

Riverside Leadership Academy Student & Families Handbook 2024 – 2025



Riverside Leadership Academy
1955 Old Airport Road
New Bern, NC 28562
Phone: 252-276-2150 Fax: 252-276-2150

Dear Students and Families,

Welcome to Riverside Leadership Academy (RLA) in our inaugural year of operation! We are thrilled you have chosen to join us and entrust us with your child's education. Our commitment to excellence in education goes hand in hand with nurturing the emotional and social well-being of every student. We are so excited to work with all of our students and families to provide the best educational experience for our Pirates!

At RLA, we believe in taking an innovative approach to education through the power of Project-Based Learning (PBL) to foster creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration. Our curriculum is designed to engage students in real-world challenges, encouraging them to explore their interests and develop practical skills. Through PBL, students gain a deeper understanding of academic subjects by working on projects that have meaningful connections to their lives and communities. They will demonstrate their learning through authentic presentations, which we encourage our parents, guardians, and community to attend.

Equally important to us is the focus on a holistic approach to our students' education through Social Emotional Learning (SEL). We understand that academic success is deeply intertwined with emotional well-being. Responsive Classroom, our SEL program, is woven into every aspect of our school culture, helping students build resilience, empathy, self-awareness, and effective communication skills. By creating a supportive and inclusive environment, we empower students to navigate their emotions, establish positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.

Our dedicated and passionate educators are at the heart of this unique learning experience. They are not only teachers but also mentors who are committed to guiding and inspiring students. They work closely with each student, providing personalized support and encouragement to ensure that every learner reaches their full potential. To foster this, every student will have a Personal Adult Advocate (PAA), who will be a support to the student and a connection between the family, the student, and the school.

We also value the strong partnership between school and home. Families play a crucial role in students' educational journey, and we encourage open communication and collaboration. Throughout the year, we will offer a variety of opportunities for families to engage with the school community, from student-led conferences and presentations of learning, to volunteer events and school-wide celebrations. As you will see in our parental involvement expectations, we want our families to know that not only do we welcome involvement, we expect it, and look forward to working together to support our Pirates' educational journey.

As we embark on this exciting first year together, we invite you to embrace the spirit of curiosity, innovation, and compassion that defines Riverside Leadership Academy. Together, we will create a learning environment where every student feels valued, supported, and inspired to achieve their best.

We look forward to a wonderful year filled with growth, discovery, and joy.

Gratefully,

Siobhan Brewer

Executive Director

RLA Mission

Through project based and leadership curriculums, Riverside Leadership Academy develops confident, community focused, future ready leaders. Students thrive from meaningful connections between families, school staff, and community members curated by involvement of all stakeholders.

Vision Statement

Riverside Leadership Academy provides a holistic and innovative approach to the growth and development of our future leaders.

RLA Core Values

- To lead from where you are
- To empower courage and confidence
- To honor individuality
- To encourage curiosity, ambition, and initiative
- To promote a culture of approachability, open communication, and support

RLA Core Programs

Responsive Classroom

RLA will use Responsive Classroom as our primary approach to teaching, creating a safe, joyful, and engaging school community. We will include the six principles of this approach in all facets of our daily rhythms and routines.

These principles are as follows:

- Principle 1: Teaching social and emotional skills is as important as teaching academic content.
- Principle 2: How we teach is as important as what we teach.
- Principle 3: Great cognitive growth occurs through social interaction.
- Principle 4: How we work together as adults to create a safe, joyful, and inclusive school environment is as important as our individual contribution or competence.
- Principle 5: What we know and believe about our students—individually, culturally, developmentally—informs our expectations, reactions, and attitudes about those students.
- Principle 6: Partnering with families—knowing them and valuing their contributions—is as important as knowing the children we teach.

Expectations for the Responsive Classroom will be taught to staff through initial professional development and will be reviewed annually, will be taught to students through ongoing structured lessons and modeling, and will be posted throughout the building as visual reminders and cues for all.

Project-Based Learning

Our school will incorporate Project Based Learning (PBL) as our primary pedagogical method, ensuring that students consistently engage in real-life, meaningful projects in all grade levels. Our teachers will facilitate daily project-based learning (PBL) experiences for students to enhance students' curiosity, creativity, and collaborative skills, and to provide authentic opportunities for learning and growth. These experiences, when paired with traditional methods of teaching, will provide a well-rounded, comprehensive approach to learning.

School Hours

Students should arrive at school between 7:30-7:55 am to ensure that they are in class before they are marked tardy (after 8:00 am). Students who are arriving by car will be dropped off in the designated "carpool" area, where they will be greeted by staff and escorted into the building as needed. Students are expected to come into the building in an orderly manner and walk to class so that they can begin their day. After 8:00 am, the carpool line will close, and parents will need to park and check their students in.

Students who ride the bus in the mornings will enter the school through the designated “bus” area and will walk to class as well. Staff members and students who are assigned to “safety patrol” will be positioned throughout the school to help younger students as needed.

RLA Daily Schedule

Front Office Hours: 7:30 am-3:30 pm

School Hours for Students	
7:15 am	Teachers arrive and set up for their day.
7:30am	Students arrive and go to classrooms. Teachers will be at their classroom doors to greet students and to provide supervision as students navigate through the hallways.
8:00 am	Tardy bell rings. Students arriving after this time must go to the front office to get a tardy slip, which will then be given to their teacher.
8:10-8:35am	Schoolwide “Morning Meeting” and classrooms will view the school news program, the “Riverside Report.”
8:35am-2:50pm	Instruction that will include a 90-minute literacy block (as outlined in LETRS), a 90-minute math block, a 60-minute lunch/recess block, a 60-minute exploratory class, and daily time for PBL.
2:50-3:00pm	Closing Circle Meeting/Dismissal

Transportation Changes

Parents or guardians are required to send in a written note with their child if there is to be a change in their mode of transportation home for that day. Without a written note, the student will be sent home by their regular mode of transportation. These notes can be sent in on paper with the student or email and should include the following information:

- Student’s full name
- Student’s grade and teacher
- Date the change is occurring
- Mode of transportation that will be used that day (please note that students should not change to a bus rider, as seats are limited).

For any transportation changes made after 1pm, parents or guardians must follow-up the written note with a phone call to the front office to ensure that the teacher has checked their email.

Entering the School

All visitors to the school must check in through the front office in Building A. No visitors are allowed to enter Building B or Building C without an escort. Please utilize the call button outside of Building A to check your child in, out, or to enter the building as a visitor or volunteer.

Early Checkout

Ensuring your child's presence throughout the school day is crucial to maintaining uninterrupted learning. Whenever possible, please schedule appointments outside of school hours. In cases where this is not feasible, early check-out may be necessary. For early check-outs, please ensure that your child is checked out by 2:30 PM to minimize disruption to our dismissal process. Parents arriving after this time will need to join the carpool line for pick-up. Early check-outs require signing out by a parent/guardian or a previously approved adult. Students will only be dismissed once a parent or approved adult is physically present in the building for pick-up.

Attendance Policy

All students must be fully enrolled and should attend school regularly. Riverside Leadership Academy does not accept partial enrollment. Regular attendance is the best way to ensure that students master the curriculum. Riverside Leadership Academy will make every effort to protect instructional time from interruption and we ask that, whenever possible, parents/guardians schedule appointments (doctor, dentist) after school hours. For record keeping purposes, a child is marked absent when he or she misses half of the school day.

Excused Absences (All absences not listed below are unexcused)

- **Illness or injury.** When the absence results from illness or injury, which prevents the student from being physically able to attend school. The Lead Administrator or designee may require an official note from a physician.
- **Quarantine.** When isolation of the student is ordered by the local health officer or by the State Board of Health.
- **Death in the immediate family.** When the absence results from the death of a member of the immediate family of the student. The immediate family of a student includes, but is not necessarily limited to, grandparents, parents and siblings.
- **Medical or dental appointments.** When the absence results from a medical or dental appointment of a student. A written excuse should be presented with a doctor's signature or stamp.
- **Court or administrative proceedings.** When the student is a party to or is under subpoena as a witness in the proceedings of a court or administrative tribunal.

- **Religious observances.** When the student or the student's parent/guardian or custodian adheres to a religion whose tenets require, or suggest the observance of a religious event. The parent/guardian or custodian must seek prior approval of the Lead Administrator for such absences [and the approval should be granted unless the religious observance or the cumulative effect of religious observances is of such duration as to interfere with the education of the student].
- **Educational opportunity.** When the student obtains the Lead Administrator's prior approval of a valid education opportunity, such as travel or approved community experiences.
- **Military Deployment / Unification.** When the student is visiting with a parent or legal guardian who is an active duty member of the uniformed services, and has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting.

Procedures for Notifying Riverside Leadership Academy about Absences

Absences must be documented and lawful in order to be considered excused. On the day of the absence(s), parents/guardians should provide written documentation to a member of Riverside Leadership Academy staff (teacher or administrator) stating the reason for the absence. This can include an email, doctor's note, or written note from the parent. If you do not notify Riverside Leadership Academy, when the student returns to class, he or she must bring an explanatory note within three days. If Riverside Leadership Academy does not receive the explanatory note within three days, the absence will be marked unexcused.

Make-Up Work for Absences

Students are responsible for completing all missed work during absences. Unless extenuating circumstances warrant an extension, all missed assignments, quizzes, and tests must be made up within a specified timeframe. At the elementary level, teachers will collaborate with students and parents to ensure completion of missed work within this timeframe. Generally, homework will not be assigned prior to pre-planned absences, such as trips. Students suspended from school will have the opportunity to make up missed work and tests.

