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# family handbook



**TWO RIVERS PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL**

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# Translations

The Family Handbook is available in multiple languages upon request. For translation services, please contact our Director of Operations, Gail Williams, at [gwilliams@tworiverspcs.org](mailto:gwilliams@tworiverspcs.org).

El Manual de la Familia está disponible en varios idiomas bajo petición. Para servicios de traducción, por favor contacte a nuestra Directora de Operaciones, Gail Williams, en [gwilliams@tworiverspcs.org](mailto:gwilliams@tworiverspcs.org).

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Le Manuel familial est disponible sur plusieurs langues sur demande. Pour les services de traduction, veuillez contacter notre directeur des opérations, Gail Williams, à [gwilliams@tworiverspcs.org](mailto:gwilliams@tworiverspcs.org).

Sổ tay gia đình có sẵn bằng nhiều thứ tiếng theo yêu cầu. Đối với các dịch vụ dịch thuật, vui lòng liên hệ với Giám đốc Hoạt động của chúng tôi, Gail Williams, tại [gwilliams@tworiverspcs.org](mailto:gwilliams@tworiverspcs.org).

家庭手册可应要求提供。对于翻译服务，请联系我们的运营总监盖尔·威廉姆斯，电邮至[gwilliams@tworiverspcs.org](mailto:gwilliams@tworiverspcs.org)。

# Overview & Mission

## *Overview*

Two Rivers Public Charter School embarked on its maiden voyage in the fall of 2004. The school is a vibrant educational environment where students and staff become a community of learners on a journey of discovery. Founded by an energetic and committed group of DC parents, Two Rivers uses EL Education (formerly Expeditionary Learning), an educational model that emphasizes interactive, hands-on, project-based learning. The school focuses on the whole child, recognizing the importance of character education and the social-emotional needs of children while helping them achieve academic excellence.

Two Rivers' founders and staff share a strong belief that all children can learn and be high achievers. The curriculum at Two Rivers is rigorous, standards-based, and provides opportunities for students to excel in all areas. The school's demanding academic program is augmented by an integrated arts program and a content-based Spanish program. These elements come together through learning expeditions that allow students to incorporate and apply their classroom learning through real-world experiences.

Two Rivers is a public charter school operating outside of DCPS. As a charter school, it functions as its own school district, enabling it to select its own curriculum and instructional methods and hire its own teachers and staff. Two Rivers students still participate in standardized testing and are required to meet state standards.

Students receive instruction in language arts, math, science, social studies, music, performing and visual arts, and physical education. Special emphasis is placed on Spanish language instruction. Two Rivers also has a strong commitment to special education.

During the 2018-2019 school year, Two Rivers will serve over 850 students in preschool through eighth grade across three buildings.

## *Mission*

To nurture a diverse group of students to become lifelong, active participants in their own education, develop a sense of self and community, and become responsible and compassionate members of society.

## *Goal*

Our mission is supported by the following goal: When students graduate from Two Rivers, they will have the cognitive and social skills to succeed in high school and college so that they are positioned to have rich and varied options for their future.

## *Guiding Principles*

Our educational philosophy is based on these guiding principles, which support the school's mission:

- 1 A small, diverse student body with a low student-teacher ratio, supported by extensive parent involvement.
- 2 Curriculum that is integrated across disciplines and provides high academic expectations.
- 3 Instruction that is interactive, hands-on, and project-based.
- 4 Teachers who facilitate student self-discovery and critical thinking.
- 5 A committed, talented, caring, creative, and well-supported staff who are partners in guiding the school.
- 6 An emphasis on literacy, with the goal that every student will become a talented author, an adept reader, and a skilled communicator.
- 7 Active, engaging social studies, science, and math curricula that allow students to develop and apply skills in these areas to the world around them.
- 8 A strong commitment to the arts and a second language program.
- 9 An approach to student development that nurtures the whole child, focuses on problem solving, and helps children develop social skills and self-confidence.
- 10 An emphasis on learning beyond the classroom supported by community involvement, service-learning, field education, and partnerships with community organizations.
- 11 A physical environment conducive to learning and exploring.

## **CORE VALUES**

Two Rivers community members are learners who live the following core values: experience and grow, give access, be thoughtful, nurture relationships, and learn better together.

# Instructional Program

## *Educational Program*

Two Rivers has structured its educational and character development programs to encompass its guiding principles and achieve its stated mission. Fundamental to Two Rivers is a strong belief that all children can learn and be high achievers in a supportive environment focused on educating the whole child and grounded in high expectations. Two Rivers has purposefully selected a method of instruction, EL Education, which emphasizes the achievement of all students and is based on a belief that individual success is directly related to group success. The EL Education model also provides students with meaningful and authentic experiences by linking classroom learning to real world experiences and related skill building opportunities, making learning relevant to all students.

## *EL Education*

Two Rivers' educational philosophy is exemplified by the EL Education model that forms the basis of its method of instruction. EL Education was developed by a group of Harvard educators during the early 1990s, incorporating the principles and philosophy of Outward Bound, founded by Kurt Hahn in 1941. The model was one of 12 models chosen by New American Schools to develop and evaluate a comprehensive school reform model.

EL Education is based on 10 design principles and five core practices embodied in each aspect of the school. Learning is, at its heart, an expedition into the unknown in which personal experience and intellectual growth promote self-discovery and construction of knowledge. Children must be guided through this journey with care, compassion, and respect for their diverse learning styles, backgrounds, and needs. By addressing individual differences, educators can substantially increase the potential for learning and creativity of each student.

The instructional practices in EL Education schools engage children's natural passion for learning to develop their curiosity, knowledge, skills, and courage to imagine and work toward a better world. At the completion of learning expeditions, students participate in a showcase to present the results of their expeditions and detail the progression of their work. Parents and student families attend these events to witness their children's discussion of their work and view evidence of their learning. For more information about EL Education, please visit their website at [eleducation.org](http://eleducation.org).

## *Outcomes for Deeper Learning*

Two Rivers recognizes that students need more than the core content and basic skills that schools have traditionally taught. Students need to develop skills associated with critical thinking & problem-solving, collaboration & communication, and character.

Critical thinking & problem solving involve developing a deep fund of knowledge and a set of flexible skills that students can apply in a variety of settings beyond a single discipline. Critical thinking & problem solving skills may be applied in a particular way in a biology class, but the same skills can transfer to a literature class or to jobs in our modern economy. At the heart of these skills is the ability to analyze information and formulate creative solutions to complex problems.

Collaboration & communication are interpersonal skills that help people work well with one another. Both collaboration & communication involve being able to read the vast number of verbal and nonverbal cues that we all use to communicate our ideas and emotions. People need to learn to build shared understanding, negotiate outcomes, and cultivate trust to work together to solve problems that no one can solve alone.

Character at Two Rivers is comprised of the intrapersonal skills necessary for success. Character involves being able to monitor and direct your own learning, as well as cultivating positive attitudes and beliefs about your academic abilities and your identity as a learner. Character involves the skills of setting goals, maintaining attention to detail and precision in your work, and cultivating a growth mindset. In addition, character involves personal integrity in both work and relationships. Thinking about character in these ways values how individuals think about themselves both as learners and more broadly as people.

Throughout the instructional program, Two Rivers balances an emphasis on the core content and basic skills defined by academic standards with development of skills associated with critical thinking & problem solving, collaboration & communication, and character.

## **LEARNING MEANS CONVERSATION**

We believe student conversation is a powerful form of exploration. We believe that important learning takes place when children challenge one another, ask questions, share ideas, and build on one another's knowledge.

## **PRIMARY SOURCES**

We believe children learn authentically by using authentic resources. Although they have access to some textbooks, students more often gather information from non-fiction books, publications, and the Internet. By reading literature and exploring primary sources, children gain information-gathering skills that they use to independently problem solve and conduct research.

# Instructional Program

## *Course of Study*

Two Rivers is proud to offer a rigorous, standards-based curriculum that encompasses many areas of study.

All students at Two Rivers participate in language arts, math, social studies, and science as part of their regular classroom instruction. In addition, students have a variety of classes that enrich their classroom learning and challenge them to think and grow in new directions. Grades PS–5 have both Spanish and Physical Education (PE) twice each week and music once each week. Elementary students also have visual arts class twice each week for half of the year; they then switch and have drama twice a week for the other half of the year. Middle school students take Spanish class four times a week. All middle school students have arts classes for two or more periods per week, and physical education class four times a week. (Daily recesses and Wellness Wednesday classes complement and extend our Health and Physical Education program.) Students who need significant academic interventions in reading, writing, or math may receive interventions during the Spanish or arts class periods.

Grades K–8 use the Common Core Standards in Literacy and Math, and Next Generation Standards in Science and DCPS Standards for Social Studies. The Common Core Standards were created through a state-led effort by teachers, school administrators, and experts to provide a clear and consistent framework to prepare our children for college and the workforce. For more information about the Common Core State Standards, please visit [commoncore.org](http://commoncore.org).

## *Differentiating Instruction*

Two Rivers builds on student strengths. Collaborative work allows each student to shine in his or her area of strength and grow in areas that need improvement. In order to serve all students well, Two Rivers provides differentiated instruction to meet the needs of all learners within the classroom. Differentiated instruction means that lessons are designed to allow for students at different ability levels to improve their skills and increase their depth of knowledge without ignoring the needs of students who either are struggling or are ready for additional challenges. Through the use of problem-based teaching and flexible group structures, instruction and assignments often have a variety of ways for students to engage with the material at different levels, ensuring that each student is challenged and growing in their content knowledge and skills, toward a deeper understanding. Often within the same

lesson, students who are at a beginning level of understanding of a given learning target are moved towards mastery; students who are close to mastering a given target master it; and students who have already mastered the target are pushed to attain a higher learning target.

## *Field Education*

Fieldwork or field studies are an integral part of the EL Education program. Two Rivers uses the natural and social environments of our local communities as sites for purposeful fieldwork and service connected to academic work. Students working in the field are active investigators, using research tools, techniques of inquiry, and standards of presentation used by professionals in the field. Fieldwork is used to cultivate curiosity and background knowledge. Unlike a traditional field trip, fieldwork has a clear purpose that furthers the work of the expedition (i.e., students collect data, conduct interviews, do observations). In many cases, fieldwork takes place over an extended period of time with several visits to the same site.

All parents are asked to sign a general permission slip during the registration process. Students are expected to follow the Two Rivers behavior guidelines on all fieldwork. Students who demonstrate difficulty abiding by the guidelines may be prohibited from participating in fieldwork or a parent or guardian may be required to accompany them on the field study. If a student is prohibited from participating in a field study, he or she will be given work to be done in another location in the school. If a student is having a difficult time following the behavior guidelines on fieldwork, parents/ guardians may be asked to pick up the student from the field location.

On occasion, fieldwork expeditions may be scheduled to locations too far from the Washington, DC area to facilitate a return by the end of the school day. In these cases, parents may be asked to pick up their student from school at a later time.

One of the many meaningful ways parents support learning at Two Rivers is to chaperone fieldwork. Teachers welcome parents on field studies. Though there may be occasions when parent participation is limited by space or tickets, in general, the more chaperones, the merrier.

## *Math at Two Rivers*

Two Rivers has three goals in its mathematics program: develop conceptual understanding of mathematics, build students' critical thinking & problem solving skills, and promote number sense and computational fluency.

## **REVISING WORK IS A HABIT**

Students at Two Rivers normally aren't finished with pieces of work until they do multiple drafts of it. This expectation reaches across grades and disciplines. Teachers guide students from draft to draft. Students collaborate to assess the work of their peers. Rubrics set high standards for finished pieces and guide students as they strive to get their work to meet these high standards.

# Instructional Program

Problem-based tasks in math are one of the primary tools that develop conceptual understanding and critical thinking & problem solving skills. Through these tasks, students grapple with complex problems that do not have a clear path to a solution or algorithm. They begin the process by developing a clear and deep understanding of the problem. They then grapple with the concepts and work to find a solution. They finish by sharing what they have learned with their classmates. By learning math in this way, students construct a deep and lasting understanding of the underlying math concepts.

In addition to problem-based tasks, Two Rivers utilizes two text book series: enVisionMATH in the elementary grades and the University of Chicago School Mathematics Project in the middle school. These tools supplement the mathematics program by providing targeted lessons and materials for students to practice the concepts that they are learning in class. With these tools and a combination of games and math fact practice, students improve their number sense and fluency skills. Through regular focused time to increase speed and proficiency, students are better able to access the rudimentary mathematical skills they need to further deepen their understanding and apply mathematics to relevant situations.

Our program is designed to develop proficiency in mathematics so that all of our students are well prepared to succeed in high school. With that in mind, we offer a credit-bearing algebra course for middle school students who have demonstrated that they are prepared for work in more advanced mathematics based on school-wide and state assessment measures.

## **THE MATHEMATICAL WIZARDRY PRIZE**

To promote the pleasures of mathematics and develop critical reasoning skills, on a weekly basis, Two Rivers introduces a Mathematical Wizardry Prize problem for everyone in the community to solve. The problems are designed to have multiple solution methods and occasionally feature multiple solutions. These types of problems promote flexibility in thinking and provide access to problem solving to students with varying levels of mathematical proficiency. For example, drawing a picture, acting out the situation, creating a table, drawing a graph, or creating an equation can often be used to solve the same problem. No particular method is valued over any other and in fact exploring the similarities and differences

between two different paths to a correct solution is a fruitful way to develop mathematical reasoning.

The problems are introduced in community meeting and are available to be picked up at the front desk in each building and from the math teachers in the middle school. Solutions can be turned in until 3:30pm the day before community meeting at 4th Street or 1:15 the day before community meeting at Young. Everyone can participate, and we often have solutions turned in by parents and teachers as well as students. Collaboration is heartily encouraged. Winners of the weekly prize have their names called out at community meeting. Celebrating the mathematical thinking of an entire family is a pleasure! So next time you are in the lobby, ask for the Mathematical Wizardry Prize Problem at the front desk, and have fun!

## *Reading at Two Rivers*

Two Rivers uses a balanced literacy approach to teaching reading. Reading is taught through the use of authentic, compelling pieces of literature and informational text as well as through direct instruction in fluency and decoding skills. The theory behind this approach has been outlined by Gay Su Pinnell and Irene Fountas in their books, *Guided Reading and Word Matters*. In addition, Two Rivers' approach to reading has been further developed around the practices described in the EL Education book *Transformational Literacy* by Ron Berger, Libby Woodfin, Suzanne Plaut and Cheryl Dobbartin.

