

Athol Elementary Schools Student Handbook 2019-2020

Athol Community Elementary School

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Royalston Community School

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Dear Families,

Welcome to the Athol Elementary Schools. We are so happy to have you as part of our school community. We look forward to providing a safe and happy learning environment while challenging all students to be their best.

It is our goal to provide excellent learning to the community in which we serve and to meet the needs of all students. These early years for students are critical to the development of all student areas, social emotional and academic. We embrace each child as a whole child and fully consider all aspects of your child's development as a successful learner.

At ACES, our staff work collectively to provide consistent behavioral expectations through our core values of being kind, safe and responsible. Students are taught expected behaviors in these values as part of their routines that structure their school day. These routines include their classroom, the cafeteria, the playground, the bus and any other place a student participates in across the school day. Students receive ACER cards as tokens to collect and to cash in, when they are recognized throughout the day for being **kind**, **safe** and **responsible**.

These values are further defined as:

Kind: Thinking of your actions and acting in a positive way that is mindful of others and self.

Safe: Actions that keep our bodies and others secure in one's surroundings.

Responsible: Taking ownership of our actions within the community of our school.

Students with behavior infractions may be asked to fill out a Think Sheet that allows them to reflect on the choice(s) made and participate in a "fix up," a restorative piece of problem solving for improved behavior in the future. Behavior incidents of this nature are tracked to make decisions about further supports for student success.

As we partner with you in any way possible for our student's success, we are always looking for ways to make our school better. We appreciate constructive feedback for this purpose. We look forward to a positive learning experience for all our students.

This Handbook provides important information for Parents/Guardians and Students. It is not intended to cover all policies, rules and regulations used to operate the schools. If you have any questions, please feel free to call your child's elementary school.

General Rules

School Rules apply and are enforced at all times when students are on school grounds, all ARRSD property, on school buses, during all school events, field trips, and during all school sponsored activities.

In all matters, the Principal/Administration reserves the right to exercise his/her discretion.

Daily Schedules/Dismissals

Individual school schedules are available at each school. It is important that you note the times your child can arrive to school, when breakfast begins and dismissal times and procedures. All students are dismissed at 12:00 on half days. All students who are not leaving school on a bus or leaving school with a parent/guardian after school **MUST** have a note from the student's parent/guardian.

Arrival/Departure Times

Students should arrive at school between 8:15 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. and report directly to their classroom. Breakfast is served in classrooms at the start of school. No student should arrive before 8:15 a.m. The school day ends at 3:05 p.m. Students should leave school by 3:05 p.m., unless they are under the direct supervision of an adult.

School Closings/Delayed Openings

In the event of a storm or hazardous road conditions or other emergencies requiring schools to be closed, announcements will occur over the following radio stations or will be listed on the following television stations: WCAT (700) AM, 99.9 FM in Orange, WSRS (96.1 FM) in Worcester, WJDF (97.3) in Orange, WWLP, TV 22 Springfield, WGGB TV 40 Springfield, WCVB TV 5, and WBZ (TV4) in Boston.

Parents may also opt to be included in the One Call Now to get telephone messages about school closings.

Student Release Procedures

If it is necessary for your child to leave school during the day, he/she will need to be excused by the classroom teacher and signed out in the office by the adult picking the child up. Children will only be released to adults listed on the registration form or with a note signed by the parent/guardian. Adults picking up children may be asked for identification if the school staff does not know them. Students will be called to the office when the person releasing them arrives at school. This maximizes their time on learning so that no student is waiting for extended periods in the office.

Attendance Policy

Our learning day begins at 8:30 a.m., attendance will be taken daily and monitored carefully for each student. While there are a number of reasons that a student may be absent from school, the principal has legal responsibilities when the number of absences exceeds a certain limit. A student may be considered truant and court proceedings may be initiated when the student accumulates seven unexcused absences in a six-month period (Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 76, Sec. 2). The decision whether an absence is determined to be excused is made by the principal, not by the parent/guardian. Diligent attention is given to attendance. All students need to attend school on a regular and consistent basis. The elementary schools wish to partner and problem solve any barriers keeping students from attending. School meetings are designed for this purpose, along with accountability for school attendance that fosters student success.

The attendance protocol at ACES is as follows:

- A call is made home when a child is absent without an explanation.
- After three days of absences/tardies during the school year, there is a specific conversation about the importance of attendance that includes where the student falls in terms of the number of absences.
- Once a child has missed five days, families receive a letter, signed by the Principal, invoking the Excessive Absences Tracker to monitor further missed school time. A referral is made to the Guidance Department.
- Upon the seventh absence, a meeting will be scheduled with the family and the Assistant Principal and/or Guidance Counselor.
- When a child's record contains ten absences, a meeting with the Principal, Guidance Counselor and Teacher is held for a clear demonstration of how the absenteeism is impacting the child's learning.

- Further steps may be filing with the Court for a Child Requiring Assistance (CRA) or with the Department of Children and Families for educational neglect.

