

RISING SUN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
500 Hopewell Road
Rising Sun, MD 21911

410-658-5925 / 410-378-4493 Fax 410-658-7999



Sherrri Isaac
Principal

Marian Martino
Assistant Principal

Parent Handbook

2023-2024

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Welcome to Rising Sun Elementary School and a new school year! The RSES staff looks forward to the honor of working with the students, parents, and community to provide another year of educational opportunities for our students. The teachers are excited about the new students they will have in their classes and wait with great anticipation for the opportunity to help each child learn. Parents are our very important partners! We want you to feel welcome and to be involved. Together we can make certain that all of our children experience success in school. We will work together to show our RSES pride and to “believe” and “achieve” great things.

If you have any questions or concerns about this document or anything else that occurs during the year, please do not hesitate to contact us. You may reach us at the school number or our e-mails listed below.

Sherrri Isaac
Principal
sisaac@ccps.org

Marian Martino
Assistant Principal
mrmartino@ccps.org

This handbook is intended to highlight many areas of school life that are controlled by Rising Sun Elementary or Cecil County Public School Board policies and to serve as a reference for parents and students. Additional information and announcements pertaining to RSES will be made available on the RSES website. Please refer to the Cecil County Public Schools website www.ccps.org for additional information and announcements pertaining to the entire school system.

School Hours

Grades PK-5

8:45 AM – 3:25 PM: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday

8:45 AM – 1:45 PM: Wednesday

Students may not arrive before 8:45 AM.

Pre-School Morning Session

8:45 AM – 11:50 AM: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday

Pre-School Afternoon Session

12:50 PM – 3:25 PM: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday

Teacher Hours:

8:15 AM – 3:45 PM

Office Hours:

8:00 AM – 4:00 PM



ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

BUSES

It is our goal for every student to travel safely on the bus. Students are expected to maintain safe and appropriate behavior at all times while riding on the bus. Failure to comply with bus rules and regulations may result in the following consequences at the driver/administration discretion:

- Verbal Warning
- Written Warning
- Suspension of Bus Riding Privileges

The school bus driver is expected to enforce the regulations of safe student behavior as they board, ride, and depart the bus.

PARENTS ARE RESPONSIBLE for the safety of their students from the time the students leave home in the morning until they board the school bus, and at the end of the day from the time they get off the bus until the students reach home. Bus stop supervision is a parent's responsibility.

AT THE END OF THE DAY, pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students will be let off along with other students at their stop. However, prekindergarten and kindergarten students getting off alone at a stop will be let off the bus only under appropriate supervision which is a responsible adult or older sibling.

Please Note: Bus riding privileges may be suspended for an indefinite period of time if a student continues to violate bus regulations. A student serving a bus suspension may not ride **any bus** during their suspension. Please refer to the "Parent Guide for Pupil Transportation" for additional information.

BUS CHANGES

Each of our students is assigned one bus to and from school. We do not permit students to ride a bus other than the one assigned to them. This allows us to accurately monitor the number of students per bus and reinforce the safety of our students. If you move during the school year, please contact the school office immediately to update your child's information.

CAR RIDERS

Parents/guardians choosing to transport their children both to and from school should enter the car loop in front of the school building. Students may NOT be dropped off in the bus loop or parking lot. In the morning, doors to the building will open at 8:40 AM. Please do not release your child from your car until the school doors are opened and staff members are present. To increase the efficiency of the car loop, we ask that *all adults remain in the car and pull all the way to the white line*. Our school staff will assist students who need help getting out of the car. Please have students ready to get out of the car upon your arrival. This includes having shoes and coats on, book bags packed, and all materials readily available for a quick exit. Doors will close promptly at 9:00 AM. If you arrive later, you will be asked to sign your child into school in the main office.