Literature is used in several distinct ways during the school day. Each of the following strategies teaches explicit comprehension and decoding skills. First, read alouds allow students to hear fluent reading and models of comprehension strategies as teachers think aloud. Second, shared reading is an opportunity for students to read chorally to further enhance fluency. Third, guided reading in the lower grades and literature circles in the upper grades are structures for providing targeted direct instruction in reading to each student. During guided reading, students read literature at their instructional level with a small group of other students and a teacher. The teacher helps the students develop strategies for figuring out difficult words and facilitates discussions about the books to help students develop comprehension skills. Guided reading groups allow our teachers to connect students with interesting, meaningful literature while also explicitly teaching reading skills.



# Instructional Program

As students' reading abilities mature, the focus of direct instruction around reading shifts from the mechanics of reading to independent comprehension skills. Two Rivers formalizes that shift through literature circles as outlined by Harvey Daniels in his book, *Literature Circles: Voice and Choice in Book Clubs & Reading Groups*. Both whole class literature study and small group literature circles are used to read novels, short stories, informational text, and shorter pieces. Upper grades read longer and more complicated texts to build background knowledge and understand the nuances of expedition topics and themes.

Finally, there are many opportunities for students to read independently during the day to practice and hone the skills that they have learned in the other strategies listed above. Nightly reading at home will help middle school students keep up with the reading demands as students read both for pleasure and to build background knowledge.

In our younger grades, students develop their letter and phonological knowledge and word attack skills through the *Words Their Way* program. Words Their Way lessons emphasize word study as a method for students to independently develop their decoding skills with guidance from the teacher. They encourage students to make their own discoveries about how letters and words work.

In addition to the strategies listed above, Two Rivers places a heavy emphasis on vocabulary development at all grade levels. We place instruction in vocabulary on a continuum of tiers to differentiate our vocabulary instruction as suggested by Isabel Beck, Margaret McKeown, and Linda Kucan in their work, *Bringing Words to Life: Robust Vocabulary Instruction*. We begin with the most common words in the English language that form the first tier of vocabulary. These words are taught in kindergarten and first grade as sight words or power words with the expectation that every student be able to recognize them on sight. In addition, emphasis is placed on subject knowledge specific words in math, science, and social studies. These technical terms fall into the third tier of vocabulary. However, there is a second tier of vocabulary words between the most common words and expert language of tier three that is made up of terms that are used frequently in educated speech and writing but are general enough to apply to multiple settings. These tier two words are often synonyms that provide a greater level of sophistication and

nuance to language than traditional speech and are taught at all grades.

## *Science and Social Studies*

Expeditions are the primary way that Two Rivers delivers social studies and science instruction. Expeditions are 10 to 12 week in-depth studies of a specific topic. Studying something in depth will help students develop life-long learning skills more successfully than studying a broad range of topics in less detail. The topic for expeditions are selected from the curriculum framework that outlines the essential areas of study in science and social studies that will be covered in each grade level. Through the curriculum framework, Two Rivers ensures that by the time a student graduates from eighth grade, he or she will have studied the critical aspects of each discipline: physical science, life science, and earth science in the sciences, and in social studies: geography, civics, history, and economics.

The curriculum is structured in this way to provide an interdisciplinary framework on which all children can build their understandings year after year. All units of study involve intensive research, reading, writing, scientific exploration, and real world application. In addition, the school places particular emphasis on development of the arts and social development. Two Rivers' curriculum offers challenging, interesting content for students of all ages and ability levels.

## *Homework Guidelines*

Two Rivers believes that homework should be meaningful and connected to the school day experience by linking home to school and reinforcing skills already learned. Establishing good homework habits at an early age is an important way to develop personal responsibility as students prepare for future assignments and projects as they grow academically. Homework is an opportunity for parents and teachers to be partners in their student's education. Parents are encouraged to monitor homework completion and offer assistance if needed. They are also encouraged to teach routines for where and when to do homework and how to pack their backpack each day. Parents should help students set up a designated place and time for homework that is well lit and free of distraction. Homework assignments are designed to be developmentally appropriate for the grade. Homework will not always be given every night and new skills are not introduced through homework. Children may be expected to make up or complete unfinished work. Communication

## **SERVICE AND CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT ARE PART OF OUR CURRICULUM**

We focus on character and service as well as academics. Quality academic work is mirrored by the quality of the ways in which we treat one another, our community, and our environment. Students are encouraged to be compassionate, disciplined, courageous, and responsible. For example, your child's class may take time to discuss why a class member has been mistreated. They may take twenty minutes to pick up litter at a neighborhood park. They may be a reading or math buddy in an elementary school classroom.

# Instructional Program

regarding homework between home and school is important and encouraged. If you have any questions or your child is regularly having difficulty completing or understanding homework, please contact your child's teacher.

Two Rivers follows the guidelines from the National Parent Teacher Association (PTA) regarding the appropriate volume of homework. The National PTA suggests as a general guideline assigning approximately ten minutes of homework per night, per grade. That means that a third grade student should have, on average, approximately 30 minutes of homework per night. Teachers use homework in two primary ways at Two Rivers. Some teachers use homework as an opportunity to practice skills that have already been introduced and taught. This means that homework will involve no new information, only skills that they are practicing in order to secure. Second, teachers also use homework as an opportunity to extend learning. This means that a student may have to take a concept that has been introduced in class and think about new and novel ways to apply that skill/ knowledge.

An important part of every child's life is recreation and exploration beyond schoolwork. We encourage families to take their children outside to play and get exercise, go to museums, and read together, as these are other opportunities for learning outside the school day.



# Student Support Services

As a school that is committed to the success of every student, Two Rivers embraces all students – including students with disabilities, English Language Learners (ELLs), and students experiencing homelessness – and provides the necessary support to ensure their success as learners and community members. Our continuum of support services begins with our Student Support Team, which is available to any student needing additional support.

Students who have disabilities that substantially limit a major life activity or that adversely impact their educational performance may be eligible for accommodations and/or services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) or the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA). Students who speak a language other than English at home may also be eligible for our ELL program. For both students with identified disabilities and ELLs, Two Rivers uses an inclusion model of teaching in which students with special needs are educated alongside their peers.

## *Response to Intervention / Student Support Team*

In order to help students achieve their maximum potential, Two Rivers uses a Response to Intervention (RTI) framework. Students who are not meeting academic targets, or who are experiencing social-emotional challenges, are provided with short-term intervention services to address their needs. Parents are notified when a student is receiving intervention services.

Additionally, Two Rivers uses a Student Support Team (SST) process, a collaborative approach to help a student reach his/her maximum potential. The SST process addresses academic, social-emotional, health, or behavioral concerns that may not have responded to initial interventions. The intention of the team is to explore the needs of the child and create a plan to provide the supports necessary to ensure success throughout the academic day.

After the initial meeting, one or more follow-up meetings will be held to ensure that the student is making progress, and to refine the plan to add additional supports if sufficient progress is not occurring.

The Student Support Team is led by an SST Coordinator and includes the student's classroom teacher and Assistant Principal; along with other school personnel as appropriate, including a school counselor, and Dean of Students; and, if appropriate, the student. Parents will be notified

when SST meetings are scheduled and are strongly encouraged to attend and participate in SST meetings. Student support plans are most effective when parents are active members of the SST process.

For additional information about the SST process, please contact:

### **Laura Lorenzen**

Director of Student Support  
202-546-4477  
llorenzen@tworiverspcs.org

### **Genifer Salandy**

SPED Coordinator (PS3 - 2)  
202-546-4477  
gsalandy@tworiverspcs.org

### **Shanon Redman**

SPED Coordinator (3 - 8)  
202-543-8477  
sredman@tworiverspcs.org

## *Special Education at Two Rivers*

Two Rivers' Responsive Classroom and Expeditionary Learning models, which emphasize respect of individual differences and active hands-on learning and problem-solving, as well as our classroom co-teaching structures, which balance whole class with flexible group activities, are particularly well suited to the inclusion model, in which students with disabilities are educated alongside their non-disabled peers.

Research has shown that co-teaching – in which general and special educators collaborate in planning and delivering instruction – improves the quality of instruction for all students. Not only does co-teaching provide additional support for students with disabilities, but students without disabilities benefit, too.

Two Rivers embraces co-teaching in a variety of ways. In the elementary grades, every classroom has an assistant teacher, ensuring a minimum of 2 adults are teaching throughout the school day. In most classrooms, Special Education Teachers provide specialized instruction and additional classroom support to our learners with special needs, with caseloads kept small so that students have multiple opportunities to receive both individual and small group support as needed. This year, we are also piloting several classrooms in which a General Education and Special Education teacher will co-lead a classroom, with an Assistant Teacher providing additional support.

# Student Support Services

In the Middle School, all English Language Arts classes are co-taught by a general education and special education teacher, and a math inclusion specialist consults with our general education math teachers to ensure student needs are being met. Specialized reading and math labs lead by special education teachers provide opportunities for more intensive remedial instruction for students who are still working on building their basic skills in those areas.

Common planning times in both the Elementary and Middle School grades ensure that, even when a special education teacher is not present in the classroom, lessons have been designed with the needs of all learners in mind. All members of the teaching work together to provide instruction that is individualized to meet the needs of the child. Most children receiving specialized instruction will have their needs met primarily within the general education classroom. For students needing more intensive remediation of basic skills, or for those with other needs that cannot be met in the general education classroom, our special educators and related service providers may work with the child in a small group or one-on-one outside the classroom for a small portion of the school day, as determined by the Multidisciplinary IEP Team.

Continuous monitoring of student progress through both standardized and classroom-based assessments allow us to refine our interventions to ensure that students with special needs improve their basic skills and knowledge while developing the expert thinking and complex communication skills needed to become successful adults.

Parental involvement at all steps of the process is particularly important, as parents bring a unique perspective on their child's strengths and needs, as well as any external factors that may be impacting their child's school performance.

Students are typically identified for special education or other services after going through the Response to Intervention (RTI)/Student Support Team (SST) process. Parents who believe their child may have a disability are encouraged first to use the RTI/SST process; however, parents have the right to make a request for an evaluation at any time. Upon making such a request, parents will be contacted by one of our Student Support Coordinators to discuss next steps. Parent consent is required prior to evaluation, and determination about whether a child qualifies for special education services is made by a Multidisciplinary Team that includes parents, the special education and general education teachers, the Special

Education Coordinator and/or Director of Student Support, and other qualified professionals as appropriate (psychologist, speech and language pathologist, occupational therapist, counselor, etc.) Detailed information about our Child Find policies and procedures can be found on our website. Students give input into the creation of their IEP through developmentally appropriate discussion of their strengths and learning needs, goals, and classroom supports and accommodations that support their ability to successfully access and progress in the curriculum. Many students, depending on their developmental readiness, also participate in some or all of their IEP meeting, and their ideas, questions, and concerns help inform and direct the discussion. Two Rivers has found that when students participate in creating their IEP, they feel a sense of ownership and pride. They become better able to self-advocate for their needs and work with a greater sense of purpose to achieve their goals.

Questions about Two Rivers' services for students or your rights as a parent under Section 504 or IDEA should be addressed to Laura Lorenzen, Director of Student Support, 202-546-4477 or [llorenzen@tworiverspcs.org](mailto:llorenzen@tworiverspcs.org).

## *English Language Learners*

In accordance with federal law, all students who speak a language other than English at home and/or were born in a foreign country are screened to determine if they qualify for our English Language Learners (ELL) program. Students are assessed in the areas of Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing to determine their level of need, if any, in each area. Parents are notified before their child is screened, and informed of the results afterwards. Parents may choose to opt out of participation in the ELL program.

For students identified as ELLs, specific classroom goals in each identified area of need are developed in order to guide teachers in ensuring that students are building the English language skills they need to succeed. Our ELL teacher works alongside classroom teachers in developing these goals and supporting students in acquiring needed skills. The ELL teacher may guide the classroom teacher in differentiating materials to make sure they are accessible to all students, or may work directly with ELL students to help them build specific skills.

Questions about our ELL program should be addressed to Laura Lorenzen, Director of Student Support, 202-546-4477 or [llorenzen@tworiverspcs.org](mailto:llorenzen@tworiverspcs.org) or Elizabeth LeBoo, ELL Specialist, at [eleboo@tworiverspcs.org](mailto:eleboo@tworiverspcs.org).

# Student Support Services

## *Language Access for Families*

All families have the right to information about your child's education in a language you understand, and to have the opportunity to participate fully in all school events. When your child enrolls in Two Rivers, we will ask you about the language you would like to use when communicating with the school. This helps us identify your language needs so we can provide an interpreter, or written translation of vital educational documents when needed.

When you talk with teachers or school staff, the school will offer an interpreter if you need one. This includes parent-teacher conferences, Showcase, parent information nights, meetings about special education, or any other school-wide events or meetings about your child's education. If you will be attending a school event for which interpretation services are needed, we ask that you make this request at least 48 to 72 hours in advance. If immediate language assistance is needed, please inform the front desk and an interpreter will be called.

## *Homeless Students*

The rights of homeless children are protected under a federal law known as the McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth Act. This law ensures that homeless children have access to the same free and appropriate public education as other children. Under this law, if a child who is enrolled at Two Rivers is or becomes homeless, the law provides that the child may continue to be enrolled at Two Rivers for the duration of homelessness. In addition, homeless children have the right to transportation to ensure they are able to continue attending their school of origin. Two Rivers will also work with homeless children and their families to ensure that they receive all supports and services for which they may be eligible.

The term "homeless child or youth" means:

- Children and youth who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence; and includes children and youth who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelter (including DC transitional housing); are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement;

- Children and youth who have a primary nighttime residence that is a private or public place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- Children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings;
- Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above;
- Unaccompanied youth, including youth who are not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian, who qualify as homeless because they live in circumstances described above.

Families who are experiencing any of the circumstances described above or who have questions about the rights of homeless children and/or services that may be available should contact one of our Homeless Children Liaisons: Iyamide House (4th Street), 202-546-4477 or [ihouse@tworiverspcs.org](mailto:ihouse@tworiverspcs.org); Leonardine Pacombe (Young), 202-388-1360 or [lpacombe@tworiverspcs.org](mailto:lpacombe@tworiverspcs.org); or Sasha Clayton (Middle School), 202-543-8477 or [sclayton@tworiverspcs.org](mailto:sclayton@tworiverspcs.org)

# School Culture

## *Scholarly Habits*

In order to support our mission and goal, all students need to develop certain social and cognitive skills. At Two Rivers, these skills are articulated through our Scholarly Habits. The Scholarly Habits are grounded in the recommendations for social emotional learning competencies outlined by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). By articulating the social emotional skills that we want all students to develop, the Scholarly Habits make our expectations explicit. They are the tenets teachers reference to help students develop and take ownership over their own social-emotional and academic development. Students learn that by persevering through challenging tasks, engaging in team work, advocating for themselves, and using self-control, they can improve their academic outcomes. The Scholarly Habits also contribute to making Two Rivers a safe and supportive environment in which everyone feels safe to learn and to be themselves.