In middle school, students are responsible for identifying missed assignments, quizzes, and tests and completing them within the specified timeframe. Additionally, any student with 20 or more absences in one or more classes during the school year may face grade failure.

Truancy (Recurrent unexcused absences)

If a student is truant, the first step will be a conference with the parents/guardians. Should this prove unsatisfactory, next steps include possible notification of appropriate legal authorities and/or possible recommendation for long-term suspension or expulsion. Students absent more than 20 days may not be promoted and must meet with school administration to determine next steps, which could result in expulsion.

Late-Arrival/Tardiness & Late Pick-up

We understand that unforeseen circumstances like doctor's appointments or traffic may sometimes cause tardiness. However, we kindly request parents to make every effort to ensure their children arrive on time and prepared for the

day. Our morning meeting sets a positive tone for the day, and we encourage all students to participate. If you anticipate your child will be late, please notify their teacher as soon as possible so arrangements can be considered.

Tardiness disrupts instruction for the entire class, so students arriving late must sign in at the office. Excused tardies include student illness, medical or dental appointments, and family emergencies. All other tardies are considered unexcused.

Supervision is essential for student safety. Parents arriving after the designated carline time disrupt the afternoon schedule of teachers and staff. While emergency late pickups are understandable, frequent tardiness will result in consequences similar to tardies.

The table below outlines the consequences for cumulative absences, tardies or late pick-ups.

Number of Occurrence(s)	Action to be Taken
0-4	No Action
5-9	Letter home to parent/guardian and student. Late pick-up may need to have a conference with an administrator.
10-19	Required conference with the Attendance Committee that includes an Administrator and the School Counselor
20+	Parent/guardian and student required to conference with the Lead Administrator. The Lead Administrator will determine next steps, which could result in expulsion.

Releasing Students from School

Parents/guardians are the only people allowed to take a student from school. Prior arrangements with the school administration, however, may allow for others to do so. If a parent or guardian would like their child to be released to another adult, the request must come to Riverside Leadership Academy administration in writing prior to school dismissal. Riverside Leadership Academy staff will not release a child to anyone other than the student's parent or guardian without written documentation from the student's parent/guardian.

Discipline for Attendance

Rewards and penalties in the form of grades shall not be used as attendance incentives. Riverside Leadership Academy can develop attendance incentives that do not involve grades to encourage attendance. Riverside Leadership Academy administration does reserve the right to apply discipline consequences for students who knowingly "skip" classes or leave campus without permission. This shall be considered a behavioral issue and disciplinary action shall be appropriate if the behavior is excessive.

Minimum Attendance Requirement

A student is absent from school for the purposes of this section when the student is not present for at least half of the school day, whether the absence is excused or unexcused. A student is absent from a class for the purposes of this section if the student misses more than half the class period, whether the absence is excused or unexcused. Absences resulting from participation in school-sponsored activities will not count against the minimum attendance requirement. This policy does not limit a staff member or Executive Director from imposing disciplinary sanctions for students who miss portions of the school day or a class without excuse.

Partial Attendance for Extracurricular and Special Event Participation

Students must be present at school for at least half of the school day in order to participate in any extracurricular activities. The same applies for special events. Students must be considered present the day of the special event or evening student activity to participate in the event.

Providing Support to Students with Excessive Absences

The Executive Director and school staff shall take appropriate action to help prevent excessive absences and provide counseling for students with a history of excessive absences. A student's parent/guardian must be notified of excessive absences, and the teacher and counselor shall then work with the student and family to analyze the causes and determine steps to eliminate the problem. School administration shall designate a school employee to assist parents or other caretakers and counselors with chronic cases of absenteeism.

Unexcused/Unlawful Absences and Tardies

An absence/tardiness with or without parental permission which does not come under one of the lawful absence/tardiness categories will be considered as unexcused. Examples: Hair appointment, oversleeping, car trouble, shopping, traffic, DMV etc. (reasons not limited to those listed above)

Inclement Weather

In the event of inclement weather that will require a change in the school's operating hours, parents and staff will be notified by telephone through our automated notification system with Infinite Campus Messenger. For this system to be effective, it is extremely important for families to ensure that the school always has updated contact information on file. This information will include the most current information at the time of the call, but parents and staff will need to check the school website as well to ensure that this information hasn't changed since it can take the system a while to cycle through all of the numbers. Our social media presence and local news stations will also share notifications from the school about these changes.

Inclement Weather Delay Schedules

Type of Delay	Schedule
Two-Hour Delay	Carpool begins at 9:30am, school start at 10am
Three-Hour Delay	Carpool begins at 10:30am, school start at 11am

Change of Contact Information

When moving to a new address or when getting a new phone number or email address, parents are asked to inform the school to ensure that updated information is readily available. Parents or guardians can update their contact information through the Infinite Campus Parent Portal, or may send in a written note with this information that includes: their child’s full name, teacher’s name, grade, and the updated information.

2.007 Family/School Communications Policy

Riverside Leadership Academy’s Board of Directors recognizes that parents/guardians, families, caregivers, schools, and the community share the responsibility for the education of our students. Creating positive home, school, and community partnerships is essential to carrying out this shared responsibility successfully. To promote high student performance, school administrators, teachers, and parents/guardians must work as knowledgeable partners and communicate effectively to promote student achievement. In order to encourage effective communication, the Board also encourages parents/guardians to participate in activities designed by school personnel to involve them, such as student-led conferences and presentations of learning.

Parent/Guardian Communication and Conferences

The Board encourages regular contact with parents/guardians by school personnel with notification of both positive and negative interactions with their students. Riverside Leadership Academy’s administrators shall plan for periodic communications with parents/guardians annually. Teachers are responsible for scheduling and hosting two student-led conferences with parents/guardians, one conference in the fall and one conference in the spring.

At the student-led conferences, students will review and reflect on their academic progress. Riverside Leadership Academy believes it is important for the student to take personal responsibility for his or her own education, when developmentally appropriate. At the conferences, teachers will be present to explain all academic data to the parents and answer any questions the parents/guardians might have about their student.

We expect that all staff will respond to parent/guardian emails or phone calls within two school days. Any electronic communication to groups of parents shall be done using the blind-copy function so as to protect the email addresses of parents/guardians. All email communications sent to parents/guardians or other staff must be done from their school email address.

Student Service Hours/Parent Volunteer Hours

Per our charter, students at RLA are required to complete service hours. “Service to each other and to our community is an important part of our school’s culture since we are developing confident, community focused, future ready leaders. Therefore, students will be required to meet a minimum number of community service hours in order to be promoted to the next grade level (K-2: 5 hours, 3-5: 7 hours, and 6-12: 10 hours). Several of these hours will be completed as part of the Project Based Learning process. Since many of the relevant issues’ students try to solve are community based, PBL and this requirement allows our students to serve the community and in turn, develops relationships with local community members.” In our first year of operation, these service hours will be completed through the school.

Per RLA’s charter requires parent volunteer hours. Per our charter, “Each family is also required to complete service hours. However, these Parent Involvement Hours must be in service to their child’s educational experience. RLA’s families are expected to volunteer for various opportunities on our campus (volunteering in the classroom, participating in school activities, participating in parent organizations, attending meetings on campus, attending school productions, etc.). We believe children do best with a village behind them and, therefore, will do everything we can to engage with parents and community members as partners in education.” We will begin tracking these hours in quarter 2. There are many ways parents can earn these hours, and the school will provide many opportunities to earn them

School/Family Communication Processes

At the beginning of each school year (in grades K-7) students will be assigned to a staff member who will act as their Personal Adult Advocate (PAA). This PAA will be responsible for providing an initial positive contact with families, as well as ongoing support and communication as needed to keep families abreast of the student’s progress, including areas of strength and opportunity. As students enter into the upper grades (9-12), their assigned advocate will act as their advisor as the student begins the trek on their determined career- or college-path.

Teachers at RLA will be expected to maintain their own classroom communication to give a glimpse into the class’ daily schedule, learning targets, and units of focus for PBL. This website will also provide information needed for parents to communicate with their child’s teacher, including email address and other platforms used, such as Class Dojo. Parents should allow 24-48 hours for teachers to respond to emailed messages on school days. In the event of an emergency or if an immediate response is needed, parents should contact the front office using the school’s main number.

RLA will also maintain a school website and social media accounts to communicate with families about important information and/or upcoming events. A monthly newsletter for parents, including important upcoming dates, will be available on the website.

Annual Notifications

The Executive Director or their designee shall effectively notify parents each year of the following:

- The Code of Conduct and school rules.
- The Student-Parent Grievance Procedure.
- Grading Practices.
- The manner in which school officials, in emergency situations during non-school hours, may be contacted.
- Procedural safeguards for parents/guardians of students with disabilities.

- That the school does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, sexual orientation, or age.
- A list of athletics and extracurricular activities available to students.
- Information about meningococcal meningitis and influenza, including the causes, the symptoms, the vaccines, the manner in which diseases are spread, and places at which additional information and vaccinations may be obtained.
- For students in grades five through twelve, information about cervical cancer, cervical dysplasia, and human papillomavirus, including the causes and symptoms of these diseases, the manner in which they are transmitted, the manner in which they may be prevented by vaccination, including the benefits and possible side effects of vaccination, and places where parents and guardians may obtain additional information and vaccinations for their children.

Parental/Guardian Permission is required prior to the following:

- Administration of medications to students by employees of the school.
- Any release of student records that are not considered directory information unless the release is allowed or required by law.
- Off-campus trips.
- All decisions or actions as required by the IDEA with regard to providing special education (EC) or related services to children with disabilities.
- Certain health services, as required by law.
- A student's participation in programs or services providing information about the manner in which students may obtain contraceptives or abortion referral services.
- Disclosure of a student's free and reduced lunch eligibility status.