At 3:25 PM afternoon dismissal begins and car riders will be dismissed first. As the staff members on duty recognize the adult authorized to pick up a student, that child will be called and loaded into the car. If your child maintains a schedule or is picked up every day, you must complete a car rider form to be eligible to pick up your child in the car rider loop. Once the form is completed you will receive a placard which will need to be placed on the passenger side dashboard, visible to car rider staff. If the staff member in the loop does not recognize the adult, he/she will be asked to show ID before the child is released. All students being picked up that do not qualify under the car rider loop criteria must be signed out in the office. When a child is being picked up in the office by someone other than the parent/legal guardian, this person must be listed on the emergency card, have proof of identification, and you must send a note to school with your child to let us know who will be picking him/her up from school. After a child is signed out in the office the parent is asked to **wait inside the cafeteria** until the children are called for dismissal. We ask that parents wait in the cafeteria so that our hallways remain clear allowing students and staff to safely move throughout the building. When leaving the building, please use the designated cross-walk area to get to the parking lot. Moving between buses is unsafe and this designated area is the safest place to cross.

RESTRICTED DISMISSAL / CUSTODY

In divorce or separation situations, there are often restrictions placed upon parties by the court custody decrees. If there are special considerations regarding your child, you must provide copies of court documents to our office. If there are changes in these arrangements/documents, please send new copies as soon as possible.

LATE ARRIVALS / EARLY DISMISSALS

If you are dropping off your child after 9:00 AM, please park in the parking lot and walk your child into the office to sign him/her into school. You should do the same when your child is picked up early and returns to school for the remainder of the day. **FOR THE SAFETY OF YOUR CHILD, PLEASE DO NOT LEAVE HIM/HER OFF AT THE DOOR TO ENTER SCHOOL ALONE. YOU SHOULD ALWAYS ACCOMPANY YOUR CHILD INTO THE SCHOOL.** If you are picking up your child early from school, please send a note to that effect, and come into the office to sign out your child.

ATTENDANCE/ PARTICIPATION

The importance of regular attendance cannot be over emphasized. Children should be in school every day that they are physically able. The Cecil County Board of Education attendance policy includes standards for regular attendance. Be mindful that a student may not be absent in excess of seventeen (17) days **during the school year**. Parents will be notified in writing when their student has accumulated five (5), 10, and 15 absences in a school year. *The seventeen days include lawful and unlawful absences, including family vacation.* Also, a student in grades 1-5 must make up all work missed due to an absence. Students who are absent from school in excess of 17 days may fail the grade. Please contact the main office with questions or to discuss a specific situation.



Principal approval for family vacations will not be granted during MCAP Testing for students in grades 3, 4, or 5. Dates for MCAP testing have not yet been determined but usually occur in the month of May.

Students who are absent or tardy are required upon their return to present a note of explanation signed by the parent, giving a specific reason for the absence.

Why Attendance Matters			
If your child is absent...	That equals...	Which is...	Over the course of your child's 13 year education they will have missed...
1 day a week	36 days a year	more than 5 weeks a year	approximately 2 years of school
2 days a week	72 days a year	more than 10 weeks a year	approximately 3.5 years of school
3 days a week	108 days a year	more than 15 weeks a year	approximately 5 years of school

Why Being on Time Matters			
If your child is just 10 minutes late...	That equals...	Which is...	Over the course of your child's 13 year education they will have missed...
10 minutes a day	50 minutes a week	30 hours a year	60 school days (33% of a school year)
20 minutes a day	100 minutes a week	60 hours a year	120 school days (67% of a school year)
30 minutes a day	150 minutes a week	90 hours a year	180 school days (1 school year)
1 hour a day	300 minutes a week	180 hours a year	360 school days (2 school years)

AWARDS

Students will be recognized throughout the year for their academic achievement and other awards may be included as appropriate.

BAKED GOODS / BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Birthdays are a very special time for our students. CCPS has put guidelines into place to prevent hurt feelings and to guard against potential food allergies or other health concerns. In keeping with the CCPS regulation, KSA-RA, distribution of materials guidelines, **party invitations are not to be handed out at school.** There are many ways to celebrate your child's birthday at school. This includes: donating a book to the classroom library or giving an indoor recess game to your child's classroom. **Please do not send in food to celebrate your child's birthday.** This policy is for the safety of all children, including those with severe food allergies. **Students are not permitted to receive flowers, balloons or other types of deliveries during the school day.** This practice will help us to minimize disruptions in the school day as well as ensuring safety on the buses.

