



90 Hendrie Avenue, Riverside, CT 06878
203-637-1440 * 203-637-1004 (fax)
www.greenwichschools.org

Christopher Weiss
Principal

Safiya Key
Assistant Principal

August 19, 2022

Dear Parents and Families of Riverside School,

On behalf of the faculty and support staff of Riverside School, I want to welcome you and your family to the 2022-2023 school year! As a parent of two sons (now both in high school), who many years ago were elementary school students, I understand the excitement the whole family feels upon starting a new school year.

As we celebrate our 89th year as a school here in Riverside, we look forward to working in partnership with each of you to offer the best possible education and learning environment for your children. As a school this year we will continue to emphasize our 3 main goals, providing a top quality education for your children, providing an enjoyable and connected classroom and school community for each student, and providing a safe and engaging environment for all at the school.

Our assistant principal, Ms. Safiya Key, and I are pleased to welcome all of the students on our first day of school, September 1. We have spent many days this summer preparing for their return and we are eagerly awaiting their arrival back in the building. We pledge to work together with our families and staff to provide a successful and rigorous learning experience for all of our students.

Please take some time to read the information in this letter prior to the beginning of the school year, as well as review all of the key documents posted to the Riverside [Back to School Page \(BtS\)](#).

The first day of school is Thursday, September 1. It is a full day. Arrival is between 8:30-8:45 and the day officially starts at 8:45. (**Kindergarten arrival (for the first day only) will be 9:45 am at the Kindergarten entrance on the side of the school near Hendrie Ave.**). We will be continuing with a regular arrival at school on the first day (as we have the past few years) and we do encourage families/parents to escort their child/children (grade 1-5) anytime between 8:25-8:45 and even take a photo of your child (or as a family) arriving at school. Please note, we will not be continuing the former practice of a "Parade of Learners". This regular first day of school entry (as we have had for the previous two school years) will allow for a relaxed and comfortable first day of school entrance to start the school year for all students and their families.

We ask that parents and family members remain outside and have your child/children enter at their grade level entry doors anytime between 8:30-8:45 on the first day of school. From 8:30-8:45 am, the classroom teachers will be ready to greet their new students inside the building at their classroom doors, and any non-classroom teachers (along with a number of other support staff members) will either be inside directing students to their classrooms as needed or outside (weather permitting) to greet the students and families for the first day. The PTA will be providing signs and balloons outside to welcome everyone back for the first day of school as well.

As we do every school day, at the end of the first day of school for the 3:10 (just for Kindergarten – outside the Kindergarten door) and 3:15 (for grades 1-5) dismissal outside (all grade 1-5 classroom will return to the same dismissal time of 3:15), classroom teachers will bring out their students to dismiss them directly to their parents/family members and that would be great time to introduce yourself to your child/children’s new classroom teacher(s).

Non-classroom teachers and other support staff members will be stationed at the designated building entrances each morning at 8:30 am to help ensure the students enter the building safely. The entrances and exits will be similar to last year (with one change for 1st grade student entry). 3rd and 5th grade students will enter/exit through the door to the right of the front door of the school and head directly up the stairwell to the second floor, 1st grade students (a change from last year) and 2nd grade students (same as last year) will enter through the front door (as well as any late students), just 4th grade students will enter/exit through the door to the left of the front door and heading directly up the stairwell to the second floor.

Kindergarten students will enter and exit from the side door nearest Hendrie Avenue (remember Kindergarten will have an hour delayed start districtwide again this year (at 9:45 am on the 1st day only – September 1). There is one change regarding 1st grade dismissal - 1st grade classes will exit through the side doors along the left side of the building where the gymnasium and side hallway entrance is located (to help ease congestion at dismissal).

[Back to School Documents](#)

Please be sure to review all back to school documents accessed via this link on the [Back to School Page \(BtS\)](#) of the Riverside School website linked here and in the email you are receiving.

We will continue to use School Dismissal Manager for dismissal changes so please be on the lookout for an email about setting up your SDM account right before the start of school.

Class lists

The eleven Greenwich Public Elementary Schools will NOT be emailing class lists this Friday (today) but instead the **class lists will be emailed to parents by next Friday, August 26**. This delay is due to grade level sections being reviewed by the district (based on district class size guidelines) at some schools in GPS.

School Calendar

The District’s 2022-2023 school calendar is available on the Greenwich Public School’s website.

