

August 19, 2026

Welcome Back, Royle Families—and Happy New Year!

As we love to say at Royle, every new school year is a new beginning—a chance to reconnect, build new relationships, and embark on another year of learning and growth together. I hope your summer has been filled with rest, fun, and special memories with family and friends. We are so excited to welcome our students back and begin another wonderful year at Royle!

This year is especially exciting as we celebrate the completion of our construction project. After many months of transformation, our beautiful learning spaces are ready to welcome students and staff, and we look forward to filling them once again with curiosity, laughter, and learning.

I would also like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the dedicated Royle staff members who have worked tirelessly behind the scenes all summer. A special thank you to Jessica Presser in our main office, Assistant Principals Katie Risk and Amanda Kearney, and our incredible custodial team—Hector, Reinaldo, and Mike—for their hard work and commitment to preparing our school. Their flexibility, teamwork, and countless hours of effort have ensured that our building is ready to welcome students and families for another fantastic year.

As we begin this new chapter together, we look forward to partnering with you to nurture each child's curiosity, confidence, and love of learning. Together, we'll create a school year filled with discovery, growth, and meaningful connections.

This electronic mailing contains important information about the opening of school. Teacher assignments will be available on ASPEN, today, **August 19th at 3:00 PM. Please be sure you have completed your ASPEN updates and sign-off(s) as soon as possible. Attached below is a link to ASPEN on the Darien Public Schools website [Aspen Student Information System - Darien Public Schools](#) If you need assistance regarding ASPEN you can [contact the helpdesk](#).**

2026-2027 Royle Staff Roster

We are excited to welcome back many of our Royle teachers, as well as welcome some new faces to the Royle family! This year, we will have 3 class sections in grades K, and 2-5. We will have 4 class sections in First Grade this year. Here is our 2026-2027 Royle teacher roster:

K: Fiona Doonan*, Liz Markham, Beth Joyce

1: Bess McNamee*, Christina Capasso, Asia Boyd, Danielle Tomanelli

2: Christie Martin*, Nancy Mason, Meagan Harris

3: Amanda Orvis*, Devon Tiani, Kayla McEwan

4: Lisa Vetti*, Sara Farina, Kelly McKay

5: Jenna Rosen*/Emery Tedesco (co-taught 5th grade), Linda Dragotta, Sarah Collias

**denotes Grade Level Leader*

Staff New to Royle:

Danielle Tomanelli, Classroom Teacher, 1st grade
Meagan Harris- Classroom Teacher, 2nd grade
Sarah Collias- Classroom Teacher, 5th grade
Catherine Takovich- MTSS Math Specialist
Brooke Milikowski- Sacred Heart University Intern
Ariana Tsiachouridis- Iona University Speech Intern

SCHEDULES FOR OPENING DAYS**Wednesday, August 26th- First Day of School for grades 1-5**

School Hours: 8:25am-2:55pm

9:00 am: Kindergarten Orientation (see alphabet breakdown below)

10:15 am: Kindergarten Orientation (see alphabet breakdown below)

Thursday, August 27th - Full school day for all students grades K-5

School Hours: 8:25am-2:55pm

First Day of School

Students will come right into the school building on the first day of school. Families can say “goodbye” to their student(s) at the front door if walking to school, or lower loop for car drop off. Staff will be stationed outside and around the school building to assist students in finding their new classroom. Students will wait outside of their classroom, inside the building, from 8:15-8:25 am with adult supervision in the hallways. Students will follow this arrival process when they arrive at school each morning.

Kindergarten Orientation

Our **Kindergarten students** will have the opportunity to meet their teacher and visit the classroom on August 27th. Kindergarten parents please bring your child to school at the following time:

Wednesday, August 26th:

9:00-9:45 am Last names that begin with A-J

10:15-11:00 am Last names that begin with K-Z

****Please bring your Kindergarten student to the front entrance of the school.***

While Kindergarten students are visiting their classrooms and getting to know their teacher and classmates, Kindergarten families are invited to join me, our assistant principals, school nurse and our PTO, for an introductory meeting and Q&A session in the Royle Common Room.

All Kindergarten students will have their first full day of school on **Thursday, August 27th.**

Linked here is the Elementary 2026-2027 District Calendar for your convenience!

 **BOEApproved26-27Calendar.pdf**

 **Elementary Rotational Calendar 26-27 Calendar[41].pdf**

Arrival and Dismissal

Below is information on arrival and dismissal procedures for grades K-5. **No dogs are allowed on campus during arrival or dismissal. Dogs may not be carried onto the campus either.**

This is to ensure the safety of all of our students.

Arrival

Students can arrive by bus or by parent drop-off at school beginning at 8:15am. Students in grades 3-5 are also still welcome to walk or bike to school. Bike racks are located in the Kids' Zone.

