

“Everything You Need to Know” - ERMS

Arrival

The school day begins at 8:00 a.m. in homeroom. However, students should be given enough time to arrive at school, go to their locker, and walk to homeroom by 8:00. *Any student who arrives at school after 8:00 must sign-in at security as a late arrival to school.*

Attendance Guidelines

The state of Connecticut has guidelines which schools must follow regarding student attendance. Absences are categorized as either excused or unexcused according to the guidelines. A student’s absence from school is considered unexcused unless they meet one of the following criteria:

- A. the absence meets the definition for an excused absence (including documentation requirements); or
- B. the absence meets the definition of a disciplinary absence.

For absences, there are two levels that pertain to a student. The first nine absences in a school year can be excused by a parent for any reason the parent chooses by contacting the school within 48 hours of the absence. Our expectation is that you will enter the absence in School Dismissal Manager (SDM) or leave a message on the school’s attendance line, 203-894-5500 option 1, to report an absence. After 48 hours, a written note from the parent/guardian must be provided. Any absence above the ninth absence is in level 2 (see the chart) and must fall into a particular category with additional documentation in order to be approved. The chart below gives more detailed information regarding the possibilities.

The State Board of Education definitions establish two levels of criteria for an absence to be considered an excused absence (see table below).

Level	Total # of Days Absent*	Acceptable Reasons for a Student Absence to Be Considered Excused	Documentation Required within 10 Days
1	One through nine	Any reason that the student’s parent or guardian approves.	Parent or guardian note only.
2	10 and above	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student illness (<i>Note: to be deemed excused, an appropriately licensed medical professional must verify all student illness absences, regardless of the absence’s length.</i>) • Student’s observance of a religious holiday. • Death in the student’s family or other emergency beyond the control of the student’s family. • Mandated court appearances (additional documentation required). • The lack of transportation that is normally provided by a district other than the one the student attends (parental documentation is not required for this reason). • Extraordinary educational opportunities pre-approved by district administrators. (Opportunities must meet certain criteria. See below for details). 	Parent or guardian note and in some cases additional documentation (see details of specific reason).

* Note: The total number of days absent includes both excused and unexcused absences.

If student absences are at the level 2 threshold and do not have the appropriate required documentation, they are considered unexcused. There are guidelines that all schools must follow for unexcused absences. Connecticut state law reads: “**Sec. 10-198a. Policies and procedures concerning truants.** (a) For

purposes of this section, "truant" means a child age five to eighteen, inclusive, who is enrolled in a public or private school and has *four unexcused absences from school in any one month or ten unexcused absences from school in any school year.*"

Backpacks

Students will be using backpacks to carry their books/materials from class to class throughout the day. They will NOT be allowed to go to their lockers in between classes or during instructional time.

Bicycles

Students are allowed to ride their bicycles to school. If they do ride one, please remind them that they need to park and secure it properly in one of the bike racks in front of the building. They can lock and chain it to a rack. The school is not responsible for stolen or damaged bicycles.

Bus Notes

Parent permission is required in order for your child to ride a different bus or their regular bus but stop at a different stop. You must enter this in SDM as an exception. **No bus notes will be accepted over the phone or via email.**

Cell Phones

In an effort to support our students being present and engaged during the school day, we have created formal cell phone expectations. The use of cell phones is not permitted for students at any time during the school day. They are to remain in their backpacks, turned off, for the duration of the day. The only exception is if a teacher specifically requests their use (in which case, the teacher will facilitate the obtaining and returning of phones).

If a student is found carrying or using a cell phone during the school day, the phone will be taken from them and put in the main office. They will then need to pick it up at the end of the school day. If they are repeatedly caught with a phone, after the third time, you will be contacted and told that the phone will be kept in the main office for a few weeks. If it happens again after that, the student must leave his/her phone in the main office each morning and pick it up by the end of day for the entire school year.

We ask for your support in this expectation by recognizing that students will not be able to answer your calls or texts during the school day. If there is an emergency that requires immediate attention, you can call the main office and they can reach the student. However, please keep in mind that forgetting papers, changes in pick-up plans, and other situations are not "emergencies" - students will have time to check their phones for updates as soon as the day is over.

Counseling Center

The Counseling Center is a valuable resource for the students of East Ridge Middle School. In addition to having the support of teachers and administrators, students have a grade-specific Counselor that they can rely on for support and assistance. The same Counselor works with your student for all three years of their ERMS experience. Counselors are available to answer students' questions and advise them with academic and personal problems.

The Counseling Center is next to the main office, and appointments are easily arranged by talking to the Counseling Center secretary. Students are allowed to see their counselor during the school day, but must receive a pass from their teacher before they go to their appointment.

You, as a parent, are also welcome to call or email the Counseling Center with any questions or concerns. The current guidance counselors for the different grade levels are:

Grade 6 - Ms. Meghan Mulvehill

Grade 7 - Ms. Caitlin deMello

Grade 8 - Mrs. Amy Jonsson

Chromebooks

All students at East Ridge Middle School are provided with a Chromebook at the beginning of the school year. Students use these Chromebooks actively for everything from classwork and technological exploration, to homework and projects. As parents, we request that you help us ensure that your students are using their Chromebooks appropriately, and treating them with care and respect.

