

WELCOME & INTRODUCTION

A sincere welcome to you, the student body of River Cities High School, as we begin the 2025-2026 school year. May it prove to be a most rewarding, satisfying, and exciting experience. Please read through this handbook, and if you have any questions please contact the administration. River Cities High School strives to provide a positive learning environment for all students. This handbook is the guideline for proper behavior and conduct, as well as consequences when the guidelines are not followed. The Wisconsin Rapids Board of Education approves this handbook. The various sections of this handbook are intended to comply with WRPS School Board policies, local, state, and federal laws. If any section of this document is found to be contrary to law or constitutional rights, it shall be revised.

RIVER CITIES HIGH SCHOOL

The Wisconsin Rapids Public School District recognizes that there are students whose educational needs are not being met in a traditional school setting. It is our human, legal, and ethical responsibility to meet the unique needs of all individuals and provide opportunities for success. It is the mission of River Cities High School to provide an environment that promotes the social, emotional, academic, and vocational growth and development of students most at-risk. Instead of lowering expectations, we are attempting to raise the hope and redefine success among our students. The school will provide students with non-traditional approaches to meet their high school graduation requirements.

River Cities High School Staff

Steven Hepp, Principal
Carrie Siler, Lead Teacher
Jason Borski, Teacher
Marti Olivarez, Teacher
Timothy Studinger, Teacher
Kathy Ferguson, Reading Interventionist
San Juanita Rodriguez, School Psychologist
Tessa Gruszynski, School Social Worker
Matthew Neve, Office Secretary

NOTICE: STUDENT NON-DISCRIMINATION & ANTI HARASSMENT

The School District of Wisconsin Rapids is committed to equal educational opportunity for all District students. The District will not deny any person admission to, participation in, or the benefits of any curricular, extracurricular, pupil services, recreational or other program or activity because of a person's gender, race, national origin, ancestry, creed, religion, pregnancy, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, transgender status, gender identity, or physical, mental, emotional or learning disability, or any other characteristic protected under State or Federal civil rights laws.

The District strives to provide a safe, secure, and respectful learning environment for all students in school buildings, on school grounds, and school buses, and at school-sponsored activities. The District prohibits all forms of discrimination and harassment.

The District encourages all students, as well as third parties, to promptly report incidents of discrimination or harassment to a teacher, administrator, supervisor, or other District employee or official so that the District may address the conduct before it becomes severe, pervasive, or persistent. Any teacher, administrator, supervisor, or other District employee or official who receives such a complaint shall forward the complaint to the District's designated Compliance Officer without undue delay, but not later than two (2) business days. The District's designated Compliance Officer is the Director of Human Resources. Complaints should be submitted to:

Brian Oswald, WRPS Director of Human Resources
510 Peach Street
Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54494

To review Board Policy 411 concerning Student Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment, go to www.wrps.org and click on School Board Policy 411.

Special Statement Regarding Sex Discrimination Under Title IX

In compliance with the federal Title IX statutes and regulations set forth in Chapter 106 of Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations, the District does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of sex in any education program or activity that the District operates. Title IX's requirement not to discriminate in any education program or activity extends to cover, but is not limited to, District students, certain admissions processes, and District employment. Inquiries regarding how Title IX and the federal Title IX regulations apply to the District may be referred to the District's Title IX Coordinator (as designated below), to the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Education, or to both. Please refer to [Board Policy 411.11](#) for additional information.