Any parent or legal guardian wishing to withhold consent for any of these program activities must do so in writing after receiving notice. Otherwise, consent for their student's participation in all programs or activities not opted out of are presumed.

Carpool Procedures

Carpool will begin at 7:30 am each morning. Families should pull into the right hand side of the carpool lane, forming lane 1, where they will wait until they come to a designated cone with an adult to drop off their child. If lane one becomes full, cars will be instructed to pull into the left hand side of lane 1, forming a second line. Families should ensure that students are ready to exit the vehicle as soon as they get to the cone, with all materials ready to go. Unless there are extenuating circumstances that have already been arranged with the front office staff, family members should not get out of their car during carpool to assist students. Once cars have dropped off their students, they should exit the property by turning right onto the main road and going through the Taberna neighborhood to reach Hwy. 70.

In the afternoons, carpool will begin immediately after buses and vans have departed for their routes. Families will line up as they did in the morning, lining up in lane 1 (all the way to the right of the carpool lane). Families will receive carpool tags for their children the first week of school. These should be displayed on rearview mirrors so that the teacher calling students for carpool will be able to see which children to call. Cars should move up as far as they can in the

carpool line and ensure that students only enter their car when the car is completely stopped at a cone. Cars should exit the property by turning right onto the main road and going through the Taberna neighborhood to reach Hwy. 70.

Bus Safety and Procedures

Students will be trained on bus safety and bus procedures during the first week of each semester.

School Meals

School lunch can be brought from home or ordered through My Hot Lunch Box. Outside fast food should not be brought to students at any time, unless a parent has scheduled to have lunch with their child for a special occasion. Should a student forget their lunch, their lunch should be brought to the office no later than 11:00 am.

For the 2024-2025 school year, we will be partnering with My Hot Lunchbox, a company which allows families to order lunches online from local restaurants. These restaurants will be determined at the beginning of each semester and will offer a la carte items that range from around \$5-\$9. Families will be able to order at the beginning of each month through the website or the app, but also have the option of changing or adding orders up to 12pm the day before. Meals will be delivered to the school individually packaged, labeled, and sorted by restaurant partners. My Hot Lunch Box is a peanut-free company and vendors will offer at least one gluten-free and one vegetarian option.

Riverside Leadership Academy will offer a free- and reduced-lunch program for qualifying students. This income-based program is a credit program and will ensure that students from low socioeconomic households have access to hot meal options daily. Families who qualify for free and reduced lunch will be required to provide proper documentation of family income and household size within the first week of school. Those who do qualify will receive a credit of \$6.00 per day in the My Hot Lunchbox program. Any ordering over the credit provided by the school will be the parent's responsibility to pay for.

Birthday Celebration Guidelines

Our students are special and should be celebrated, and at RLA we believe that recognizing students on their birthdays can be a fun and uplifting experience. Student birthdays will be announced on our school-wide news program. In an effort to be sensitive to families with students who have severe food allergies or are experiencing financial hardships, we would like to encourage families to work with their child's teacher to determine a non-food way to celebrate this special day. Some examples may include: coming in and having lunch with your child, purchasing a special book for our school "library" or their own classroom "library" in their honor, having a special show and tell, or bringing in a special activity that they will enjoy.

School/Family/Community Partnerships

At RLA, we believe that our greatest success is in our partnerships with families and community members. Parents are welcome to come into our school as visitors or volunteers, provided that they adhere to the School Volunteer Policy. We recognize that strong relationships between families and schools are necessary for student engagement and growth, and

these relationships are best fostered through open communication, active family involvement, and commitment to the school's overall vision and mission.

As part of our school-wide commitment to celebrate the individuality of all of our Pirates, students will participate in projects at each grade level that will provide specific opportunities for family cultural elements to be shared. We embrace the diversity of our student population and encourage parents to reach out to teachers to collaborate on additional ways to share unique traditions and celebrations.

Our school will also actively seek out opportunities to partner with local community members and businesses, to find ongoing ways to enhance the learning experiences and environment for students, families, and staff. One opportunity that RLA will provide for family and community engagement is our designated Curriculum Nights and family events. RLA is committed to providing AT LEAST one of these events in the fall semester and one in the spring semester. Additional events sponsored by our exploratory teachers and/or Parent Teacher Organization will also be offered.

2.008 Campus Visitors Policy

All visitors at Riverside Leadership Academy must sign in at the front office. All visitors are required to wear a visitor badge while on campus. Once a visitor has checked in, they will be escorted to their destination. All visitors must abide by the policies set forth in the Riverside Leadership Academy Parent-Student handbook at all times.

Family members are welcome to join the student during lunch on designated days. The student's teacher will communicate the days of the week that are open for visitors during lunch. Visitors and volunteers should notify the teacher if they plan to visit during lunch so that the teacher can plan accordingly and/or let the visitor(s) know of any changes to the daily schedule.

In the event a parent/guardian requests to observe their student's class, the parent/guardian must make an appointment directly with the Executive Director or their designee to visit a class for this purpose. Unexpected visits are not allowed because they disrupt classroom instruction and routines.

2.006 Dress Code Policy

Riverside Leadership Academy's Board of Directors created a dress code to help promote unity by encouraging a sense of belonging and pride in the school community. It also is designed to discourage bullying, victimization, and socio-economic discrimination. It reduces social pressure and peer conflicts and encourages students to concentrate more on their studies than on their wardrobe by creating a learning environment free of unnecessary distractions.

Any apparel that includes graphics or lettering that are vulgar, obscene, have profane language or that Riverside Leadership Academy Administration deems inappropriate, such as clothing that inappropriately exposes students' bodies, is prohibited and may result in disciplinary action. If a student's dress or appearance violates the dress attire policy, it will result in a Class 1 infraction (see student discipline policy) and students may be required to change.

In all aspects of student dress, Riverside Leadership Academy Administration reserves the right to deem student apparel out of compliance and inappropriate. The school administrators shall exercise appropriate discretion in implementing this policy, including making reasonable accommodations to these rules for religious, cultural, or medical reasons.

TOPS

Tops are defined as shirts, sweatshirts, hooded sweatshirts, blouses, jackets, vests, and sweaters.

Permissible Tops include:

- Tops that have a primary color of gray, white, black, or blue
- Any official RLA school apparel, regardless of color including tops related to athletic teams, clubs, and other programs endorsed by Riverside Leadership Academy.
- Tops that have small brand logos such as those on the breast pocket of a polo or t-shirt

Prohibited Tops include:

- Tops in any color other than the permissible colors listed under Permissible Tops
- Tank tops, sleeveless tops, camisoles, or cut off shirts
- Tops that expose undergarments
- Tops with images, words, or lettering

All jackets, coats, pullovers and hoodies, worn in the school building, must meet the same standards of Permissible Tops as described above. If a student wears a jacket or coat that does not meet these requirements, they must remove it once they enter the school building.

BOTTOMS

Bottoms are defined as shorts, pants, jeans, leggings, athletic pants/shorts, capris, skirts, and dresses.

Permissible Bottoms include:

- Bottoms that have a primary color of navy, blue, gray, black, or khaki.
- Any official RLA school apparel, regardless of color including tops related to athletic teams, clubs, and other programs endorsed by Riverside Leadership Academy.
- Bottoms that have small brand logos such as those located on hips, hems, or pockets.

Prohibited Bottoms include:

- Bottoms with holes, rips, or excessive distress that exposes undergarments or students' bodies.
- Bottoms in any color other than the permissible colors listed under Permissible Bottoms
- Bottoms that expose undergarments
- Bottoms with images, words, or lettering

All bottoms must be worn at or above the waistline. Waistline is defined as in line with the student's navel. Students who wear bottoms that RLA administration deems inappropriate will be considered out of dress code.

OTHER APPAREL

Socks/Shoes

- For students in grades K-5, all shoes must have a back or heel strap. Flip flops and slides are NOT permitted.
- For students in grades 6-7, all shoes including flip flops and slides are permitted.
- Slippers/house shoes are prohibited for all students K-7.

Headgear & Sunglasses

- Sunglasses are not to be worn inside the school building.
- Hats, bandanas, & beanies are not to be worn inside the school building.
- Religious or culturally significant headgear including, but not limited to hijabs, yamakas, or headscarves are permitted inside the school building.

College Day Guidelines

- Students may wear a permissible top with a College/University logo or lettering displayed on it.

Dress Down/Spirit Day Guidelines

- Students can dress outside of the primary color requirements and clothing should meet all other dress code requirements.
- Dress down days include project celebrations, athletic events, and other occasions as noted on the calendar and directed by school administrators, school leaders, or coaches.

5.004 Student Code of Conduct Policy

Policy Overview

Riverside Leadership Academy requires respect and responsibility for self and others, which includes respect for property, honesty, punctuality, and reliability, and accountability. RLA views student conduct as the responsibility of all students, staff, parents/guardians, and community participants. Vital to creating this climate is our social/emotional curriculum delivered as outlined in the Student-Family Handbook, specifically through our daily morning meetings/sessions, afternoon closing circles, and throughout the school day utilizing Responsive Classroom practices and techniques. It is Riverside Leadership Academy's intention to use positive reinforcement and to promote ethical responsibility.

Riverside Leadership Academy's expectations for student behavior are based upon the following governing principles:

- Students will act with courtesy, consideration, tolerance, and patience in all interactions with others both at school and during school-sponsored activities.
- Students shall treat school property and facilities with care and respect.
- Students shall treat the property of others with care and respect.
- Students will follow Riverside Leadership Academy Student Code of Conduct and be honest in all academic and social situations.
- Student behavior will reflect positively upon Riverside Leadership Academy.