CELLPHONES:

- Elementary students may NOT use cellphones during the school day. This includes use within the school building, during the dismissal process, and while on field trips. All personal electronic devices will be in silent mode during the school day except under specific conditions outlined in this regulation.

Acceptable Settings for Cell Phone Use:

1. Students may use their cell phones before and after school, which includes riding on the school bus.
 2. Students may be allowed to make a phone call if given permission by supervising school personnel.
 3. Before and after school, students may listen to music with one earbud or headphone in one ear at a volume that other people can not hear.
 4. The Cell Phone policy applies when students opt to use them on school property and during school-sanctioned events.
- The Parent Handbook for Transportation references personal electronic devices as follows:
 - PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES such as MP-3 players, cell phones and handheld game units are the responsibility of the student. Even though the use of personal electronic devices is restricted in the school building, students may use their electronics on the school bus for personal and private non-disruptive activities. If the use of any electronic device disrupts the safe transport of students, the privilege of using those devices will be stopped. Drivers are permitted to temporarily confiscate improperly used devices until the student disembarks from the bus. Any belongings left on the bus will be held by the driver until the next school day. If the item is not claimed, it will be turned in to the school office.

It is an expectation that all RSES students adhere to the rules, regulations, and procedures outlined in the Student Code of Conduct, including those identified above. Students who do not follow these expectations may be disciplined for the behavior.

Please note that under certain circumstances, students may be disciplined for behavior which has taken place off-campus and/or beyond the school day. This is especially the case if the behavior is determined by the principal to be connected to the school so as to impact the educational environment of the school, the safety or welfare of other students or staff, or the maintenance of school order.

COUNSELING SERVICES

We have a full-time school counselor, Mrs. Ragan, on staff at our school. She is available to meet the social and emotional needs of our students. Services include small group counseling, consultation, and parent education.. Our program offers preventative and crisis intervention to all students. Feel free to contact Mrs. Ragan at krragan@ccps.org or 410-658-5925 or 410-378-4493.

CRISIS EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM

Every school in Cecil County has a Crisis Emergency Response Team (CERT) made up of school administrators, teachers, secretaries, a custodian, the school nurse, and support staff. It is the responsibility of this team to develop our Crisis Emergency Response Plan. Although one plan cannot provide for every imaginable emergency, our CERT works with our school system and other county emergency response agencies to provide for the safety and well-being of all of our students. Several times throughout the year, we have practice drills to test our plan and revise it as needed – fire, civil defense (weather), and secure status. During these drills, your phone calls may go unanswered and you may not have access to the building. Thank you for your understanding as we provide for a safe school environment.

Additionally, Rising Sun Elementary School partners with the Cecil County Sheriff's Office to provide us with access to a School Resource Officer. This is a deputy from CCSO who regularly spends time at Rising Sun Elementary School for safe school monitoring, and to assist with school safety concerns as needed.

DRESS CODE

Cecil County Public Schools seeks to promote good citizenship, to provide a safe and comfortable environment conducive to learning, and to prepare students for adult professional life. Certain clothing types and styles are deemed not appropriate as school-day attire and in addition may present an unhealthy situation. Appropriate dress is expected of all students. The responsibility for appropriate student dress lies with the student and his/her parents or guardians within approved standards set by the Board of Education and the schools. –from the Board of Education Dress Code Policy.