There are clear expectations in school about what Chromebooks should and should not be used for. We ask that you help reinforce these rules at home, especially in instances where it has been a problem during the school day. Students are expected to bring their Chromebooks to school and back home on a daily basis. It is a student's responsibility to charge their Chromebook with their school-provided charger every night. If they do not charge them, or forget to bring them, they will face difficulty participating fully in school the next day, and will risk falling behind.

Please also make sure your student respects their Chromebook as if it was their own computer. They should not damage or drop it, put stickers on it, write on it, download anything inappropriate on it, or do anything else that could harm it. Damage to Chromebooks may result in a fine if the Chromebook needs to be majorly repaired or replaced.

Dress Guidelines

Any clothing students wear to school that breaks one of the following rules is prohibited:

- 1) Students' clothes cannot impair safety or increase risks of danger or injury to themselves or other students.
- 2) Students' clothes cannot make other students feel uncomfortable or upset. This includes both the appearance and condition of the clothing (e.g. uncleanliness, odor)
- 3) Students' clothes cannot cause distraction from the learning environment.
- 4) Students' clothes cannot show any inappropriate or libelous messages or images.

Drugs and Vaping

East Ridge is proud to be a drug free zone. Due to this, drugs of any kind, such as vaporizers, chewing tobacco, e-cigarettes, alcohol, or any other tobacco/nicotine delivery device, are not permitted at any time on campus, on any school transportation vehicle, or at any off-campus school activity. These drugs and devices pose a hazard to health by both use and subsequent disposal. Students found with any of these drugs or devices are subject to disciplinary action as smokers.

Early Dismissal

In order for a child to be dismissed early from school, you must enter this in SDM as an exception. **No early dismissals will be accepted over the phone or via email.**

Extra Help

At times you may find that your child needs a bit more help in understanding the material that has been taught in class. ERMS teachers are free to give extra help on a more individualized basis. Your child must make an appointment with the teacher personally to make the necessary arrangements to meet either before, during, or after school to get extra help.

Gum

Students are not permitted to chew gum during school. Chewing gum is a distraction in the classroom and leads to a great amount of extra cleanup for the custodial staff.

Items Left at Home

If your child forgets something at home such as their lunch or a book, you may drop it off down at Security by the main entrance for the student to pick up during their lunch period or during passing time.

Lockers

At the start of each year, students are issued a personal locker with its own unique combination. **Lockers will only be used to store coats and lunches. Students will only be allowed to visit their locker upon arrival to school, to pick up their lunch and at the end of the day at dismissal.** They are told to not share their combination with anyone, and to ensure their locker is closed and locked whenever they aren't using it. Students should keep their lockers clean and orderly, and should not place decals or stickers on them or write on them. A student's locker is school property - school administrators may open a locker at any time with "reasonable cause" if they believe that the locker contains items which are prohibited by school rules or state laws.

Lost and Found

Lost and found departments can be found in the cafeteria, both locker rooms in the gym, and occasionally the Main Office for smaller items. If your child loses an object, they must report it at once to the secretary in the Main Office and look through the previously specified departments either during their lunch or at the end of the school day. Please do not have your child bring valuables or large sums of money to school where they may be lost. We do everything we can to safeguard private property, but the school cannot be responsible for lost items. Please remind your child not to give out their locker combination to others so it remains a safe place for your child to store their property.

Lunches (and breakfast)

School lunches, which include milk, are free of charge. A la carte items such as water, juice, snacks, are extra. On early dismissal days, lunch is not served. Breakfast is available on early dismissal days free of charge. The daily lunch menu can be found on the ERMS website in the parent link under food services information.

Obligation

Students are expected to take care of the school's books, technology, materials, and property. Returning items on time and in good condition is very important. Students will be expected to replace any lost or damaged school equipment.

Passes

We use various forms of hall passes to keep track of where students are and where they are going during the day. If they will be arriving in a class late, they are expected to have a "late pass" from another teacher/staff member to explain their tardiness. If they are stepping out of a classroom for a moment, or going to a different location during class, they will need hall passes.

RPS Covid Safety Protocols

Please reference Covid health and safety district protocols on the RPS website.

School Dismissal Manager (SDM)

Using SDM with your smartphone or computer, you can quickly report when your child will be **absent, tardy, leaving early coming back, leaving early not coming back, or riding a bus to a friend's house** (no more notes or phone calls required).

Please make every effort to communicate your child's plan with them before they leave for school. If you make a change in SDM after your child has left for school and they are unaware of the plan, please call the main office for assistance.

At the middle school level, you do NOT need to let us know about your child's plan at regular dismissal time (2:50). Just communicate that directly with your child. They are responsible for knowing what they are supposed to do at the end of the day. The default dismissal on SDM will always show your child's assigned bus, even if they choose not to take the bus.

Please report absences and tardies before 9:00a.m. When your student is tardy (which is any time after 8:00 a.m.), he/she will sign in at the security desk before reporting to class.

We strongly suggest planning ahead to create any dismissal exception in SDM before 9:00a.m. as well. However, please note that the cut-off time for same day entries is 1:30p.m. on regular days and 9:45a.m. on early release days. Calls are discouraged after cut-off times unless it is an emergency. We truly appreciate your cooperation with these expectations.