The Scholarly Habits are:

### **I know myself.**

- *I can identify my emotions.*
- *I have an accurate self-perception*
- *I recognize my strengths.*
- *I demonstrate self-confidence.*
- *I advocate for myself.*

### **I am independent and resilient.**

- *I control my impulses.*
- *I manage my stress and emotions.*
- *I act with self-discipline.*
- *I am self-motivated.*
- *I set realistic goals and work to meet them.*
- *I can organize my materials.*
- *I can plan and manage my time.*

### **I show compassion and embrace diversity.**

- *I see others' perspectives.*
- *I demonstrate empathy for others.*
- *I appreciate diversity.*
- *I respect others.*

### **I can connect and communicate.**

- *I can communicate clearly and flexibly.*
- *I can actively listen.*
- *I actively engage with others.*
- *I build relationships with diverse individuals and groups.*
- *I cooperate with others and negotiate conflict constructively.*
- *I seek and offer help when needed.*

### **I act with integrity.**

- *I identify problems.*
- *I analyze personal and social situations.*
- *I constructively solve personal and social problems.*
- *I evaluate the impact of my actions.*
- *I honestly reflect on the impact of my actions.*
- *I take responsibility for the impact of my actions.*
- *I act ethically and responsibly.*

## *Crew*

Two Rivers middle school students participate in Crew, a structure designed to support students socially, emotionally, and academically, and to provide an effective transition into middle school and eventually high school and beyond. Crew ensures that each student is well known by at least one adult and builds positive connections with their peers and school community. Crew is a structure that has been developed and supported by EL Education and the spirit of Crew is something that we as an organization find extremely valuable. Crews are single grade groups of 16-17 students and one teacher. Crew occurs four times a week; this is considered the students' first class of the day. Crew members build relationships with each other and with other crews through initiatives that foster understanding, teamwork, and trust. Academic progress monitoring and goal setting happens regularly in Crew, including portfolio and student-led conference preparation and the creation of 7th grade Passage Presentations. Character development occurs in Crew through goal setting, discussion, acknowledgement, and reflection upon the Two Rivers Scholarly Habits. Crew leaders serve as the point of contact for their crew families throughout the school year.

## *Community Meeting*

Every Wednesday morning, at 8:30 in the 4th Street Elementary School, every Thursday morning at 8:30 in the Young Elementary School, and every Friday morning at 8:30 in the Middle School, we start the day with a campus-wide community meeting. This school-wide ritual is an important component in developing the culture of our learning community. It functions as an opportunity for our students and staff to come together to greet one another, to sing, to move, to celebrate our successes, and to share our learning. The community meeting structure reflects the morning meeting structure that students use in their classrooms every other day of the week. The elementary and middle school will meet together for community meeting at least once each month. We very much enjoy visitors to community meeting and hope that parents will join us. We ask that adults participate and follow the same community meeting rules as students. Because

## **INTERNAL REWARDS INSTEAD OF EXTERNAL REWARDS**

We do not reward students with prizes when they succeed. We offer specific praise, encouragement, and we celebrate the varying forms of student achievement. We believe that if children only experience extrinsic rewards, they learn to work only for those rewards and do not connect their learning to the outside world. We strive to help children make these connections, believing that the purpose of learning is to interact thoughtfully with the world.

# School Culture

community meetings and morning meetings are so important to the building of our Two Rivers culture and community, we ask that you make a special effort to make sure students are not tardy for morning or community meetings. These meetings start promptly at 8:30. If you are running late on community meeting mornings and arrive after 8:30, you must wait with your child in the lobby until after community meeting is finished at 9:00 when he or she can report to his or her classroom.

## *Ago Ame*

Two Rivers uses a West African call and response tool to get the attention of a group of people. Ago (ah - go) roughly translates into, “are you ready” or “are you with me” and Ame (ah - may), roughly translates into, “yes I am ready” or “yes I am with you”. You will hear Two Rivers staff use this during transitions, during school-wide events, or in the classroom. We use this with all of our students and even staff when we need to call their attention or ensure that they are prepared to move on. Students learn that when a Two Rivers staff person says ‘Ago’, they are to stop what they doing, look at the speaker, and respond with ‘Ame’. We ask that adults respond in the same way.

## *Responsive Classroom*

Two Rivers uses the Responsive Classroom approach to create a safe environment where children are able to take academic and social risks, to help children understand the importance of kindness toward and acceptance of all people, to celebrate differences in people and cultures, and to learn important social skills such as empathy and problem solving.

The Responsive Classroom model is based on research in social cognition, developmental psychology, multi-cultural education, and child development. Drawing on the work of many great educational theorists and practitioners, it operates on the following seven guiding principles:

- 1 The social curriculum is as important as the academic curriculum.
- 2 How children learn is as important as what they learn.
- 3 The greatest cognitive growth occurs through social interaction.
- 4 There is a set of social skills that children need in order to be successful academically and socially. These are represented by the letters CARES: Cooperation, Assertion, Responsibility, Empathy and Self-Control.
- 5 Knowing the children we teach – individually, culturally, and developmentally – is as important as knowing the content we teach.
- 6 Knowing the families of the children we teach and encouraging their participation is essential to children’s education.
- 7 How the adults at school work together to accomplish their shared mission is as important as individual competencies; lasting change begins with the adult community.

The Responsive Classroom approach offers interconnected strategies to use in classrooms, such as: starting each school day with Morning Meeting, where students work together on group activities and greet each other; creating clear and consistent approaches to discipline that foster social responsibility; and classroom organization and family communication strategies to involve families as partners in their children’s education. It also focuses on student reflection, encouraging daily introspection about their goals, what they learned, things that could have been better, and things they would like to do in the future. This reflective component provides a strong connection with EL Education. For more information about Responsive Classroom, please visit their website at [www.responsiveclassroom.org](http://www.responsiveclassroom.org).

## *Two Rivers’ Approach to Behavior*

Two Rivers’ approach to discipline is derived from the Responsive Classroom model, which incorporates social learning into the daily program. In particular, children are expected to follow teacher directions and school rules, resolve conflicts without physical contact, be respectful of adults and each other, use appropriate language, and respect the rights and property of others. The goal of Two Rivers’ approach to behavior is to set a high standard for kind, appropriate conduct and provide students with clear guidelines of acceptable behavior. Staff members will treat students respectfully in all situations. Children are expected to make appropriate choices that ensure safety and respect for themselves and others. Two Rivers is a learning community where students are expected to support each other academically and socially. Each class works on developing an understanding of community around the idea of mutual respect and encouragement.

Throughout the program, staff will demonstrate to students that they can make choices in social situations and that their behavior has consequences. Two Rivers expects students to become positive members of the school community and to uphold the school’s expectations for appropriate behavior. Rules and logical consequences will be clearly communicated to students and consequences for breaking rules will be administered calmly and fairly. While

## **LEARNING IS PUBLIC AND COLLABORATIVE**

Our students’ work is often assessed by their peers. Students read their writing and show their projects to the group, solicit comments, and present drafts for formal peer critiques. We do public work just like in the real world. Having an authentic audience keeps us on our toes, supporting quality work with high standards.



# School Culture

expectations and consequences vary according to the developmental level of the students involved, there is a shared understanding of the overall expectations for student behavior at Two Rivers.

Appropriate behavior makes the learning environment a positive and safe place for everyone. This includes being respectful of all people and property, participating in classes, being responsible, showing consideration for self and others, using appropriate language, and offering help when appropriate.

Behavior that is inappropriate includes: hurtful teasing or name calling, repeated ignoring of staff requests, behavior that prevents others from learning, acts of physical aggression, destruction of property, inappropriate touching of others, possession or intended use of illegal drugs or weapons, physical or verbal threats, and acts of cruelty. These behaviors take away from the positive and safe learning community that Two Rivers strives to maintain.

## *Logical Consequences*

Two Rivers utilizes the Responsive Classroom approach to consequences. There are three types of logical consequences that students may be given depending upon the behavior and how the child will learn best from the situation:

**“YOU BREAK IT, YOU FIX IT.”** – Children take responsibility for fixing, as best they can, any problem or mess they created.

**LOSS OF PRIVILEGE** – When a student or group of students breaches the trust of the rules, a logical consequence is for the teacher to take away the privilege until the child shows readiness to handle the privilege.

**TIME OUT** – During the child’s time away from the group, his or her job is to regain self-control so he/she can come back and participate effectively.

Consequences help students who have engaged in inappropriate behaviors understand the impact of their behavior and its effect on themselves and on the community, provide a deterrent from engaging in the behavior again, and give students an opportunity to rectify the situation. Additional consequences may include meeting with school staff, contact with parent, a parent conference, parent workshop, behavior contract, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, or expulsion. In conjunction with consequence(s), the student may be offered the opportunity to perform a “good deed” for the school community. Good deeds are

those which improve social relations between students, assist with the general upkeep of the campus, and improve the overall atmosphere of the school. Even if a student has made a negative contribution to the community, they have the opportunity to contribute positively by doing a good deed.

## *Two Rivers’ Bullying Prevention Policy*

Bullying prevention begins with the establishment of a safe and respectful culture that enables all community members to thrive. Two Rivers works hard to establish and maintain a safe environment where children are able to take social and academic risks, develop social skills, celebrate differences, and become responsible and compassionate members of society.

Two Rivers defines bullying as any severe, pervasive, or persistent act or conduct, whether physical, electronic, or verbal that: (1) may be based on a youth’s actual or perceived race, color, ethnicity, national origin, religion, age, gender identity or expression, intellectual ability, familial status, marital status, family responsibilities, matriculation, political affiliation, genetic information, disability, source of income, status as a victim of an intrafamily offense, place of residence or business, or any other distinguishing characteristic, or on a youth’s association with a person, or a group with any person, with one or more of the actual or perceived foregoing characteristics; and (2) can reasonably be predicted to put the youth in reasonable fear of physical harm to their person or property, cause a substantial detrimental effect on the youth’s physical or mental health, substantially interfere with the youth’s academic performance or attendance, or substantially interfere with the youth’s ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by an agency, educational institution, or grantee.

Bullying is a pattern of intimidating behavior, not a single incident. Bullying is not acceptable at Two Rivers. Acts of bullying, including cyber-bullying, are prohibited on or near Two Rivers’ grounds or at any Two Rivers’-sponsored event. (This includes communication on school property or done using school property, e.g. laptops or other devices.) Acts of bullying that create a hostile environment at Two Rivers or disrupt the orderly operation of Two Rivers are also prohibited, including through the use of electronic devices not owned by Two Rivers and used at a location unrelated to Two Rivers. This policy also prohibits retaliation against youth for reporting incidents of bullying.



# School Culture

Two Rivers students are expected to behave in a way that supports the school's objective to provide a safe and welcoming environment for all. This includes following teacher directions and school rules, resolving conflicts without physical contact, being respectful of adults and each other, using appropriate language, and respecting the rights and property of others. Two Rivers expects students to become positive members of the school community and to uphold the school's expectations for appropriate behavior.

Students who engage in acts of bullying will be held accountable for their actions. Potential consequences include: meeting with school staff, contact with parent, loss of privileges, in-school or out-of-school suspension, or expulsion. Consequences will fit each individual incident and may vary in severity, based on: the nature of the incident, developmental age of the person bullying, and any history of problem behavior from the person bullying. Consequences are designed to correct the bullying behavior, prevent another occurrence of bullying, and prevent retaliation.

Two Rivers staff are expected to report incidents of bullying they witness or are made aware of. Two Rivers administrators are charged with responding to incidents of bullying and investigating reports of bullying. Reports of bullying can be made to:

**Caroline Mwendwa-Baker**

4th Street ES Principal  
cbaker@tworiverspcs.org  
202-546-4477

**Rossana Mahvi**

4th Street ES Assistant Principal  
rmahvi@tworiverspcs.org  
202-546-4477

**Maggie Bello**

Acting 4th Street MS Principal / CAO  
mello@tworiverspcs.org  
202-543-8477

**Lashaunda Robinson**

4th Street MS Assistant Principal  
lrobinson@tworiverspcs.org  
202-543-8477

**NaKeisha Jones-Helton**

4th Street MS Dean of Students and Families  
njones@tworiverspcs.org  
202-543-8477

**Chelsie Jones**

Young ES Principal  
cjones@tworiverspcs.org  
202-388-1360

**Ann Selzer**

Young ES Assistant Principal  
aselzer@tworiverspcs.org  
202-388-1360

Reports of bullying by youth, parents, guardians, and community members may be made anonymously, but disciplinary action cannot be taken by Two Rivers solely on the basis of an anonymous report, though such a report may trigger an investigation that will provide actionable information.

Two Rivers takes alleged incidents of bullying very seriously. School administrators will follow school procedures in investigating incidents, and will ensure that witnesses, anyone who reports bullying or provides reliable information, and alleged victims are kept safe.

If a family, a student who was a target of bullying, or a student who allegedly bullied someone else is not satisfied with the outcome of a bullying investigation, they may lodge a complaint with the Executive Director as outlined in the Governance section of the handbook.

## *Cyber Bullying*

Cyber-bullying is the use of technological means to send hurtful, cruel, or harmful messages to others. Because many students have access to technology outside of the school environment, it is impossible for Two Rivers to police and protect students outside of the school hours and off the school campus. However, cyber-bullying has a direct impact on the school culture and safety of students during the school day. The emergence of social networks such as Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, and other popular sites have sparked new gateways for cyber bullying.

Per relevant laws, outside actions that have harmful effects and interfere with the smooth functioning of the school environment may be cause for school-based disciplinary action.

In an effort to protect students, we ask that parents monitor student use of these websites and apps outside of school. We also ask that parents encourage their students to adhere to the rules set up for most of these sites - that students be at least 13 years of age and in high school.

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As a school, we have taken precautions to block usage of these websites from our school computers. Students will also be monitored while on the Internet at school and can only log in using their student log-in information. We reserve the right to revoke a student's permission to use the Internet at school.

## *Student Suspension and Expulsion Policies and Procedures*

Two Rivers emphasizes character development and respect for others as evidenced by its adoption of both EL Education and Responsive Classroom. It is hoped that this will minimize the need to suspend or expel students. Suspension is defined as the temporary removal of a student from all classes and school activities for disciplinary reasons. Expulsion is the permanent removal of a student from enrollment at Two Rivers for disciplinary reasons.

An administrator may suspend or expel a student under circumstances in which students willfully cause, attempt to cause, or threaten to cause bodily injury or emotional distress to another person, including behavior that occurs off school grounds. "Bodily injury" means a cut, abrasion, bruise, burn, or disfigurement; physical pain; illness; impairment of the function of a bodily member, organ, or mental faculty; or any other injury to the body, no matter how temporary. "Emotional distress" means mental suffering or distress that requires more than trivial treatment or counseling. The decision to suspend or expel a student shall be made by an administrator, with or without the recommendation of the student's teacher or other school employees.

