. Contact the counseling office for information on referrals.
- Reallyville - is a character development and anti-bullying curriculum used to create a safe and positive learning environment for all students.

If you have questions or concerns about these school counseling services, please contact one of our school counselors.

HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION

Homebound instruction may be provided for those students who, because of illness or accident, pregnancy, or congenital defect, cannot, even with the aid of transportation, attend class at school.

For obtaining homebound instruction, the procedure is as follows:

- Please notify your child's counselor to obtain the appropriate forms.
- Obtain proper signatures from both the physician and parent or legal guardian, and then return them to your child's counselor. The counselor will forward the forms to the District Office for review and possible approval.
- If approved, a certified teacher will be assigned to the homebound student. The teacher will give up to five hours of instruction per week to the student. Scheduling is left up to the individual student and the homebound teacher. Failure to meet scheduled homebound appointments may result in termination of services.
- All homebound hours must be completed.

MULTI-LANGUAGE LEARNERS PROGRAM (MLP)

The goal of all services in the MLL program is to have students reach full English proficiency in the areas of speaking, listening, reading, and writing in both social and academic settings. These students are identified based on the Home Language Survey that parents and guardians complete during enrollment. The school will notify the MLL teacher within ten days of enrollment to help determine if a student may be eligible for services. For information on instructional support, or to request translation/interpreter services, contact the MLP teacher or district coordinator.

MCKINNEY-VENTO ACT

The McKinney-Vento Act provides services and support to students without a fixed, regular, or adequate night-time residence. Please contact the school counselor if your family lives in any of the following situations:

- In an emergency shelter, motel, vehicle, or campground;
- In an abandoned building, RV/camper, or other temporary housing;

- Doubled-up with friends or relatives due to the loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason;
- Awaiting foster care placement.

SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973:

Section 504 is a federal law that requires public schools to make adjustments so that students with certain disabilities can learn and remove barriers in the academic setting. To be eligible for services under Section 504, a student must have a recently documented condition that substantially limits one or more major life activities. **The 504 team makes eligibility determinations**. The team should include the student's parent or legal guardian, the student, a teacher, a school counselor, and other RMS school staff as appropriate. If the student is eligible, the team develops an individual accommodation plan. The individual accommodation plan explains how the student's needs will be met while at school and may include health services for the student during the school day if needed. To learn more about Section 504, contact your child's school counselor.

SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

Anderson School District 4 provides numerous special education programs for students identified in need of these services. If your child has been identified as needing special educational services or if you think your child may be in need of such services, please contact your principal or Dr. Laura Simmons, Director of Special Services, at 864-403-2000.

THERAPY DOG

Our school has been approved by the school board to have a certified therapy dog on campus as part of our support for student well-being. If you prefer that your child not have direct interaction with the therapy dog, please complete the Anderson 4 Therapy Dog Opt-Out form, available on our school website. This form is only required if you do not grant permission for your child to engage with the therapy dog.

BUS TRANSPORTATION

The Anderson School District 4 Transportation Department would like to welcome you and your child another great school year. We look forward to working with you to ensure that your child has a safe and problem-free bus ride to and from school. To reach this goal, our office, the bus drivers, each individual school, the student, and the student's family must all work together.

We also ask for your understanding that delays may occur that are beyond our control. In these cases, please know that your child's safety and well-being is our main concern and we will do everything possible to minimize any inconveniences.

STUDENT CONDUCT ON BUSES

Safety is and shall be the first priority for our Transportation Department. Student conduct on the school bus has a direct impact on safety. Safety requires the cooperation of students, parents and guardians, and school personnel.

Regular education transportation services are a privilege that have been extended to eligible students to support district educational objectives and student achievement. Unless otherwise provided by law, violation of a student bus conduct rule by any student shall be sufficient cause for the student to become ineligible for the privilege of transportation on a school bus. The district may impose additional consequences and discipline as deemed appropriate for the infraction. Because the school bus is an extension of school activity, students are expected to conduct themselves on school buses in a manner consistent with the district's student code of conduct (JICDA). All bus riders must fully cooperate with their bus drivers—observing all rules and district policies and conducting themselves properly at all times. Students are responsible for their conduct while riding a school bus so as to ensure safe transportation, respect for school personnel and property, and respect for other students.