Please see the District Handbook for further details about attendance.

If your child arrives late to school, they should check into the main office prior to going directly to class. As a school community, we look forward to building learning experiences with your child and do not want them to miss any opportunities that will make them successful. However, if your child is unable to arrive to school on time, a meeting may be scheduled to develop an attendance plan that will help them be successful.

Please inform your child's school, as soon as possible before 8:45 a.m., if your child will be absent due to illness or other reasons. As a school, we want every opportunity for your child to be met with success; we will pay close attention to attendance and have every expectation that all students attend school on a regular and consistent basis.

Visitation Procedures for Parents, Volunteers, and Guests

In the interest of keeping our school safe, we are highlighting our procedures for visiting our school. We would ask that when entering our school, visitors ring the bell at the entrance door, buzz in, sign in at the office and wear a guest tag. Visitors must have made prior arrangements to visit classrooms. Tardy students and early dismissals will take place in the main office area to minimize classroom disruption. Our students' safety is our number one concern.

Delivering Items to Students During School Hours

If a member of a student's family needs to bring the student an item during school hours (instruments, lunch, homework) they will deliver the item(s) to the main office. Main office staff will ensure that items are delivered to the classroom with the least amount of disruption to the class. Party invitations are not to be delivered if anyone in the classroom is excluded.

Morning Announcements

Each morning at ACES begins with students making morning announcements using the PA system. Students lead the school community in the Pledge of Allegiance, and make brief announcements. At ACES students remind the school community of the core values through the school motto; "we are kind, we are safe, we are responsible, we are ACES!"

Lunch Rules

- Students must show respect to cafeteria workers and staff, following lunch supervisors' and cafeteria workers' directions in the food lines and at all times during lunch.
- Students must stay seated except to get lunch, return their tray, buy a snack and at dismissal time.
- Students may raise their hand to request access to the bathroom or to ask other questions of cafeteria duty staff/teachers.
- All food should remain in the cafeteria. No food is allowed on the playground.
- All lunches must be eaten in the cafeteria, unless designated by the administration.
- Students should remain in the cafeteria during lunch and not be permitted in other areas during lunch, except when accompanied by an adult.
- Students may not throw, toss, or forcefully slide food or drink.
- It is expected that students will clean up their area during lunch. If multiple infractions occur, students may be asked to practice cleaning up during other times of the day.
- Students must walk quietly to and from lunch staying to the right in the hallways.
- Students must follow all other school rules while in the lunchroom.
- Lunch menus go home at the beginning of each month and are posted on the district website: www.arrsd.org

Appropriate disciplinary actions will be taken when there is a violation of the lunch rules. All disciplinary actions are at the discretion of the administration. These may range from a warning, to an alternative lunch, or even an in school or out of school suspension. Other consequences may assigned by administration.

Bus Rules

Students must adhere to bus rules whenever they ride on a school bus. All students will practice bus evacuation procedures twice during the school year. If students violate bus rules, they may be asked to practice bus rules during their free time at school.

Waiting for the Bus

- Students should be at their bus stop ten minutes before the published pick-up time.
- Students should practice safety around roadways and avoid crossing streets when possible.
- Students should not move toward the bus to board until the bus has come to a full and complete stop.
- Appropriate behavior is expected at the bus stop.

Riding on the Bus

- Students are to be seated quietly at all times while buses are in motion and cannot change seats.
- Student will sit with their back against the seat and their feet in front- no feet in the aisles.
- Students will NOT eat food while on the bus.
- Nothing is to be thrown either on the bus or out the windows.
- Listen carefully and obey any directions issued by the driver.
- All body parts (hands, arms, etc.) must remain in the bus at all times.
- Stay seated while the bus is in motion.
- Use appropriate language and volume.

Unloading from the Bus

- Students should remain seated until the bus has come to a complete stop and the driver has opened the door.
- Students will follow the instructions of the bus driver.
- Students will leave the bus in a quick but courteous and safe manner.
- Students who must cross a street as they depart the school bus, must walk in front of the bus (never in back) at a distance of at least 12 feet from the bus.
- Students will observe all safety precautions as you travel from your bus stop to home.

Loss of riding privileges initiated from the Bus Behavior Report form:

Students may be asked to practice bus riding skills during free time at school, such as recess, or during an alternative lunch. Students engaging in unsafe or inappropriate behaviors may be suspended from riding the school bus for a period of time up to the remainder of the school year. There is one warning given before students may be removed from the bus. Such suspension will be initiated by the administration. During any suspension of the bus privileges parents are responsible for transportation. It is expected that students will attend school; absences due to a lack of transportation will be unexcused.

Car Transportation

Families choosing to drive students to school or pick up students to transport home, should use the community entrance parking lot for pickup and drop-off. This area is used for both morning drop off and afternoon pick up. Students should not arrive earlier than 8:15 a.m., unless an adult is available to supervise the student. It is unsafe to drop students off, unsupervised prior to 8:15. The front door entrance is available for students with special circumstances as long as the office is notified of the need. At ACES families obtain a pick up number affiliated with students and their siblings, to hang in their car to foster efficiency when picking up. Please be sure the student is aware of his/her pick up number.