Maintaining clear disciplinary philosophies and practices is imperative to the success of our school. In doing so, Riverside Leadership Academy will help students adjust to the requirements of their environment rather than punish them for not having adjusted. RLA's disciplinary system is meant to be responsive and not humiliating or embarrassing. The ultimate, unique achievement of good discipline is self-discipline on the part of the student. Each teacher/team is responsible for managing student behavior in a manner that incorporates effective strategies consistent with the purpose and principles established by Board policies regarding student behavior. Teachers are encouraged to seek positive, innovative, and constructive methods of correcting and managing student behavior in an effort to avoid repeated misbehavior and suspension.

Overview of Consequences

Consequences for violating the policies in this handbook, teacher/team standards, or rules may include, but are not limited to the following:

- Parental/Guardian contact
- Loss of privileges
- Behavior improvement agreements (contracts)
- Individual or small group sessions with an administrator
- Detention during lunch or before/after school
- Exclusion from extracurricular activities
- Suspension or exclusion from Riverside Leadership Academy

Riverside Leadership Academy is not required to engage in progressive discipline. Some offenses are so serious that they warrant more severe consequences including, but not limited to, immediate suspension and/or recommendation for longer-term consequences.

The behaviors listed in our Student Code of Conduct are not to be construed as all-inclusive. The administration reserves the right to amend or add to these lists as unique situations arise. The administration further reserves the right to deviate from the stated disciplinary action(s) based on unique or aggravating factors.

Failure to follow the instruction of a teacher, administrator, or other school official and any conduct in violation of any written rule, policy, procedure, or code of Riverside Leadership Academy will result in appropriate disciplinary measures.

Code of Conduct Definitions

- Behavior Referral - A behavior referral is a specific written record of the student's act of misconduct. It documents the date, nature of the offense, and the disciplinary action taken by the teacher, School Leader, and/or dean.
- Behavior Support Plan (BSP)/Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) - A behavior support plan (BSP), also known as a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP), is a written document that identifies the motivation for chronic misbehavior and what steps will be taken in order to help a student overcome inappropriate behavior. It will be signed by school administration and offered to the student and parent(s) for signature.
- Behavior Contract - A behavior contract is a written document that outlines specific behavior expectations, strategies for teaching the appropriate behavior(s), and disciplinary action(s) for a student.
- Exclusion - Permanent removal of the student from school, school activities and school grounds. A charter school student who has been excluded may return to his local educational agency pursuant to North Carolina law.
- Expulsion - Permanent termination of the student-school relationship. This applies only to students 14 years of age or older whose continued presence constitutes a clear threat to the safety of other students or school staff.
- Long-Term Suspension - Suspension from school, school activities and school grounds for more than ten (10) school days, but less than exclusion.
- Short-Term Suspension - Suspension from school, school activities and school grounds for a period of up to ten (10) school days.

Level 1 Behaviors

Level 1 Behaviors are those behaviors that may distract others and/or disrupt the academic environment:

- Tardiness
- Use of profanity and/or an obscene gestures
- Inappropriate public displays of affection
- Dress Code violations
- Littering on school property
- Repeatedly refusing to complete school assignments
- Violation of the Technology Use Agreement
- Repeatedly neglecting to bring computer, notebook, pencil and/or other learning materials to class

Level 2 Behaviors

Level 2 Behaviors are those behaviors that significantly distract others and/or significantly disrupt the academic environment:

- Repeatedly committing Level 1 behaviors.
- Failure to comply with Level 1 assigned consequences.
- Deliberately disrupting the normal educational process in the classroom.
- Failure to attend an assigned class without a valid excuse, skipping school, or cutting classes.
- Lying to or deliberately deceiving a teacher or a staff member.

- Willfully leaving the classroom or school grounds without permission.
- Failure to follow instructions of school staff.
- Unauthorized or inappropriate use of any electronic device while on school property not associated with the educational process during normal school hours.
- Throwing objects in the classroom or on school grounds.
- Insubordination.
- Violations of the Honor Code such as cheating and/or plagiarism.
- Bullying/harassing behaviors as defined by Board policy 1.008, Prohibition Against Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying.
- Any conduct committed off-campus that (a) if committed on campus would constitute a Level 2 offense and (b) has a reasonable relationship to school operations.

Level 3 Behaviors

Level 3 Behaviors are those behaviors that cause significant disruption to the academic environment or cause harm to self or others. Level 3 behaviors may result in a short-term suspension (less than 10 days) either on-site or off-site:

- Stealing from a teacher or a student.
- Defacing school, classroom, or student property.
- Threatening a student or teacher.
- Fighting/inappropriate physical contact (Non-Sexual).
- Extreme or persistent incidents of bullying/harassment.

Level 4 Behaviors

Riverside Leadership Academy scholars will be taught that level 4 behaviors cause extreme breaches in the security, growth, and development of our community. These breaches are often difficult to repair because they disrupt relationships and break down trust:

- Committing a combination of or repeated Level 1, Level 2, and/or Level 3 offenses.
- Trafficking, possessing and/or using tobacco/nicotine products on school property or at a school-sponsored event including the use or possession of electronic cigarettes or paraphernalia.
- Stealing or possessing stolen property.
- Threatening to physically harm or attack another student, staff member or adult on school property or at a school-sponsored event.
- Physically striking or attacking a student, staff member or adult whether as an individual act or with the assistance of others.
- Possessing, handling, transferring or bringing a weapon or ammunition (including a toy weapon; example – toy gun, toy knife) on school property or at a school-sponsored event*.

- Creating or encouraging other students to join in a disturbance, so as to cause the disruption of normal school operations.
- Possessing, selling, exchanging, distributing, attempting to purchase, using or being under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, drug paraphernalia, or any substance purported to be an illegal drug, prescription medicine or alcohol on school property or at a school-sponsored event. This includes distribution of or purposely taking more than the prescribed amount of medically necessary prescription medication.
- Touching or conduct perceived as sexual or inappropriate in nature.
- Damage/destruction/vandalism/arson of or trespassing on school property.
- Hazing.
- Bomb threat/hoax, false alarms.
- Possession or use of explosives, fireworks, sparklers, smoke/stink bombs on school grounds or at a school-sponsored event.
- Any conduct committed off-campus that (a) if committed on campus would constitute a Level 3 offense and (b) has a reasonable relationship to school operations.
- Creating or encouraging other students to join in a disturbance, so as to cause the disruption of normal school operations.

Additional behaviors that can result in long-term suspension (greater than 10 days) include the following:

- Repeated fighting
- Setting off the fire alarm without cause
- Possession of tobacco, drugs/alcohol, and/or weapons
- Sexual activity/assault
- Gang-related activity
- Extreme harm to self or others
- Possession and/or distribution of pornography
- Taking unauthorized or inappropriate photos or videos of another individual

*Any student who inadvertently possesses or finds a weapon or illegal substance or stolen property, which may subject the student to exclusion, may or may not be recommended for these sanctions if the student voluntarily surrenders the property to a school staff person prior to discovery by another person. This should be done as soon as the student realizes that he/she is in possession of the weapon, substance, or stolen property.

Level 4 behaviors require that severe steps be taken to restore a sense of safety and trust. The Executive Director shall have the authority to suspend a student for up to ten (10) school days at a time (i.e., a Short-Term Suspension). There are no appeals for short-term suspensions of 10 days or less. Any student who has been given out-of-school suspension three or more times in the same academic year may be recommended for exclusion. Riverside Leadership Academy will not expel any scholars under the age of 14 in accordance with state law.

For Level 4 offenses, the Executive Director may recommend a Long-Term Suspension, and/or Exclusion, and/or participation in a Behavioral Contract. Decisions as to Long-Term Suspensions and/or Exclusion shall be made by the Executive Director after appropriate written notice to the involved parties and a hearing, if one is requested. In the absence of the Executive Director, the Board Chair shall appoint a hearing officer. Student appeals from the decision of the Executive Director or hearing officer shall be heard by a panel of three Board members who shall be appointed by the Board Chair. Appeals must be made in writing to the Board Chair within ten (10) days of the decision of the Executive Director or hearing officer. The hearing of the panel will occur at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting date, unless the family is otherwise notified. Decisions of the Board panel shall be final, and there will be no further appeal to the full Board of Directors.

Bullying or Harassing Behavior

See RLA Guidance: 1.008 Prohibition Against Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Policy - RLA

Rights for Students with Disabilities

See RLA Guidance: 5.007 Discipline for Exceptional Children’s Students – RLA

Personal Belongings and Cell Phones

At RLA, we are committed to the emotional and physical safety of all students, In support of this, we will hold our students to a high standard regarding cell phone possession and use.

At this time, students grade kindergarten through third grade should not have a personal cell phone device on campus. Students in fourth grade through seventh grade may have personal cell phone devices only if they adhere to the classroom teachers’ specific expectations for these devices. Cell phones should be powered off and remain in backpacks or in a designated area as indicated by the classroom teacher.