An administrator will determine the number of days for suspensions based on the severity of the infraction, the age of the student, and previous infractions. Students in grades K through 5 will not be suspended for more than 5 consecutive school days at a time unless the student is facing expulsion. Students in grade grades 6 through 8 will not be suspended for more than 10 consecutive school days at a time unless the student is facing expulsion. No student will be suspended for more than 20 cumulative days in the school year unless the student is facing expulsion or the Head of School provides written justification to the parent describing why exceeding 20 days is a more appropriate disciplinary action than alternative responses. An exception to the 20-day limit may also be made where the student's conduct necessitated an emergency removal and the Head of School provides a written

justification for the emergency removal to the parent. Students in Pre-K will not be expelled under any circumstances. A Pre-K student may only be suspended for up to 3 days if the student willfully caused or attempted to cause bodily injury unless the injury was caused in self-defense; or if the student threatened serious bodily injury to another person unless the threat was made in self-defense.

Two Rivers will provide a plan for continuing the education for any student who is suspended. That plan will ensure that the student continues his/her studies, receives all assignments during the suspension, can communicate with school staff about the assignments, and has the opportunity to make up any work missed during the suspension if the student cannot complete it during the suspension.

Depending on the situation, a student may receive an in-school suspension or an out-of-school suspension. In-school suspension is defined as temporarily removing a student from the student's regular class schedule as a disciplinary consequence, during which time the student remains on school grounds under the supervision of school personnel who are physically in the same location. Out-of-school suspension is defined as temporary removal of a student from school attendance to another setting for disciplinary reasons, during which time the student is not under the supervision of school personnel, and is not allowed on school grounds. Staff will consider whether behavior can be safely and appropriately handled through school-based disciplinary action before involving law enforcement, except where referrals are required based on mandatory reporting requirements

The suspension or expulsion shall become effective immediately unless otherwise stated by the school administrator. When a student is suspended, a parent is required to pick the child up from the school. At times, parents will need to pick a suspended child up before the school day is complete.

After three suspensions from school within the same school year, expulsion will be seriously considered. Students for whom suspension or expulsion is being considered will be told that this is a possibility and given an opportunity to present his/her side of the story before a final decision regarding suspension or expulsion is made.

Prior to issuing the suspension, the school administrator will meet with the student, notify the student of what he/she is accused of doing and

# School Culture

the information that the school has to believe that the student engaged in such behavior, and give the student an opportunity to present his/her side of the story or explanation for his/her behavior. After this meeting, the school administrator will issue written notice to the parent detailing the length of and reason for the suspension.

For students facing suspension of more than 5 days, including expulsion, the school administrator will meet with the student, notify the student of what he/she is accused of doing and the information that the school has to believe that the student engaged in such behavior, and give the student an opportunity to present his/her side of the story or explanation for his/her behavior. If necessary, the school administrator will conduct an investigation into the circumstances of the student's behavior and any explanation provided by the student. At the school administrator's discretion, the student may be suspended pending the results of this investigation and recommendation for further disciplinary action from the school administrator. School staff will make an attempt to complete the investigation within 3 school days, but in some cases, the investigation will require additional time.

After the meeting with the student and any investigation, the school administrator will issue written notice to the parent with a recommendation for long term suspension or expulsion and the reason for this recommendation. This notice will explain the information that is being relied on as a basis for the recommendation. Within 5 school days of the recommendation for long term suspension or expulsion, a hearing will be held to make a final determination about the disciplinary action proposed. The student will be suspended pending the results of the hearing. At the hearing, the school administrator, or designee will present the information relied on to support the recommended disciplinary action; the student will be given an opportunity to fully respond to that information; the student may be represented by an attorney; and the student may present any information that he/she wants considered.

In most cases, the Executive Director will act as the impartial decision maker at this hearing. In cases where the Executive Director cannot serve as the impartial decision maker, an impartial decision maker will be appointed by the Executive Director to hear all of the information presented and make a final decision about the proposed disciplinary action. Within two school days after the hearing, the decision maker will notify the parent in writing of the final determination and reason for that determination.

## *Behavior Policy for Students with Special Needs*

Students with special needs may have individual behavior guidelines and policies. To maintain the safety of all students and staff, however, acts of physical aggression of any kind are not permitted at Two Rivers and will be addressed with consequences specific to the student that commits them. For students who have an IEP, out-of-school suspensions will be handled in accordance with the provisions set forth by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004.

Students with a disability are subject to disciplinary action just as other students are, as long as repeated disciplinary actions do not establish a pattern of removing the student from a classroom setting that denies the student a FAPE (Free Appropriate Public Education). Exclusion from class for more than ten school days in an academic year would constitute a change in placement under IDEA. As such, the IEP team must convene a manifestation determination review to determine whether the behavior was a manifestation of, or caused by, the student's disability, and if so, ensure that the student's IEP contains appropriate supports to assist the child in being successful.

At the time of a suspension that would constitute a change in placement under IDEA, the parent will be notified in writing (typically as part of the suspension letter) that a manifestation determination meeting is required, and will be provided with a copy of their Procedural Safeguards Notice. Two Rivers will work with the parent to schedule the manifestation determination meeting within 10 days of the suspension. Team members in attendance at the meeting will include the parent, special education teacher, general education teacher, Director of Student Support, and any other school team members or individuals invited by the parent who can assist in making the manifestation determination. Following the meeting, parents will be notified in writing about the outcome of the Manifestation Determination, and provided with a copy of any changes to their child's IEP and/or Behavioral Intervention plan. For more information, contact the Director of Student Support, Laura Lorenzen (llorenzen@tworiverspcs.org).

## *Play Dates*

We encourage our students to spend time with classmates after school or on weekends. If you are not sure who might be a good match for your child or have questions about play dates, your child's teacher would be happy to make suggestions. If your child has an after school play date and you will not be picking him/her up as usual, please send us a note. We must have written consent to release a child

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from school to another individual. Socializing is an important component of adolescent development. Please make sure that middle school students are supervised during afterschool social activities.

## *Birthdays and Birthday Parties*

Birthdays are very special events in the lives of our students. Celebrations can occur during lunch or snack time to minimize disruption from classroom time. Parents should coordinate any special activity with their child's teacher or crew advisor well in advance of the child's birthday as each classroom has their own traditions for celebrating birthdays. Please remember that the school has a limited amount of extra supplies so any birthday treats should come complete with all products and utensils. If you are planning on giving out any special treats, please make sure that there are enough for all students.

We encourage the Two Rivers community to share special occasions like birthdays together, while being careful to acknowledge the feelings of all students. Unless the entire class is invited to a party, please do not distribute invitations at school. To avoid hurt feelings, we encourage you to invite less than half the class, or to invite the entire class. Parents/guardians are also encouraged to avoid any hurt feelings by not shepherding a party group directly from school.

## *Technology and Digital Citizenry*

Two Rivers uses technology in our educational program to ultimately promote and develop the digital responsibility of our students, as they use technology to engage more effectively with learning. By integrating technology in learning experiences across the grades, we aim to accomplish the following goals:

- Equip all students to interact with and impact the world around them through being digitally responsible
- Provide greater access to educational opportunities and differentiated instruction
- Archive the revision and final products of high quality work for a variety of audiences
- Improve communication of student progress and achievement, by widening our sense of community through expanding the ways teachers, students, and families interact

## **COMPUTING IN THE ES AND MS**

We have one-on-one computing in grades 4-8. This means a laptop will be assigned to every student for the academic year. During homeroom, laptops will be issued to students for the day, and at the end of the day after lab, teachers will ensure that

students return their laptops to the correct cart and charging bay. Before dismissing for the day, all students will be responsible for returning laptops to assigned carts for re-charging and safe-keeping. Students will only use laptops on school grounds; this means laptops should never be taken home.

## **RESPONSIBLE USE OF TECHNOLOGY**

To be digital citizens, students are expected to follow the same rules for scholarly habits and respectful conduct online as offline.

Students are expected to treat laptops with extreme care and caution; the laptops are expensive technology that the school is entrusting to student care. Students should immediately report any malfunction, loss, or damage of laptops to school personnel. Upon further investigation of the situation, students may lose the privilege of using a laptop for a period of time, and/or may be held financially accountable for any damage or loss resulting from negligence or misuse.

## **DIGITAL INTEGRITY VIOLATIONS AND CONSEQUENCES**

Technology provided by Two Rivers is intended for educational purposes only. If a student uses laptops and gmail accounts, Google drive, Google chat, or any other gmail-related tools for non-educational purposes, he or she will lose laptop privileges for a set period of time, and/or the student will require close adult supervision whenever using the laptop for a core class assignment.

If a student uses school technology to view and/or disseminate inappropriate content, or accesses another student's account, this will immediately result in loss of laptop privilege for a set period of time. The severity of the violation or repeated digital violations may be grounds for in-school or out-of-school suspension, as determined by school leadership. The school will also work with the student and student's family to explicitly research the importance of digital responsibility and create an action plan for earning back technology privileges.

## **STUDENT AND FAMILY TECHNOLOGY AGREEMENT**

Before being issued a laptop, students and parents will need to sign an agreement articulating the above laptop and digital responsibility expectations. If an agreement is not signed, a student will not be able to receive a laptop. The agreement ensures that all students and families understand the

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expectations for digital responsibility at Two Rivers, which will best help us effectively use technology with students and preserve our technology for future years.

## *Student Email Accounts*

Students in grades 4-8 have personal email accounts and access to Google drive, which are to be solely used for educational purposes. Teachers and students in grades 4-8 will regularly communicate with one another through exchanging core assignments and discussing relevant instructional topics via email. To practice the scholarly habit of being responsible and independent, students should take the initiative to email their teachers questions about instructional tasks, in addition to seeking in-person, out-of-school help. These accounts allow students the following:

- Google Drive: a place to house student work and engage in peer review and critique
- Gmail (*student.tworiverspcs.org*): a vehicle for communication directly with instructors and, in the Middle School, the ability to communicate online with fellow Two Rivers students

In order to access their account, students will be assigned a student email address and password. They are expected to adhere to the aforementioned Internet policies and to only use their Two Rivers student accounts for approved school purposes. Consequences of misuse include loss of privilege and/or administrative action. Similarly, students need to be respectful of all device hardware (laptops, desktops, tablets, etc.). Damage to hardware will warrant administrative attention.

Only designated Two Rivers staff will be given permissions to email student accounts. There will be no other inbound or outbound email traffic.

To ensure digital security, students should never share their gmail passwords with others, and should immediately notify staff personnel if they suspect that someone else may have access to their email account.

## *Internet Use Policy And Internet Safety*

Student use of the Internet is an important component of classroom research and learning. Teachers will supervise student Internet use and monitor the online activity of minors. Students are required to abide by Internet safety protocols. They are only permitted to access appropriate matter on the Internet, are not permitted to use electronic mail, chat rooms, or other electronic communications without permission of the teacher,

may not perform unlawful activities online, and may not disclose, use, or disseminate personal information via the Internet. Failure to abide by these rules will result in the suspension of Internet privileges for the student and could lead to other disciplinary action.

Two Rivers enforces a policy of Internet safety, which includes measures to block or filter Internet access for both minors and adults to certain visual depictions. These include visual depictions that are obscene, pornographic, or harmful to minors. Only an authorized person is able to disable the blocking or filtering measure for research or other lawful purpose of an adult.

## **DIGITAL PORTFOLIOS**

For years, Two Rivers has collected, exhibited, and archived student work through paper portfolios. These portfolios are purposeful collections of student work that showcase students' best efforts, progress, and achievements across core academic subjects, as well as analysis of student assessment data. In the 2018-2019 school year, every student in grades 4-8 will have a digital portfolio, which will house evidence of student revisions, final pieces of high quality work, and student reflections around the work based on rigorous criteria.



# Measuring & Reporting Student Progress

## *Reporting Student Progress*

Two Rivers is aware that you will want to know how your child is learning and growing both academically and socially. Our teachers assess progress in a variety of ways and provide you with ongoing, comprehensive information about your child. Parents will receive regular updates on student performance.

Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled three times each year to discuss student performance and provide parents with an opportunity to review student work, assessment folders, and other evaluations. These conferences provide parents and teachers with a forum for discussing any concerns and developing strategies to address them. Teachers will provide parents with suggestions for working with their children at home on particular skills. Additional parent-teacher conferences will be scheduled upon parent request or as needed.

## *Progress Reports*

At Two Rivers, students receive progress reports twice each year. Progress reports include both numeric “grades” and narrative comments. A five-point scale is used to provide information on how a student is progressing in a specific category of learning. The scale ranges from a “1”, for areas in which the student is performing below grade level, to a “5”, for areas in which the student is achieving above grade level. Evaluating students this way allows us to communicate more detailed and accurate information (as opposed to traditional grades) as students progress in their learning. We are able to communicate specifically which areas of a subject are strengths for a student and which categories are ones in which the student struggles. Please do not mistake numbers as equivalent to letter grades. If your child receives a progress report that consists mostly of 3s, he or she is progressing appropriately. The narrative component of the progress report allows us to provide additional information on a student’s performance in a given category of learning. These observations are made based on classroom data and evaluations. In the middle school, progress reports are prepared in order to communicate student achievement in a transparent way with receiving high schools. Middle school families also receive two interim progress reports per semester, showing current, or formative, student progress, habits of work, and homework completion percentage. Neither homework nor work habits are factored into the final semester grade.

In addition to the progress reports detailed above, students with IEPs receive IEP progress reports four times a year. Students receiving ELL services are also provided with an update on their progress towards language goals.

## *Student-Led Conferences*

In grades 4-8, students present a portfolio of high-quality work to their parents and guardians at winter and spring conferences. Students present three to five pieces of work, and explain the skills, knowledge, and processes necessary to complete the work. Parents and teachers are encouraged to ask students probing questions and inspire students to discuss their strengths, areas that need development, and growth over time through revision.

Seventh graders also participate in a Portfolio Passage where they present their work to Two Rivers’ teachers in the middle of their seventh grade year. Students who do not receive a passing grade on their passage portfolio revise their portfolio and present again in the spring.

## *Showcase of Student Learning*

Known as Two Rivers’ Community Showcase, classroom showcases are performances and presentations of the vibrant, in-depth learning that students participate in throughout the semester. Through products and performances, students create work collaboratively for an audience beyond the classroom, giving them an authentic reason to care about quality. Products and performances are modeled on real-world formats rather than artificial scholastic formats to make presentations both more realistic and engaging. Teachers involve students as much as possible in directing the aspects of the showcase presentation and product, both making them accountable and involved in the creation of high-quality work. At Community Showcase, parents and family members are invited to attend to experience and learn about their student’s exciting work.