Electronic Devices

Cell phones are primarily allowed for emergency use only. The student's cell phone must be turned off and MUST remain in the child's backpack or with the teacher at all times. If a student is using a cell phone and does not have permission, the device will be confiscated and sent home with the student at the end of the day. The school district cannot be responsible for any lost, damaged, or stolen cell phones or electronic devices. A second offense will warrant a parent or family member retrieving such device from the teacher/ front office. Cell phones are not allowed on field trips. Electronic devices may be used on the bus at the discretion of the driver, provided they are used to access appropriate content and do not cause disruption of those around the area.

Personal Items/Toys

Personal items/toys must be stored during the school day. Whenever possible these items should be kept at home. The school is not responsible for lost, stolen or damaged personal items/toys brought to school.

Computer Use Policies

Students will sign these policies and parents are asked to do the same in order to access chrome book usage at school.

Students shall not:

Attempt to access or send email unless created by the school district.

Attempt to access chat rooms or personal gathering websites deemed inappropriate like instagram, snapchat, facebook, etc.

Access or type in any Internet address (URL) unless directed to do so by their teacher.

Reveal their account password or shall not permit or authorize any other person to use their name or login password.

Gain unauthorized entry into a file, either to read or change information or transfer files.

Use another individual's account or vandalize another user's data.

Degrade damage or disrupt equipment or system performance.

Gain unauthorized access to network resources.

Download, install or load programs or disks onto a specific school computer.

Use the network to access and/or transmit material in violation of any U.S. or Commonwealth law, including copyrighted material.

Access, download, display, transmit, produce, generate, copy or propagate any material that is obscene or pornographic material; that advocates illegal acts, that contains ethnic slurs, or racial epithets; or that discriminates on the basis of gender, gender identity, national origin, sexual orientation, race, religion, ethnicity, disability or age.

Use of the Internet for personal commercial activities, product advertisement or political lobbying.

Refer also to the Internet Use Policy.

Violation of these usage rules will result in an immediate loss of computer privileges for anything unrelated to school content; assignments, assessments, practice sites. Administration will determine if paper copies of the school content activities may be delivered in paper format instead of computer based.

Absolutely No Food or Drink at the Computers

If a student violates any of the District's Acceptable Internet Use Rules, or applicable state and federal laws, the student may be subject to the loss of computer privileges and any other district disciplinary options as determined by the administration.

Internet access is coordinated through a complex association of government agencies and regional networks. The operation of the Internet relies heavily on the proper conduct of the users, who must adhere to strict guidelines. The district staff has the right and obligation to monitor student Internet activities. Please remember that Internet access at school is a privilege, not a right.

Administration will have final authority on usage of personal computers, pen drives, disks or other storage devices.

Property Damage

It is against the law to deface or damage public school property or the property of others. Parents and students will be held accountable for damage costs or replacement costs.

Lost and Found

We collect a large amount of items in our lost and found within just a few months. Misplaced articles should be turned in to the lost and found. Please have your children check the lost and found after lunch each day. Articles unclaimed will be donated to the Salvation Army (November, February, May, June).

Written Notes

Children should bring a “school note” or written permission by parents for:

- an early dismissal (to be released only to authorized individual at the office)
- going home other than the usual manner, including going with someone other than parent after school
- going to an after school activity
- written notice for an absence from school for any reason; may not be accepted to “excuse” absence, but will be kept file as family communication regarding school absenteeism
- tardiness

Please make all arrangements for students ahead of time. Calling in daily instructions for your child or the teacher is disruptive to the school day. The school office is especially busy at dismissal time. Please only call with a change in your child’s dismissal procedure in the event of an emergency. All other instructions should be sent to the office via a note in the morning. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Behavior Expectations

Student Code of Conduct

The ACES Code of Conduct, annually reviewed by the School Council and approved by the School Committee, is designed to provide all members of the school community with clear expectations regarding student behavior along with specific consequences for the violation of these expectations. It is the school’s goal that all students can come to school in a safe and orderly educational and social environment and that they develop the necessary character, work-ethic, and sense of personal responsibility for students to be successful in school and in life.

Students with behavior infractions may be asked to fill out a Think Sheet that allows them to reflect on the choice(s) made and participate in a “fix up,” a restorative piece of problem solving for improved behavior in the future. Behavior incidents of this nature are tracked to make decisions about further supports for student success. Parents are notified when a child fills out a Think Sheet. Consequences for behavior infractions are decided upon with a teacher and or administration input. Final decisions rest with the discretion of the school administration.

While the infractions and consequences outlined below are meant to provide clear expectations for behavior, each disciplinary incident involves unique elements. Therefore, situations may be handled differently by the administration because of contributing factors.