For safety reasons, Rising Sun Elementary students are not permitted to wear:

- **flip flops or shoes with high heels or wheels.** If a student comes to school with shoes such as these that are unsafe, he/she will not be able to participate in directed play, physical education, or integrated arts.
- Revealing clothing or shirts with inappropriate slogans will also not be permitted.
- **Head coverings**, except for those worn for approved and accepted medical or religious purposes, such as
 - Hats
 - Caps
 - Bandanas
 - Sweatbands
 - Hoods

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

Parents are required to fill out a card on each child each school year, which includes address, telephone numbers, and persons to contact in an emergency. It is the parent's responsibility to notify the office (**in writing**) of any changes. In an emergency, the school will attempt to notify parents first. In the event parents cannot be reached, the office will notify the persons listed on the emergency information card. Students will not be released to anyone other than the people listed on the emergency card. If your emergency contacts change throughout the year, please contact the office to make necessary changes.

FOOD SERVICE

Breakfast and lunch are served daily. For the last two years, meals have been provided at free of charge to every student. This is not the case for the 2022-2023 school year. Families will have to fill out FARMs applications in order to qualify unless they are already direct certified. Parents are encouraged to take advantage of our computerized School Cash online payment website to add funds to your child's meal account. All meal account checks should be made payable to RSES Food & Nutrition and should not include payment for any other school activity. Please include your child's name and "meal account" in the memo section of the check. Parents are expected to rectify negative balances in their child's account. These negative balances do not clear at the end of a school year and also carry over from school to school within the county.

Costs:

Breakfast	\$1.50	(Reduced cost= Free)
Lunch	\$2.90	(Reduced cost= Free)
Milk	\$.55	



**To complete the online application for Free & Reduced Price Meals, please visit:

<https://www.myschoolapps.com/Application>

County menus are planned around a four-week cycle. Menus will be distributed during the first week of each month and are also available on the Food Services website. Free and reduced lunch service is available throughout the year upon request. The information is confidential and will be used only to determine eligibility.

GIFTED & TALENTED PROGRAM

Rising Sun Elementary School offers opportunities for those students demonstrating exceptional academic skills. A countywide screening tool is used to identify those students who would benefit from participation in our gifted and talented program. Please contact the school for more information or find additional information at: <http://media.ccps.org/challenge/index.html>. Information can also be found in the CCPS calendar.

GRADING AND REPORTING

The Elementary Grading and Reporting Policy and Regulations can be found on our school web page under the Grading and Reporting tab or under the Parent tab on the CCPS home page.

All attendance and grades are recorded in an electronic system called PowerSchool. As a parent, you have access to your child's information through the Parent Portal. **In order to protect students' privacy, you must come into the school office to pick up your username and password letter.** We may ask for ID to insure that we are giving the information to the correct person. It does not change from year to year, so if you already have this information, you may continue to use it to view your child's records.

Make-up Work, Late Work and Retake Process: Please refer to the CCPS website at www.boarddocs.com/mabe/cecil/board.nsf/Public# for complete information regarding Grading and Reporting policies, regulations and guidelines.

HEALTH / WELLNESS

When a child becomes ill at school or has sustained any injury requiring immediate attention, every attempt will be made to reach a parent or guardian by telephone. Arrangements should be made so a child will have a place to go. Notify the office of any health concerns. If your child has a life-threatening condition, contact us so they can be included in the Emergency Medical Assistance Program. Call for details.

Students who have a doctor's note excusing them from Physical Education will not be permitted to participate in directed play/recess, unless it is specified otherwise on the doctor's note.

MEDICATIONS

Our school nurse administers medication according to the county medication policy. Parents/guardians must have a doctor complete an Administration of Medication form to take any medicine or use any over the counter products at school. This includes over the counter medication such as Tylenol. However, students may use cough drops, hand cream, or lip balm with a parent note. Medications, including cough drops, hand cream, and lip balm, may not be stored in the student's desk and are dispensed from the nurse's office. These medications are to be in their original container. All medications must be brought to school by the parent and given to the Nurse. Students are not permitted to have medication in their possession.



HOMEWORK

The purpose of homework is to reinforce and extend learning and is an important part of your child's education. Homework might include reading, discussion, flashcards, oral practice, quiet study, or written work. Homework develops a sense of self-discipline, personal responsibility, and independent thinking. Parents are encouraged to interact with their child to provide guidance, but homework is the student's responsibility. Students are required to write their homework in a journal. Parents may be asked to sign the homework journal.

PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION - PTA

Parents and teachers work together for the benefit of their children. Our PTA's email address where you can submit any question or comment you would like to share is rstestigerpride@yahoo.com. We encourage everyone to join, support, and participate in our PTA.

Officers for the 2023-2024 school year are:

Farrah Kind – President
Tracey Placentino- Vice President
Katie Gwaltney – Treasurer
Erica Fielder – Secretary
Laura Matthai - Staff Representative



PHOTOGRAPHS

We take pictures of the children for the yearbook and for displays of students' activities. If you do not want your child's picture taken, please send in a note. Professional pictures are taken in the fall and in the spring, which are available for purchase.

REASONABLE SEARCH

As allowed by Maryland State Law, the principal or designee may search a student's clothing, backpack, or locker if there is reason to suspect that a student has items which may be illegal, prohibited, or stolen.

SCHOOL CASH ONLINE

School Cash offers families the opportunity to make online payments for school fees such as field trips and student meals, all in a "one stop shop." This new and improved system is offered by the "School Cash Online" program. It will provide a convenient fee payment option that will save time, reduce paper, maintain a focus on instruction in the classroom, and limit cash and checks in our schools. This improved efficiency also aligns with the District's strengthened accounting practices. To register with SchoolCash, please visit: schoolcashionline.com



SCHOOL CLOSINGS

School closing announcements or school delay announcements are broadcast on television, the local radio stations, and on the Cecil County Public Schools website: www.ccps.org, CCPS Facebook and Twitter Page. Each family will also receive a recorded message from our calling system. If schools close early the system will call not only the home telephone, but work telephones and cell numbers that are listed for the student. Please be sure that all telephone numbers are up to date at the school. It is imperative that every child knows where to go in case of an emergency and in the event of an early closing. Be sure you have a plan and have discussed it with your child.

SIGN IN / SIGN OUT PROCEDURES

All visitors and volunteers are required to enter and exit through the main entrance by pushing the buzzer on the wall to the right. All visitors are required to give their photo ID for our Raptor system that will generate a sticker and screen all visitors for the federal sex offender list. Stickers must be worn in a visible spot throughout your visit to the school.

SOCIAL MEDIA

- All social media used should comply with the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA).
- Due to COPPA, elementary students should NOT have accounts on social media and communication sites. This is especially the case as most of these platforms indicate that children must be at least 13 years old (Snapchat, Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, FaceTime, YouTube, Twitter) or 16 years old (WhatsApp).

STUDENT DISCIPLINE AND BEHAVIOR

Rising Sun Elementary is a PBIS school. PBIS stands for Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. PBIS is a way for our staff to establish a positive social culture while recognizing students for their positive behavior. As a part of PBIS we have a set of core expectations which are Practice Respect, Act Responsibly, Work Hard, and Stay Safe. Throughout the year we will reinforce these values and explicitly teach how to show respect, responsibility, and safety in the different school settings. Students will receive positive feedback and encouragement in the form of PAWS Tickets and/or Positive Office Referrals from staff members centered around these values. These tickets will be entered into a bi-weekly raffle drawing for students to earn rewards from the PBIS closet.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES AND CARE OF PROPERTY

Part of the learning process is to develop individual responsibility. Your child should be responsible for such items as sneakers, musical instruments, paper, pencils, money, lunches, library books, and textbooks. If possible, please have your child's property clearly marked with name and grade. We discourage students from bringing expensive items, for example; cell phones, MP3 players, CDs, video games, etc. to school. These types of items can be distracting and may be disruptive to classroom instruction. In addition, the school cannot be responsible for monitoring these items to make certain that they are not traded, lost, borrowed, damaged, or stolen.

TECHNOLOGY USE:

Students are expected to adhere to the expectations outlined in the Cecil County Public Schools Board of Education [Acceptable Use of Technology Policy](#).