## *Assessment & Standardized Testing*

Two Rivers uses a range of different assessment tools in order to understand better the knowledge and skills of our students. Teacher-made tests, screenings, computer-based tests, and standardized tests are some of the different tools that students will see at Two Rivers. In all cases, the primary purpose of assessments is to provide useful information about student progress that can be used to improve instruction and programming at Two Rivers.



# Measuring & Reporting Student Progress

Below are brief descriptions of the major assessment tools used by Two Rivers.

## **MCLASS: CIRCLE**

This assessment is taken by all students in preschool and prekindergarten and is used to assess a child's progress on specific skills related to literacy and mathematics. This assessment helps identify areas of strength and concern in order to inform instructional decisions made by the teachers and to inform parents about their child's progress. The assessment is administered three times a year and can also include progress monitoring, if needed. Teachers assess students using mClass: Circle in a one-on-one setting.

## **MCLASS: DIBELS AND TRC**

This assessment is taken by all students in kindergarten through second grade, as well as by students in grades 3 through 5 who receive reading interventions, and is used to assess a child's progress on specific skills related to literacy. This assessment helps identify areas of strength and concern in order to inform instructional decisions made by the teachers and to inform parents about their child's progress. The assessment is administered three times a year and can also include progress monitoring, if needed. Teachers assess students in a one-on-one setting.

## **MEASURES OF ACADEMIC PROGRESS (MAP)**

MAP is a computer-based adaptive test that assesses student skill levels in reading and mathematics. The adaptive feature of MAP means that the difficulty of the test adjusts to the performance level of the student as they answer questions correctly or incorrectly throughout the test. Ultimately, this results in a more precise estimation of a student's knowledge and skills in the tested areas. Students in grades 1-8 take MAP two times a year (September and May).

## **THE PARTNERSHIP FOR ASSESSMENT OF READINESS FOR COLLEGE AND CAREERS (PARCC)**

The PARCC is the state standardized test that all public school students in grades three through eight must take each spring. The test primarily focuses on reading/language arts and mathematics and is aligned with the Common Core State Standards. Following administration of the PARCC, families will receive an individual student report detailing their child's performance.

Results on the PARCC will be used to determine Two Rivers' achievement and progress as a school. These results will be made publicly available through the District of Columbia Public Charter

School Board (DCPCSB), the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), and various media sources.

## **THE ACHIEVEMENT NETWORK: QUARTERLY BENCHMARK TESTS**

The Achievement Network is a nonprofit organization that helps schools use real-time data to make instructional adjustments that advance student learning. Two Rivers partners with the Achievement Network to administer quarterly benchmark assessments in reading and mathematics for students in grades 2-8. The tests are primarily multiple choice. Teachers analyze student response data and develop instructional plans that target specific skill and knowledge gaps revealed by the assessments. Data from these tests is shared with students after each administration and used to set goals for their own progress and mastery of specific standards. The Achievement Network series is used primarily to improve teaching and learning and is not used as an accountability tool.

## *Testing Philosophy*

Successfully mastering the skills assessed by the PARCC is only one of many goals that Two Rivers has for its students. We expect all of our students to do well on the state test; however, there is considerable evidence to suggest that the development of social skills and sophisticated problem-solving skills is as important (if not more) in determining adult success (i.e. employment, civic participation, etc.). Consequently, Two Rivers works hard to keep test preparation in perspective and balance it with the other goals we have for our students. Two Rivers does not construct our school program around achieving success on the PARCC. Two Rivers sees the state standardized test results as an important indicator of our program's ability to achieve successful outcomes for students; however, Two Rivers does not believe that this is the sole measure of success for our students or our school.

As part of helping students take ownership over their learning, middle school students review their data, reflect on strengths and areas in need of improvement, and track their data during the year.

# Governance

## *Charter*

The DC Public Charter School Board approved the charter to operate Two Rivers and continues to oversee our activities. The school's charter agreement sets forth all of the legal obligations of the school. Two Rivers is not managed or governed by the District of Columbia Public Schools and need not comply with most of its regulations. Two Rivers is operated by the Executive Director, administrative team and other staff, and governed by a volunteer Board of Trustees.

## *Board of Trustees*

### **WHAT DOES THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES DO?**

Two Rivers' Board of Trustees is responsible for:

- determining the mission and purpose of the school and keeping the mission clearly in focus
- selecting the Executive Director and supporting and reviewing the performance of the Executive Director
- ensuring effective organizational planning
- ensuring adequate resources and managing resources effectively
- monitoring and strengthening the school's programs and services
- monitoring compliance with the school's accountability measures
- enhancing the school's public standing
- ensuring legal and ethical integrity and maintaining accountability
- recruiting and orienting new Trustees and assessing Board performance
- 

The Board is not involved with the day-to-day operations of the school. For example, the Board does not determine what is taught in math on Tuesdays or what is served for lunch on Fridays.

### **WHEN AND WHERE DOES THE BOARD MEET?**

The Board meets regularly throughout the school year at Two Rivers, usually from 6 to 8 pm. Information about Board meetings is available in the school's main office and online at [www.tworiverspcs.org](http://www.tworiverspcs.org) > community > information for parents and families. Minutes from Board meetings are available in the front office.

### **HOW CAN I GET IN TOUCH WITH THE BOARD?**

- Call (202) 546-4477 and leave a message for the Clara Botstein, the Board Chair
- Email the Board at [board@tworiverspcs.org](mailto:board@tworiverspcs.org)

- Submit a written note addressed to the Clara Botstein, Chair, Board of Trustees by:

**fax** (202) 546-0869  
**mail** 1227 4th Street, NE  
Washington, DC 20002

A Trustee will respond to your submission to discuss the best way to address your questions or concerns.

## *Non-Discrimination/ Non-Harassment Policy*

Two Rivers affirms the right of all students, families, and staff regardless of race, color, sex, national origin, religion, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, veteran status, genetic information, or other status protected by federal, state, or local law or any other basis prohibited by applicable law, to be treated with respect and to be protected from intimidation, discrimination, physical harm, and/or harassment in its educational programs and activities.

### **TRANSGENDERED STUDENTS**

Transgender students are protected in DC schools under city law; the DC Human Rights Act prohibits discrimination in educational institutions based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, family responsibilities, political affiliation, and disability. Students at Two Rivers have been and will continue to be able to use the bathroom that matches their gender identity and be called by the name and pronoun that matches their gender identity.

### **UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS**

Two Rivers serves all students who are residents of the District of Columbia, including students who are undocumented. DC protects and serves all residents, regardless of their immigration status. Please note that all children in the United States have the right to a free public education, regardless of their race, ethnic background, religion, sex, language, family's income level, or immigration status.

Questions or concerns related to our non-discrimination/non-harassment policies should be addressed to:

**Caroline Mwendwa-Baker**  
4th Street Principal  
[cbaker@tworiverspcs.org](mailto:cbaker@tworiverspcs.org)  
202-546-4477

# Governance

**Maggie Bello**

Acting Middle School Principal / CAO  
mbello@tworiverspcs.org  
202-543-8477

**Chelsie Jones**

Young ES Principal  
cjones@tworiverspcs.org  
202-388-1360

For questions or concerns related to elementary or middle school students with disabilities, please contact:

**Laura Lorenzen**

Director of Student Support  
llorenzen@tworiverspcs.org  
202-546-4477

## *Parent Complaints and Grievances*

To address a concern or seek resolution of a problem at Two Rivers, we encourage you to first address the person most immediately involved in the issue with which you are concerned. If after this step your concern is not addressed to your satisfaction, you may inform the Principal, Assistant Principal, Dean, or, if the concern involves a student with disabilities, you may inform the Director of Student Support.

Your concern will be responded to within a reasonable period of time, usually 5 business days. If you have gone through the parental complaint and grievance procedure listed above without reconciliation of your complaint, you may make a formal complaint in writing following the procedures below. The process above is not required before a formal complaint can be submitted.

## *Formal Complaints*

If you wish to make a formal complaint, you must do so in writing to the Principal or the Director of Student Support. All complaints will be adequately, reliably, and objectively investigated, and any evidence or witnesses presented by the person(s) making the complaint will be considered. Your concern will be responded to in writing within a reasonable period of time, usually 10-15 business days, although every effort will be made to resolve the issue as quickly as possible. There are some investigations that may take more than 10-15 business days.

The response will summarize the concern(s) raised and the course and outcome of the investigation, and will identify an appropriate resolution. If after this point the matter is still not resolved, you may contact the Executive Director within 5 business

days, who will consider all information presented and respond in writing, summarizing the outcome of the appeal, within 10 business days. If your concern is still not resolved, you must contact the President of the Board of Trustees in writing within 5 business days. The President of the Board of Trustees, or his/her designee, will consider all information presented and respond in writing to your grievance, summarizing the outcome of the appeal, within 30 calendar days of receiving your written grievance.

Posting a complaint on a Two Rivers listserv will not be considered a formal submission. These grievance procedures apply to any concerns that may arise, including but not limited to concerns about discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, or otherwise. All information presented and discovered during the course of an investigation will remain confidential.

Two Rivers will not retaliate against any person who raises a concern using the procedures outlined above or otherwise participates in the investigation of such concerns. If, during the course of the investigation, it is determined that corrective or remedial action is necessary, such action will be taken in a prompt and reasonable manner.

Contact information for the individuals to whom formal grievances are to be made are as follows:

**Clara Botstein**

Chair, Board of Trustees  
board@tworiverspcs.org  
202-546-4477

**Jessica Wodatch**

Executive Director  
jwodatch@tworiverspcs.org  
202-546-4477

**Maggie Bello**

Acting MS Principal/CAO  
mbello@tworiverspcs.org  
202-543-8477

**Laura Lorenzen**

Director of Student Support  
llorenzen@tworiverspcs.org  
202-546-4477

**Caroline Mwendwa-Baker**

4th Street ES Principal  
cbaker@tworiverspcs.org  
202-546-4477

**Chelsie Jones**

Young ES Principal  
cjones@tworiverspcs.org  
202-388-1360

# Health, Safety, & Inclement Weather

## *Health*

Two Rivers strives to maintain a healthy and safe school environment. We ask parents to keep any child home, who, because of illness, cannot participate comfortably in classroom or school activities or who may present a health risk to other children. If a child arrives at school ill, or becomes ill during the school day, he or she is taken to the office, where designated staff will care for the child while the parent is notified to pick up the child in a reasonable amount of time.

If your child is ill with a communicable disease, such as strep throat, lice, conjunctivitis (pink eye), or chicken pox, please inform us promptly so that we may alert other parents. Children may attend school when we have evidence that treatment is underway and your child is no longer contagious (or if they are fever-free for 24 hours).

We have outdoor recess in almost all weather conditions. We ask that children be sent to school only if they are well enough to play outdoors.

Accidents during the school day are treated with simple first aid procedures when appropriate. In the case of severe illness or injury, parents will be notified immediately and 911 will be called. Two Rivers staff members are not permitted to transport any child for medical care. The 911 response team and emergency room physicians make all decisions about emergency treatment of any child. A Two Rivers staff member will remain with your child until a parent or guardian arrives.

All students at Two Rivers must be toilet trained. We do not have the facilities or staff to change diapers.

## *Physical and Immunizations*

DC law requires that all children have annual medical and dental evaluations and that immunizations are up to date. Two Rivers requests that students' District of Columbia Universal Health Certificate, Immunizations, and District of Columbia (Dental Provider) Oral Assessment Forms are submitted within 30 days of the expiration date and current at the time of re-enrollment. Student health records will be maintained separately and confidentially from other school records, as required by law. If a student is exempt from immunizations due to religious or medical reasons, exemptions forms must be submitted along with students District of Columbia Universal Health Certificate.

## *Medications*

Whenever possible, administer medications at home. If your child needs to take medication or requires medical treatment during school hours, please have your medical provider complete the appropriate forms – the Medication and Treatment Authorization Forms, the Asthma Action Plan, and/ or the Action Plan for Anaphylaxis. Two Rivers Public Charter School only administers medication to students who have a signed Administration of Medication Release. The forms are located in the main office of each school building and must be signed by a physician and legal guardian. Staff are not permitted to administer medication to the student without a signed form on file.

The school nurse or a Two Rivers Staff member who has received a Medication Administration Certification will administer all medication during the school day. Any medications turned into the school nurse or front desk staff stays with the school. Families are responsible for providing separate medications/Epi Pens for field studies. Furthermore, on field studies if a student does not have a self-administer plan from their doctor, then it requires that our trained staff administer medication including, inhalers, Benadryl and Epi-Pens. For students who are on prescription medication, only medication administration certified staff or parents can administer this when students are off-site.

To ensure access to field studies and overnight trips, we need to remain compliant with the guidelines regarding students who are required to receive medication while under our supervision. Medications are kept in a locked cabinet in the main office of each school building, unless we have written medical permission and school approval for a student to carry their own medication. Medications that are given daily must be brought in by the parent and dispensed from the original pharmacy bottle. You will be notified in advance when supplies are running low. Parents are expected to provide the school with all medication in a timely manner and ensure that the school does not run out of needed medication. For more information on medication, see the Permission for the Administration of Medication Form, which is available in the main office. On the last day of school, parents or guardians must sign out all medications from the front desk. Any medications that have not been picked up will be discarded.

# Health, Safety, & Inclement Weather

## *Allergies and Specific Medical Conditions*

Please alert us to any allergies your child may have and provide medication if necessary to prevent a serious allergic reaction (this includes allergies to plants, animals, foods, medicines, and other substances). Parents also need to notify the school about specific conditions that may require emergency treatment such as bee stings, diabetes, severe asthma, or a seizure disorder. These should all be noted on the child's emergency care form with permission to summon emergency medical attention for your child if necessary.

Any changes in your child's health status should be immediately reported to the front desk staff together with any relevant medical documentation. All staff will be informed of any children with health concerns that may arise during the school day such as asthma and food allergies.

We will do what is medically required for students with food allergies, up to and including banning specific foods from classrooms. Food allergies will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Students with serious medical conditions may qualify for an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 plan. Please see the handbook section on Student Support Services page 8 for more information.

## *Two Rivers Emergency Response Plan*

Two Rivers has emergency plans for earthquake, fire, tornado, or hurricane, as well as emergency plans for in-school lock-down and school evacuation.

In case of fire, all students, faculty, and staff will exit the building using the primary route on the emergency evacuation map specific to their location in the building. Secondary routes should be used only when primary routes are blocked. After leaving the building, students and staff will assemble at the relevant evacuation location. The primary evacuation location for 4th Street elementary is the 4th Street middle school (1234 4th Street NE). The primary evacuation location for 4th Street middle school is 4th St elementary (1227 4th St. NE). The secondary evacuation location for the 4th St elementary and middle school is Gallaudet University (800 Florida Ave NE). The evacuation location for students at Two Rivers at Young during school hours and during extended day will be at the Recreation Center at 1701 Gales Street NE. If Two Rivers is required to evacuate & relocate, information will be posted on our website and left on the main Two Rivers phone message regarding student pickup.