Students are expected to ensure that their personal belongings are secure while on school property. RLA will not be held liable for students’ personal belongings. Parents and guardians who allow for personal devices on campus must sign agreement that states that RLA is not responsible for securing personal belongings and devices, and that students who do not adhere to the outlined expectations of this policy and their classroom teachers’ expectations lose the privilege, and devices may be confiscated by school administration until they can be picked up parents or guardians,

2.009 Grading Systems Policy

The policy of the Board of Directors is to strive for a consistent and just evaluation of each student at Riverside Leadership Academy. To ensure the effectiveness of this policy, the Board of Directors endorses the following beliefs and best practices:

- Student grades should reflect academic achievement

- While attendance and behavior may influence a student’s learning, they should be reported separately, and not a factor in the student’s grade
- Teachers should compare each student’s performance against pre-set standards, not against the performance of other students.
- For missing work, teachers should provide reasonable opportunities to complete make-up assignment(s) in order to demonstrate the targeted learning
- Teachers should provide students and their parents/guardians with a clear explanation of their grading practices including the weighting of formative and summative assessments and rubrics as appropriate.
- All assessments and assignments, including teacher-made tests should be designed to assess student achievement accurately and aligned with the North Carolina Essential Standards and the Riverside Leadership Academy Charter.

Grading Scale

Kindergarten – Fifth Grade students will not receive traditional letter grades on their report cards. However, they will receive a Standards Based Report Card. A Standards Based approach allows parents and students to understand Riverside Leadership Academy's educational program as well as strategies to support student success. Traditional grades often measure many different factors - how well students do in comparison to their classmates and/or how well behaved they are in class. Standards based evaluations measure how well an individual student is doing in relation to grade level standards and skills, not the work of other students. Teachers use the results of the on-going assessments to determine a student’s present level of performance and relation to the mastery of grade level content. The report cards will provide meaningful and relevant information, detailing each student’s social/emotional and academic development.

In a Standard Based Report Card, grades reflect four levels of performance. They are:

- 4 - Exceeds grade level expectations with consistency and accuracy;
- 3 - Meets grade level expectations with consistency and accuracy;
- 2 – Making progress/developing- indicates the student is approaching and occasionally meets the standards for the current grade level; and
- 1 – Concern - indicates the student has not yet met minimum level standards.

Sixth - Twelfth Grade Letter and/or numerical grades will be given; the grading scale shall be as follows:

- A = 90-100 Excellent
- B = 80-89 Above Average
- C = 70-79 Average
- D = 60-69 Proficient

- F = 0-59 Not Proficient

Grading Parameters

Students earn grades based on material outlined in the North Carolina Essential Standards. Students' grades will reflect their actual performance in the course. Percentage grades will be used on report cards, cumulative folders, and transcripts.

The following grading parameters are in place for the 2024-2025 school year and will be followed by all Riverside Leadership Academy's applicable grade levels:

- Make-up Work – When a student is absent, the student has 3 school days to turn in missed work upon returning to school. The day the student returns to school is Day 1 of the 3 days.
- Late Work – Teachers shall have autonomy to develop a late work policy within their grade level teams. Before each school year the grade level teams will determine their late work policy and communicate it to their student's parents/guardians. When determining their policy, teachers shall consider how the policy effectively helps them assess student comprehension of the curriculum and not student behaviors. Riverside Leadership Academy's administration must approve any late work policy before it is implemented.
- Teachers will have autonomy when determining grade categories weights/percentages. (classwork, homework, Tests, etc.) Teachers will communicate these weights/percentages with Riverside Leadership Academy's administration and parents/guardians at the beginning of each school year.
- When completing team/group assignments, students shall not be penalized for the incomplete work of others. In some situations, the student could receive a group grade and an individual grade. Teachers will determine whether they assign a group and individual grade.
- The final grade may include tests, quizzes, projects, group/team work, labs, research papers, homework, class participation, classwork, etc.

Homework Expectations

Homework will be given at times, though it should be a minimal amount and shall be used solely to enhance the classroom learning experience and connect families to students' learning. Research supports additional practice whenever this practice is brief, has clear purpose, and is relevant to the student's individual educational needs. Teachers should also be considerate of families' schedules outside of school hours and collect homework at the end of each week, allowing for parents to work with their children on assignments when their schedules allow.

In lower grades (K-5), homework may include daily reading (may be recorded on a nightly log), brief practice of math skills, or completion of incomplete class assignments. At times, students may be asked to complete activities as an extension to class projects.

In upper grades (6-7), homework may be assigned at the teacher's discretion, but must adhere to the school's overall philosophy, assigned as a brief, relevant practice with clear purpose.

2.010 Report Cards

Teachers shall keep parents/guardians informed of student progress at school. Each family will receive a report card for their student at the end of each 9-week grading period. The report card will include each student's grade in all of the courses they are enrolled in based on the 10-point grading scale. The report may also include teacher comments. In addition to the report card that is sent home, additional information may need to be sent to the parent/guardian or individual conferences may need to be scheduled.

Kindergarten - Fifth Grade: students will receive a Standards-Based Report Card. Please see the Riverside Leadership Academy Grading Policy for more information regarding the Standards Based Report Card.

Report cards shall include the number of days absent and the number of days tardy.

Each student receiving exceptional children's services will receive an assessment of the student's progress toward goals on the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) at the end of each grading period, including whether the student is likely to reach IEP goals by the end of the school year. The student's IEP shall state how the student's parent/guardian will receive this assessment.

Progress Reports

Parental/Guardian communication of student progress is essential in providing quality instruction. Teachers will communicate each student's progress and identify areas of concern. All parents/guardians will receive communication regarding the progress of each student between report cards, regardless of the level of progress.

Interim Progress Reports Schedule

Interim progress reports shall be distributed to each student according to a schedule determined by Riverside Leadership Academy's administration.

Interim Progress Reports to Students with Disabilities

Each parent/guardian of a student receiving exceptional children's services will receive an assessment of the student's progress toward goals on the student's Individual Education Plan whenever the student receives a formal progress report under this policy. The student's IEP shall state how the parent/guardian will receive such assessments.

2.003 Retention and Promotion Policy

Riverside Leadership Academy's Executive Director has the authority to promote and to retain students based upon the standards set by the Board of Directors and by the State Board of Education. Students are required to meet promotion standards that include demonstrated grade level proficiency on local assessments, standardized tests, report cards, and student work. In order to be promoted to the next grade level, students in all grades should be proficient in reading and mathematics, which may be demonstrated through North Carolina End-of-Grade tests, school assessments, student portfolio of work, and report card grades. A promotion decision should not be made solely on the basis of a state assessment.

The Executive Director shall consider the following criteria when making decisions regarding student promotions:

1. Satisfactory performance on all relevant state End-of-Grade (EOG) assessments
2. Passing final grades in core academic classes
3. Satisfactory performance on PBL project content and presentations
4. Satisfactory classroom performance on all teacher-initiated standards and criteria for advancement and promotion in core academic classes
5. Daily Attendance records

Students With Disabilities

To the extent possible, students with disabilities shall be held to the same promotion standards as all other students. However, for students with IEPs who take alternative assessments in lieu of the EOG or the EOC tests in their respective grades and/or high school courses, promotion decisions shall be based on criteria as recommended by the IEP team. Such decisions may or may not be tied to passing or failing course grades and/or other promotion requirements.

All intervention strategies and other opportunities, benefits, and resources that are made available to students without disabilities shall be made available to students with disabilities who are subject to these promotion standards. Such opportunities must be in addition to the special education services provided to students with disabilities.

Each IEP team, with the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) as members (and the student themselves as member, where appropriate) shall work together to determine the appropriate course of study for that student.

Retention

If a student appears likely to be retained, then the parent/guardian of the student shall receive at least two (2) notices. The first notice may be a conference; the second notice must be in writing and must be provided by the end of the third quarter. The Executive Director's office must provide in writing an official notice of retention to the parent/guardian by the last day of school.

Pursuant to state law, third graders who fail to achieve reading proficiency may not be promoted unless a statutory exception applies. Parents/Guardians of impacted students will be informed of the law's application. Any parent who wishes to learn more about this law and its application should contact their student's third grade teacher, the Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and School Culture, or the Executive Director.

5.000 Student Records Policy

Policy Overview

All student records shall be up-to-date and shall be maintained with appropriate measures of security and confidentiality. Riverside Leadership Academy abides by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) with regard to the procedures for inspection, review and disclosure of student records as set forth in 20 U.S.C. § 1232g, 34 C.F.R. Part 99. Records protected by this policy include any recorded information directly related to a student and maintained by Riverside Leadership Academy. Student records do not include the records of school personnel that are in the sole possession of the maker and which are not accessible or revealed to any other person except a temporary substitute for the person who made the record.

The official record shall contain, as a minimum, adequate identification data including date of birth, attendance data, grading and promotion data, and such other factual information as may be deemed appropriate by the Riverside Leadership Academy Board. The official record of each student enrolled at Riverside Leadership Academy shall be permanently maintained in the files until after the student graduates, or should have graduated, from high school.

Student official record will also contain any notice and notice of any suspension of more than 10 days (long-term suspension) or exclusion and the conduct for which the student was suspended or excluded.

Each student's official record also shall include notice of any long-term suspension or expulsion imposed pursuant to G.S. 115C-390.7 through G.S. 115C-390.11 and the conduct for which the student was suspended or expelled.

The Executive Director or designee shall expunge from the record the notice of suspension or expulsion if the following criteria are met:

- The student graduates from high school or is not suspended or excluded during a two year period following the student's return to school after the suspension or exclusion;
- The Executive Director determines that maintenance of the record is no longer required to maintain safe and orderly schools; and,
- The Executive Director determines that the maintenance of the record is no longer needed to adequately serve the student.

The Executive Director shall expunge a notice of long-term suspension or exclusion from the student's record if all of the above criteria are met and a request for expungement is made by a parent, legal guardian, custodian, student who is at least 16 years old or student who is emancipated. Additional rights of parents and eligible students concerning a student's special education records are explained in the Handbook on Parents' Rights and the North Carolina Policies Governing Services for Children with Disabilities.

