

Parent and Student Handbook
2026 - 2027

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Bus Riders



Free bus transportation is provided for all students who live more than one and one-half miles from the school. Any questions concerning buses should be directed to Drew Sloan, the Director of Transportation, at 949-2361.

Parents of bus riders in K4 and K5 must be visible at the designated bus stop for students and must display the sign with their child's name and assigned number. K4 and K5 students may be returned to the school if a parent is not visible at the stop. Repeated occurrences may lead to the termination of bus transportation.

Welcome to River Ridge Elementary!

Dear River Ridge Families,

Welcome to a new school year at River Ridge Elementary! As I begin this journey with you, one thing is already clear, River Ridge is a special place. It is a school filled with caring educators, supportive families, and amazing students who bring energy, curiosity, and joy to our hallways every day. I feel fortunate to join a community with such a strong tradition of excellence and commitment to children.

The start of a new school year always brings a sense of excitement and possibility. It is a chance to build new relationships, create meaningful memories, and help every student discover just how much they can achieve. My goal is to ensure that every child who walks through our doors feels welcomed, valued, safe, and inspired to learn.

I firmly believe that our greatest successes happen when schools and families work together. Your partnership, support, and involvement make a tremendous difference in your child's education, and I look forward to getting to know each of you throughout the year. Together, we can create an environment where every student is encouraged to grow, take risks, celebrate successes, and learn from challenges.

As we move forward, I am excited about all that lies ahead for River Ridge. We will continue building on the strengths that make this school great while exploring new opportunities to help our students thrive. I cannot wait to see what we accomplish together.

Thank you for welcoming me into the River Ridge family. I am looking forward to a year filled with learning, laughter, growth, and success. Together, we will make this an incredible year for our students.

Warmly,

Lisa M. Dunagin
Principal
River Ridge Elementary School

River Ridge Elementary Mission, Vision, & Beliefs

Mission

Spartanburg District Five Schools prepares students to thrive in a global society by providing exceptional educational experiences in a safe, caring and inclusive environment.

Vision

To inspire students to discover their potential, pursue their passions, and shape their future

Beliefs

We believe:

- That every child matters
- In providing equitable, educational experiences
- In building positive relationships with all stakeholders
- In embracing diversity to create an inclusive environment
- In challenging our students to become engaged members of society
- Public education is the foundation of a thriving community and global society
- In providing a safe, caring and nurturing environment
- Educating every child is both a responsibility and a privilege
- That social and emotional well-being is as important as instruction
- In developing and enhancing student potential through purposeful and rigorous instruction
- In providing each student with authentic educational experiences to prepare them for college, career and life choices in an ever-changing global society
- In recruiting, hiring, empowering and retaining highly qualified staff
- In adapting to the ever-changing demands of society
- In the importance of stewardship of resources

Accreditation

River Ridge Elementary School is fully accredited by the South Carolina Department of Education and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

Professional Qualifications
Parents' Right to Inquire

As a parent of a student in District Five, you have the right to know the professional qualifications of the teachers and instructional assistants who instruct your child. Professional qualifications include

1) licensing criteria for the grade level/subject areas in which instruction is provided,
2) the baccalaureate degree major,
3) graduate certification or degree held and the field or discipline of the certification, and
4) the qualifications of teacher's assistants if they provide the child instructional services. A parent who wishes to inquire about the qualifications of his/her child's teacher or instructional assistant should make a written request to the school principal. The inquiry may address only the qualifications listed above.

River Ridge Elementary Faculty and Staff

Principal.....	Lisa Dunagin
Assistant Principal.....	Carrie Wilson
Assistant Principal …….……..	Bryan Cegelis
SRO.....	Officer Jason Kelly
Bookkeeper.....	Gabby Aura
Secretaries.....	Tammy Paradis and Gayelynn Ruedinger
School Nurse.....	Ann Marie Chmielewski
Custodians.....	Tonnie Collins, Pam Gaffney
Four-Year-Old Kindergarten.....	Laurie Cox, Teacher Betsy Call, Teacher Assistant
PCD ……	Tonya Neshan, Teacher Vickie West, Teacher Assistant Maiia Beling, Teacher Assistant
Kindergarten.....	Kelsey Mills, Teacher Ashley Maul, Teacher Assistant
	Jalyn Bates-Thompson, Teacher Autumn Gololb, Teacher Assistant
	Mollie Wheeler, Teacher Katie Wilber, Teacher Assistant
	Andrea Price, Teacher Alberta Rogers, Teacher Assistant
	Julie Harrington, Teacher Kaye Arnold, Teacher Assistant
	Chaffee Gore, Teacher MacKenzie Cruell, Teacher Assistant
First Grade.....	Mandy Edwards, Teacher Angie Wells, Teacher Jared Hembree, Teacher Leslie Acree, Teacher Shannon Judge Wheeler, Teacher Amber Ratkowski, Teacher
Second Grade.....	Rebecca Jalbert, Teacher Dianna Bembenek, Teacher Ashley Cloonan, Teacher Amanda Huss, Teacher Taylor Jenkins, Teacher Kelli Bradley, Teacher
Third Grade.....	Ellen Nardella, Teacher Allison Wilson, Teacher