## *Two Rivers Building Information*

The Two Rivers 4th Street Elementary School Building is located at 1227 4th Street NE. The phone number is 202-546-4477. The fax number is 202-546-0869.

The Two Rivers Middle School Building is located at 1234 4th Street, NE. The phone number is 202-543-8477. The fax number is 202-543-8479.

The Two Rivers Elementary School Building at Young is located at 820 26th Street, NE. The phone number is 202-388-1360.

## *Onsite Activities Outside of School Hours*

All of the policies and procedures for maintaining a safe environment are in force when school activities happen at Two Rivers during times when school is not in session. If a student is not being safe during these events, their privilege to participate in activities during out of school time may be revoked.

If a student is picked up late from onsite activities outside of school hours, school administrators may revoke permission for the student to participate in further onsite activities after school hours. Parents will be contacted by school staff to communicate any such changes.

## *Playground Safety*

Recess and other outdoor activities are a wonderful way for our students to get exercise, have fun, and learn to interact with their friends outside of the classroom. Two Rivers strives to maintain a safe environment where children feel comfortable trying out new activities, sports, and games. Students are only permitted on the playground during the school day or after school with adult supervision. Students are expected to follow the Two Rivers Playground Rules and be safe at all times or may have their playground privileges revoked. After school, adults must remain on the playground with their child and ensure that they are following our playground rules.

### **PLAYGROUND RULES**

- 1** Safe bodies!
- 2** Appropriate use of equipment!
- 3** Have fun!

### **MIDDLE SCHOOL GYM RULES**

- There must be a teacher or staff member present before students can enter the gym; students will line up outside the gym in the hallway to await a staff member.
- Teachers and staff will monitor and direct student play in order to support safety.



# Health, Safety, & Inclement Weather

- Students will play by the stated rules of the game.
- Students will be safe on the bleachers and gym equipment; appropriate use of the equipment, Look both ways before crossing even if the light is green, because cars might be coming. When a car is coming, do not cross the street. When the red hand is flashing, do not step off the curb.
- Balls will be used as a part of organized games, and students will not throw or kick balls randomly.
- All materials and equipment must be cleaned up, and mats returned to original position, after each activity.
- Participation in P.E. classes is an expectation.
- Students will be directed to take a break if displaying high levels of frustration, anger or unsafe behavior.
- All injuries must be reported to teacher/staff on duty immediately.

## *Crosswalk Safety*

With over 800 students and 130 staff members moving to and from Two Rivers everyday, safety is a must. Please take the time to read these guidelines for commuter safety:

### **WALKERS**

Please follow all pedestrian laws around the school. Cross in the crosswalk lines and obey the walk signal. Always cross the street at the crosswalk (parents, remember our students are watching!).

### **DRIVERS**

Obey the speed limit at all times. Please look carefully- if there is a person in the crosswalk, do not enter the crosswalk. Stop at all stop signs, obey the traffic lights, and please do not park or drive in the bike lane. Look carefully for bikers before opening your car doors.

### **BIKERS**

Please walk your bicycle in front of the school. Please park your bicycle at the bike stand in front of the school.

### **DROP OFF/PICK UP**

Punctuality is a virtue, but it is more important to drive safely than to be on time. Please allow enough time to get your child to school without rushing.

Please walk, bike, or use public transportation when possible. Be sure to observe basic safety rules during arrival and dismissal times and always model safe behavior for our students.

At 4th Street, pull up into the Drop Off Lane in front of the elementary school by the sidewalk between

the orange cones. Pull up to the car in front of you. If there is no space in the Drop Off Lane, please do not park in the crosswalk. Drive past the Drop Off Lane and find a parking space further down the block and walk your child to school. *Do not double park.* Unload your children right onto the sidewalk and not into the street. Please follow the instructions of staff members directing cars and people during drop off and pick up.

The entrance to Two Rivers at Young is accessible through the H Street side of the building. The stairs leading to Young's entrance are located in middle of the block of H Street NE and there is street parking available on 26th Street NE. When walking your child to the entrance of Young, please walk on the sidewalk across from Young and cross with your child at the stair entrance. The loading dock parking lot is reserved for handicap accessible parking only. Vehicles must display a handicap placard or handicap license plate to park in this lot during arrival and dismissal. Do not drive up H Street NE, double park, or park in staff parking lots.

## *No Smoking*

Two Rivers is a non-smoking building. Parents, students, and staff are prohibited from using any tobacco products in the building or on school grounds at any time.

## *Weapons Policy*

Two Rivers takes the safety of all students, staff, and community members seriously. Weapons are prohibited at all times at Two Rivers; no student or non-student, including adults and visitors, shall possess, use, or distribute a weapon on school grounds. A "weapon" means any object, device, or instrument designed as a weapon or which, through its use, is capable of threatening or producing bodily harm, or which may be used to inflict self-injury. In accordance with Federal requirements, any student who brings a weapon to Two Rivers (including school building and grounds) will be expelled for not less than one year, subject to a case-by-case exception. Furthermore, simultaneous with expulsion, any student who is expelled for bringing a weapon to school may be referred to the Criminal Justice or Juvenile Delinquency system.

## *Snow/Emergency Policy*

Two Rivers Public Charter School will follow the decision of the District of Columbia Public Schools in opening late and closing entirely due to inclement weather. **If DCPS is open, Two Rivers is open. If DCPS is closed, Two Rivers is closed. If DCPS is delayed, Two Rivers is delayed.**



# Health, Safety, & Inclement Weather

Two Rivers also uses a communication service called School Messenger that helps us notify families by voice and text message about inclement weather or other unplanned events. If you have questions about this service, please stop by the front desk. You can also check for Two Rivers' school closing announcements on our website, [www.tworiverspcs.org](http://www.tworiverspcs.org). When in doubt, call the school and listen for school closing information. There will be no before-care on days when there is a delayed opening. If DCPS dismisses school early, aftercare will be cancelled.

## *School/Community Partners*

### **EXTENDED DAY PROGRAM**

Two Rivers has developed relationships with several aftercare providers to serve the Two Rivers community. Springboard provides on-site aftercare to our elementary students and families, and After-School All Stars provides aftercare to our middle school students and families.

#### **Springboard**

[www.springboardkids.com](http://www.springboardkids.com)

#### **After-School All Stars**

[www.asas.org](http://www.asas.org)

All of the local providers listed below pick up students at Two Rivers at 4th Street, and the Capitol Hill Arts Workshop, listed below, picks up students from Two Rivers at Young.

#### **Capitol Hill Arts Workshop After School Arts**

[www.chaw.org/yap-after-school-arts](http://www.chaw.org/yap-after-school-arts)

#### **Pilgrim Baptist Church After School Care**

(202) 547-1815

#### **Kingman Boys and Girls Club After School Care**

[www.kingmanbgc.org/](http://www.kingmanbgc.org/)

### **WELLNESS WEDNESDAY PROGRAM**

Two Rivers provides a wellness program for all middle school students every Wednesday from 1:15pm–4:15pm. Students engage in various activities that encourage healthy habits that will provide them with lifelong options. Two Rivers is committed to ensuring students have a variety of enrichment options available through diverse programming. There will always be a Site Director or Acting Principal available during program hours to address questions or concerns that parents or students may have over the course of the year. Please note that Wellness Wednesday is a regular part of students' school day. Absences or early dismissals that are not considered excused during the regular school day will also be counted as an unexcused absence during Wellness Wednesdays.

## *Breakfast and Lunch Program*

Two Rivers is proud to provide nutritious and tasty meals through the school breakfast and school lunch program. Because we don't have a cafeteria, we order these meals in individual serving packages from a catering company, which prepares the meals fresh daily. The school pays for each meal ordered in coordination with a catering company which prepares the meals fresh daily. We strive to be family-friendly in the meal service, by offering options such as milk-only, vegetarian, and juice only options on top of regular breakfast and lunch meal service. Families interested in ordering lunch or breakfast must order meals in advance for the entire month. Monthly meal menus are available in the main office.

Families who are eligible for free or reduced price lunch under the National School Lunch Program will receive lunch each day. However, even if you qualify for free or reduced lunch you must still sign up for the meal at the front desk. We encourage all families to apply and take advantage of this program if you qualify. The school must have a completed application form for the National School Lunch Program on file for a child to receive free meals. Lunch and breakfast are available for purchase for all children.

## *Lunchtime Philosophy*

We want lunch to be an enjoyable, community-building time that provides an opportunity for sharing in small groups. All students will eat lunch in their classrooms and will participate in the set up, serving, and cleanup of the meal. As part of our commitment to developing healthy choices and modeling good eating habits, we encourage all families to send in healthful food for their children's meals. We ask that sweets are brought to school only for special occasions and that candy is removed from Lunchables and other prepackaged food items. **Students are not allowed to bring candy or soda to school.**

# Communication & Family Involvement

## *Family Involvement*

Two Rivers families are an involved, passionate group of parents and guardians. We consider the input, assistance, involvement, and support of our parents to be one of our greatest strengths.

Two Rivers' parents, guardians, and staff collaborate using a formal parent involvement structure- the Two Rivers Parent School Association (PSA).

The establishment of the PSA was a highly involved process that took place over the course of the 2011-2012 school year. Two Rivers parents, guardians, staff, and administrators engaged in a dialogue that was designed to create a new and inclusive parent organization. This parent-driven process received support from school staff, and included several school-wide meetings, an assessment of best practices, lessons, and a non-binding survey. In addition, it allowed for a school-wide referendum that enabled hundreds of parents to vote in-person and online on the establishment of a parent organization and its key features. This consultative process culminated with the drafting and adoption of the PSA bylaws and the election of the PSA officers in May 2012.

## *Parent School Association*

The vision of our PSA is to have an open, supportive school community where families, teachers, school administrators, and community members collaborate to encourage lifelong learning. The mission of the PSA is to provide a structured forum so families, in full partnership with school staff, can cooperatively contribute their time, and talent towards the ongoing success of Two Rivers PCS.

The association's primary objectives are:

- 1 To foster school-wide community building (across grade levels and between the elementary and middle schools);
- 2 To support student learning;
- 3 To participate in school governance by giving voice to the parent body
- 4 To engage in projects for continuous school improvement; and
- 5 To build resources for and facilitate the development of parent/teacher/school priorities.

All parents and guardians of Two Rivers students, as well as Two Rivers staff and administrators, are automatically members of the PSA, have voting rights, and can hold PSA offices. Dues are not a requirement of membership though parents will be responsible for raising funds to finance PSA initiatives.

The PSA will hold regular meetings during the school year that can be attended by any member of the Two Rivers community. The PSA's Executive Board is responsible for managing the organization, which includes but is not limited to: PSA board meetings, PSA general community meetings, and any PSA sponsored events.

The PSA is organized under the legal umbrella of Two Rivers PCS. The PSA is run consistent with the PSA bylaws and any standing rules that are put in place.

### **PSA EXECUTIVE BOARD**

The PSA Executive Board consists of the following officers who were elected by Two Rivers parents and guardians:

#### **CO-PRESIDENTS**

Alden Nougá (4th Street ES)  
Karena Dees (Young ES)  
Tamara Brown (MS)  
PresidentES@tr-psa.org

#### **SECRETARY**

Sylvia Soltis  
Secretary@tr-psa.org

#### **TREASURER**

Colleen Gallopin  
Treasurer@tr-psa.org

### **VOLUNTEERISM**

Two Rivers and the PSA welcome and value family involvement in pursuit of the school's mission. Families are encouraged to contribute at least 20 hours of volunteer time to the school each year. Families may volunteer their time for activities and committees sponsored by the PSA, as detailed below, or they may seek out other opportunities as best suit their interests and schedules.

### **CONNECTING WITH THE RIGHT PSA COMMITTEE**

There are lots of ways to help Two Rivers. You can work directly with our students by volunteering in your child's classroom, chaperoning a field study, helping in our office, becoming active in the PSA, or making voluntary financial contributions. You can also donate time and expertise to one or more of the committees listed below.

If your passion is putting on big events, raising funds, soliciting donations, organizing volunteers, or running auctions, consider joining the **GALA COMMITTEE**. **The role of Gala Committee chair is currently vacant.**

# Communication & Family Involvement

If you want to create, organize, and manage family-friendly opportunities for Two Rivers students and families to give back to their external communities, please join the **COMMUNITY SERVICE COMMITTEE**. For more information, e-mail Committee Chairs Lina Assad-Cates (lina.assad@gmail.com).

If your passion and talents could enhance the sense of community among TR families and staff, please join the **COMMUNITY BUILDING COMMITTEE**. For more information, e-mail Committee Chairs Michael Gilles, Rebecca Ferson-Ondrey, and Princess Whitaker-Taylor (MS) at communitychair@tr-psa.org.

If you love to read and would enjoy being involved with the planning and execution of the annual book fair, consider joining the **BOOK FAIR COMMITTEE**. Reach out to Committee Chair Al Williams (awms73412001@yahoo.com).

If you'd like to help manage small fundraisers held throughout the year that support PSA activities, including Showcase dinner sales, retail points and promotions, Box Tops, etc, join the **FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE**. For more information, contact Committee Chair Kelly Davis (kasdavies@gmail.com).

The **GARDENING COMMITTEE** devotes their talents to "greening" of the school, building a sense of environmental responsibility, and maintaining the beautiful landscaping around the buildings. For more information, contact Karen Ancillai (karen@ancillai.com).

If you would like to help actively engage Two Rivers' grandparent community, the **GRANDPARENTS COMMITTEE** needs you! **The role of Grandparents Committee Chair is currently vacant.**

Additional details regarding these and other committees and clubs will be posted on the PSA bulletin boards located in the lobbies of each campus.

## LISTSERVS

Each grade at Two Rivers has its own email listserv which connects parents & guardians by grade level. Sign-up is voluntary. These lists are separate from Two Rivers' School Reach or other all-school messaging services, and are a more informal channel for parents and guardians to connect to others in their child(ren)'s grades, and with the Parent School Association (PSA). The Trib is delivered by email to these lists weekly, along with occasional announcements from the PSA for

events, volunteer opportunities, etc.

If you have subscribed previously, you do not need to do anything - the list remains the same as your child progresses to a new grade.

To join a Two Rivers email list:

- 1 For 4th Street families, go to lists.tr-psa.org
- 2 For Young families, go to https://lists.tr-young-psa.org
- 3 Select "Discussions" in the Directory of Groups and then select the appropriate list. There is one for each grade at 4th Street. Young families do not have to take this step.
- 4 Click "Subscribe" on the left-hand side of the page.