- **A Orientation visit for all Kindergarteners will be held on Wednesday, August 31 at 10 am** in the Kindergarten classrooms. Parents and children will meet outside the K door (closest to Hendrie Avenue) and students and their parents will be able to visit their classrooms with their teacher for 30 minutes.
- **An Orientation visit/tour for all new students (in grades 1-5) will be held on Wednesday, August 31 at 9:30 am** for 30 minutes. This is a tour just for students.
- Our school PTA will be sponsoring a “meet and greet” information table from 9:30-11 am on August 31 for Kindergarten families and other families (in grades 1-5) new to the school, near the front door. We encourage the families of all new students as well as new Kindergarten families to stop by.
- Please check the district calendar for all early release days, school holidays and other important dates.

- Please “Save the Date” for our elementary school **Open House** evening (in-person event just for parents/guardians) on **Thursday, October 13**.

The Handbook

Reading and returning the “Receipt of Handbook Form” is required.

Emergency Contact Information

Our home-school notification system known as Blackboard/Parent Link will continue to enable us to inform you of important events and emergencies through automated messaging. Please inform the main office immediately of any changes to your personal contact information.

School Lunch

Lunch will no longer be free for all students. Families in need of free or reduce price lunches should fill out the required forms posted on the “Back to School” webpage. **School lunch is \$4.15 this year.**

School Supplies

The 2022-2023 School Supply List can be found on the Riverside Back to School page. If you ordered your child’s school supplies through the PTA, they will be ready for your child in their classroom on the first day of school. For all others, please make sure to send the supplies in with your child on the first day of school.

Additional Information:

Finally, I wanted to share with you the updates to sections and to staffing at Riverside at this time so you are aware of the changes.

At this time we are still projected to have 4 sections of Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grade this year, and 3 sections of 5th grade.

We have one classroom teacher changing grade levels this school year, Mrs. Anstey will be returning to 4th grade (from 5th grade this past school year). She has number of years of experience as a 4th grade classroom teacher.

We also want to note that Cathy DiDonato has a new married name, she is now Mrs. Kowalski, so her class will now be 1-K.

As mentioned in late June, we welcome Mrs. Angelica Morganti as our new Spanish and Native Spanish teacher. She worked previously at Riverside a few years ago as a Native Spanish teacher. This year we will be running a Native Spanish program for 4th and 5th grade students who are native Spanish speakers (based on the number of students in those grades who qualify for the program. Grade 3 native Spanish speaking students will have differentiated instruction during their Spanish classes.

We welcome Ms. Valerie Saltz as our new .5 (2 ½ days a week) social worker to the school.

We welcome two new additional ALP teachers who will be joining Mrs. Hancock in our ALP (Advanced Learning Placement) department. Mr. Christopher Healey joins us as a full time ELA Grade 3-5 ALP teacher. Ms. Rachel Gryak join us as a .2 ALP teacher who will teach the Grade 2 ALP classes this year.

Ms. Jenna Moody will be the long term substitute teacher for 1-C as Mrs. Ciara Cullen continues her FMLA (Family and Medical Leave Act) through January 2. Ms. Moody was the long term substitute for 1-C in the late spring.

Ms. Gina Bergamini will continue to be the long term substitute teacher for all general music classes while Ms. Jessica Punctatz continues here FMLA leave until November 1. We also welcome a .1 music teacher this year, Ms. Victoria Boretsky, who will teach 2 music classes. She works primarily at North St. School.

We welcome a .1 Art teacher, Ms. Suzanne Gold, who works primarily at Old Greenwich School, who will teach 2 Art classes. Ms. Roth continues as our full time art teacher.

We also welcome Mrs. Catherine Gunthrope as our full time Math Interventionist (up from 3 days a week last year).

Our Kindergarten teacher, Mrs. Megan D'Andrea, is about to start her FMLA leave and we are aiming to announce her long term substitute teacher by this next Friday when class lists come out.

We welcome Ms. Cara Rohrer as our new school intern. She will serve as a permanent building substitute in that role through January.

Our school nurse, Mrs. Melissa Luiso has recently taken a position in nursing outside of the school system. We welcome Mrs. Joanne D'Andrea (who has been at Riverside many weeks over the past few years) as our substitute school nurse through the month of September, until our new school nurse is announced. You can reach Mrs. Joanne D'Andrea with any school nurse/medical form/medication related question at joanne_d'andrea@greenwich.k12.ct.us or by calling the nurses office later next week. You can also copy me as needed for follow-up.

Finally, our school psychologist, Mrs. Alexa Brennan, has recently taken a position in another school district, and we are currently working to hire a school psychologist (aiming to announce around the start of the school year).

I hope that you enjoy the last week and a half of summer vacation and we look forward to seeing your children soon! Please let me know if I can answer any questions that you may have.

Sincerely,

Christopher Weiss

Riverside School Principal