Students may arrive at school between 8:15am-8:25am. **Students may not arrive prior to 8:15am as there is no supervision prior to then.** Students will be directed to come right inside the building at 8:15am, and to wait outside of their classrooms. School staff will supervise students waiting outside of their classrooms.

Parent drop-off will continue to be in the lower lot. Please ensure that your child is ready to exit your vehicle when you enter the drop off loop. This ensures an efficient drop off and keeps the line moving! I ask that we continue to work together to make this as efficient as possible, so we please ask that you watch for Royle staff members waving you forward, pull around the loop (past the dumpsters and picnic tables) to where we are waving you to allow for as many cars to enter the loop as possible. Then, have your child exit the vehicle (on the curbside) as quickly (and safely) as possible to keep our traffic moving. Please do not stop directly at the door area without pulling up. **Please note: You cannot park in the loop and walk your child to the door.** We will have staff outside ready to assist your child(ren) and help with their belongings. For students that may require additional assistance for the transition, our administrators and school psychologists will be available to assist you!

If you are driving a Kindergartner to school, please use the lower loop and stop at the stairs on your right. A Royle staff member will be there to assist your Kindergartner up the stairs and into the school building. This ensures the safety of our youngest learners getting to where they need to go safely and with adult supervision.

Dismissal

All students in grades K-5 will dismiss at 2:55 pm. Walkers and bikers will be called first to dismiss. Children taking the bus will remain in their classroom until their bus is called.

For parent pick up: If you are a returning Royle family, please use your car visor sign previously given to you. For new families, we will give your child a car visor sign on their first day to bring home to you. You can also contact Jessica Presser (jpresser@darienps.org) in the main office to pick up a visor sign before school starts. Car visor signs should be displayed in the front window of the pick up vehicle when picking up your child(ren) at dismissal.

For parent pick up, you will proceed to the lower lot and pull forward to the Royle staff member waving you on. We will read the visor tags and call into the school to have children sent down

for dismissal in order to maintain safety. **On the first days of school, we kindly ask that you have a sign in your passenger window/windshield with your child(ren)'s last name to assist in dismissal prior to visor signs being available. Please note: you cannot park in the loop and leave your car to meet your child in the Kid's Zone for pick up. Please stay in your car and as you move up through the loop we will get your child to you.** This is to maintain the safety of all students, families and staff.

For pick up in the lower loop, students must remain in the cafeteria until their car (or family/caregiver via walking) arrives. The students' last name is then called through the walkie talkie, to the supervising staff member in the cafeteria. Your child will then come outside to meet you either in the Kids' Zone if you are walking, or in the car line if your child is a car pick up. Students should only enter their vehicle in the car line CURBSIDE. Please do not ask your child to bypass any part of this process as it is unsafe and causes delays in the car line.

DISMISSAL APP - Pikmykid

For safety reasons and to avoid confusion, it is essential that we have accurate information about how your child is going home **each day**. This is particularly important during the first few weeks of school when routines and procedures are still new for everyone!

Darien Public Schools will continue using ***Pikmykid*** (www.pikmykid.com) to track student dismissal information. Each day ***Pikmykid*** will be used to notify classroom teachers how each child in their class is going home that afternoon. This is the app that parents **must use** for any change to a student's dismissal plans. **All parents of elementary-aged children will be asked to create an account prior to August 26th.** Directions for doing so are [here](#). This year, all students who are eligible for a bus will be assigned to a bus route and the assigned bus number will be your child's default setting in ***Pikmykid****. If your child will be going home a way other than their default setting, **parents are required to log in and enter their child(ren)'s dismissal plans for that day**. Please be sure to make these changes **PRIOR to 2:15 pm each day.**

It is possible to set an ongoing recurring dismissal plan in ***Pikmykid*** (i.e. if your child will always be a pickup or always walk home). Please click [here](#) if you'd like to see a step by step visual on how to create a recurring change.

If you need help with navigating the ***Pikmykid*** app, please note that ***Pikmykid*** has 24/7 Parent Support. You may contact them at support@pikmykid.com or directly in the parent app by going to the Account Tab >> Contact support.

[Here](#) is a full resource folder that you may find helpful.