	Katie Aleman, Teacher Megan Frech, Teacher Kelly Jeter, Teacher TBD, Teacher
Fourth Grade.....	Ashley Bailey, Teacher Hannah Green, Teacher Sam Powers, Teacher Lisa Cobb, Teacher John Jackson, Teacher Diana Sheriff, Teacher Stephanie Walker, Teacher
Fifth Grade……..	Colleen Fitzgerald, Teacher Jamie Kehrwald, Teacher Jane E. Shetley, Teacher Whitney Mabry, Teacher Janine Dunlap, Teacher Evie Relyea, Teacher Christine Kaplon, Teacher
Special Education.....	Anna Taylor, K-2 Special Ed. Teacher Maddison Childers, Teacher Assistant Marjorie Ramos, Teacher Assistant Megan Cleveland, 3-5 Special Ed. Teacher Kimberly Berg, Teacher Assistant Crystal Short, Teacher Assistant Jill Geary, Resource Teacher Julie McSwain, Teacher Assistant Hillary Brock, Resource Teacher Kayla Millot, Teacher Assistant Sami Singleton, Resource Teacher Karen Puckett, Teacher Assistant Kaci Holston, Autism Support Mikki Lewis, Special Ed. Assistant Johnna Lancaster, Special Ed. Assistant
Art Teacher.....	Lorie Goode, Mollie Andrews (.5)
ML.....	Andrea Mata
Hall Assistants.....	Ruta Dzyadyk, Mary Pearson, Wanda Harris
Math Coach.....	Sharon Laye
Math Interventionist.....	Ava Cogdill
Media Specialist	Molly Barker Brandi Turner, Library Assistant
Music Teacher.....	Suzzane Hughes, Ashley Rhoden (.5)
Project Lead The Way……	Julie Scott
PE Teachers.....	Matus Ceselka and Tre' Confer
Reading Interventionists.....	Tracy Tucker, Jennifer Harrison, Christy Emerson (.5)
Literacy Coach……	Brook Loggins

School Counselor.....	Pam DeCaprio and Heather Watkins
School Psychologist.....	Lauren Holder
Speech Therapists.....	Jennifer Godwin and Katie Johnson

Volunteers

Working at a school can be exciting and fun. Your volunteer help can meet the needs of children in many ways. The list below indicates some of the areas in which volunteers may serve at our school. Paperwork must be completed and volunteers must be approved prior to working with children.

Festivals - Bulletin Boards - Class Parties - Room Parents - Media Center - Reading Tutors - Mentors - Field Trips- Picture Day - PTO Events

School Improvement Council

The School Improvement Council (SIC) is a committee of elected and appointed parents, teachers, and community members who set goals and devise strategies to improve the school. The Council meets at least four times a year to discuss school and community concerns and make recommendations to the principal.

Student Organizations

River Ridge Elementary believes in developing and promoting the leadership abilities of our students. Our school offers a variety of activities and clubs for students to participate in.

Parent Teacher Organization

River Ridge Elementary will have an active PTO with meetings being held throughout the year. Notifications of PTO-sponsored activities will be sent by students and/or publicized in newsletters, on the website, and in the school calendar.

School Visitation

All visitors must sign in and out using our electronic check-in system. **All visitors entering the school will be asked to present their driver's licenses.** Visitors wanting to meet with teachers or administrators should call the teacher or administrator to schedule in advance. This policy is a safety precaution for the student's welfare. Please allow time to check in for events.