TEXTBOOKS, LIBRARY BOOKS, AND CHROMEBOOKS

All books are to be handled carefully. Students and their families will be required to pay for lost or damaged books. With parent permission, students are allowed to sign out a chromebook for home use. Practice safe habits while using, such as, refraining from liquids nearby and placing it on a table. For the safety of all children, CCPS uses an online monitoring system called BARK to ensure appropriate use of technology.

VACATION REQUESTS

All vacation requests must be submitted in writing at least a week prior to the vacation. Please address all requests to the Principal, Mrs. Isaac.

VISITORS

Visitors are always welcome at Rising Sun but must report to the office immediately upon entering the building. All visitors must sign-in and wear a visitor's pass. Teachers have been instructed to stop any adult visitors who are not wearing a visitor's pass. These individuals will be instructed to report to the main office to sign-in. Absolutely no exceptions will be made to this procedure. This is for the safety of all students. Visits to classrooms are scheduled throughout the year through classroom and/or school-wide events. If a parent/guardian wishes to visit his/her child(ren)'s classroom(s) on a separate occasion, it is required to schedule ahead of time with the teacher and/or an administrator. Such visits may require an administrator to be present. Please contact the office to schedule a visit at least one day prior.

Please note: We do not allow visitors to join students in the cafeteria during the lunch period. However parents may volunteer to assist in the cafeteria during lunch shifts after completion of the volunteer program guidelines below.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are a valuable part of our school program. We welcome and encourage parent and community volunteers. Our Assistant Principal coordinates our volunteer program. Information will come home regarding our volunteer program. As a part of our volunteer program, we expect that you will read and adhere to the volunteer guidelines. If the guidelines are not followed, you may lose your volunteer privileges.

WATER BOTTLES IN THE CLASSROOM

Students are permitted to carry drink containers in the classroom however, these should be **sealable** and contain **ONLY PLAIN WATER**. Students may not have sodas, juice, water w/ flavor packets, coffee/tea, etc. in the classroom. Non-water beverages leave stains on our classroom furniture, floors, and cause greater damage to school materials when spilled or leaks occur, as well as leave a sticky residue that attracts insects. Non-water beverages are still allowed in school lunches to be consumed in the cafeteria.

WHO TO CALL

Because of the complexity of our school programs, no one person knows all of the answers to all questions that may arise.

If:	Go to:
You have questions about the classroom, school work, homework, or classroom behavior	Call your child's teacher
You have questions about an office referral or bus referral	Assistant Principal, Mrs. Martino
You are concerned about your child's learning or behavior problems	The classroom teacher 1st, then the administration (Mr. Loman or Mrs. Martino)
You have questions about special education	The Building Coordinator, Mrs. White
You have questions about curriculum	The classroom teacher 1st, then the administration (Mr. Loman or Mrs. Martino)
You have questions about the Gifted and Talented program	The Gifted and Talented Instructional Coach, Mrs. Lively
You would like to discuss an issue your child is having with a bully or feel your child needs to speak to a counselor	The Guidance Counselor, Mrs. Ragan
You have health concerns or your child needs to take medication at school	The School Nurse, Nurse Sarah
You need to report your child's absence and request assignments from school due to a prolonged illness	The School Secretaries
You have a question about an upcoming school event	The School Secretaries
You need to inquire about school meal accounts, snacks, or other aspects of the breakfast and lunch programs.	Cafeteria Manager, Amber Timmons, (410-658-5925) or (410-378-4493). You can also check your child's lunch balance or add money to their account at School Cash online.
You have questions that are district-wide in nature and are for general information about our school system.	The Board of Education Office (410-996-5400)
You have questions about bus routes, bus stops, or other transportation concerns other than bus referrals	The Transportation Department (410-287-4656)

*****This handbook highlights some important information for parents. Cecil County Public Schools' website has links to complete policies and copies of some policies are sent home with students at the beginning of each school year and throughout the year as changes are made. Please read them carefully and save them for further reference.*****