WRPS Title IX Coordinators

Brian Oswald, Dir. of Human Resources
510 Peach Street
Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54494
P: 715-424-6710
E: brian.oswall@wrps.net

Steven Hepp, Dir. of Pupil Services
510 Peach Street
Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54494
P: 715-424-6724
E: steven.hepp@wrps.net

Roxanne Filtz, Dir. of Teaching and Learning
510 Peach Street
Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54494
P: 715-424-6721
E: roxanne.filtz@wrps.net

ACADEMICS

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Plagiarism:

All work submitted for the purpose of meeting course requirements must represent the individual efforts of each student. Any form of academic dishonesty is prohibited. Academic dishonesty, cheating, and plagiarism are defined as the following:

1. Plagiarism is taking the writings and/or ideas of another person/student and presenting them as one's own. Plagiarized ideas may be taken from written materials such as books, newspapers, magazines, and shared documents, as well as electronic media including the internet and videos.
2. Plagiarism is doing another person's work for him/her.
3. Plagiarism is buying, selling, or giving work, questions, or answers.
4. Plagiarism is providing another person with answers to homework, tests, quizzes, or written work (essays, paragraphs, journals, projects, etc).
5. Plagiarism is copying or stealing teachers' answer keys or teacher's edition texts.
6. Plagiarism is, at any time, sharing with others one's final graded work whether digital or print.
7. Plagiarism and the Use of AI Language Models: The use of AI language models like ChatGPT (or others) to generate content for academic assignments is strictly prohibited unless approved by the classroom teacher. Any student found to be using AI language models to generate content for academic assignments will be subject to school consequences.
8. Plagiarism detection programs may be used for all assignments completed. They will provide a detailed report, which includes information regarding the content and sources of the papers submitted for assignments at WRPS and all schools using such programs. All students should review their work carefully before submitting the assignments into Canvas. Please do not use content (assignments, papers, or research papers submitted for previous classes) you developed in other courses. If this takes place, it will be considered plagiarism. The WRPS plagiarism process will be followed.

Sharing Documents:

Plagiarism is, regardless of intent, sharing one's work with another student without teacher permission.

1st Offense -

- The student will be required to meet with the administration.
- A report and action will be made in the student's discipline file.
- If the intent was to allow another student to copy work, the student will receive Academic Dishonesty.
 - The student will serve a school consequence.
 - The student will be ineligible for the National Honor Society.
 - The student will be referred for a co-curricular code violation.

2nd Offense -

- The student will receive Academic Dishonesty.
- A report and action will be made in the student's discipline file.
- The student will serve a school consequence.
- The student will be ineligible for the National Honor Society.
- The student will be referred for a co-curricular code violation.

E-LEARNING EXPECTATIONS

We have two built-in inclement weather days. After these days are "used up", we will move to "E-Learning" on future inclement weather days. This will allow us to not extend our school year further into June.

All students will participate in one of the following Life Management virtual meetings. A link to the meeting will be sent to your school email. Attendance will be taken.

- Life Management Course (Virtual Meeting) @ 9:30 AM
- Life Management Course (Virtual Meeting) @ 11:30 AM
- Students will check in with their assigned advisor during one of the following sessions. Students are expected to check their school email for specific instructions.
- Students are expected to complete assignments through Canvas and/or as indicated by their classroom advisor.

RELEASE OF STUDENT INFORMATION

Student Directory Data is defined as: student name, address, photographs, degrees and awards received, major field of study, participation in activities/sports, weight/height on athletic team, and name of school student most recently attended. The ability to release directory data helps WRPS to include a student in certain publications like the annual yearbook, honor roll and scholarship programs, and athletic program rosters. At the high school level, WRPS does receive requests for student data from organizations such as colleges/universities, technical colleges, and armed forces recruiters for educational or career opportunity purposes. Parents or adult pupils must complete a "Release of Student Directory Data" form if they wish to restrict the release of student data. You can obtain this form from the school office. If no form gets completed, the District will fulfill its legal obligation to release directory data when requested.

BUSING

Transportation provided by the District is considered part of the school day. Inappropriate behavior on buses may result in disciplinary action at school as well as loss of transportation privileges.

443.2 STUDENT CONDUCT ON SCHOOL BUSES Parents/guardians and students must realize that the school bus is an extension of the classroom. The bus driver, as the teacher in the classroom, has the responsibility for the safety and welfare of the student while under his/her charge. Students must obey all rules that apply to bus riding for their own safety and protection as well as others aboard the school bus. Students and parents/guardians alike should be informed that misbehavior will not be tolerated. Students who misbehave on the school bus can be suspended from riding the school bus, in accordance with established procedures.