School Schedule

7:00-7:25 The cafeteria serves breakfast.
Students not eating breakfast will be supervised.
7:30 Classes begin. Children should be in their seats, ready to learn.
2:15 Students are dismissed.

Early Arrivals

The school cafeteria opens at 7:00 AM. Students may arrive at school any time after 7:00 AM. Students will be supervised in meeting rooms/hallways or in the cafeteria.

Tardiness

The school day begins promptly at 7:30. To avoid major traffic, parents should drop off by 7:25. Students should be in the classroom and ready to begin work at this time. When students come to school late, they lose valuable time, interrupt the classroom, and miss important explanations of the work to be done. After a student has been tardy 15 times, a truancy intervention conference with the administration will be required. At 20 tardies, a referral to truancy court will be made. Punctuality is a quality of good citizenship. Please help your child to be on time. **A parent or legal guardian must enter the front office and sign in any student arriving at school after 7:30.**

5 Tardies	**School runs a tardy report**
10 Tardies	**Tardy warning letter sent**
15 Tardies	**Letter and Tardy Intervention Conference**
20 Tardies	**Referral to Truancy Court**

Early Dismissals

Early dismissals are strongly discouraged after 1:50. If your child must leave school, please **send a note** to your child's teacher stating the reason for and time of the requested dismissal. Early dismissal requires an authorized adult to come into the office with photo identification and sign out the child. Dismissals between 1:50-2:15 require approval by an administrator. This policy is for the protection of our students and allows us to secure the building for dismissal.

Students Going Home With Others

1. If a child is going home with another student or parent, the child is REQUIRED to have a signed note from home to give to the teacher.
2. Students MAY NOT change their bus assignment OR ride with another student on their non-assigned bus or route.

Car Riders

We ask parents who drive their children to and from school to stay in their cars. We ask that children do not get out of or into cars except at the main entrance to the building. Parents should not drop off in the parking lot during normal drop-off and/or dismissal times.**When the tardy sign is on display outside, an adult must enter the building to sign your child in. This will begin at 7:30 AM each day.** For the well-being and safety of your child, we request that you pick up your child no later than 2:40. If you arrive after 2:40, please park and enter the office with photo identification. Students must not be left at school for an extended time. If a child is still at school at 2:45, he/she will be sent to our after-school program.

Bus Riders and Policies

Students must ride only their assigned bus and may only get off at their assigned bus stop. Notes or calls from students will not be accepted. **Bus riders may not have another student ride the bus home with them.**

Emergency School Closing Procedures

When inclement weather occurs before the school day begins, the district administration will decide if schools will open or remain closed. That decision will be broadcast on area radio and television stations and posted on the school website and social media. In addition, parents will receive a call from the district. **Please do not call the school for information.** If inclement weather or other emergency situations occur during the school day, district administration will declare if schools remain open on a regular schedule for the remainder of the school day. Parents should have emergency plans in place in case school closes in the middle of the day. No after-school care will be available if school closes early.

Field Trips

Field trips are planned by the teacher for specific instructional purposes and are correlated with the curriculum. They are considered an extension of the classroom. Written permission from a parent or a legal guardian is required before a child is permitted to go on a field trip. Transportation is by bus, and each child may be asked to pay a fee to help cover expenses. Students are chaperoned by school personnel. Parent volunteers assist when needed.

Insurance

Insurance is available for students at the beginning of each school year. An independent company provides insurance coverage. Any student who has an accident should report it immediately to his/her teacher or to the office staff.

Lost and Found

Please **write your child's name and grade on all lunch boxes and clothing** that might be removed at school (e.g. jackets). This is important and worthwhile. It will enable us to return clothes that are lost or misplaced.

Parties

It is important that our students receive as much uninterrupted instructional time as possible. In order to accomplish this, it is necessary for us to limit the number of parties allowed during the year to two, Christmas and Valentine's Day. All food brought in from outside the school for students must be store-bought with ingredients listed on the packaging. Students may choose not to participate in classroom parties**. *Students may not bring individual party bags or candy bags to school due to allergies.**

Telephone Messages

Messages will be taken for the teachers, but it may not be possible to deliver them immediately. **Only in the case of emergencies will a teacher be called to the phone during class time.** Students may use the school telephone only for emergencies. Arrangements for after-school activities should be made before a student leaves home.