The District requests that parents and guardians ensure that the student understands the importance of all bus rules and safety regulations. If a student's bus riding privileges are revoked due to failure to comply with the policies of the district, then the district charges the parent or legal guardian with providing the student with transportation to and from school each day in accordance with the South Carolina Compulsory School Attendance Laws, Section 59-65-10.

Parents or guardians of students who require special assistance and/or of students in first grade and under are required to be present at the bus stop or visible to the driver of the school bus. It is also the parent or legal guardian's responsibility to be home when these students arrive in the afternoon. If the parent or legal guardian cannot be home, they are required to have another responsible adult meet the bus. If an adult is not visible to the bus driver, the child will be returned to a previously designated location. If this should become a recurring problem, bus riding privileges for the student may be revoked.

School bus drivers have the important responsibility for supervision of students on the bus. The driver may stop the bus at any time misbehavior or threatened misbehavior presents a hazard to safe driving. It is the responsibility of the driver to report to school principals or their designees the name of any students whose conduct interferes with safe driving or who act disruptively by submitting the school bus incident report within one day of the incident. Drivers are encouraged to make initial contact with parents or guardians at the onset of misbehavior.

Should there be a reported incident of student misconduct, your school principal or his/her designee will investigate as authorized by state law, regulation, and district policy and will suspend or deny bus transportation when it has been determined by the principal or his/her designee that a student’s conduct is persistently or flagrantly detrimental to safety and order on buses. Your child’s principal or his/her designee will notify the parent or legal guardian of the action taken within two days of receiving the school bus incident report.

Additionally, no student will be removed from the bus without first contacting the parent or legal guardian except when the student’s presence on the bus constitutes imminent danger; however, in such a case, the student will be supervised by an employee of the school district until he/she is turned over to the custody of the parent or legal guardian or other governmental agency.

VIDEO CAMERAS ON BUSES

The board supports the use of video cameras on school buses used for transportation to and from school as well as for field trips, curricular, and extracurricular events. The district will use video cameras to monitor student behavior. The district may use videotapes as evidence in a student disciplinary proceeding. The videotapes are student records, subject to school district confidentiality, board policy, and administrative regulations.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to call John Chmelar, Director of Transportation, Safety, and Security at 864-403-2000.

BUS REMINDERS

Pick-up and Drop off Locations – It is the practice of Anderson School District 4 that all students are assigned to only one bus. Students must get on and off at their home bus stop or get on and off at a bus stop for his/her babysitter every day. We require at least a 24-hour notice to the transportation office on any change in transportation.
Bus Stops – All students are to use their assigned bus stops only. The driver cannot stop at places other than the designated stop.
Bus Schedules – Schedules are planned with sufficient time for students to load at each stop, but no time has been allocated for tardy students. We ask that you have your child at the bus stop 10 minutes prior to the scheduled pick-up time. Help the driver maintain his/her schedule by making sure your child is ready on time. If your child misses the bus, you must arrange transportation to school. Do not chase the bus or try to catch the bus at another stop.
Crossing in Front of the Bus – Students who must cross in front of the bus when loading or unloading must wait at the end of the bus crossing gate and out of the roadway for the driver to signal that it is safe to cross.
Parents are not permitted on school buses during regular route times. Field trips are the exception to this.
Bus Passenger Information Sheets – Sometime during the first week of school, your child will receive an information sheet from his/her driver. We are required by law to have this information in order for your child to ride the school bus. Please make sure that all contact information is correct and return the form promptly to the bus driver.
These items are not allowed on the school bus: Any item that will not fit in the student's lap, glass items, containers with liquid, animals, snakes, insects, chemicals, weapons, balloons, rubber bands, sharp objects such as scissors, pins or needles, tobacco products, lighters or matches, any item that is prohibited on school grounds.
These smaller band instruments will be allowed on the bus: flute, clarinet, alto sax, trumpet, and bells.

For complete policy, reference **EEAEC – STUDENT CONDUCT ON BUSES**.

STUDENT WELLNESS AND HEALTH

NUTRITIONAL SERVICES

Anderson School District 4 has contracted with Chartwells Dining Services to provide food service to all students. Chartwells provides monthly menus and nutritional information on our district website at **anderson4.nutrislice.com**. In addition, you are encouraged to visit the App Store or Google Play to download the free **Nutrislice app**.

All Anderson 4 students may eat breakfast and lunch for free this school year. There will be a la carte menu items (milk, chips, cookies, etc.) available at a cost.