For disciplinary actions that are deemed less severe in nature, a warning and/or parent notification may occur before first offense consequences are implemented. For those of a more serious nature, parent meetings may be required.

List of Possible Consequences (additional/other/different consequences may be assigned at any time as determined by school administration)

Conferences are a formal warning where the school administration will clarify the behavior expectation and outline potential consequences for future infractions. A Think Sheet will be filled out by the child or the staff person that approached the incident in discussion. Parents/guardians may participate in the conference or be contacted by the school administration to be informed of the purpose of the conversation.

Teacher Detentions are assigned by individual teachers or grade-level teams for violations of classroom academic or behavioral expectations. Students are expected to report to assigned detentions/extra help and to work productively. Any student who fails to report to the teacher detention or who refuses to work as asked will be referred to the administration.

Office Detentions, which are assigned from 3:00-3:30 for repeated behavior infractions. If necessary, detentions will be assigned with a 24 hour notice to parents/guardians. This will allow for alternative transportation arrangements for the student, following the detention. After being assigned three office detentions, a student will face more severe consequences for poor behavior such as internal suspension.

In-School Restriction is assigned when a student is unable to be in a classroom setting or school routine for disciplinary or other reasons. All in-school suspension expectations and rules apply during this restriction period.

In-School Suspension is assigned to a student when a disciplinary offense warrants action more severe than detention but less severe than one that warrants an out-of-school suspension. Students assigned to in-school suspension must complete work sent to them. Those who refuse to work productively may remain in in-school suspension until work is completed. Those who are assigned to a full-day of in-school suspension will not be allowed to participate in extracurricular activities on the day of the assigned suspension unless the administration feels an exception is warranted.

Out-of-School Suspension is assigned when a student has committed a serious disciplinary offense or when other consequences have proven ineffective at modifying behavior. Students who are suspended out-of-school may not attend school events and are prohibited from being on school grounds unless they have prior permission from school administration. **Please see the ATHOL-ROYALSTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT HANDBOOK for the process for Out-of-School Suspensions and correlating laws.**

Severe disciplinary infractions such as weapon possession, bullying, fighting/assault, and threats directed at faculty/staff may result in a long-term out-of-school suspension/possible exclusion hearing. Please see the ATHOL-ROYALSTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT HANDBOOK for the process for Expulsions and correlating laws.

Bullying

Bullying or harassment of any type, including cyber-bullying, will not be tolerated and may result in suspension or exclusion from an Athol Elementary School. Bullying that occurs outside of school may result in disciplinary action if the behavior causes problems at school. Please see the ATHOL-ROYALSTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT HANDBOOK for the full anti-bullying policy and correlating laws.

Progressive Discipline, Additional Consequences, and Due Process

The school's Code of Conduct provides a list of common infractions and the typical corresponding consequences for less severe violations of school rules. Consequences for such infractions range from detentions to short-term suspensions. Students who repeat the same offense will receive stronger penalties for subsequent offenses (at the discretion of the administration) which will likely include out-of-school suspension. The school administration reserves the authority to prevent students from participating in school events, keeping a leadership role, or being a member of a team if their behavior puts at risk other students or the reputation of the school. Families and students have the right to due process and appeal of decisions affecting them by faculty or the administration. The chain-of-command applies in processing such a complaint is as follows: teacher, principal, superintendent, school committee.

Health and Safety

Rules of Dress

We consider school our place of learning for students as well as staff. It is important that we all dress in ways that make possible to do our work well. This means wearing clothing that is comfortable, safe, clean, and not distracting to others. Specifically, we require that:

- Students must wear appropriate footwear at all times. Closed toed shoes are required to use the playground structure and are also required to participate in P.E. Class.
- Students may not wear items of potential safety concern. (i.e. Roller blade type shoe) Administration will make a decision as to what may be unsafe.
- Students may not wear hats, hoods, caps, bandannas while in the building, except with teacher/admin. discretion that is clearly communicated to all staff.
- Students may not wear clothing that contains "obscenities, fighting words, incitement or defamation on them."

If student dress is inappropriate, we will call home for a change of clothes or we will provide a change of clothes.

Winter Weather Wear

Students must wear winter coats, boots, hats and mittens in order to participate in recess during cold weather. Students

who wish to play in the snow must also wear snow pants/suits. Students choosing not to wear appropriate clothing to school must play in the designated area(s). Please contact the school administration if the expense of appropriate outerwear is a hardship for your family.

Health Issues

The school nurse's function is to establish a comprehensive school health program consistent with the Massachusetts guidelines, regulations and statutes governing nursing, school health, and local school district policy.

Illness/Injury

Students who are ill or injured must receive a pass from their teacher, and report to the Nurse's Office or the Main Office if the school nurse is unavailable. At no time should a teacher administer treatment to a student. If the school nurse or administration finds it necessary to dismiss a student due to health reasons such as illness or accident, a parent/guardian will be notified. A parent/guardian or authorized person must pick up the student at the main office. Early dismissal rules must be followed at this point.