**** Remember that parents MAY NOT call to change transportation after 1:45 PM.**

Equal Opportunity In Education Policy

Discrimination of all persons is prohibited with regard to employment and any other programs or activity on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, religion, sex, or handicap in Spartanburg County School District Five as required by the Title IX of Educational Amendments Act of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and the

Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended.

Exclusion from School

In accordance with the SC Exclusion Law for Communicable Disease, SC Code Section 20-7-2980, 44-1-110, 44-1-140, and 44-29-10, District Five Schools provide a list of conditions requiring exclusion from school. This list is located in the school nurse's office.

Attendance, Absences, and Excuses

School attendance problems are best resolved between parent(s), students, and school officials. Parents are advised that after ten (10) parent notes, medical notes will be required. Students, age 6 to 17 years old, who have three (3) consecutive unlawful absences or a total of five (5) unlawful absences, are considered truant as defined by the state board of education. Once a student is determined to be **truant**, school officials will make every reasonable effort to meet with a parent/legal guardian to identify the reasons for the student's absences, including telephone calls, home visit, written messages and emails. The district will utilize a written intervention plan for improving student attendance. The purpose of the plan will be to link students with attendance problems and their families to all appropriate school and community resources. If a student transfers to another public school in the state, the district will forward the student's intervention plan to the receiving school.
Refusal by the parent/legal guardian to cooperate with school intervention planning can result in a referral to the student family court.

Any student who misses school must present a written excuse signed by his/her parent/legal guardian. If a student fails to bring a valid excuse to school, he/she will automatically receive an unexcused absence.

The district will consider students lawfully absent under the following circumstances:

1. They are ill, and their attendance in school would endanger the health of others.
2. There is a death or serious illness in their immediate family.
3. There is a recognized religious holiday of their faith. (Prearranged absences or absences for extreme hardship are at the discretion of the principal)

The district will consider students unlawfully absent under the following circumstances:

1. They are willfully absent from school without the knowledge of their parent/ legal guardian.
2. They are absent without acceptable cause with the knowledge of their parent/legal guardian.

Procedures:

- On two (2) consecutive absences school personnel will contact the

parent.

- On three (3) unlawful absences in a row or a total of five (5) unlawful absences, the school attendance clerk will mail a letter to the parent/legal guardian requiring a School Intervention Team meeting with the school administration to discuss an intervention plan.
- On six (6) unlawful absences the parent/legal guardian will receive a letter from an administrator and a report will be made to the District Attendance Supervisor.
- On the seventh (7) unlawful absence the school administrator will immediately notify the District Attendance Supervisor who will follow the guidelines for the Student Attendance Review Board.

District absence forms will be included in school handbooks. Additional forms may be obtained at the school office or printed from the school website.

Special Health Needs

South Carolina law (Section 59-63-80 and 59-63-90) requires school districts to inform parents and/or legal guardians of the rights of students with special health needs. Students who qualify for services related to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), and/or homebound regulations may be entitled to an Individual Health Care Plan. For additional information about Individual Health Care Plans, you may contact your school nurse or the District Health Service Coordinator. The following websites will supply additional information as well.
Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
http://www.ed.gov/print/about/offices/list/ocr/504faq/html
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and/or Homebound Services.
www.myschool.com

Medication Regulations

1. Most medication adjustments of dosage, may be taken over the telephone from the physician by the school nurse.
2. Any over-the-counter medication (including cough syrup), ointments, or lotions (such as Calamine lotion) will not be administered by a school nurse without a prescription.
3. Topical antiseptics and cleaners, such as alcohol, peroxide, etc. may be administered by authorized personnel only.
4. The school nurse will be available to discuss any medication questions with school personnel, parents, or physicians.
5. The District Health Coordinator will coordinate any needed standing orders with the physician and school personnel.
6. **Students MAY NOT bring medication of any kind to school.** All student medication should be given **directly to the school nurse** by only a parent or guardian between 7:30 AM and 2:30 PM.

Administration of Medication

Prior to administering any medication prescribed by a physician, the following procedures must be followed:

1. A signed and dated statement from the prescribing physician giving specific information concerning the medication administration must be on file. Adjustments to previously prescribed medication will not be accepted over the phone by the parent/legal guardian.
2. A written statement from the parent/legal guardian must be on file outlining the medication, time of administration, and dates to be administered.
3. The prescribed medication, the physician's statement, and the parental statement must be delivered to the nurse.