Note: No breakfast is served when we are on a 2-hour delay.

Microwave/Refrigerator Use
Students do not have access to a refrigerator or microwave. If they bring their own lunch, they are encouraged to use an insulated lunchbox. Students who bring their lunches should not bring food items that need heating.

Energy Drinks
Students are not allowed to consume energy drinks while on campus or while on a school field trip. Only water is permitted inside of our classrooms.

Outside Food
Students are not allowed to have food delivered to school through delivery services such as Door Dash or Uber Eats. If a parent drops off food from a restaurant, the student will be required to eat it in the main office before returning to our lunch and recess areas.

Student Meals
Breakfast and lunch are free for all students this year.

Forgotten Lunches
Riverside provides all students with access to a free and nutritious breakfast and lunch each day, including accommodations for dietary restrictions and special food needs. Parents may bring forgotten lunches to the front office; however, delivery of lunches to students during the school day is a courtesy and cannot be guaranteed. Students are encouraged to advocate for themselves by checking with a teacher or the front office if they believe an item has been dropped off for them.

HEALTH/MEDICATION

At times, health issues and needs require a medication that must be given during the school day. Please ask your doctor what hours medication could be given at home, so it will not be necessary to bring the medicine to school. If it does become necessary for a student to take medication at school, the following guidelines must be followed:

1. No medication, prescription or non-prescription, is to be brought to school by the student. **No medication is to be transported on school buses.** Parents must bring the medication to the school office and fill out the medication permission form. Our school will assist parents with this process.
2. Students who use an inhaler must have a signed permission form in the school office.
3. Medication will be given only upon written permission on the school's medication form by the parent/guardian. All medications must be left in the school office and administered by school personnel, including inhalers.

4. All medication must be in its original container. Prescription medication must be in the container provided by the pharmacy or doctor with the name of the medication, student's name, current date, and directions for giving the medication. It should also include the prescriber's name and the pharmacy's name and address. If the directions for the prescribed dosage do change, a doctor's statement is required regarding the new dosage.
5. For students requiring medication on a long-term basis or for more than three weeks' time, parents may supply the school with no more than a month's supply at a time.
6. For students requiring medication on a short-term basis, such as antibiotics and cold medications, parents are strongly encouraged to arrange a schedule for giving the medication before school and immediately upon the child's arrival home from school. This will prevent your child from having to leave class to take medication.

Violation of this policy may result in ISS or OSS.
Please understand that this policy on dispensing medication is part of our continuing effort to provide a safe, secure learning environment for all students. If you have specific questions or concerns, please call our school nurse.

For administrative rule, reference **JLCD-R – ASSISTING STUDENTS WITH MEDICINES** under The board Policies section at the end of this handbook.

SCHOOL INSURANCE

School insurance will be available to all students for a nominal fee through a private carrier. Information on insurance is sent home with students at the beginning of each school year. It is optional; however, families who do not have other accident insurance are encouraged to purchase it. Parents/guardians of Riverside students will be required to complete a physician's assignment form which will be filed in the main office. If a student is injured and has school insurance, he/she should report the accident to the main office immediately. School insurance may or may not cover all medical expenses.

STUDENT IMMUNIZATION CERTIFICATE

Students currently enrolled in Anderson School District 4 are required to have on file an up-to-date South Carolina Certificate of Immunization, including the required Tdap for all 7th graders, or a Certificate of Medical examination. Schedules will not be released to students who have not shown proof of Tdap and enrollment will be delayed. Students transferring to Anderson School District 4 from another district or state are required to provide a current SC Certificate of Immunization within 30 days of enrollment. Immunizations are handled through the school nurse's office. If you have questions concerning immunization requirements, you may visit http://www.scdhec.gov/Health/Vaccinations/VaccinesNeededforSchoolAdmission/ or contact the school nurse at 864-403-2200. A student who fails to provide the appropriate certificate will be excluded from school until the appropriate certificate is presented.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

School Resource Officer

Anderson School District 4 provides a number of security measures to ensure the safety of students. The School Resource Officer (SRO) provides additional support for the Riverside Middle School campus.

Visitor Management System

In the interest of keeping our children safe and improving service, Anderson School District 4 has implemented a Visitor Management System (VMS). This system enables schools to produce visitor badges, monitor volunteer hours, and electronically check all visitors against registered sexual offender databases. Our overall goal with this system is to increase the safety for students and staff at our schools.