Specific conduct expectations and possible consequences for misbehavior can be found by clicking on [Bus Conduct](#).

BUS PASSES

In order to be issued a [bus pass](#), a student must be a regular bus student and provide Student Services with written, parent consent. [Messages through Parent Square are acceptable](#). Permission by phone cannot be accepted.

ATTENDANCE AND EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS

(Revised March 2015)

River Cities High School adheres to all state statutes and school board policies regarding truancy. Please review Ordinance No. 68 (Town of Grand Rapids, Wood County, WI).

<http://townofgrandrapids.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/68-Governing-Truancy.pdf>

<https://www.co.wood.wi.us/Departments/Clerk/Ordinances/224-Habitual%20Truancy.pdf>

<http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/statutes/statutes/118/15>

The school administrator will determine a referral to law enforcement (Grand Rapids) and/or to human services (Wood County) after 5 absences or tardies.

ALL DAY ABSENCE: Parents/Guardians must call the River Cities High School office (715) 424-6798 or the attendance line (715) 424-6765. If the absence is anticipated to be longer than one day, it should be so stated.

DURING THE SCHOOL DAY: If a student becomes ill while at school, he/she should report to the lead teacher(s).

Parents/Guardians will be notified to determine whether or not the student will remain at school. Any student who leaves campus without prior approval will receive an unexcused absence for each session missed. Missing any part of the school day results in a full day of absence being recorded

ABSENCES: Students absent six (6) days, excused or unexcused, in one trimester may be dismissed from River Cities High School. Attendance will be documented, and parents/guardians informed when their child is in jeopardy of being dismissed from River Cities High School.

APPOINTMENTS: Students are required to attend school for three hours each day. This allows time for appointments to be made other than during school time. Appointments during the school day will count toward absence days.

TARDIES: Tardiness may accumulate towards absence days, loss of breaks, activities, or making up lost time. If parents/guardians anticipate the tardiness, they should call the River Cities High School office to indicate the late arrival and estimated time student will be at school. Students arriving late thirty (30) minutes or more may result in a full day of absence. The student may, however, elect to remain in school to complete work.

EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS

- Make school attendance a priority. Consistent and prompt attendance at every session is critical for successful academic performance.
- Be prepared for and participate in class. Report to class on time with the necessary materials needed for class. Complete all work in a neat and legible manner. Achieve maximum performance in class through effort, attitude, and daily attendance. Sleeping in is not permitted. Items that inhibit maximum academic effort will not be allowed. Students are expected to do their own schoolwork.
- Although cell phones are permitted, students may be asked to put them away or store with staff so that they can focus on their schoolwork. Cell phones are prohibited during life management class.
- Respect other people and their property. At all times, the student should act with courtesy toward teachers, staff members, and students. Both their actions and words should reflect such courtesy. The student is responsible for keeping all school property (books, classroom materials and the school) in good condition.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

ONLINE VERIFICATION INFORMATION: Wisconsin Rapids Public Schools uses Online Verification to have the most up-to-date information possible on our enrolled students – especially address and telephone number changes, health conditions and concerns, as well as emergency contact information. Online Verification, which you can get to by accessing your [Family Access](#) account, is not an option, it is a requirement. Please contact the office secretary for more information.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION: Emergency information must be on file in the River Cities High School office. It is important that names of doctors, names of persons to be reached in case of emergency, and any change in medical status be kept current.

INTERNET USE: Access to the Internet is provided for those students and staff who have signed a Wisconsin Rapids Public School System Acceptable Use Agreement available in the River Cities High School's office. Internet access is reserved for classroom or curricular activities.