Health Office Procedures

Students who are ill or injured must receive a pass from their teacher, and report to the Nurse's Office. If the school nurse or administration finds it necessary to dismiss a student due to health reasons such as illness or accident, a parent/guardian will be notified. A parent/guardian or authorized person must pick up the student at the main office and sign them out.

Emergency Contact Information

The school office must have an accurate and current emergency contact list. If your family's home or work phone numbers change, or your address changes, please notify the school right away so that we are able to reach an authorized caregiver in the event of illness or accident. We reserve the right to initiate safety checks at the last known address if an active phone number is not on file. Our School Resource Officer may be sent to the home.

Medication at School

Ideally, all medication should be given at home. If the physician feels it is necessary for the student to receive medication during school hours, the school must receive the following before we begin to give any medicine at school, both over the counter and prescription medication:

- A written, signed, dated, note from the parent.
- A written, signed, dated, note from the physician.
- Medicines must be delivered to the school in a pharmacy or manufacturer labeled container by the student's parent/guardian.

Please ask your pharmacy to provide separate bottles for school and home. No more than a thirty (30) day supply of the medicine should be delivered to the school.

Students may not carry medication. All medication must be kept in the nurse's office.

Medication for Field Trips - for a student to have medication available for field trips, they must have the above completed forms on file in the health office.

Please note: inhalers, EpiPens and as needed medications must have MD orders to include consent for self-administration.

Health Screenings

- Vision screening will be conducted annually for all elementary students. Hearing screening is conducted annually for students in Kindergarten through 3rd grade
- Body Mass Index (BMI) screening will be conducted annually for 1st and 4th grade students. BMI is a

measure used to show a person's weight for height and age. It is a tool that is used to determine possible health risks. Parents or guardians should notify the school nurse in writing by November 1st, if they feel that this screening is not necessary.

- Physical exams are required for Kindergarten and 4th grade students. The completed physical should be returned to the nurse to be filed in the student's permanent health record. This physical is best done by your family physician, who has a comprehensive knowledge of your child's health. If this requirement poses a financial hardship for you, the school physician can conduct a physical examination of your child at school. A physical exam is required for all new students within the first year of transfer and upon special request.

The parent or guardian of any student with an area of concern discovered during these screenings shall be notified in writing for follow-up and/or evaluation.

Massachusetts Immunization Requirements

Under state law, in order for a student to enter/attend school, the student must have received the following immunizations:

Entry into Preschool:

- At least four (4) DPT (diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus) immunizations.
- At least three (3) polio immunizations.
- One (1) MMR (Measles, mumps and rubella) immunizations
- Three (3) Hepatitis B immunizations
- One (1) varicella (chicken pox) immunization or proof of disease
- One (1) to Four (4) Hib (Haemophilus influenzae type B)

Entry into Kindergarten:

- At least five (5) DPT (diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus) immunizations
- At least four (4) polio immunizations
- Two (2) MMR (Measles, mumps and rubella) immunizations
- Three (3) Hepatitis B immunizations
- Two (2) varicella (chicken pox) immunizations or Proof of disease
- Lead test with results

Pets and Animals

The use of pets and animals in the classroom can be a valuable educational experience. However, the very presence of such animals creates the potential for health concerns. Permission to bring a pet and/or animal into the classroom to share must be received from the Principal and the pet and/or animal must be accompanied by the student's parent. Pets are not allowed on buses.

Pediculosis - Head Lice

Pediculosis (lice) head checks will be done periodically throughout the school year as needed. Those found to have lice will have parental notification to include education. Students will be sent home for treatment if live lice are found. Follow up by the school nurse will be required prior to returning to the classroom. Additional intervention will be addressed on an individual basis.

Medical Excuses

Medical excuses are required for those students who cannot participate in physical education classes. A parental note will suffice for one gym class. After that, a note from a physician with the medical diagnoses, specifying the length and extent of the excused absence, may be asked for submission.

Use of Elevator for Medical Reasons

Use of the elevator is granted on a case by case basis. School administration will be consulted for permission to use the elevator unless a note from a medical professional is submitted.

Fire Safety Rules

Students may not be in possession of a lighter or matches. Students may not ignite matches, lighters, or other flaming devices. Students may not ignite any material except under teacher supervised, experimental conditions. Setting fire to any material or property will be considered a criminal act – arson. Students may not ignite or possess any incendiary device, firecracker, sparkler, etc. Setting off a false fire alarm will be considered a criminal act as well as a violation of school rules.

Fire Drill Procedures

Each room has displayed a conspicuous and well-marked evacuation plan map.

We ask that each student respond to every fire drill as though an actual fire existed. All students and staff are to follow all fire drill procedures without exception. The objective of the fire plan and drill is to clear the entire building with no confusion and no injury as quickly and safely as possible.

At the sound of the fire alarm all students will rise and exit the classroom according to the fire exit plan. The students will close all windows and doors if the teacher or staff member instructs them to do so. The teacher or staff member will escort the group from the classroom according to the fire plan.