All parents/guardians and volunteers attempting to gain access to the school/facility will present one of the following: a valid Driver's License from any state, an official state photo identification card from any state, U.S. Passport, an active military identification card, or a Mexican Consulate card for scanning. The visitor's identification will be scanned and a one-time badge with the visitor's destination will be issued. At the conclusion of each visit, all parents/guardians and volunteers will need to return to the front office to check-out and return their badge.

VMS also gives Anderson School District 4 a database to use along with our student database in case of any emergency that might warrant the need to give Emergency Responders the list of who is (was) in the building. For instance, if a tornado hit a building, using the databases, we would have information to share with the Anderson County Emergency Preparedness Office.

Safety of our students is our highest priority. If you have any questions regarding the VMS, please contact Mr. Scott Brock at 864-403-2000.

Drug Prevention

Anderson School District 4 is committed to keeping all students and employees safe and drug-free. We have added air locks to ensure visitors are directed to the front office for visitor check-in, updated emergency preparedness plans, increased camera presence in all schools, as well as provided staff training to encourage appropriate adult responses. Our efforts will continue, as the safety and security are about multiple layers of safeguards.

A drug prevention program has been designed to keep school premises free of controlled substances and has been implemented at Riverside Middle School and Pendleton High School. Through a partnership between Anderson School District 4 and the Anderson County Sheriff's Office, a dog trained to detect drugs will periodically visit the schools throughout the school year. Per board policy JIH (Searches, Student Interrogations and Arrests), the dog will be brought through the hallways, bathrooms, classrooms, common areas, lockers, locker rooms and automobiles parked on the premises. The program is designed for the dog to sniff property only.

The administration will accompany the officer while on school grounds. Should a student with a controlled substance on his/her person come close to the dog, the animal will pick up the scent. This may be reason for further investigation. Those students found to be involved in bringing controlled substances to school will be disciplined according to district policies. Penalties will include suspension and the possibility of expulsion from school.

The goal with this initiative is not to "catch" kids but rather to send a powerful message that we will not accept the presence of drugs at our schools. Our ultimate intent is to maintain the integrity of the educational process and to keep students safe. Additionally, we are making a broad effort to reduce the disruptions and the dangers caused by drugs being present in our schools.

For complete policy, reference **JIH – SEARCHES, STUDENT INTERROGATIONS AND ARRESTS.**

BEHAVIOR & EXPECTATIONS

DISCIPLINE CODE

Students at Riverside are expected to act in accordance with our Bulldog Beliefs. These beliefs establish our basic framework for expected behavior. Discipline at RMS is not designed to only punish students. Instead, it centers on fostering a sense of individual responsibility within each student for their own education. We strive to ensure our learning environment is free of distractions and interference from individuals not operating within the established framework and guidelines laid out by school-based personnel for all students at Riverside Middle School.

CHECKS AND DETENTION SLIPS

Most disciplinary problems should be handled by the teacher, student, parent(s) and an administrator (when needed) in a calm and reasonable manner. RMS's discipline philosophy assumes that effective, consistent expectations (established and carried out through the Bulldog Beliefs) will lead to increased maturity and desirable behaviors on the part of all students. When behavior and actions do not align with the Bulldog Beliefs, consequences in the form of discipline are in order. Each teacher should both model and inform students of proper behavior within the school setting. If students do not act in accordance with this, then teachers will issue checks to students verbally and will document it in their grade level spreadsheet. The accumulation of these checks becomes a detention slip under our system at the following increments—6, 5, 4, and then every 3 subsequent checks. It is the student's responsibility to notify a parent or guardian if a check is received. Teachers will notify parents by either a phone call or Student HQ email when a student receives a detention slip. As students earn detention slips, consequences increase as follows:

- 1st Slip = 1 day of lunch detention
- 2nd Slip = 2 days of lunch detention
- 3rd Slip = 3 days of lunch detention & possible student/teacher conference
- 4th Slip = 5 days of lunch detention & required parent conference
- 5th Slip = 1 day of ISS
- 6th Slip = 2 days of ISS
- 7th Slip = 3 days of ISS
- 8th Slip = 5 days of ISS
- 9th Slip = 1 day of OSS
- 10th Slip = 2 days of OSS
- 11th Slip = Riverside Reset (15 Day In-House Alternative Placement)
- 12th Slip = 3 days of OSS & required Discipline Contract
- 13th Slip = 4 days of OSS & possible district alternative placement

Lunch Detention will be held in an assigned room determined by the Assistant Principal during the student's lunch period. They will have the opportunity to complete assigned work (such as reading articles, copying information from the dictionary, reflective journaling, etc.) assigned by the Assistant Principal and the teacher on duty for lunch detention.

