

Thursday, January 16, 2025

Richmond Community High School

Happy Thursday, Pharaohs! We are having an amazing week back and I couldn't be prouder of our students adhering to the new cell phone policy. They are truly engaging with one another and maintaining a positive attitude. We have also started a Pharaoh Café' on Wednesdays where we have a live band/performance from our very own students during lunch. This started yesterday and it was a hit. Looking forward to incorporating more engaging activities for our students as we navigate the new policy. Thanks for your support! New information is highlighted in RED.

In this update, you will find:

- Cell Phone Free Zone
- Course Selection Process
- RPS Career Fair
- District calendar
- Important Dates
- RCHS Arrival and Dismissal
- Transportation
- RCHS Procedures
- Clear Backpack Protocol

Cell Phone Free Zone

To comply with Virginia's Executive Order 33, RPS is transitioning to a cell phone free learning environment starting January 6th. We realize that this is a huge transition for our school community. Below you will find more guidance on what this *looks like* for RCHS.

A cell phone free zone means phones should be turned off and stored away upon entering the school building and remain off and stored away until the dismissal bell rings at the end of the academic school day. This includes ALL areas of the school building. Please plan accordingly to support this policy.

You can also visit rvaschools.net/phonefree for full details.

Course Selection Process

We are excited to announce that the course selection process for the 2025-2026 school year will open on Monday, December 16, 2024. Students will have the opportunity to select their courses through Friday, February 28, 2025. This is an important step in planning for the upcoming academic year and ensuring students meet their graduation requirements while exploring their interests.

To assist students with their selections, Ms. Williams will meet with students to provide guidance and answer any questions. Parents/guardians are encouraged to discuss course preferences and goals with their students to make the most of this process.

If you have any questions about the course selection process, please get in touch with Ms. Williams at 804-780-4332 or via email at bwilliam@rvaschools.net

Thank you for your continued support in helping our students succeed!

Course Selection

RPS Career Exploration Fair

We are thrilled to announce the 1st Annual RPS Career Exploration Fair, taking place on **Tuesday, February 4, 2025**, at the Dewey Gottwald Center. This event is exclusively for **12th-grade students** and promises to be an incredible chance for Seniors to connect with employers and gain valuable insights into various career fields.

This event is open to **ALL Seniors**, including those who have already committed to college. Participation can help students explore professional opportunities and understand the skills needed for success in their chosen fields.

Please see the [Informational Flyer](#), which includes a QR code for students to register. Encourage your scholar to sign up today and watch for the field trip permission form! If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Williams, School Counselor.

District Calendars

- District Calendar: <https://www.rvaschools.net/news/district-calendar>

Upcoming Important Dates

- RPS Schools Closed: January 20th (MLK Holiday)
- End of Semester: January 24th
- Semester Two classes start: January 27th (report cards will be mailed home the following week)
- Wellness Day (RPS Closed): February 17th
- Full instructional day: February 18th (This is a change)
- Black History Celebration: Month of February

RCHS Arrival/Dismissal

Below is a very important message from our Safety & Security Department after evaluating our dismissal and traffic process. Please adhere to these guidelines. Parent pick-up and drop-off is at the front of the building on E. Brookland Park Blvd. Students and parents should be using the crosswalks at each corner to safely cross the street. Mid-block crossing is dangerous, and visibility is limited. Drivers should follow traffic laws at all times. To avoid traffic collisions, no U-turns should be done in the middle of the street. We want all students and their families to arrive and depart safely at all times. We are seeing this happen often and we are requesting that you follow the protocol above for safety. Thanks

Please avoid using Woodrow Ave. Our drop-off location is still at the front of the school building. Do not drop off students on the Woodrow Ave. side of the school. That street is reserved for buses only. You can drive closer to the end of the school to drop-off but do not turn on Woodrow Ave. If you have to use Woodrow Ave. when buses are loading and unloading, **vehicles are to remain stopped while the stop sign is out and flashing**

red. (<https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/46.2-859>) There is a fine of \$250 for violations of passing a stopped school bus.

****The safety of our students, staff, and community is our priority. Let us all do our part**

Transportation

Here is the link of all bus routes: <https://www.rvaschools.net/fs/resource-manager/view/e21c216b-34d0-493c-9340-7e44e1145c37>