The last person out of each room needs to close the door. Students are expected to walk quickly and silently. During a fire drill groups of students may be rerouted. In this instance, students should listen for alternative instructions from their teacher or other adult.

General Conduct During Drills

- All students will obey the instructions of staff members without exception.
- Students are to remain quiet throughout a fire drill.
- When outside the building, all walks and roadways must remain clear.
- All students will wait in groups with the adult supervisor for the signal to return to the building.

In the event that there is an emergency situation at one of the schools or in town, we ask that parents please think about the safety of all students. We ask that you call the school first to find out what the procedures are, if you are unable to reach someone, please call Central Office. You can be assured that we will be working on keeping all children safe at all times. In an effort to minimize confusion, we ask that parents not dismiss at this time. We will keep you updated anyway possible on the situation.

Lockdown/Shelter In Place

Depending on circumstances, it may be necessary to have all students remain in the classroom for their safety. In this event either the “lockdown” or “shelter in place” command will be given over the intercom.

“Lockdown” – When “lockdown” is called there is an immediate threat and all students should follow the lockdown procedures and attempt to conceal their location.

“Shelter in Place” – When “shelter in place” is called there is not an immediate threat, but students should not be in the common areas of the building. Students should remain in their classroom but the class should continue as usual.

Weapons

All weapons including but not limited to knives or guns of any kind are banned from school. This includes penknives exacto knives and pocket tools that contain blades. Any item that may be used to cause harm is also considered a weapon (rocks, stones, sticks, chains, etc.). A student in possession of any “weapon” will be immediately removed from class and/or school. Toy weapons are also not allowed at school and will be confiscated and returned to the student’s parents. A toy may result in disciplinary action including suspension from school, at the administrator’s discretion.

Student Support

Child Study Teams

Each elementary school within the district has a child study team consisting of members of the faculty and the building administration. This team discusses students who may be experiencing academic and behavioral difficulties in school. Parents or teachers may refer any student experiencing said difficulties. This may result in additional strategies to ensure student support, including but not limited to examining a student's progress in relation to grade level curriculum standards using a tiered system of support or Massachusetts Tiered System of Support (MTSS) model. MTSS is a general education process of providing high-quality, scientifically-researched instructional practices based on your child's needs, monitoring your child's progress, and adjusting instruction & interventions based on your child's response rate of success.

The school district endorses a three step process of identifying student needs. This process is followed by a tiered approach to intervening. Depending on the significance of a student's learning difference and the effectiveness of tiered interventions, this approach may result in the development of a district curriculum accommodation plan, a positive behavioral intervention and support plan, the development of a 504 accommodation plan if a student has a substantial impairment, or possibly a referral for evaluation to determine if a student is eligible for special education. Please see the ARRSB Handbook for further details relating to these topics.

MTSS Model/ Tiered Systems of Support

Step 1: Formal Assessments - Every child is assessed at least twice a year in reading and math. We utilize a range of formative and summative assessment data to track how students are doing in comparison to benchmark expectations.

Step 2: Analyze Student Data - Assessments results are analyzed to identify the learning needs of all students.

Step 3: Provide Differentiated Instruction - A variety of instructional strategies are used to teach students with different learning styles and rates. This instruction is delivered through a three-tier approach:

Tier 1 - involves the classroom teacher using different strategies and additional or different materials to assist student learning. If a child is not progressing as expected, they will need to spend some additional time receiving Tier 2 support.

Tier 2 - happens beyond the core instruction already occurring in reading and math. We provide additional small group instruction 3-4 days per week for 20 minutes. Sometimes children need additional and more frequent help to meet standards. If that is the case, Tier 3 interventions are explored.

Tier 3 - involves an individualized intervention plan (4-6 weeks in length) that will be developed for the child. Instruction will be tailored to specific learning goals.

English Language Education

ARRSD provides English language instruction and support for students whose native language is not English. English language learners (ELL students) study language appropriate materials to increase their English language reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. The English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher collaborates with the classroom teacher and sends home quarterly reports. If your family speaks a language other than English and you believe your child needs English language support, please contact your child's classroom teacher or building principal.

Guidance Department

The counselors are here for your children. If something is happening with your child that may affect them at school, please know that you may reach out to your child's counselor at any time. They will provide any assistance that you and/or your child may need during a difficult time at home or school. Family transitions often impact a child's presentation and/or performance at school, please notify the Guidance Department of such changes so that your child may be more closely monitored for support around school success. Your family's information will be kept confidential unless it impacts the safety of your child.

School Wide Academic Support (TITLE I)

Athol-Royalston Regional School District Schools receive Title I Federal Grant aid based on enrollment numbers and federal guidelines. These funds are used to provide academic assistance to students who are identified as at-risk or unable to meet the state's content and performance standards in literacy.