In School Suspension (ISS) is the temporary removal of a student from his/her regular classes. The student will be isolated in an environment that does not allow interaction with other classmates during the day. Students will be required to do assigned work under the supervision of an in-school suspension supervisor. Students in ISS will also complete reflective journals and standards based packet assignments, in addition to classroom assignments. **Students with 5 or more days of ISS for the year will not be allowed to participate in field trips without principal approval. Students with 3 or more days of ISS for the year will not be allowed to participate in overnight field trips without principal approval.**

Out of School Suspension (OSS) is the temporary removal of a student from school. Administration will notify the parent/guardian, giving the reason for suspension. Additionally, a conference will be held with the parent to review behavior leading to suspension and expectations of the student upon their return to school. Students who are suspended lose school privileges which include dances, pep rallies, block parties, field day, talent show, non-instructional field trips, etc. for the rest of the nine weeks or 45 days. After 45 days, students may earn back privileges by adhering to conditions as determined by a meeting and contract with the principal, or his designee. There are no refunds for field trips if a student is given OSS. During OSS, the student will not be allowed on any district school grounds (including sporting events, and after school events) without expressed permission of the principal. **In addition, students with any OSS for the year will not be allowed to participate in field trips without principal approval.**

Riverside Reset is the temporary removal of a student from traditional classes for 15 days. Students will continue to complete coursework and/or assignments provided by the school. The goal of Riverside Reset is to intervene before alternative placement at an off-campus location is considered.

Parents may appeal disciplinary decisions to the principal. After an appeal to the principal, parents may appeal to Mr. Jeff Boozer, Director of Student Services, at the Anderson School District 4 Office 864-403-2000.

BULLYING PREVENTION

We have a comprehensive, school-wide approach to address bullying and create a safer, more positive school environment. Our program includes instruction through the Reallyville platform. If a student is being bullied, meeting the criteria of the definition below, they are encouraged to complete a written incident report with the assistant principal.

- When someone says or does something *unintentionally* hurtful and they do it once, that's RUDE.
- When someone says or does something *intentionally* hurtful and they do it once, that's MEAN.
- When someone says or does something *intentionally* hurtful and they *keep doing it* even when you tell them to stop or show them that you're upset, that's BULLYING. Bullying involves repetition and an imbalance of power.

Anti-Bullying Rules

1. We will not bully others.
2. We will try to help students who are bullied.
3. We will try to include students who are left out.
4. If we know that somebody is being bullied, we will tell an adult at school and an adult at home.

For complete policy, reference **JIFCAA – HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION OR BULLYING.**

DRESS CODE

Students are expected to dress for school success. Clothing, piercings, and hair color must not interfere with the educational process or the rights to education of others, undermine the authority of teachers, or jeopardize the safety of others. Exceptions may be made for Spirit Weeks, field day, and other student events and will be communicated by administration.

The following guidelines must be followed at Riverside Middle School:

- No blouses, dresses, or shirts which expose any areas of the stomach, chest, side, or back
- No bare midriffs or crop tops
- No pajamas
- No hats, hoods, bandanas, non-religious head coverings, or sunglasses (Headbands are permitted.)
- No tank tops or spaghetti straps
- No studded bracelets, studded necklaces, studded belts, handcuffs, or heavy chains or items that could be considered to be used as a weapon
- No visible undergarments
- No sheer or see-through clothing
- No clothing or accessory that displays inappropriate language or images or causes a school disruption (profanity or insinuation of profanity, sexual suggestion, alcohol, tobacco, drugs, ethnic slurs, gang-related imagery, etc.)
- No shorts, dresses, or skirts any shorter than mid-thigh
- No pants, jeans, shorts, and skirts should with holes or slits above mid-thigh
- No sagging pants
- No blankets, flags, or capes
- No bedroom shoes or slippers

Dress Code Violations

<u>Students who are not in adherence to our dress code will be given three options to resolve the issue:</u>

1. Correct the violation with alternate clothes brought from home.
2. Correct the violation with clothes or items given by the school (quantity may vary.)
3. If parents cannot bring a change of clothes or the student cannot or will not correct the violation, they may spend the day in ISS for holding (not considered a discipline referral).