Riverside Leadership Academy will adhere to all federal laws relating to maintaining student files. The following information regarding The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) comes from the US Department of Education website (<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>).

Student Record Request and Withdrawal

North Carolina Public Schools, along with Riverside Leadership Academy, use an electronic student database. Once a student is registered to attend another school, a request is sent to Riverside Leadership Academy, and records are released to the school. Once we receive a student record request, the student is dropped from our enrollment.

Access to Student Records

The natural parents/legal guardians of a student, or an individual acting as parent in the absence of a parent or legal guardian, have the right to review the contents of the child's student record.

Students 18-years of age or older or who are married (emancipated students) have the right to review their own school records. The parent/guardian of an emancipated student may examine the student's records if the child is classified as a dependent of the parent/guardian under federal income tax regulations.

When a child's parents are separated or divorced, the records will be open to both parents unless a current court order specifying otherwise is provided to school officials. A copy of any court order restricting a parent's access to a student's files shall be included with the student's cumulative record and shall be followed by all school personnel.

FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students."

Parents and eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Riverside Leadership Academy is not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records. Riverside Leadership Academy may charge a fee for copies.

Parents or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If Riverside Leadership Academy decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.

Generally, Riverside Leadership Academy must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows Riverside Leadership Academy to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):

- School officials with legitimate educational interest;
- Other schools to which a student is transferring;
- Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
- Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;

- Accrediting organizations;
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
- Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
- State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

Riverside Leadership Academy may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. If a parent/guardian would prefer that Riverside Leadership Academy not release directory information about their student, they must inform the Executive Director in writing.

Riverside Leadership Academy employees, contractors and volunteers are exposed to confidential information daily. Information concerning students and their families should be treated as confidential information, including personally identifiable information from students' education records. The Riverside Leadership Academy staff with access to this information do not have the right to give this information to anyone who does not have a legitimate professional reason for access. Teachers or other staff members can be held liable for the individual release of information. Staff members are not permitted to discuss information about their students in open areas or where parents or other students have access. Anything said in meetings discussing students is considered confidential.

A student's name should not be placed in the subject box of an email. Their names should also be treated as confidential. FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students."

If parents/guardians have questions regarding FERPA or have received a request for educational records, they should contact the Executive Director. See FERPA: <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>.

2.000 School Calendar Policy

The Board of Directors of Riverside Leadership Academy delegates the responsibility of developing, and maintaining the annual school-year calendar to the Executive Director. The Executive Director shall recommend and the Board shall approve a school calendar by March 15th before the start of each school year and may present a calendar adoption for 2 consecutive years. The calendar shall include a minimum of 1025 instructional hours and shall include provision for inclement weather and teacher workdays. Riverside Leadership Academy will also adhere to GS 115C 84.2 and will close on Veterans Day or the day in which Veterans Day is observed each year.

In order to make informed and reasonable decisions regarding the school calendar, the Executive Director and Board of Directors may or may not seek the input of the Riverside Leadership Academy staff members, students, and parent organizations.

Riverside Leadership Academy 2024-2025 Calendar

July							August							September							October						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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7	8	9	10	11	12	13	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
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21	22	23	24	25	26	27	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
28	29	30	31				25	26	27	28	29	30	31	29	30						27	28	29	30	31		
November							December							January							February						
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24	25	26	27	28	29	30	29	30	31					26	27	28	29	30	31	23	24	25	26	27	28		
March							April							May							June						
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23	24	25	26	27	28	29	27	28	29	30				25	26	27	28	29	30	31	29	30					
30	31																										

First Day of School – August 21
 Last Day of School – May 30 (Early Release)
 Inclement Weather Make Up days:
 4/21, 06/02, 06/03

Quarter 1 – Aug. 21 – Oct. 23 (Report Cards: Nov. 1) 44
 Quarter 2 – Oct. 28 – Jan. 15 (Report Cards: Jan. 24) 44
 Quarter 3 – Jan. 21 – Mar. 19 (Report Cards: April 4) 42
 Quarter 4 – Mar. 31 – May 30 (Report Cards: June 6) 42

■ Campus Open for Teachers ■ PD Day
■ Required Teacher Workdays ■ Student Led Conference Days
■ Holidays/No School

Riverside Leadership Academy will adhere to the State requirement of at least 1025 instructional hours* (172 days, 1032 hours)

Semester 1: August 21 - January 15 (88 Instructional days) **Semester 2:** January 21 - May 30 (84.5 Instructional days) **Total Instructional Days:** 172

Board Adopted: August 8, 2024

Parent's Bill of Rights Compliance Policies

THESE POLICIES WILL BE POSTED AND AVAILABLE ON THE SCHOOL'S WEBSITE.

Riverside Leadership Academy believes that parent and family involvement must be aggressively pursued and supported by our communities, in homes, schools/colleges/universities, neighborhoods, businesses, faith congregations, organizations, and government entities by working together in a mutually collaborative effort. As such, the Board is committed to developing policies to involve parents in schools and their child's education effectively. N.C.G.S. § 115C-76.20(b)(3).

All parents/families and educators must prioritize family involvement in education; thus, the Board commits to providing support and coordination for school staff and parents to implement and sustain appropriate parent involvement.

Improved student achievement must be the equally shared responsibility and the goal of parents, teachers, the school system, and the community. Thus, the Board commits to seeing that each school has effective volunteer programs to address student needs and commits to utilizing schools to assist students and families in connecting with community resources.

The Board commits that it will impact student achievement significantly by improving the quality and quantity of parent/family involvement. Consequently, the Board will provide guidance, support, cooperation, and the necessary funding to enable parents to become active partners in education.

A. Parent Rights

A parent has the right to the following:

- (1) To direct the education and care of their child.
- (2) To direct the child's upbringing and moral or religious training.
- (3) To enroll their child in a public or nonpublic school and in any school choice options available to the parent for which the child is otherwise eligible by law to comply with compulsory attendance laws, as provided in Part 1 of Article 26 of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes.
- (4) To access and review all education records, as authorized by the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1232g, relating to their child.
- (5) To make health care decisions for their child, unless otherwise provided by law, including Article 1A of Chapter 90 of the General Statutes.
- (6) To access and review all medical records of their child, as authorized by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), P.L. 104-191, as amended, except as follows:

- a. If an authorized investigator requests that information not be released to a parent because the parent is the subject of an investigation of either of the following:
 - A crime committed against the child under Chapter 14 of the General Statutes.
 - An abuse and neglect complaint under Chapter 7B of the General Statutes.
 - b. When otherwise prohibited by law.
- (2) To prohibit the creation, sharing, or storage of a biometric scan of their child without the parent's prior written consent, except as authorized pursuant to a court order or otherwise required by law, including G.S. 7B-2102 and G.S. 7B-2201.
- (3) To prohibit the creation, sharing, or storage of their child's blood or deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) without the parent's prior written consent, except as authorized pursuant to a court order or otherwise required by law, including G.S. 7B-2201.
- (4) To prohibit the creation by the State of a video or voice recording of their child without the parent's prior written consent, except a recording made in the following circumstances:
 - a. During or as part of a court proceeding.
 - b. As part of an investigation under Chapter 7B or Chapter 14 of the General Statutes.
 - c. When the recording will be used solely for any of the following purposes:
 - A safety demonstration, including one related to security and discipline on educational property.
 - An academic or extracurricular activity.
 - Classroom instruction.
 - Photo identification cards.
 - Security or surveillance of buildings, grounds, or school transportation.
- (5) To be promptly notified if an employee of the State suspects that a criminal offense has been committed against their child, unless the incident has first been reported to law enforcement or the county child welfare agency, and notification of the parent would impede the investigation.

B. Limitations on the right to parent:

- (1) The requirements of this Article do not authorize a parent to do any of the following:
 - a. Engage in unlawful conduct.
 - b. Abuse or neglect of the child, as defined in Chapter 7B of the General Statutes.
- (2) The requirements of this Article do not prohibit the following:
 - a. A State official or employee from acting in their official capacity within the reasonable and prudent scope of their authority.
 - b. A court of competent jurisdiction from acting in its official capacity within the reasonable and prudent scope of its authority or issuing an order otherwise permitted by law.

C. Pursuant to N.C.G.S. § 115C-76.25, the School shall display on its website the following parental legal rights regarding their child’s education:

- (1) The right to consent or withhold consent for participation in reproductive health and safety education programs, consistent with the requirements of G.S. 115C-81.30. The School will provide parents with a consent form prior to such programming.
- (2) The right to seek a medical or religious exemption from immunization requirements, consistent with the requirements of G.S.130A-156 and G.S. 130A-157. Please consult the Student Handbook for this information.
- (3) The right to review statewide standardized assessment results as part of the State report card. The School will provide such information following such assessments.
- (4) The right to request an evaluation of their child for an academically or intellectually gifted program or for identification as a child with a disability, as provided in Article 9 of this Chapter. Please consult the Student Handbook for this information.
- (5) The right to inspect and purchase public school unit textbooks and other supplementary instructional materials, as provided in Part 3 of Article 8 of this Chapter. Please refer to the School's Policy on Curriculum, Textbooks, Supplementary Materials and Library Materials.
- (6) The right to access information relating to the unit's policies for promotion or retention, including high school graduation requirements. Please consult the Student Handbook for this information.
- (7) The right to receive student report cards on a regular basis that clearly depict and grade the student's academic performance in each class or course, the student's conduct, and the student's attendance. Please consult the Student Handbook for this information.
- (8) The right to access information relating to the State public education system, State standards, report card requirements, attendance requirements, and textbook requirements. Please consult the Student Handbook for this information as well as the Department of Public Instruction.
- (9) The right to participate in parent-teacher organizations. This information will be provided directly from the parent-teacher organization.
- (10) The right to opt into certain data collection for their child, as provided in Part 5 of this Article and Article 29 of this Chapter. Please consult the Student Handbook for this information
- (11) The right for students to participate in protected student information surveys only with parental consent, as provided in Part 5 of this Article. Please consult the Student Handbook for this information.
- (12) The right to review all available records of materials their child has borrowed from a school library. Please refer to the School's Policy on Curriculum, Textbooks, Supplementary Materials, and Library Materials.