Cell Phones/Electronic Devices

The parent/student agreement and supporting documents may be found at www.d5live.net/students and are included in the registration process. Please refer to these documents for all additional district technology information.

Students will **not** be permitted to connect **personal devices** such as, but not limited to, cell phones, electronic watches, earbuds, tablets, or laptops to the District Five Wireless Network. **All personal devices including watches and earbuds must be turned off and remain in book bags during the school day.**

Emergency Information

In case of emergency, each student is required to have on file at the school office.

1. Name of parent or guardian
2. Complete and up to date address
3. Home phone and parent(s) work or cell phone (connected and working)
4. Emergency phone number of friend or relative (connected and working)
5. Medical alert information

***Notify the school office immediately if changes occur during the year. School administration should be able to contact any parent within a 15 minute time frame. ***

Food Service Program

All students may receive ONE free breakfast and lunch per school day during the 2026 - 2027 school year. Students requesting additional food will be required to pay. Parents can load money onto their student's lunch account using the app for the school lunch program. More information can be found in the front office of the school or on the district website www.spart5.net.

Do not send lunch items to school that need to be heated. The Federal School Lunch Program prohibits soft drinks in the lunchroom. **If a child is allergic to milk, he/she may bring tea, juice or a fruit drink in a thermos or juice bottle.**

***No energy drinks of any kind will be allowed at school. Students will be asked to keep them in their lunch box and bring them back home. If they are opened, they will be asked to discard them. This is a safety issue at school.**

Policy ADF: Wellness Policy on Physical Education Standards, Nursing & Nutritional Standards

Outside Foods

To ensure student safety regarding food allergies and dietary restrictions, food brought from outside the school for student consumption will be commercially prepared and packaged or sealed. When applicable, food will be labeled with specific ingredients or the ingredients easily accessible online.

However, this policy does not restrict the food that a parent/legal guardian may provide for his/her child's consumption at school.
Adopted 6/26/06; Revised 10/22/07, 2/27/12, 11/24/14

This policy can be found on our district website:
https://boardpolicyonline.com/?b=spartanburg5&s=252193

Meals

Breakfast is served from 6:50 to 7:20. In order for cafeteria personnel to prepare the lunch program we must stop serving breakfast at 7:20. Students should arrive by 7:20 if they need to eat breakfast. A bagged breakfast will be sent with a child to the classroom if he/she arrives for breakfast after 7:20.

Cost of Adult Meals

Please refer to the school or district website for current adult meal prices. http://www.spart5.net

Food Sharing

Students are NOT allowed to share food items in the cafeteria, classroom, or on the bus. This policy is to help prevent unanticipated adverse reactions to food or other allergy reactions.

Toys, Electronics, or Balls

Toys or other types of entertainment (including trading cards) are not to be brought to school unless pre-approved by the teacher. We ask for your cooperation in checking backpacks for hidden toys. **All recess balls will be provided by the school.**

Address Change

It is necessary for the school to have your current address and phone number at all times. This information is especially important in case of an emergency. **Please notify the school secretary immediately upon change of address or phone number.**

Dress Code for District Five Schools

Spartanburg School District Five respects students' rights to express themselves in the way that they dress. Student attire should facilitate participation in learning as well as the health and safety of students and the adults who supervise them. All students who attend Spartanburg School District Five are expected to adhere to the Dress Code. To ensure effective and equitable enforcement of this dress code, school staff shall enforce the dress code consistently and in a manner that does not reinforce or increase marginalization or oppression of any group based on race, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, cultural observance, household income or body size/type. Enforcement for students in grades K-5 should be limited to the Basic Principle and Must-Wear items outlined below. The primary responsibility for our students' attire resides with the student and their parent(s) or guardian(s). Basic Principle: Certain body parts must be covered for all students at all times. Clothes must be worn in such a way that the rear end and private areas are fully covered with opaque (non-sheer) fabric at all times. All items listed in the "must wear" and "may wear" categories below must meet this Basic Principle.

Students Must Wear:

● A Shirt (with fabric covering from one armpit to the other armpit, with straps, and touches the top of the pants) AND
● Pants/jeans or the equivalent (for example, a skirt, sweatpants, leggings, a dress,

or shorts) AND
● Shoes (must be safe for the school environment, no bedroom shoes or slippers unless approved by the principal).