PARKING: Students who drive to school are expected to park their cars, bikes, and motorcycles properly. Student parking is restricted to the specified parking lot. Loitering in the parking lot will not be tolerated and will lead to disciplinary action. Safe and proper driving procedures are expected when driving a vehicle to school. The parking lot is a closed area to be used only when arriving and departing.

POSTER/ MATERIAL PUBLICATIONS: Anyone wishing to post or distribute materials must obtain permission from the Lead Teacher.

TELEPHONE: Telephones are located in the classrooms and the office for student use with permission from a staff member during non-academic class time or an emergency.

TEXTBOOKS/ CLASS MATERIALS: The school will furnish most textbooks and reference materials, but students are asked to bring a small number of supplies at the beginning of the school year. At the end of a unit or a school year, fines may be assessed for any damage that is in excess of normal wear.

DISTRICT BOOK AND MATERIALS FEE: All secondary students in the Wisconsin Rapids Public School District pay a student book and materials fee of \$45.00. The fees collected are used for consumable items used by students, such as workbooks, paper, notebooks, binders, etc. Fees and fines will follow a student from school to school and must be taken care of before graduation.

STUDENT VISITORS: River Cities High School students are not permitted to bring out-of-town students or other guests as visitors.

Students are not allowed to visit other schools within the District during the school day unless the Principal or Lead Teacher and the Principal of the receiving school have granted prior permission. Unauthorized visits to other schools may result in an assessment against the 6-day absence limit.

General Overview

We at River Cities High School are dedicated to providing an environment conducive to learning. Students are expected to monitor their own behaviors, comply with staff expectations, and complete work requirements. Behaviors that interfere with a student's progress or the progress of others, or behavior that is not compliant, may lead to negative consequences. These consequences could result in a ½ day absence that will be added to the six (6) day absence limit. After school time may be assessed to discuss behavior not complying with RCHS expectations.

School rules apply to students:

1. On the way to and from school and during school hours.
2. On the school premises.
3. Away from school in connection with school-related activities.
4. In other community settings in student behavior may impact the successful implementation of school programs and/or affect the safety and welfare of students.

NON-OFFENSIVE DRESS: Students are reminded that non-offensive apparel is expected at River Cities High School. Clothing that display obscene or vulgar language/ images, or promotes the use of alcohol, illegal substances, and/ or is disruptive to an educational learning environment will not be permitted. Students will be permitted to wear hats at River Cities High School, but if this becomes a disturbance to the learning process, hats will have to be removed.

DISTRICT WEAPONS POLICY: Any student bringing a weapon to school will be suspended and referred for expulsion, according to Wisconsin State Statutes Section 948.606 and 948.61.

FOOD AND DRINK: Food and drink will be allowed at the teachers' discretion and not allowed in the computer area.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR SCHOOL PROPERTY/ VANDALISM: We expect that all students will use the building and its equipment as it was intended, and discourage abuse and misuse of school property by themselves and others. Abuse of school property will be prosecuted according to the law. The student will be held responsible for the dollar amount of damages incurred. Parents/ Guardians will be notified.

THEFT: Theft is not tolerated at River Cities High School. Students who steal will face prosecution. Students are expected to respect the property of other students, faculty, staff, and the school district. Restitution will be required.

USE OF DRUGS/ALCOHOL: Possession or use of drugs or alcohol will result in a police referral and may lead to the termination of placement at River Cities High School. The Wood County Sheriff's Department Canine Unit will conduct periodic searches of River Cities High School property during the school year.

Students may be suspended and/or expelled for grounds authorized under section 120.13 of the Wisconsin Statutes, which includes conduct either in or out of school that endangers the property, health, or safety of themselves or others at school or under the supervision of a school authority. Possession, solicitation, use, and/or transmission of any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, inhalant, toxic substance, or any chemical or controlled substance (including look-alike substances) prohibited under state or federal law, intoxicating beverages, any paraphernalia associated with such controlled substances or the unauthorized possession, use and/or transmission of prescription drugs is against school rules, WRPS Policy 443 and the law. Disciplinary action, including but not limited to suspension (and possible referral for an expulsion hearing) and police referral, shall follow for any student found in violation of these provisions. Students involved in dealing, distributing, selling or supplying illicit substances shall be referred to the Board of Education for an expulsion hearing.