Please note that subscribing requires authentication of your email and approval by the list master. Your subscription may take a day or two to become active.

## LISTSERV POLICIES

Two Rivers staff and the Two Rivers PSA may use technology to facilitate communication between families and staff and to disseminate information in a more efficient way. The following rules and guidelines govern all communication done via any listserv or electronic media that is formally or informally associated with Two Rivers Public Charter School.

- 1 By joining and using Two Rivers e-mail lists, you agree that you have read and will follow the rules and guidelines set for these peer discussion groups. You also agree to reserve list discussions for topics best suited to the medium.
- 2 As with any community, there are guidelines governing behavior on the listservs. For instance, violating antitrust regulations, libeling others, selling, and marketing are obviously not permissible. Please take a moment to acquaint yourself with these important guidelines. If you have questions, contact the list manager noted in your welcome instructions. Two Rivers reserves the right to suspend or terminate membership without notice on all lists for members who violate these rules.
- 3 Please do not challenge or attack others. The discussions on the lists are meant to stimulate conversation not to create contention or discomfort. Let others have their say, just as you may.

# Communication & Family Involvement

- 4 Do not post commercial messages. Contact people individually with products and services that you believe would help them.
- 5 Use caution when discussing products. Information posted on the lists is available for all to see, and comments are subject to libel, slander, and antitrust laws.
- 6 Any and all defamatory, abusive, profane, threatening, offensive, or illegal materials are strictly prohibited. Remember anything in a listserv message that you would not want the world to see or that you would not want anyone to know came from you, will be seen, so choose your words wisely.
- 7 Please include your name, e-mail address, your child's first name, and grade in all posts to Two Rivers email lists.
- 8 Varied and colored fonts and backgrounds can make it hard for many people to read your post. Please choose clear formatting to increase readability.
- 9 Please keep posts brief and to the point, and use a descriptive subject line.
- 10 Do not "flame." "Flaming" includes the making of derogatory comments, ridicule, excessive sarcasm, and innuendo. It is important to recognize that respectful disagreement is not flaming. It is not a flame to post: "Have you written a letter to the school requesting testing? The request doesn't exist if it's not in writing." It would be a flame to write - "How can you be so stupid and think the school will test just because you had a conversation in the hallway? If you'd bothered to read the archives you wouldn't be doing such ridiculous things." Every subscriber must be respected; no subscriber should be ridiculed or belittled.
- 11 Please keep posts on-topic for the lists. When list volume gets too high we lose many busy list members who are invaluable sources of help.
- 12 When responding to posts, it is helpful to include a small part of the original post, but please don't include the whole thing. Some email programs automatically append the original post to the bottom of the response - please be sure to delete this, as it causes problems for list members who read Two Rivers lists in digest form.
- 13 Posts with non-informative information directed at a single person, such as "thank you," "I agree," or "me, too", should be sent privately off-list.
- 14 Subscribers who consistently do not adhere to the rules of the TR listserv rules may be put on moderated status indefinitely. "Moderation" is a process by which email messages sent to the list must be approved by the list owner before being sent to the list.

## *Educational Opportunities*

Two Rivers periodically presents educational opportunities for families throughout the academic school year. There are social events that are geared towards the entire family, such as our annual school dance and potlucks. There are also educational events that serve as an opportunity for parents and guardians to learn. Please check our 2018-2019 school calendar as well as the Trib for our educational events.

## *Communication*

As partners in our students' education, Two Rivers believes that we best serve students when there is consistent communication between home and school. The administration and the PSA are working together to update and improve the use of traditional and electronic communication tools to further improve communication and information sharing among all members of the Two Rivers community.

We encourage parents and guardians to communicate questions and concerns to school staff as they arise. You do not need to wait for designated conference times. Questions and concerns specific to your child or to the classroom instruction should be addressed directly with your child's teacher or a Two Rivers school administrator. Questions and suggestions about school policies and procedures may be raised with a school administrator. Questions and suggestions about the PSA and parent involvement may be raised with a PSA officer.

If you have an idea, a concern, or a question, tell us!  
**E-MAIL** All staff have e-mail accounts they check daily. Addresses: first initial followed by last name, and @tworiverspcs.org. (Example: Maggie Bello's email address would be mbello@tworiverspcs.org). If you have questions or concerns that you would like a parent to respond to, contact one of the PSA officers listed in this handbook.

**STOP BY** Staff members from your child's class are in their classrooms every afternoon. Administrators can often be found outside or in the hallways in the morning or afternoon. They are frequently available for short conversations and are happy to schedule meetings as needed.

**ATTEND PSA** meetings and events that will be listed in the Trib and posted on the bulletin boards. Be sure to introduce yourself and talk to PSA officers who will attend all school events.

**BULLETIN BOARDS** are in the main lobby of each building and are a clearinghouse for information of importance to families.

# Communication & Family Involvement

**THE WEEKLY TRIB** This is our school newsletter and it is the way we as a school communicate with all families. This is also a clearinghouse for information of importance to families. If you have a Trib item appropriate to share with the school community, please email your announcement to your school principal. There is a set of criteria principals use to decide what announcements will be in the school Trib. If you have questions about this, please contact your school's principal.

**WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA** Follow Two Rivers on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/tworiverspcs](http://www.facebook.com/tworiverspcs), on Twitter @TwoRiversPCS, and visit the Two Rivers website for news, events, inclement weather updates, and more.

**SCHOOL MESSENGER** Two Rivers uses School Messenger, a notification service that contacts families by phone and email regarding inclement weather, unexcused absences, or other unplanned events that may impact the school day. Families can also have the option to receive important information by mobile text alerts. Families can opt in or out of text messages at any time. If you have any questions regarding School Messenger, please contact our Director of Operations, Gail Williams, at [gwilliams@tworiverspcs.org](mailto:gwilliams@tworiverspcs.org) or 202-388-1360. If you would like to learn more about School Messenger, visit their website at [www.schoolmessenger.com](http://www.schoolmessenger.com).

## *Social Events*

This year Two Rivers will host frequent social events for families such as picnics, dances, etc. These events allow adults and their children to get to know each other better and to enjoy social time with their family and others. We already have some events scheduled, so check your 2018-2019 calendar. See you there!

## *Telephone Directory*

To help connect families, Two Rivers publishes an annual student directory that contains a listing of students and family contact information. This information is only published if families have given permission on the registration form.

## *School Celebrations and Exhibitions*

Throughout the school year, families will be invited to participate in celebrations of learning and accomplishment. Students will perform, recite, demonstrate, and exhibit their wonderful ideas for an audience of family and peers at the conclusion of each learning expedition. We also invite families to other celebrations, family nights, and ceremonies to be a part of our school

community. Announcements will be sent home during the course of the school year to inform you about special events. *Two Rivers does not celebrate Halloween or any religious holidays.*

## *Family Support Team*

The Family Support Team is a group comprised of both parents and faculty to support all Two Rivers families. Some of the ways that the team provides support include providing meals to a family that has experienced a birth or a death, providing assistance with clothes (including Two Rivers shirts), school supplies or food; making referrals to tutors, physical therapists, or mental health counselors; providing referrals for help with housing or benefits (for example TANF, SSI, food stamps or WIC); or helping to coordinate transportation for students whose families are experiencing illness or a crisis. There are times when every family needs some help- the FST works to ensure that every Two Rivers family will receive the assistance that they need.

To ask the team for help, contact any member of the Family Support Team in person or by phone. You may also speak with either Elementary School Assistant Principal or the Middle School Dean of Students and Families to request support from the team or to find out how you may assist with the team. Feel free to e-mail Ms. Rossana at [rmahvi@tworiverspcs.org](mailto:rmahvi@tworiverspcs.org), Ms. Ann at [aselzer@tworiverspcs.org](mailto:aselzer@tworiverspcs.org), or Ms. NaKeisha at [njones@tworiverspcs.org](mailto:njones@tworiverspcs.org). All family information and any assistance provided will be kept confidential within the team. If you would like to provide assistance to a family or if you know of resources that would be helpful to the team, please contact either Elementary School Assistant Principal or the Middle School Dean of Students and Families.

## *Classroom Visits*

As a parent-founded school, we embrace parent participation and classroom visits. Parents are encouraged to visit their child's classroom to volunteer, observe, and spend time with their child, as we feel it is one of the best ways to understand how your child participates throughout the course of the school day. Parents need not call in advance to visit, however you are encouraged to contact your child's teacher in advance whenever possible. Typical visits may include observing the classroom instruction, observing or shadowing your own child, volunteering to help with a project or work with a small group, presenting or sharing information, or reading to and with the class. Please note that the classroom teacher may direct your use of time and student interaction during a classroom visit.



# Communication & Family Involvement

Parents are asked to wait until school has been in session for two weeks before coming to make a school visit. Although our students will become accustomed to visitors in the classroom over the course of the school year, it is helpful for the teachers and students to have the opportunity to establish routines and structures in the first few weeks of school. Exceptions can always be made for specific students if adjustment is difficult. Please talk with the Principal if you would like to visit during the first two weeks of school.

The goals of parent visits are for families to become immersed in the classroom community, to help the classroom staff when necessary, and to spend time with their child and their class during valuable learning time. Visits should benefit the classroom community and be utilized in a positive manner for both students and parents. If a parent visit is disruptive or negative in any way that takes away from student learning and teaching, a parent may be asked to leave and may be barred from future visits.

## *Student Hours*

Students in preschool through fifth grade are in class from 8:15am to 3:15pm on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. Wednesdays are early release days, beginning at 8:15am and ending at 1:15pm to allow for staff meetings, professional development, and reflection. Middle school students begin their day at 8:15am and end at 4:15pm, everyday. Students are not allowed to be inside of any building prior to 8:15am unless they are being supervised by an adult. **Students are considered tardy if they arrive at school after 8:30am.**

## **ARRIVAL**

Students may arrive to school at 8:15am, and it is expected that students will be present in their classrooms no later than 8:30am. Students may walk to their classrooms by themselves; however if a student is being unsafe on their travels to class, then this privilege will be revoked and we will ask a parent or guardian to escort that student to class. Parents are responsible for ensuring that their child enters the school. There is a before-care program at the school, starting at 7:15am for a fee. Only registered children will be able to attend the before care program. Breakfast is served at 8:15am. All students are expected to be at school on time. In the middle school, students are not allowed to enter the building until 8:15am and once they arrive on school grounds they may not leave school grounds without permission from a Two Rivers staff member. Students may not be left in front of school if tardy; the school will assume that the late

arrival is unexcused, and thus truant, unless a valid excuse is presented at the front desk.

## **DISMISSAL**

During dismissal, unless a parent or other authorized adult is disabled and in need of assistance, they must enter the building and travel to their child's classroom to pick them up. Teachers and front desk staff cannot accommodate phone calls from adults outside the school building requesting that a student be dismissed from their classroom.

Two Rivers requires authorization on file for anyone picking up a student from school. The school will not release a student, even to someone the child knows, unless the person is on the list of approved people who can pick up the student. This list can be amended by a parent or guardian at any time in the school office. School staff reserves the right to request personal identification for anyone picking up a student. If it is necessary for a student to leave school during the day, his/her parent or another authorized adult must come to the office and sign the student out. Once a student is signed out by an adult for early dismissal, students in grades 2 through 8 may be dismissed from the classroom by their teacher, and the adult does not need to travel to the classroom to pick them up. For students in grades preschool through 1, a parent or authorized adult must sign the student out and travel to their classroom to pick them up for early dismissal. Two Rivers encourages parents to make pick-up arrangements clear to their children before school each morning. Children and teachers should always know how the student will be getting home. This reduces anxiety for students and allows all adults to know where the child should be at the end of the school day. We ask parents not to expect children to call at the end of the day to make arrangements for getting home.

Elementary school students are not permitted to remain on school grounds after 3:15pm without adult supervision. All elementary school students should be picked up by 3:15pm, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, and at 1:15pm on Wednesdays unless signed up for aftercare. Only students with written permission from their parent and the permission of a school administrator will be allowed to walk home or use public transportation home from school. Students who are found to be in violation of these rules, or who are observed being unsafe, or whose behavior that day in school necessitates a parent meeting, may have this privilege revoked. Children that have not been picked up by a reasonable time may be referred to the school resource officer. In these cases, the school has the right to contact



# Communication & Family Involvement

CFSA to make a report of child neglect. Families who repeatedly do not pick their student up on time may be excluded from after school activities. There are no school staff on site to supervise students that have not been picked up and are not part of an afterschool activity.

All middle school students are dismissed at 4:15pm daily, and must exit the building or be picked up by then, unless participating in after school activities, either voluntary or mandatory. Middle school students are not allowed to sign themselves out for early dismissal and must be accompanied by an adult for pick up.

# Attendance

## *Student Attendance and Excuse Notes*

Two Rivers demonstrates a relentless commitment to on-time attendance for all students. By law, student attendance is mandatory, and a parent responsibility. Per DC municipal regulations, students are legally expected to be in school for the entire school day unless the absence is excused. Listed below are Two Rivers' categories for valid excuses for an absence include:

- Illness or other medical cause experienced by the student;
- Exclusion, by direction of the authorities of the District of Columbia, due to quarantine, contagious disease, infection, infestation, or other condition requiring separation from others;
- Death in the student's immediate family;
- Necessity for a student to attend judiciary or administrative proceedings;
- Observance of a religious holiday;
- Lawful suspension or exclusion from school by school authorities;
- Temporary closing of facilities or suspension of classes due to severe weather, official activities, holidays, malfunctioning equipment, unsafe or unsanitary conditions, or other condition(s) or emergency requiring a school closing or suspension of classes;
- Failure of the District of Columbia to provide transportation in cases where the District of Columbia has a legal responsibility for the transportation of the student;
- Medical or dental appointments for the student;
- Absences to allow students to visit their parent or a legal guardian, who is in the military; immediately before, during, or after deployment; and
- An emergency or other circumstances approved by an educational institution through conversation with the principal.

Regular attendance is imperative to ensure that students are learning and part of the community. Please keep in mind that when your child is late for school it directly affects his or her day and that of the whole class. Two Rivers accounts for the attendance of each student on a daily basis, so we ask that you call the school before 8:15am if your child will not be in school that day and send a note to the front desk via letter or email upon his or her return. If your child will be arriving late or departing early, parents must send a note to alert the school. In general, Two Rivers requests families consult the school calendar when scheduling appointments or vacations, and whenever possible, please do not schedule anything that conflicts with the school day. Extended absences for reasons other than

illness or emergency require prior consultation and approval from the Principal. Absences for vacations will not be excused. If a student is absent for six or more consecutive days due to illness, a parent or guardian must present a medical excuse from the Doctor to the front desk via letter or email.