TITLE I- Right to Know Provision

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act requires all local education agencies (LEA) to notify parents of all children in all Title I schools that they have the right to request and receive timely information on the professional qualifications of their children's classroom teachers. This notice must be sent at the start of each school year. The notice does not itself contain the teacher information; it simply tells parents the types of information they may request. At a minimum, if a parent requests it, LEA/school must report:

- Whether the teacher has met state qualifying and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher is teaching;
- Whether the teacher is a teacher under emergency or other provisional status through which state qualification or licensing criteria have been waived;
- The baccalaureate degree major of the teacher and any other graduate certification or degree held by the teacher, including the field of discipline of the certification or degree; and
- Whether the child is provided services by a paraprofessional and, if so, their qualifications.

In addition, if a child is assigned, or taught by a teacher who is not "highly qualified" for four or more consecutive weeks, the parents must receive timely notice. These and other communications with parents must be in an understandable and uniform format and, to the extent practical, in a language the parents can understand. If there is no other way to provide information, it should be provided in oral translation. Requests must be in writing to the principal. This applies only to Title I schools.

Special Education

ARRSD provides special education services in accordance with IDEA and CMR 28.00. Students may be referred for a special education evaluation following modifications to the regular classroom program and a pre-referral meeting at the building level. Students are considered through the Child Study process prior to these referrals. A student is determined eligible for services if they have a qualifying disability and require specially designed instruction or the provision of a related service. The educational team will write an Individualized Educational Program, which defines the type and frequency of services. Our schools provide special education services in the regular classroom whenever possible. Please refer to the ARRSD Handbook for further details about special education.

Tutoring

If your child has to be out of school for an extended period of time (exceeding 14 school days) due to a serious medical issue, the school district may be able to provide short term tutoring. Please contact the Principal as soon as possible if your child has a medical condition that will prevent or otherwise limit his or her daily school attendance. The school district wants to work with families to maintain continuity in learning and to minimize the educational impact that could occur from any loss of instructional time. Documentation by the medical practitioner overseeing the medical condition creating a barrier to school attendance will be needed to inform the school's decision. Please see the ARRSD District Handbook for more details about tutoring.

Academics

Academic Honesty

We expect all students to adhere to academic honesty and avoid any acts of dishonesty regarding their academic work. Cheating is to act dishonestly, to trick, or mislead regarding one's schoolwork. Plagiarism is taking another person's ideas, writings, or work, and passing it off as one's own. Any form of cheating or plagiarism is an act of dishonesty and is strictly prohibited. All students involved in such dishonesty are in violation of this rule and are subject to disciplinary action.

Cheating/Plagiarism Includes:

Copying of another student's test paper or any other school assignment
Using material during a test not authorized by the person giving the test
Knowingly using, buying, selling, stealing, transporting, or soliciting, in whole or part, the contents of a test or other assignment
Substituting for another student or permitting another student to substitute for oneself to take a test or complete an assignment
Bribing another person to obtain a test or other assignment that is to be administered
Securing copies of a test or answers to a test or other assignment in advance of a test or assignment
Copying or copy and pasting information from print or Internet sources without proper citation

Alternative Classroom Setting

Students who continually disrupt the educational process in the classroom, and prevent other students from learning may be assigned to an alternative setting for a period of time until the student learns to modify their disruptive behavior. Parents/guardians will be involved in this process with the goal of returning the student to the regular classroom setting.

Benchmarks/Targets/Assessments

Students have benchmarks in all subjects, which are tied to the state curricula. Students participate in State mandated testing during the school year, such as MCAS. Other data is diligently collected to assure that students are making academic progress or receiving intervention to support such progress. Additionally, common formative assessments are given according to a district timeline. These assessments align with curriculum adopted by the District.

Homework

Learning is a lifelong process that involves not only the students and teachers, but parents/guardians as well. Homework assignments are a critical part of the learning process and aim to:

- Reinforce and extend upon material taught during the day
- Encourage more in-depth study of specific topics at a pace and time appropriate for each student

At the elementary level, sharing literacy with your child is very important and 20 minutes of daily reading time can make a huge difference in their vocabulary development and critical thinking. We encourage you to share in the reading experience with your child by reading with them, and alongside them, for 20 minutes each day. In addition to reading, your child may have an additional time to complete work. We generally use the 10 minute rule for each grade level. (Kindergarten: 10 minutes, Grade 1: 20 minutes, Grade 2: 30 minutes and Grades 3 and 4: 40 minutes)

Library/Media Center

The Media Center is an area for learning. The print and non-print materials are meant for student study, research and browsing. We expect students to follow these guidelines:

- If you need to take materials out of the library, please check them out.
- When you are ready to leave the library, please check out at the desk.
- Please return all materials on time.
- Students/Families are responsible to replace lost or damaged library books.
- Damaged chrome books will be repaired and/or replaced by any child's family who damages such property.

Report Cards

Report cards are sent home three times per year for students in grades first through sixth. Kindergarten report cards are issued twice per year. Good communication between parents and teachers by means of conferences and report cards are essential in understanding the children's needs and their progress in school.