Students May Wear:
● Religious headwear.
● Fitted pants, including opaque leggings, yoga pants, and “skinny jeans” as long as the rear end/private areas are covered by the accompanying top. Ripped jeans, as long as underwear, private areas and rear end are not exposed.
● Visible straps on undergarments worn under clothing and above the shoulder.
● Athletic attire.

Students Cannot Wear:
● Violent language or images.
● Images or language depicting/suggesting drugs, alcohol, vaping or paraphernalia (or any illegal item or activity).
● Bulletproof vests, body armor, tactical gear, or facsimile.
● Hate speech, profanity, pornography.
● Images or language that create a hostile or intimidating environment based on any protected class or consistently marginalized groups.
● Any clothing that reveals undergarments (visible straps are allowed at the shoulder).
● Swimsuits (except as required in class or athletic practice).
● Accessories that are considered dangerous or could be used as a weapon.
● Any hats, head coverings, or hoods (except as a religious observance).
● Pajamas, sleepwear, loungewear
● Costumes or any parts of costumes including masks

Dress Code Enforcement: School administrators and teachers should be trained to understand the purpose/spirit of the dress code and how to enforce it with the least impact on student learning and self-confidence. To ensure effective and equitable enforcement of this dress code, school staff shall enforce the dress code consistently using the requirements below:

● Students will only be removed from spaces, hallways or classrooms as a result of a dress code violation of the Basic Principles or Section 3 above. Students will be given the opportunity to put on their own alternative clothing or report to a holding area until a parent can bring alternative clothing. Dress Code violations will not be treated as a disciplinary action unless the student a) refuses to cooperate with remediation of the problem; b) violates behavioral rules; or c) becomes a repeat offender of more than 3 Dress Code violations in one school semester.

● Students should not be shamed or required to display their body in front of others in school (including students, parents, or staff). “Shaming” includes but is not limited to:
* kneeling or bending over to check attire fit;
* measuring straps or skirt length;
* accusing students of “distracting” other students with their clothing.

Every effort will be made by school staff and administration to enforce the Dress Code in a way that does not embarrass, degrade or discriminate against any student. Students who feel they have been subject to discriminatory enforcement of the Dress Code should contact their grade level administrator.

Grading Scales

K4, K5 and Grade 1
4 = Exceeds Expectations
3 = Meets the Standard
2 = Approaches the Standard
1 = Does not meet the Standard

Related Arts and Grade 2(Sci./SS)
E = Excellent
S = Satisfactory
N = Needs Improvement
U = Unsatisfactory

Grades 2 (Math and ELA only), 3 and 4
A = 90 - 100
B = 80 - 89
C - 70 - 79
D = 60 - 69
F = 0 - 59

Report Card Dates

Report Cards will be sent home on October 13, 2026, January 7, 2027, March 24, 2027, and June 1, 2027. Students in 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades will be eligible for Honor Roll recognition.

Progress Reports & Conferences

Report cards are issued every nine (9) weeks. There may also be other reports about individual students when needed. It is a priority of our school to have open and frequent communication with the parents and teachers so that student progress can be monitored. During the year there will be at least one conference between teachers and parents. Please make every effort to attend these scheduled conferences. Parents are urged to initiate conferences at any time by sending a note or calling the school for an appointment with the child's teacher. Teachers may also request special conferences.

School Counseling

The Elementary School Counseling Program at River Ridge is all about helping students grow into caring citizens who can make positive choices for themselves. Our program, provided by the school counselor, offers guidance services that complement academic learning by focusing on personal and social growth, study habits, and goal setting for future career choices. We emphasize important character traits such as respect, courage, kindness, and responsibility. Our program includes classroom lessons, group and individual counseling sessions, and meetings with parents.



Library and Media Policy

Occasionally our students, faculty, and staff may be photographed, interviewed, and/or identified for publication, broadcast, transmission, and/or electronic display by the news media or school and district public relations officials. All releases will be performed in accordance with school district policy and privacy laws. As required, only "directory" type information will be provided. This includes names, school, grade level, teacher, participation in officially recognized activities, etc. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the school principal.

At the end of the year if student books are not returned to the library fines will be assessed and collected before report cards are released to families.

During the year, as books are returned they will be assessed for damages (water, torn pages, damaged binding, etc.). At the time damages occur, fines will be assessed.