Students will receive a detention slip and disciplinary consequence on the third and subsequent dress code violations.

The administration reserves the right to modify the dress code and to make final judgment on the appropriateness of student clothing, appearance, and/or display of symbols, messages, or statements on school grounds. The administration reserves the right to prohibit students from wearing articles of

clothing or displaying any symbols, messages, or statements which lead to or may foreseeably result in the disruption of or interference with the school environment.

CODE OF CONDUCT

All students are expected to follow the Anderson School District 4 Code of Conduct. For complete policy, reference AR JICDA-R – CODE OF CONDUCT.

CELL PHONES

Students should keep all personal electronic devices including smart watches powered off and stored in book bags and out of sight from the bell at 7:55 am until students are seated in their afternoon dismissal locations (gym for car riders and cafeteria for bus riders) at the end of the day. Wireless and/or bluetooth earbuds and headphones are not permitted on campus. Students may use wired headphones with Chromebooks for instructional purposes when permitted by the classroom teacher.

A student who is in violation of this policy is subject to the following penalties:

- **First Offense—**Confiscate and return to the parent; Sign a communication device contract
- **Second Offense—**Confiscate and return to the parent; 15 days lunch detention
- **Third Offense—**Confiscate and return to the parent; 1 day ISS
- **Fourth Offense—**Confiscate and return to the parent; 2 days ISS
- **Fifth Offense—**Confiscate and return to the parent; OSS or other consequences as determined by administration

When a student is in violation of RMS's cell phone policy the teacher will ask the student to turn off their phone. The teacher will confiscate the phone and turn it in to administration. It is the student's responsibility to notify their parent or guardian that their device has been taken at school and needs to be picked up. If a student refuses to turn in to a teacher, the teacher will call for an administrator. Refusal to turn in a phone to an administrator will result in out of school suspension for refusal to obey administration.

Communication devices will be allowed for field trips that extend beyond the school day, as approved by administration. The sponsor will determine the rules and regulations for its use. In these instances, the student must keep the device turned off and stored out of sight during normal school hours. Students may not use cell phones, or any devices, to take photos of others without their permission.

School personnel and/or the school district are not responsible for the loss or damage of any communication device/cell phone brought onto school property or for those that are confiscated.

During state testing, all electronic devices should be powered off and should not be in the student's possession. Any student who fails to follow this rule will have his/her test and testing materials confiscated and will be disciplined according to the school discipline code for failure to follow instructions, classroom disruption, and/or cell phone policy violation. Depending on the circumstances of the incident, the state may decide to invalidate the student's score.

For complete policy, reference JICJ-POSSESSION/USE OF PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES under the Board Policies section of the Parent/Student Handbook.

TOBACCO USE

The use or display of tobacco products, including lighters, dip, and e-cigarettes of any type is prohibited on school grounds at any time - during the school day or during any activity at school or school related after school hours, at night, or weekends. This includes all athletic facilities. Anderson 4 is committed to providing students, faculty, staff and visitors with a smoke- and tobacco-free environment. Per Board Policy ADC, smoking and the use of all tobacco products, the use of smokeless tobacco products, and the use of unregulated nicotine products (e.g., "e-cigarettes") are prohibited anywhere on school grounds, in the school buildings, on buses, or during any other time they are under the direct administrative jurisdiction of the school, whether on or off the school grounds. Violations of this policy by students or faculty and staff may result in disciplinary action.

HALL PASSES

Students are able to use the restroom during morning arrival, lunch/recess, and dismissal without a pass. Once the instructional day begins at 8:20 am, students will not be allowed in the halls without first creating a pass using our online program called SmartPass.

Students will have the ability to create up to three passes per day to use the restroom. Students will first ask the teacher to leave the room, create a pass to the correct restroom, wait until the computer tells them that there is space in their desired location, and then leave their Chromebook by the designated location in the classroom. If a student runs out of passes then they must create a pass to the nurse where they will be able to use the restroom and then get verbal permission from the teacher before leaving the classroom. If a student is gone longer than the time allowed on the pass, the teacher may require the student to make up those minutes during Dine-In not as a punishment but in order to make sure the student has not missed anything imperative.