D. Parent Guide for Student Achievement Pursuant to 115C-76.30.

The Parent Guide to Student Achievement is an effort by the State Board of Education (“SBE”). The SBE’s Guide will be posted on the School’s website once it has been provided by the State Board of Education and going forward at the beginning of each school year. The SBE’s Guide will be in writing, understandable to students and parents, and discussed at the beginning of the school year during Open House, Back to School events, or in any forum designated by the School. The SBE Guide shall meet the requirements set forth in N.C.G.S. 115C-76.30.

E. The School’s Guide for Student Achievement Pursuant to 115C-76.30.

- (1) The School has chosen to comply with these provisions by ensuring the following information is in the Student Handbook available on this School’s website:
 - a. Requirements for students to be promoted to the next grade.
 - b. School entry requirements, including required immunizations and the recommended immunization schedule.
 - c. Ways for parents to do the following:
 - Strengthen their child's academic progress, especially in reading, as provided in Part 1A of Article 8 of this Chapter.
 - Strengthen their child's citizenship, especially social skills, and respect for others.
 - Strengthen their child's realization of high expectations and setting lifelong learning goals.
 - Enhance communication between the school and the home.
- (2) The School has chosen to comply with 115C-76.30, making the following information available through its website; the Student Handbook found on the School’s website; School and classroom communications (hard copy or via email); communications from the School’s PTO; as well as through any other medium appropriate to communicate in an understandable way with parents and students:
 - a. Services available for parents and their children, such as family literacy services; mentoring, tutoring, and other academic reinforcement programs; college planning, academic advisement, and student counseling services; and after-school programs.
 - b. Opportunities for parental participation, such as parenting classes, adult education, school advisory councils, and school volunteer programs.
 - c. Opportunities for parents to learn about rigorous academic programs that may be available for their child, such as honors programs, Career and College Promise and other dual enrollment opportunities, advanced placement, Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) courses, International Baccalaureate, North Carolina Virtual High School courses, and accelerated access to postsecondary education.
 - d. Educational choices available to parents, including each type of public-school unit available to residents of the county in which the child lives and nonpublic school

options, educational choice options offered within the public school unit, and scholarship grant programs under Part 2A of Article 39 and Article 41 of this Chapter.

- e. Rights of students who have been identified as students with disabilities, as provided in Article 9 of this Chapter.
- f. Contact information for school and unit offices.
- g. Resources for information on the importance of student health and other available resources for parents, including the following information on available immunizations and vaccinations:
 - A recommended immunization schedule in accordance with the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations.
 - Information about meningococcal meningitis and influenza, as required by G.S. 115C-375.4.

F. Efforts to Increase Parent Involvement Pursuant to § 115C-76.35.

The School shall, in consultation with parents, teachers, administrators, and community partners, develop and adopt policies to promote parental involvement and empowerment. The School will use existing committees, communication mediums, and structures to engage in the consultation requirement set forth in § 115C-76.35 and/or may create new avenues to comply with this provision. Opportunities and information will be available on the School's website and/or in community and/or school communications. The School will ensure policies provide for parental choices as set forth in SB49, establish parental responsibilities, and provide for parental involvement, which shall include the following:

- (1) Providing links to parents for community services.
- (2) Establishing opportunities for parental involvement in developing, implementing, and evaluating family involvement programs.
- (3) Establish opportunities for parents to participate in school advisory councils, volunteer programs, and other activities.

G. The School has established policies to do all the following:

- (1) Provide for parental participation in their child's education to improve parent and teacher cooperation in areas such as homework, school attendance, and discipline that aligns with the parent guide for student achievement required by G.S. 115C-76.30. ***Please consult the School's website and Student Handbook on the School's website.***
- (2) Effectively communicate to parents the way textbooks are used to implement the school's curricular objectives. ***Please refer to the School's Policy on Curriculum, Textbooks, Supplementary Material, and Library Materials; the School's website; and the Student Handbook on the School's website.***

- (3) Establish a procedure for parents to learn about their child's course of study and the source of any supplementary instructional materials. This procedure shall include the process for parents to inspect and review all textbooks and supplementary instructional materials that will be used in their child's classroom. The policy shall be available for in-person review by parents at the school site and publicly available on the school's website. For this section, a textbook is defined in G.S. 115C-85, and supplementary instructional materials include supplementary textbooks, periodicals, audiovisual materials, and other supplementary materials used for instructional purposes. ***Please refer to the School's Policy on Curriculum, Textbooks, Supplementary Materials, and Library Materials.***
- (4) Establish a means for parents to object to textbooks and supplementary instructional materials. ***Please refer to the School's Policy on Curriculum, Textbooks, Supplementary Materials, and Library Materials.***
- (5) Establish a process for parents to review materials for and to consent or withhold consent for participation in reproductive health and safety education programs consistent with the requirements of G.S. 115C-81.30. The School already provides such review, notice, and consent requirements and will continue to follow our current procedures. ***Please consult the Student Handbook available on the School's website for further information.***
- (6) Establish a process for parents to learn about the nature and purpose of clubs and activities offered at their child's school, including both curricular and extracurricular activities. Such information will be provided through School and/or classroom communications. ***Please also consult the Student Handbook available on the School's website.***

H. Further Compliance

- (1) The qualifications of teachers, including licensure status, will be made available to parents at the beginning of each school year and updated from time to time as needed. This information will include teacher degrees, licensure status, and any other information necessary to comply with §115C-76.30(1)(d).
- (2) Our School is a school of choice. Parents have other educational choices available to them, including traditional district schools, non-public schools (religious and secular), other charter schools, and home schools. Information on scholarship programs is available at [Opportunity Scholarship - NCSEAA \(https://www.ncseaa.edu/k12/opportunity/\)](https://www.ncseaa.edu/k12/opportunity/)

I. Student Health Notifications Pursuant to N.C.G.S. § 115C-76.45

- (1) The School does not prohibit school employees from notifying a parent about their child's mental, emotional, or physical health or well-being or a change in related services or monitoring.

- (2) The School does not encourage or have the effect of encouraging a child to withhold from that child's parent information about their mental, emotional, or physical health or well-being or a change in related services or monitoring.
- (3) School personnel shall not discourage or prohibit parental notification of and involvement in critical decisions affecting a student's mental, emotional, or physical health or well-being except where a reasonably prudent person would believe that notification would result in the child becoming an abused juvenile or neglected juvenile, as those terms are defined in G.S. 7B-101 or jeopardize the student's safety.
- (4) Notifications:
 - a. At the beginning of each school year ,the school nurse will notify parents about each healthcare service offered at the school and provide information on how parents can consent to such service. The school nurse or school counselor will notify parents of changes, prior to or contemporaneous with changes, in service or monitoring related to their child's mental, emotional, or physical health or wellbeing and the school's ability to provide a safe and supportive learning environment for that child. (§115C-78.45)
 - b. The school nurse or school counselor shall notify parents of kindergarten through grade three students of any student well-being questionnaire or health screening form prior to administration and shall provide information on how parents can consent to such questionnaire or health screening.
 - c. The Executive Director or her designee shall provide notice of a change prior to any changes in the name of a pronoun used for a student in school records or by school personnel except where a reasonably prudent person would believe that notification would result in the child becoming an abused juvenile or neglected juvenile, as those terms are defined in G.S. 7B-101 or jeopardize the student's safety.
 - d. The School's policy and procedure for parents to exercise the parental remedies provided by G.S.§ 115.C-76.60 is set forth in this policy, **Entitled Parental Remedies.**

J. **Timelines for parental requests for information under § 115C-76.40.**

- (1) This information parents have a right to access under this SB49 has been made accessible to parents as set forth in this policy. Parents are encouraged to review this policy and the policies referenced herein before making a request for information under § 115C-76.40.
- (2) A parent of a child enrolled at our School may request in writing from a teacher or administrator any of the information the parent has the right to access, as provided in this Part. The request must be made via email sent to mainoffice@riversideleadershipacademy.org and addressed to the teacher or administrator, Within 10 business days, the teacher or administrator shall either (i) provide the requested information to the parent or (ii) provide an extension notice to the parent that, due to the volume or complexity of the request, the information will be provided no later than 20 business days from the date of the parental request.

- (3) If the teacher or administrator: (i) denies or fails to respond to the request for information within 10 business days or (ii) fails to provide information within 20 business days following an extension notice as provided in subsection (2) of this section, the parent may request in writing any of the information the parent has the right to access, as provided in this Part, from the Executive Director along with a statement specifying the time frame of the denial or failure to provide information by the principal.
- (4) If the Executive Director denies or does not respond to the request for information within 10 business days, the parent may appeal the denial or lack of response to the governing body of the public school unit no later than 20 business days from the date of the request to the Board of Directors, as provided in subsection (2) of this section. The Board shall place the parents' appeal on the agenda for the next regularly scheduled board meeting occurring more than three business days after submission of the appeal. During that meeting, the Board shall make a decision regarding the appeal. The Board's decision under this section is final and is not subject to judicial review.