Privacy of Student Records

(Required notification items according to FERPA)

●Parents and eligible students (18 and older) have the right to inspect and review the student's educational records. Parents or eligible students have a right to request that a school correct records that they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. All requests should be made in writing to the school principal or other identified school official. The school official will make arrangements and notify the parent of the time and place that the records may be inspected. Upon request, records will be released to other schools to which the student is transferring.

●Unless a written request is submitted to the contrary, schools may release, without consent, the following types of directory information contained in your student's educational records: name, sex, race, address, telephone listing, date and place of birth, dates of attendance, number of days absent, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height (if a member of the athletic team), degrees and awards received, the most recent previous educational agency or institution attended.

●Definition of school official shall be any person employed by the school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement personnel), a person serving on the school board, a person with whom the school has contracted to perform

a specific task.

Drugs, Alcohol, and Weapons Policy

Drugs, alcohol, or weapons **will not** be tolerated in or around any District Five school. The safety of our children is a priority. We will not allow even one student to be at risk.

Students **cannot** have, use, or be under the influence of drugs or alcohol or have weapons on school grounds, school buses, or at any school function. Drugs include any illegal substance or medicine that is not ordered by your doctor. All prescribed medicine must be brought to school by an adult and will be kept in the nurse's office under lock and key.

Weapons include firearms, knives, or any other item that can hurt another person. If a student breaks one of these rules, the parent or guardian and the police will be notified. The student will be suspended immediately and may be recommended for expulsion. In the case of a firearm, expulsion could be for one calendar year. Drugs, alcohol, or weapons will be turned over to the police and will not be returned. Students should not possess tobacco, tobacco products, or smoking devices on school grounds.

Sexual Harassment Policy

Sexual Harassment is a form of discrimination prohibited by federal and state laws. Consistent with these laws, it is the policy of Spartanburg County School District Five that sexual harassment of students is prohibited. Any student who feels he or she has been subjected to sexual or other harassment or the parent of a student who feels that his or her child has been subjected to harassment, is encouraged to contact the school or district administration immediately.

River Ridge Elementary School
School-Wide Behavior

Beliefs About Behavior

- Our school must be a safe place.
- Teaching and learning the curriculum for all students is the highest priority.
- Data should be collected and used to celebrate and/or improve.
- Our focus on unacceptable behaviors is always on the behavior, not the student.
- Changing behavior takes time.
- Self-discipline is the expected outcome.
- Individuals should be held responsible for their actions.
- School-wide expected behaviors should be communicated, taught, and modeled on a daily basis throughout the school year.
- Positive behavior should be rewarded.
- Leadership and effective skills should be taught.
- A partnership among parents, students, and teachers fosters significant academic growth.

River Ridge Panda Expectations

1. Respond to everyone using respectful language.
2. Make eye contact when speaking or listening to others.
3. Congratulate a classmate when he/she does something good.
4. Verbally show respect for other students' comments or opinions.
5. Use complete sentences when responding in conversations.

6. Greet others with a wave, smile, verbal greeting, or handshake.
7. When you see a need, work to meet the need.
8. Follow directions given by school staff and follow school procedures.

Classroom Behavior Plans

All classrooms will have a positive behavior system and will share this plan with parents at the beginning of the school year. Each teacher will provide daily/weekly feedback on behavior.

Consequences of Misbehavior

Misbehavior interfering with learning and/or safety will be addressed immediately. The consequences of misbehavior will match the level of offense explained below.

Discipline and Behavior Matrix

Our School discipline procedures and Code of Conduct can be found using the QR code below. On the first day of school, your child will receive a form for you to sign that verifies that you have read and understand:

1. the South Carolina School Attendance Law
2. the 2026-2027 Student Behavior Code with your student(s) for whom you are responsible
3. you have read and understand the 2026-2027 Parent/Student Handbook.

Opportunity Room

As an intervention, we use the Opportunity Room. This is a positive step to help students take responsibility for their actions; students who are frequently exhibiting inappropriate behaviors may spend time with a designated staff member who will support the students in their efforts to learn acceptable behaviors. Students will also develop a plan of action for improvement. In other words, the students will be given an opportunity to turn their behaviors around in order to return to the classroom.

Bullying

District Five introduced the Bullying Prevention Program in all elementary schools in 2012. The goals of the program include preventing bullying and improving relationships between students. Throughout the year, students will have the opportunity to learn about what bullying is and what to do if they see or experience bullying. Students will learn to recognize bullying and parents are a very important part of supporting this program and following four 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.