USE OF TOBACCO: The use of tobacco in any form will not be permitted in the school building, the school grounds, or at any school-sponsored activity.

READMISSION: Students who have been dismissed from River Cities High School may apply for readmission according to the terms determined at the time of their dismissal.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS BEGINNING 2016-2017 SCHOOL YEAR

CREDIT PROGRAM: To be eligible for a high school diploma from the Wisconsin Rapids Public School District, students must meet the following graduation requirements:

Students must earn 21.5 credits to graduate from River Cities High School in grades 9-12. Students who have completed goals on the IEP or Section 504 Plan, completed individual English as a Second Language goals, completed goals on a Differentiated Plan through the Gifted and Talented program, or completed the requirements of the High School Equivalency Diploma (HSED) at River Cities High School, may also be awarded a diploma.

To graduate from Wisconsin Rapids Public Schools, a student must earn the following credits in grades 9-12 (beginning with the class of 2017 current juniors)

English - 4.0 credits

Mathematics - 3.0 credits

Science - 3.0 credits

Social Studies - 3.0 credits

Physical Education - 1.5 credits

Health - .5 credits

IT Fundamentals I - .5 credits (beginning with the class of 2018 current sophomores)

Financial Literacy - .5 credits

Electives - 6.0 credits (5.5 beginning with the class of 2018 current sophomores)

*Per school board policies, graduation requirements are subject to change

Testing Program: Students enrolled in the General Education Development Option #2 testing program (GEDO #2) will complete the required Graduation Equivalent Diploma (GED) tests or a competency-based program to earn a high school diploma. Students must meet the national standards on tests to complete the program; additionally, River Cities High School must establish three additional requirements: attendance, work experience, health, and civics. Students are expected to earn a passing grade in all classes. The same attendance policy applies to both programs, as well as the same work experience expectations.

**Per school board policies graduation requirements are subject to change.*

Work Experience: All students must meet the requirements of 60 work experience hours per trimester/term to achieve their High School Diploma, and to remain at River Cities High School. Students must volunteer at an approved volunteer site to complete this requirement or have legitimate employment in the work force. RCHS has limited on-site work experience options available.

GRADUATION: The high school principal shall be responsible for ensuring that students meet the requirements necessary for high school graduation. Decisions related to requirements, graduation, or participation in the graduation ceremony is the responsibility of the high school principal. Accommodations may be made for students with exceptional educational interests, needs or requirements in accordance with established guidelines.

Participation in the graduation ceremony is a privilege. Students must comply with the established building procedures to participate. Students and their parents/guardians shall be kept informed of the students' graduation status at regularly scheduled intervals.

Any appeal of the decision made not to award a diploma would be made to the Superintendent of Schools.

IMPORTANT BUILDING BLOCKS FOR THE HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE

SUPPORT- Family support which provides high levels of love and support. Good communication with parents and other adult relationships. Good, caring school environment. Parental involvement in schooling.

ENDOWMENT- Helping others through community service. Feeling safe at home, in the community, and at school. The youth feel the community, the school, and their home values them.

BOUDNARIES AND EXPECTATIONS - School, community, and family have clear rules and consequences. Parent monitors the young person's whereabouts. Parents and other adult role models positive and responsible behavior. Young person's friends model responsible behaviors.

HIGH EXPECTATIONS - Parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well!!!

CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF TIME - Create activities in the community or at home that encourage interest in music, art, or theatre. Encourage participation in sports, clubs or organizations, or churches. Increase the young person's time at home – to encourage success.

Chart reproduced from the Search Institute-Healthy Communities, Healthy Youth.