K. Student support services training § 115C-76.50.

Student support services training developed or provided by the School to the school personnel shall adhere to student services guidelines, standards, and frameworks established by the Department of Public Instruction.

L. Parental rights to opt-in to protected information surveys § 115C-76.65

- (1) Definitions:
 - a. Adult student – An enrolled student who is 18 or older or an emancipated minor.
 - b. Protected information survey – A survey, analysis, or evaluation that reveals information concerning any of the following:
 - Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student's parent.
 - Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student's family.
 - Sex behavior or attitudes.
 - Illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior.
 - Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships.
 - Legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, and ministers.
 - Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or student's parent.
 - Income other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such program.

- (2) The School shall make the following available to parents and adult students at least 10 days prior to administration of a protected information survey. The public school unit shall provide opportunities for review of the following both electronically and in person:
 - a. The process for providing consent to participation in the protected information survey.
 - b. The full text of the protected information survey.
- (3) No student shall be permitted to participate in a protected information survey without the parent or the adult student's prior written or electronic consent.
- (4) The requirements of this provision are in addition to the rights provided to parents and students under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment, which are set forth in the Student Handbook available on the School's website.

M. Procedures and Remedies for Parent Concerns

This provision sets forth procedures and remedies required by § 115C-76.60. A parent has the right to notify the principal about concerns under this policy pursuant to § 115C-76.60. The School's procedures and remedies for parental concerns are as follows:

- (1) The parent shall submit in writing a detailed description of their concern to the School via email at mainoffice@riversideleadershipacademy.org. Such description shall clearly state the SB49 procedure or practice of concern. For a concern to be covered by this Section, it must be a concern about the School's procedure or practice under SB49.
- (2) Within seven business days of receiving the concern, the Executive Director or her designee shall either:
 - a. Resolve the concern and notify the parent of the resolution, or
 - b. Develop a plan for resolution and notify the parent of the plan to resolve the concern within 30 days of receiving written notification of the concern from the parent, or
 - c. Notify the parent of why the concern cannot be resolved.
- (3) If the concern is not resolved within 30 days, a parent may do one of the following:
 - a. Notify the State Board of Education and request a Parental Concern hearing, or
 - b. Bring an action against the school as provided in Article 26 of Chapter 1 of the North Carolina General Statutes for a declaratory judgment that the unit's procedure or practice violates N.C.G.S. § 115C-76.45, § 115C-76.50, or § 115C-76.55.
- (4) The court may award injunctive relief to a parent and shall award reasonable attorneys' fees and costs to a parent awarded injunctive relief.

N. Reporting requirements under § 115C-76.70

- (1) The School shall report annually by September 15 the following information to the State Board of Education in a format designated by the State Board:
 - a. The most current version of the policies and procedures adopted as required by this Article, with any modifications of the policy or procedure from the prior year's submission clearly delineated.
 - b. The following information from the prior school year:
 - The number of appeals to the governing body under G.S. 115C-76.40 and the percentage of appeals decided in favor of the parent and in favor of the administration in the prior school year.
 - The number of statements provided to parents as required by G.S. 115C-76.60(a).
 - The number of parental concern hearings involving the public school unit as provided in G.S. 115C-76.60(b)(1).
 - The number of actions brought against the public school unit as provided in G.S. 115C-76.60(b)(2) and the number of declaratory judgments entered against the public school unit.

O. School's Policy on Curriculum, Textbooks, Supplementary Material, and Library Materials.

- (1) **Compliance with SB49.** In compliance with SB49, this policy serves to communicate understandably and effectively the manner in which textbooks are used to implement the school's curricular objectives. In addition, this policy establishes a procedure for parents to learn about their child's course of study and the source of any supplementary instructional materials. Our procedure includes the process for parents to inspect and review all textbooks and supplementary instructional materials that will be used in their child's classroom. Finally, this policy also establishes a means for parents to object to textbooks and supplementary instructional materials consistent with the requirements of N.C.G.S. 115C-9
- (2) **Parent Participation.** Parent participation in their child's education is important and encouraged. We strongly encourage parents and teachers to cooperate regarding homework, school attendance, and discipline. Information and ways parents can help their children and encourage cooperation with their child's teacher are included in our Student Handbook as well as the following: our student/family handbook, teacher/parent communication, monthly newsletters, and student-led conferences and presentations of learning.
- (3) **Charter School exemptions.** A charter school is exempt from statutes and rules applicable to a local board of education or local school administrative unit. As such, the School determines its own curriculum and textbooks and is not bound by the laws governing local boards of education and local school administrative units. The School has the sole authority to select and procure

curriculum, textbooks, supplementary instructional materials, and library materials. Further, the School has the sole authority to determine if the materials are related to and within the curriculum's limits and when the materials may be presented to students during the school day. In general, supplementary books and other instructional materials shall neither displace nor be used to the exclusion of basic textbooks where the School has selected textbooks.

- (4) **Textbook Definition.** For the purposes of this section, a textbook is defined as a systematically organized material comprehensive enough to cover the primary objectives outlined in the standard course of study for a grade or course. Formats for textbooks may be print or nonprint, including hardbound books, softbound books, activity-oriented programs, classroom kits, and technology-based programs that require the use of electronic equipment to be used in the learning process. Textbooks do not include supplementary instructional materials, including supplementary textbooks, periodicals, audiovisual materials, and other supplementary materials used for instructional purposes.
- (5) **Requirements of § 115C-76.55.** Instruction on gender identity, sexual activity, or sexuality shall not be included in the curriculum provided in grades kindergarten through fourth grade, regardless of whether the information is provided by school personnel or third parties. For the purposes of this section, the curriculum includes the standard course of study and support materials, locally developed curriculum, supplemental instruction, textbooks, and other supplementary materials but does not include responses to student-initiated questions. Further, students may discuss gender identity, sexual activity, and sexuality with the school counselor and/or social worker, or any adult they feel comfortable with. This provision shall be implemented consistent with Title IX, and where a conflict arises between the two laws, federal law will control. Nothing in this provision prevents school staff and teachers from appropriate classroom displays not inconsistent with any school policy on such displays.
- (6) **Use and Purpose of Textbooks.** The School selects and uses textbooks as part of its curriculum and course of study. The textbooks selected are intended to advance the school's curricular objectives.
- (7) **Process For Selecting Curriculum, Textbooks, Supplementary Books And Instructional Materials.** The School's process for selecting curriculum, textbooks, supplementary books, and instructional material is as follows: teachers have the autonomy and authority to select instructional materials conducive to Project Based Learning and in alignment with the North Carolina Standard Course of Study.
- (8) **Procedures for Learning about the Course of Study.** Parents are provided their child's course of study, including textbooks and the source of any supplementary instructional materials in a variety of ways: in our Student Handbook, at Open House, at Back to School night, and through teacher communications. Personal Adult Advocates will communicate regularly with parents, teachers will communicate with parents regarding academic progress and learning, and student-led conferences and presentations of learning will occur throughout the school year.

(9) Parents may inspect and review all textbooks and supplementary instructional materials that will be used in their child's classroom at an open house, Back to School Night, and by making an appointment with their child's teacher to be held between the hours of 7:30 am and 3:30 pm_. They will also participate in student-led conferences and presentations of learning, which will highlight instructional materials and learning that occurs in the classroom.

(10) Process for Library Check Out and Notification

Students may be able to check out books from their classroom library. We have also partnered with the local library to allow students to check out books from the Book Mobile provided by the local library.

P. Process for Parent Challenges to Textbooks and Supplementary Instructional Materials.

(1) The School reserves the right to create an advisory committee to investigate and evaluate challenges from parents, teachers, and members of the public to textbooks and supplementary instructional materials on the grounds that they are educationally unsuitable, pervasively vulgar, or inappropriate to the age, maturity, or grade level of the students. To the extent the School establishes such an advisory committee, information about that advisory committee will be communicated to parents, teachers, and the community.

In the event the School has not established such an advisory committee, parents may submit challenges to textbooks and supplementary instructional materials for the following reasons only: the textbook and/or supplementary materials are educationally unsuitable, pervasively vulgar, or inappropriate to the age, maturity, or grade level of the students. There are no other grounds for challenges to textbooks or supplementary materials under this provision.

(2) To submit a challenge to a particular textbook and/or supplementary material, the parent shall submit in writing a detailed description of their challenge to the School. Such challenges must clearly identify the textbook and/or supplementary material they are challenging, and what precise material they contend is educationally unsuitable, pervasively vulgar, or inappropriate to the student's age, maturity, or grade level. The parent should also provide suggestions for alternatives to such textbooks and/or supplementary materials that they are challenging. Challenges must be sent to the School via email at mainoffice@riversideleadershipacademy.org or sent via mail or hand delivered to the School's address and designate on the outside of the letter: *Textbook and/or Supplementary Material Challenge*.

(3) An administrator shall review such challenges and respond to the challenge within ten (10) business days.

(4) If the decision does not resolve the matter, the parent may file a written appeal to the Executive Director if they were not involved in the initial review of the challenge. The Executive Director shall review and respond to the challenge within five (5) business days.

(5) If the Executive Director is not able to resolve the matter, the parent may file a written appeal on the record with the School's Board of Directors within five (5) business days. There are no

hearings on appeal, and decisions will be based solely on the written challenge provided by the parent and information provided by the School. The appeal must comply with section (1) above. The Board will designate a Board Panel to review the challenge and communicate its decision to remove or retain the challenged material within twenty (20) business days. The Board Panel's decision is final.

- (6)** The Board always has sole authority and discretion to determine whether a challenge has merit and whether challenged material should be retained or removed. There is no appeal from a decision of the Board Panel.
- (7)** Timelines set forth herein may be extended for good cause.