RCHS Procedures

- Main Doors open at 8:40am for scholars. Those who arrive early will have to wait outside of the school building until opening time indicated. Students who are not eating breakfast will report directly to the auditorium for our daily Morning Meeting. Scholars who are eating breakfast will report to the cafeteria and will transition to our Morning Meeting at the sound of the bell.
- Metal detectors are installed this year and will be located at the main entrance doors as well as the Woodrow Ave side door. All students will now be searched daily. Also, all students will now enter the school building using the Woodrow Avenue side door: this includes parent/caregiver drop-off students as well. We continue to monitor this and try new things to ensure this process is seamless and efficient. Starting Monday, September 16th we will reroute parent drop-off students to enter through the main doors at the front of the school.
- Moving forward any cups with lids and that is NOT clear is subject to be opened for search.
- Students should ONLY report to school with clear bags only. No student should have more than two bags entering the school building. This does not include lunch boxes. We are experiencing longer lines for searches due to multiple bags per students. Please have students plan to use their assigned lockers.
- Breakfast will close daily at 9:00am. Students who are late due to RPS transportation will have the opportunity to eat breakfast. Car riders and drivers who arrive late will not be permitted to have breakfast.
- At the conclusion of our daily Morning Meeting, students will transition to their 1st period classes except during the first week of school, when students will transition to Family for important information.
- Lunch times will vary based on the bell schedule of the day. We have a total of three bell schedules (Regular, Activity, and Family).
- Scholars who request a schedule change will be directed to complete a schedule change request form via QR code that will be located around the school building starting the first day of school. The last day to make a schedule change is Friday, September 6th. No changes will happen after this date. Schedules changes are continuing this week; students will be called to school counseling once their schedules changes have been made.
- All scholars must use the sign-in/sign-out system when leaving their classroom after receiving permission from their teacher. This is standard practice for our school culture.
- We will implement our 10/10 rule, which indicates no movement in the building during the first ten minutes and last ten minutes of class, unless it's an emergency.

- All scholars who drive must complete the driving form; driving privileges will be revoked if proper steps are not followed. Privileges can also be revoked at the discretion of the principal for disciplinary reasons.
- The SCORE (Student Code of Responsible Ethics) must be followed by all scholars daily.
- The Honor Code must be followed by all scholars.
- Student absences: please be sure to return your student with a note excusing their absence. We are tracking attendance daily and want to ensure all students are present in order to be successful. Questions regarding absences should go directly to Ms. Spruell (sspruell@rvaschools.net)

Clear Backpack Protocol

As a part of Richmond Public Schools' (RPS) ongoing efforts to enhance safety for students and staff members, clear backpack requirements will be in effect for the 2024-25 School Year. This decision was made by the RPS School Board on June 3, 2024, and is a preventive safety and security measure to ensure RPS Schools are safe and productive learning environments. We would like to express our gratitude to all RPS families for your understanding as we implement this shift. We truly appreciate your patience and compassion as we work collectively to find solutions that ensure the safety and well-being of all RPS students, staff and families.

A clear backpack is:

- **COMPLETELY CLEAR ON ALL SIDES EXCEPT THE BOTTOM**
 - **BACKPACK-SIZED OR SIMILAR: SMALLER BAGS ARE PERMITTED, BUT LARGER ONES ARE NOT**
 - **STILL SUBJECT TO INSPECTION BY THE CARE AND SAFETY TEAM**
1. **CLEAR BACKPACK REQUIREMENT APPLIES TO ALL STUDENTS.**
 2. **LUNCH BAGS/BOXES DO NOT HAVE TO BE CLEAR, BUT ARE SUBJECT TO INSPECTION.**
 3. **STUDENTS MAY CARRY A POUCH NO LARGER THAN 5.5" X 8.5 TO HOLD PERSONAL BELONGINGS** (PLEASE REFER TO PICTURE/EXAMPLE LOCATED ON DISTRICT'S WEBSITE AS WELL AS A FAQ)

The only exceptions permitted are:

- A small non-transparent pouch for personal hygiene items.
- School-approved sport-specific carrying case for athletic equipment.
- School-approved instrument-specific carrying case for band equipment.
- School-approved cases for medical equipment.

Feel free to bookmark this link (rchs.rvaschools.net/about-us/principals-newsletter) for access to all weekly updates. Also, please check out our school's website at www.rvaschools.net/RCHS. Here you will find all important school information, including our school's calendar of events and activities: rchs.rvaschools.net/about-us/community-high-school-events-calendar. Additionally, we have

both Facebook (RCHSPharaohs) and Instagram (@rchspharaohs and @principalmassenburg) accounts that we will use to send updates and quick announcements as we go throughout the school year. Looking forward to a successful school year! Please feel free to contact me at (804) 780-4332 or at Kmassenb@rvaschools.net. Additionally, we have both Facebook (RCHSPharaohs) and Instagram (@rchspharaohs and @principalmassenburg) accounts that we will use to send updates and quick announcements as we go throughout the school year. Thank you in advance for your continued support. With your partnership, we will plan, navigate, and execute with confidence!

Excellence, Every Day, Every Way!.....All In, All One, All Pharaohs!

Your Partner in Education,

Kenya E. Massenburg

Kenya E. Massenburg, Principal