Grading

Teachers assign grades to report all aspects of a student's classroom performance: effort, achievement, homework, class work, and tests as well as special requirements that vary from class to class. Teachers should make expectations clear to students as well as learning objectives.

Supplies and Materials

Paper, notebooks, pens, pencils, etc. will not be supplied by the school. Students are expected to come to school prepared with supplies necessary to complete ordinary assignments.

Clubs and Activities

Various clubs and activities may be offered throughout the school year for either before or after school. Students will be made aware of and may participate in activities/clubs that are offered. School rules apply and infractions will be met with discipline as outlined for behavior infractions during the school day. A current working phone number, as an emergency contact, is necessary in order for students to participate.

Field Trips

Teachers will provide students with a permission slip for field trips. These forms must be returned to the teacher prior to the day of the field trip. Students are expected to follow all school rules when on a field trip. A student who has consistently demonstrated poor attendance, continual tardiness, attitude or behavior problems, or who has not completed the required work may not be permitted to go on a field trip. This decision is up to the school administration. Parents will be notified prior to the trip/program.

All volunteers and chaperones on a school trip must have a CORI form on record. CORI forms are available in the school office.

Tobacco Free Zone

Use of any tobacco products within the school buildings, school facilities, on school grounds, including vehicles or school buses by any individual, including school personnel and students, is prohibited at all times.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

Parent-School Communication

We encourage parents to visit and become active in the school! Please feel free to contact your child's teacher with any compliments or concerns as soon as they arise. Teachers are available through the district's email system or by phoning the main office at 978-249-2406. Appointments must be made in advance for parent/teacher meetings.

Open House

Open House will be held within the first month of school. This is an opportunity for students and parents to visit classrooms and learn about school programs and curriculum. This is a wonderful time for students to show off their school, please be mindful, this is not a time for parent conferences.

Parent Conferences

A formal Parent-Teacher conference will be held once a year. This conference provides an opportunity for parents and teachers to exchange information in all areas that affect a student's school performance. Conferences are a wonderful opportunity for parents to learn about their children's experiences and to collaborate with teachers.

Parent/Teacher Organizations & Councils

Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO)

Parents and community members are encouraged to participate in our PTO. This group meets monthly to provide enrichment opportunities for students and build community through planning and organizing family involvement activities.

School Improvement Council

Parents and community members are vital parts of the council to work alongside teachers, and the building principal to review and update the School's Improvement Plan each year. If you are interested or considering becoming a member of the council, please contact the school through email or phone.

Special Education Parent Advisory Council

Each elementary school in the district welcomes parents/guardians of children with disabilities to consider participation in our District's Parent Advisory Council. Membership is open to all parents of children with disabilities and other interested parties. The parent advisory council duties include but are not limited to: advising the school committee on matters that pertain to the education and safety of students with disabilities; meeting regularly with school officials to participate in the planning, development, and evaluation of the school committee's special education programs. The parent advisory council shall establish by-laws regarding officers and operational procedures. In the course of its duties under this section, the parent advisory council shall receive assistance from the school committee without charge, upon reasonable notice, and subject to the availability of staff and resources.

Please see ATHOL-ROYALSTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT HANDBOOK for the following policies and correlating laws:

INTERNET USE POLICY

PHYSICAL RESTRAINT POLICY

PROHIBITION AGAINST BULLYING AND RETALIATION

DISCIPLINING STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

DISCIPLINE OF STUDENTS NOT YET ELIGIBLE FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION

DISCIPLINE OF STUDENTS ON 504 PLAN

DUE PROCESS FOR SUSPENSIONS

NOTICE OF PROPOSED SUSPENSION

SHORT-TERM SUSPENSIONS: HEARING AND PRINCIPAL DETERMINATION

LONG-TERM SUSPENSIONS: HEARING AND PRINCIPAL DETERMINATION

APPEAL OF LONG-TERM SUSPENSION

EMERGENCY REMOVAL

IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION UNDER 603 CMR 53:02(6) & 603 CMR 53.10

SUSPENSION OR EXPULSION FOR DISCIPLINARY OFFENSES UNDER M.G.L. 71 §§37H and 37H½

STUDENT DISTURBANCES

DISRUPTION AND HARASSMENT OF SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

CHAPTER 722 - AN ACT INCREASING THE PENALTIES FOR DEFACING OR DESTROYING STATE, COUNTY OR MUNICIPAL PROPERTY

SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY/COMPLAINT PROCEDURE FOR STUDENTS

PROHIBITION AGAINST FIREARMS IN SCHOOLS

SEARCH AND SEIZURE

IMMUNIZATION LAWS

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

TITLE IX - CHAPTER 662

NON-DISCRIMINATION

POLICIES AND PROCEDURE SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973

PUBLIC COMPLAINTS ABOUT SCHOOL PERSONNEL

The Title IX Coordinator for the Athol-Royalston Regional School District is:

Darcy Fernandes

Title IX Coordinator

P.O. Box 968, 1062 Pleasant Street

978-249-2400