Students will have unlimited passes to the nurse during the school day. If more are needed due to a medical situation or difficulty, please notify the school counselor. Teachers are not permitted to deny bathroom access during their class period, but they may request that students not leave during the direct instruction portion of the lesson which may vary but is typically the first 10-15 minutes of class. Students will not have access to restrooms during transitions between classes and should not create passes during the last 5 minutes of class.

ONLINE SAFETY

Based on the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) and Protecting Children in the 21st Century Act Revisions, the Anderson School District 4 Internet safety policy includes monitoring the online activities of minors. We also educate minors about cyberbullying and appropriate online behavior. Refer to policies and rules on pages 31-80.

We need parents as partners in educating students about online safety. Unfortunately, interactions with other individuals on social networking websites, cell phones, and/or chat rooms may become a disruption at school. In such cases, students may face disciplinary action. Please help monitor your child's online safety at home. Below are a few suggestions:

- Monitor your child's online and mobile activity. One way to do this is to keep the computer in a high traffic area of your home.
- Tell your child not to share passwords with anyone but you, the parent, to help avoid identity theft and cyberbullying.
- Obtain access to your child's social networking sites and monitor your child's friend list.

- Get to know how your child's social networking site works.
- Keep your operating system, web browser, and anti-virus software up-to-date.
- Conversation is the best way to educate your child about online safety. Initiate conversations with your child. Do not wait for them to come to you. Below are a few topics you may discuss with your child:
  - Anything posted to the Internet by your child may have consequences. "Once on the Internet…always on the Internet."
  - Personal information should be limited online. Set privacy settings to restrict who can access your child's profile.
  - Cyberbullying is a serious issue. Discuss what is considered bullying. If your child is ever bullied online, they should talk to you immediately.
  - Just because something is posted online does not make it true.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment of students by employees or other students is prohibited. Board policy specifies the definition of sexual harassment, prohibited behavior, prevention and corrective action. Any student who feels that he/she has been the object of sexual harassment is encouraged to file a complaint with the principal or the district superintendent.

For complete policy, reference **JIA – STUDENT SEXUAL DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT.**

VISITORS & VOLUNTEERS

VISITORS TO SCHOOL

Our door is always open to you, and we hope you will help us make the most use of our instructional time. Parental involvement is critical to a student's success. You may request to observe in your child's classroom or schedule a conference if warranted. However, to avoid visiting during a test or activity that a visitor's presence could prevent students from concentrating well for, please arrange a time and date with an administrator or the instructional coach. Once the observation is scheduled, please follow these guidelines when observing in classrooms. All visitors and observers must report to the main office to sign in and get a visitor's badge prior to entering our hallways.

1. Observations should be conducted as discreetly as possible. Please do not interrupt instruction. If you need to talk with the teacher, please do so by calling them or talking to the teacher at a previously agreed upon time. Please do not "take just a moment" of time when students are in the room.
2. Please note that your child may behave differently when a parent is in the classroom. Students often complete work or have better behavior when a personal visitor is present. Oftentimes, specific concerns will not be observed during a parent visit. On the other hand, some children behave as if they do not have to follow school rules when a parent is present.
3. Teachers may not greet you until an appropriate break in instruction. Please don't think the teacher is being rude, as teachers have been instructed to make every minute count and to guard instructional times! If appropriate, teachers will speak with you as time permits.
4. Board policy does not permit the use of tobacco products in or on school grounds.
5. Board policy also stipulates that students may not bring sisters, brothers, cousins, etc. to school with them.

6. In order to maintain an academic atmosphere and a safe environment for the students, the board will take all necessary steps to keep unauthorized visitors off school premises. The principals are empowered to take appropriate action against unauthorized persons who enter the building, grounds, or other school property. Such action will include the right to call in the police authorities and swear out warrants. The authority for such is Section 16-17-420 of the South Carolina Code of Laws.

For complete policy, reference **IJOC-R – VISITORS/VOLUNTEERS**.

BOARD POLICIES

All Anderson County Board policy can be found online on our webpage at https://v3.boardpolicyonline.com/b/anderson4

Please read each policy carefully, as they contain important information needed for you and your child. Any changes made to policies after this handbook is printed will be posted on our website under board policy.