****Please note that Royle School staff are unable to address inquiries about bus routes, bus drivers, pick up/drop off locations or times, or other transportation concerns. Those questions should be directed to our Transportation Coordinator, Dani Powers at dpowers@darienps.org.***

Chain of Communication

Please see the District's communication protocol linked here:

<https://www.darienps.org/parents/chain-of-communication>

Bus Schedules and Transportation

Bus schedules will be posted on the district website and in the local newspapers, prior to the opening of school. Check the district website for the most updated schedules, linked here [Transportation - Darien Public Schools](#). Kindergarten students will be provided with a bus tag that should be clearly displayed on students' backpacks so that the driver can easily identify Kindergarten riders. **Kindergarten students must be met by an adult at their bus stop, or they will be returned to school for pick up.**

This year every family that is "bus-eligible" will be assigned a bus. **You DO NOT need to opt-in for transportation as you may have done in the past.** Your bus route is determined by the District Transportation Office and is based on your address. Your child may not use a bus route other than the one assigned to your address. Your child is "bus-eligible" if you live more than a half mile from school. Please visit the District's [Transportation Website](#) for more information. If you have any questions regarding transportation, please reach out to Dani Powers at dpowers@darienps.org.

Student Illness

We ask that you work with us to carefully monitor children for illness. If you have any questions about your child's health or an illness, please contact our school nurse, Robin Boccanfuso (rboccanfuso@darienps.org). We continue to ask that if your child is not feeling well, you please keep them home to rest. Please click this link to learn more about our [Sick Day Guidance](#).

I also encourage you to visit the Royle School Nurse website [Royle School Nurse](#) to find answers to any health-related questions you may have.

If you do keep your child home, for any reason, please use our eAbsence system through the AspenGoApp. It is important that the main office has this information as well as the classroom teacher. Instructions are available here: <https://roy.darienps.org/visit-campus12>

Lunch and Snacks

Some classrooms will be designated **NUT FREE** due to student need. If your child's classroom is a "nut-free" classroom, you will be notified by our school nurse and your child's classroom teacher. At this time, students may bring food with nuts to the cafeteria, but we would prefer that our school remain as "nut-free" as possible to provide the safest environment for our students with life threatening nut-based allergies.

Children will go through the lunch line in the cafeteria to buy lunch. Lunch menus are available online so you can see "what's cookin'" each week!

For information regarding Free/Reduced Lunch, please contact Dani Powers (dpowers@darienps.org) and see the information below. Please note, you must fill out this form

each school year to be considered for Free/Reduced Lunch

 [Free-and-Reduced-Lunch-Application-2026-2027.pdf](#)

Additionally, Royle will continue to have **non-food celebrations** for all birthdays and holidays. Consistent with our approach to healthy lunches through our district lunch program and healthy habits through our district Physical Education and Health curriculum, in-school celebrations for holidays, birthdays, etc. will not be food-based. Students will not be allowed to bring food to share with their class or peers. Room parents, in conjunction with our Royle PTO, will work with individual teachers and classes on other ways to celebrate children's birthdays and other holidays throughout the year.

Meetings

Parent meetings (including PPTs, 504s, and meetings with the nurse) may be held in-person, remotely via Zoom, Microsoft Teams, or by telephone. We will work with families to determine the best format for meetings and work together to schedule them as appropriate.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Also- please save the date(s) for our Parent/ Teacher conferences this year. These are adult only conference days for families to meet with teachers. **This year our elementary Parent/Teacher conferences will be held on October 22nd and October 23rd , with a SNOW DATE (let's hope not!), for October 29th. These conference days will be early release days for students at 10:55, with evening conferences held on October 22nd. More information will be shared as we get closer to October!**

Updated District Personal Mobile Device Guidance

Please see the attached letter regarding the District's personal mobile device guidelines.

 [District Personal Mobile Device Letter.pdf](#)

Construction Update

As we begin the school year, we are excited to share several improvements to our school as our construction project nears completion. Here are a few highlights families will notice:

- Our new front entrance and welcome area will be completed by the end of September.
- The art and music wing has been beautifully renovated and is ready for students.
- The large field has been reseeded, and we have regained some access for recess, PE and other outdoor activities. Once we give the new grass time to grow, we will be able to access the field in its entirety.
- Our new World Language classroom is complete and ready for learning.
- Classroom renovations, including updates and right-sizing to better support teaching and learning, have been completed.
- The Kids' Zone and playground blacktop have been repaved, and all fencing has been taken down to allow full access to the back side field, wall ball, and playground.
- A new stone wall has been installed and trees have been planted to separate the picnic area from the parking lot.

I am thrilled to welcome you all back to Royle for another wonderful school year. The hallmark of our community has always been the kindness, support, and care we show one another, along with our unwavering commitment to every child. Together, we will continue to create a school where students feel safe, valued, inspired, and excited to learn each day.

As we begin this new year, we look forward to nurturing our students' curiosity, encouraging them to wonder, ask questions, and embrace new challenges with confidence. Thank you for your continued partnership and for all you do to make Royle such a special place to learn and grow. I look forward to seeing everyone soon and to another incredible year together. Happy New Year, Royle families!

Best,
Natasha Torre
Principal, Royle School