City laws require Two Rivers to abide by strict regulations around attendance. Excuse notes must be turned in within five days. Please see the front desk if you wish to drop off a medical excuse from the Doctor. If you wish to email a medical excuse, please use one of the following email addresses, depending on which school/campus your child attends:

### **YOUNG ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

youngattendance@tworiverspcs.org

### **4TH STREET ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

4ESattendance@tworiverspcs.org

### **4TH STREET MIDDLE SCHOOL**

4MSattendance@tworiverspcs.org

Two Rivers is held accountable by the DC PCSB for attendance for all our students, including preschool and prekindergarten. When our attendance suffers, our tier status may be impacted.

In order for students to be released early from school, parents or guardians must submit a note to the front desk and an authorized pick-up adult must be present to sign out the student. With or without a note, Two Rivers will not release students independently at anytime for any reason.

By law, Two Rivers must contact CFSA immediately in the case of 10 unexcused absences at any point in the school year for students age 5-13.

Two Rivers must also contact Court Social Services (CSS) and the Office of the Attorney General for students age 14 - 17 who accumulate 15 unexcused absences at any point in the school year. In order to participate in extracurricular school sponsored events, a student must be present for the entire school day, or arrive late with a valid excuse note from a parent. In the middle school, participation in after school activities is at the discretion of middle school staff based on regarding grade based eligibility and discipline.

## *Show Up, Stand Out*

Show Up, Stand Out is a free program from the DC Office of Victim Services and Justice Grants (OVSJG) that Two Rivers has partnered with. The program helps parents to get their kids to school

## **STUDENTS AND TEACHERS OFTEN DRESS CASUALLY**

Because we are a hands-on school, teachers and students need to dress appropriately for science experiments, messy art projects, and venturing into the natural environment. We are often up to our elbows in goopy materials and the natural world.

# Attendance

every day and help to solve the problem of truancy in DC schools. If your child has five unexcused absences, this program is for you. While Show Up, Stand Out is sponsored by the DC government, all emails, visits, and phone calls are confidential. For more information, call (202) 727-1700 or visit [showupstandout.org](http://showupstandout.org).

# Student Dress & Supplies

## *Student Dress*

The Two Rivers dress code generates a feeling of unity while allowing students some personal choice. In an effort to keep students focused and safe, and to encourage community, students are required to wear a Two Rivers uniform at all times.

Only on designated days may students wear the corresponding dress attire for that day. For example, if it is Pajama Day, as designated by the students' teacher and/or principals, students can wear pajamas for their class and grade, but on normal school days, they must follow the dress code or will be required to change.

If a student is wearing inappropriate clothing and does not have a Two Rivers uniform to change into, a parent or guardian will be contacted either bring the student a uniform shirt or appropriate school bottoms, or purchase a shirt over the phone. (If bottoms are available, they will be loaned to the student.) If students are unable to change, they will not be allowed to leave the building on trips, will also not be able to participate in recess, and must remain out of class until they are in full uniform. We encourage students to bring a change of clothes (an entire Two Rivers uniform option) to be kept in their lockers or cubbies.

Children should wear or have available clothing suitable for both our air-conditioned and heated building and the outdoors. We have outdoor recess in almost all weather conditions (except pouring rain), so please ensure that your child has clothing and outerwear appropriate to the season.

If a family is in need and can not afford uniform shirts, they should speak with a member of the counseling team, the Elementary School Assistant Principal, or the Dean of Students and Families.

All clothing, lunch boxes, and backpacks must be labeled. We do maintain a lost and found in the lobby of each building. Periodically during the school year, clothing in the Lost and Found is donated to charity following announcements in the Trib.

The following guidelines govern uniforms at Two Rivers:

## **TOPS**

- **All students must wear a Two Rivers top at all times.** (Two Rivers tops are available for sale at the front desk of the elementary schools and include long and short-sleeved t-shirts and polo shirts, sweatshirts, and

hoodies.)

- Uniform shirts must be displayed at all times and **may not be covered up by any other articles of clothing or accessories.** This also means that students cannot wear overall bibs, jumpers, or scarves, unless for religious reasons, that might cover the Two Rivers logo. Two Rivers sweatshirts and hoodies are available for students who need an additional layer.
- **Uniform shirts may not be altered in any way**, including cutting off sleeves or necks, tie dying, or writing on them.
- During cold weather **students may wear a long sleeve shirt underneath their uniform shirt** but can not wear any non-Two Rivers items like hoodies or coats on top of their uniform when inside the building.

## **BOTTOMS**

- **Students may wear whatever bottoms they choose** as long as they are appropriate in length and design. (Appropriate length means that bottoms must reach the students' fingertips if their hands are relaxed by their sides.)
- **Students may not wear clothing that presents a safety risk** (i.e. pants with studs attached to them).
- **Students may not wear bottoms, (including jeans) with rips, tears or holes in them.**
- **All students should wear pants that sit firmly at their waist** (i.e. leggings, sweatpants, shorts, or skirts should not sag and no undergarments should be visible).

## **SHOES**

- Shoes must be worn inside of the building at all times.
- Students should wear footwear that allows them to fully participate in PE and active games.
- Students can wear open toed shoes as long as they have a strap on them. Students can not wear slides, flip flop or sandals unless they have a strap.
- Students can not wear wheeled shoes
- Heels that are higher than one inch are not permitted.

## **ACCESSORIES**

Due to safety and to decrease the distractions in our school learning environment. Students are not able to allowed to wear the following things, unless for a noted medical or religious reasons:

# Student Dress & Supplies

- Students are not allowed to wear hoods or hats of any kind in the building. This includes sun visors, ball caps and ski masks.
- Sunglasses are not to be worn in the building.
- Jewelry must be appropriate for school and not pose a safety threat. Necklaces should not include any vulgar symbols and/or words and should be smaller than a penny. Earrings should be no larger than a quarter if wearing hoops or studs.
- Students are not to carry bags, purses, or fanny packs in the building or at school-sponsored events. Each student is given a locker or cubby where they can store their personal belongings throughout the school day.

## *Toys*

Please help your child remember that toys should be left at home during the school day. Toys include anything that may disrupt learning or distract a student from engaging in the school community. Our classrooms are filled with wonderful and stimulating educational toys, games, and materials for learning.

## *School Supplies*

Several weeks before school, students will be given a list of supplies necessary for class and field activities. School supplies will be for all students in the classroom to use and generally will be placed in a common space. If purchasing school supplies is difficult due to financial constraints, please see your child's teacher or a school administrator. He/she will make sure that your child has what he or she needs for participation in school.

Middle school students have both shared and individual supplies, as noted on the supply list. Students must have a binder, dividers for each class, paper, a homework folder, and a supply bag complete with sharpened pencils, blue or black pens, highlighter, etc. The school will provide each student with one homework agenda. If lost, there may be a replacement cost or service requirement.

## *Electronic Devices*

While on school grounds there is never an appropriate time for a student to use cell phones or any other electronic device (including smart watches). If a parent or guardian needs to speak with a child during the school day, they should call the school.

In the middle school, we understand that students may carry cell phones to communicate with parents and guardians outside of school. Upon entering school, middle school students must turn cell phones off and store them in their lockers. Cell phones will be confiscated if seen after arrival in the morning.

Cell phones and electronic devices must remain in a student's locker or backpack until they are transitioning home. Students are not allowed to take the cellphones or other devices out of the building or on field studies. We strongly encourage that students put these items in their book bags and leave them there until they have left the building.

If a staff member sees a student phone or device, they will take it and turn it into the front desk.

Be advised that Two Rivers in no way assumes any responsibility for damaged, lost, or stolen electronic devices.



# Student Records

## *Student Records*

Two Rivers maintains a comprehensive, computerized database of student information.

This information is entered and reviewed for accuracy and disseminated in accordance with applicable laws. Access to this database will be restricted to school staff. Hard copies of confidential student records will be similarly maintained in a locked file cabinet.

We ask that parents make the school aware of any changes that may occur during the school year such as a change of address or phone number. These changes should be made with the front desk staff.

## *Release of Information*

A parent/guardian has the right to review the student's educational records unless the custodian of the educational records has received a copy of a court order to the contrary. Educational records may contain personally identifying data, progress reports, courses taken, standardized achievement test scores, attendance data, aptitude tests, psychological tests, health data, family background information, observations, and reports of serious or recurrent behavior problems. In order for the school to release any information to a third party we must first receive written permission from the parent and guardian.

## *Withdrawal From School/*

### *Transfer of Records*

If a family wishes to withdraw a student from Two Rivers, they must submit a student withdrawal form to the office formally announcing the family's intent to leave the school and indicating the last day of attendance at Two Rivers. Upon request of the parent, the Principal will arrange for the student's records to be available for transfer to the new school.

# Registration and Enrollment

## *Admissions Process*

Two Rivers participates in the My School DC (MSDC) common Lottery. Families must submit an online application via [www.myschooldc.org](http://www.myschooldc.org) or by calling the MSDC hotline on 202-388-6336.

The following preferences offered are listed below in order:

- 1 FOUNDERS** - Biological, legally adopted, or court appointed children of founding members of Two Rivers.
- 2 STAFF** - Must be residents of the District of Columbia and employed full-time.
- 3 TWO RIVERS SIBLING** - Siblings must re-enroll for the upcoming school year and be enrolled at the same campus. If a sibling enrolls and TR sibling withdraws within the school year, sibling will lose their seat and will be added back to the waiting list; wait list position will be determined by MSDC.
- 4 TRANSFER** - Can only be used one time.
- 5 SIBLING APPLICANT** - If one sibling enrolls, the other sibling(s) move to the top of the waiting list, but not above a student with a higher preference. A seat must be available to make an offer, therefore sibling applicant admission is not guaranteed. If sibling applicant enrolls and sibling providing sibling applicant preference withdraws, sibling applicant will lose their seat and be added back to the waiting list, waitlist position will be determined by MSDC.

## *Re-Enrollment Process*

Families will have a window of approximately 8 weeks to re-enroll. This includes early and extended hours during the week as well as Saturday hours. Reminders are in the Weekly Trib, verbal reminders from Ops Associates, flyers posted in the lobby, email, phone calls, and targeted School Messenger alerts during the last two weeks. Once you are enrolled in Two Rivers, you do not have to submit another application to MSDC. However, every student must complete the re-enrollment process every year which consists of submitting:

- DC Residency Verification Form(s)
- DC Residency Supporting Documentation or consenting to Electronic Verification (for returning students in grades 1 - 8)
- Online Re-enrollment Form
- Updated District of Columbia Universal Health Certificate with updated immunization
- Updated Immunization Exempt Form if applicable in addition to the District of Columbia Universal Health Certificate
- Updated District of Columbia Universal Dental Assessment Form

- Authorization for Emergency Medical Treatment Form

You can not hold a seat at more than one school at a time. If you apply in the lottery are matched with another school and enroll, you will lose your seat at Two Rivers. In the event you desire to re-enroll at Two Rivers, you may do so without going through the MSDC lottery, only and if we are still in open re-enrollment and have a seat available. Otherwise, you will have to submit an online post lottery application to MSDC to be added to our waitlist.

## *Re-enrollment Deadline*

Families who miss the re-enrollment deadline:

- Seats will be released as of the said time on the day of the deadline and offered to the next person on the waiting list.
- Will receive a "Missed Re-enrollment Deadline" email from the Registrar with a Transfer & Withdrawal Form attached.
- Will have to submit a post lottery application to MSDC to be added to the waiting list if interested in re-applying. You must enter "other" as your current school on the MSDC application in order to complete the application.

## **ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS?**

Please call us at 202 546 4477, email [info@tworiverspcs.org](mailto:info@tworiverspcs.org), or stop by the office.

## **A SPECIAL THANKS**

Thank you to Capital City Public Charter School and The Odyssey School for creating inspiring educational environments and allowing us to use parts of their handbooks.

# '18'19 calendar

The **Elementary School** day at 4th Street and Young begins at 8:15 AM and ends at 3:15 PM Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. School begins at 8:15 AM and ends at 1:15 PM every Wednesday.

The **Middle School** day begins at 8:15 AM and ends at 4:15 PM Monday through Friday.

*Total number of instructional days is 180.*

## August

- 23 Family and Staff Welcome Potluck
- 23-24 Family Orientation Meetings
- 27 First Day of School for K- 8<sup>th</sup> grades and Transition Day for Preschool and Pre-K (full day for half of the class)
- 28 Transition Day for Preschool and Pre-K students (full day for half of the class)

## September

- 3 Labor Day - School Closed
- 13 Back to School Night for 3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grades
- 17 Back to School Night for PS-2<sup>nd</sup> grades
- 25 PSA Meeting 6:00-7:30
- 26-28 5th Grade Overnight Camping Trip

## October

- 5 Professional Development Day - no school for students
- 8 Columbus Day - School Closed
- 11 Expeditionary Learning Night
- 16 Picture Day
- 24 Elementary School Fall Festival
- 31 Family Conferences-early release for students

## November

- 1-2 Family Conferences - half days for students
- 8 School Culture Information Night
- 8-9 Jamestown Overnight Field Study for 4th Grade at 4th Street
- 12 Veteran's Day - School Closed
- 13 Professional Development Day - no school for students
- 15-16 Jamestown Overnight Field Study for 4th Grade at Young
- 21-23 Thanksgiving Break - School Closed

## December

- 17-18 Community Showcase at 4th Street
- 19-20 Community Showcase at Young
- 24-31 Winter Break - School Closed

## January

- 1 Winter Break -School Closed
- 2 Professional Development Day - no school for students
- 3 Students return from Winter Break
- 10 Family Math Festival

## January (continued)

- 18 Professional Development Day - no school for students
- 21 Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday - School Closed
- 24 PSA Meeting
- 29 Middle School Artspedition
- 30-31 Family Conferences-early release for students

## February

- 1 Family Conferences- early release for students
- 7 Arts Night
- 11-14 Share the Love Week
- 15-18 Mini Winter Break - School Closed
- 19 Professional Development Day- no school for students
- 21 Middle School Science Fair
- 22 Family Dance

## March

- 7 Family Literacy Festival
- 15 Professional Development Day - no school for students
- 29 Framing the Future Ga

## April

- 11 PSA Meeting
- 15-19 Spring Break
- 22 Professional Development Day - no school for students
- 25 Spanish Night

## May

- 9 Early Childhood Night
- 20-21 Community Showcase at 4th Street
- 22-23 Community Showcase at Young
- 24 Professional Development Day - no school for students
- 27 Memorial Day - School Closed

## June

- 3-5 Vocabulary Fashion Show
- 6-7 Middle School Musical
- 10-12 Field Days
- 12-14 Family Conferences-early release for students
- 14 Last Day of School



**TWO RIVERS PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL**

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