

Thomas Jefferson



Ridgefield Park Public Schools
Parent/Student Handbook

110 Mt. Vernon St.
Ridgefield Park, NJ 07660
201-336-9855

Mr. Matthew Perrapato, Principal

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Thomas Jefferson ELC

Mr. Perrapato, Principal

Dear Parents/Guardians and Students:

The Thomas Jefferson ELC Parent/Student Handbook has been prepared to help answer questions you may have regarding school policies and procedures.

Close cooperation between home and school is essential to the success of our students. Please take time to review the policies with your children so they have a clear understanding of what is expected of them in school. Family support will help our policies and rules to be more effective. We urge you to contact your child's teacher(s) whenever you have a question or concern.

We are very proud of our students and staff at Thomas Jefferson ELC. With your support, we will continue to function as an exemplary school.

Sincerely,

Mr. Matthew Perrapato
Principal

Preparing Your Child for the School Day:

In order for your child to have a stress free, productive school day, we ask parents to send their children to school with everything they will need for the day: books, homework, musical instrument, lunch, money, keys, etc., as required.

If it is necessary to bring a child's lunch or other items to school, please have the child's name and class clearly visible, and leave it in the main office.

We ask you to make after-school plans with your child before he/she leaves the house in the morning, and refrain from asking school personnel to give messages to your child unless it is an emergency.

Visitors

Parents are encouraged to visit our school and actively participate in their child's education. To insure the safety and security of students and staff and make certain there is minimal disruption to the learning environment, all visitors must adhere to the guidelines below.

All visitors must report directly to the Main Office

All visitors must enter the school by means of the Main Entrance. For the PROTECTION of our students, all visitors are to report to the office immediately upon entering the building and sign in at the Main Office.

Student Arrival to School:

DROP-OFF PROCEDURES

TIME 8:20-8:40AM. ARRIVING AFTER 8:40AM WILL RESULT IN A TARDY

In order to help more efficiently move things along we are providing you with some helpful tips:

1. **Pull all the way up to the next available staff member**
2. **Stay in your car and allow one of the staff members assist your child in exiting the vehicle.**
3. **If possible have your child seated in the backseat of the vehicle on the passenger side.**
4. **Have your child begin to get ready (back pack, lunch box, seat belt) as you enter the "valet line".**
5. **If your child is still adjusting and is not willing exiting the vehicle we ask that you kindly find street parking and walk your child up to the main entrance.**
6. **If you choose not to use the drop-off line it is imperative for your safety and the safety of others that you use the crosswalks and remain on the sidewalk at all times.**

Children must NOT arrive at school earlier than 8:20 a.m. There is no supervision before that time. The exceptions involve attendance at before-school activities and the **Breakfast Program, for which children must NOT arrive at school earlier than 8:15 AM.** Children are expected to follow the directions of teachers who will be lining them up by class.

Those arriving late (after 8:40AM) must go to Door #1 Main Office with your child and sign them in to school at that time.

Dismissal:

To expedite a safe and orderly dismissal it is necessary that all stairwells, halls and doorways be clear. Parents should wait for their children on the sidewalk. Parents are requested not to wait in the building, block doorways, or congregate at the main entrance on Bergen Avenue.

Early Dismissal:

Parents must come to the main office when a student is to be excused before 3:00 p.m. to sign the student out.

Lateness/Attendance:

Students who arrive late to school must report to the main office.

Parents should notify the school nurse on the morning of their child's absence. In addition, a doctor's note is required for absences of **5 or more consecutive days. Please reference the policies section of the school website for the complete attendance policy.**

Medical/Absence Procedures:

In the event of illness, your child's absence should be reported directly to our school nurse. You may call and leave a message on her answering machine. (*Mrs. Aguilar- 201-336-9857*)

We strongly request that you take a few minutes each morning to observe your child to determine whether or not he or she should be sent to school.

Suggestions:

Reasons for keeping a child home:

1. Illness during the night
2. Fever of 99.6 or higher (keep child home 24 hours **after temperature returns to normal**)
3. Complaints of nausea, headache or abdominal distress
4. Symptoms of communicable disease such as sore throat, reddened eyes, swollen glands, or rash
5. In cases of strep throat, child **must be on antibiotic for 24 hours before returning to school.**

Notify the school of the following:

1. Any absence
2. If the child is hospitalized
3. If school insurance forms are needed
4. If home tutoring is required
5. If a communicable disease is present
6. Complaints of nausea, headache or abdominal distress

A note must be sent to the school in the following instances:

1. After every absence, stating the reason for the absence
2. When your **home or work telephone number has been changed** (this is essential if emergency contact becomes necessary)
3. **When you change the emergency person** to be contacted in the event you cannot be reached
4. If your child is to be given a prescription medication at school
5. If your child develops an allergy which you have not previously reported to us

If you cooperate with us by checking your child's health condition each morning, and by not permitting your child to return to school after an illness until he/she is completely well, we will be better able to serve the welfare of the entire student body.

Also, it should be remembered that a student cannot function properly in a classroom situation if he/she is not feeling well or is not well nourished. Please encourage your child to eat a balanced breakfast before coming to school.

Emergency School Closing/Delaved Openings:

In the event that schools are closed or delayed in opening due to inclement weather or other emergencies, the following stations will

broadcast this information beginning as early as 6:30AM:

WOR - 710 AM
WVNX 1160 AM

News Radio - 88 AM
News 12 New Jersey

Jukebox Radio - 103.1 FM

School Messenger, the automated telephone calling system, will alert you about emergency closing or delayed opening of school. In the event of school closing your home will receive a message between the hours of 6:00AM and 7:00AM. **School Closings are also posted on the district and school websites.** PLEASE DO NOT TELEPHONE THE SCHOOL, POLICE, OR DISTRICT FOR INFORMATION ON CLOSINGS OR DELAYED OPENINGS.

Emergency Student Information:

An emergency card is in the opening packet. Please fill it out and read the accompanying letter. Up to date, accurate emergency information is crucial to the safety and well being of your child. If at any point your emergency information changes, please come to the office to update the information.

Guidance Department

We are very proud of the Counseling program we have developed at the elementary level
The purpose is to provide for your child's social and emotional growth.

This is accomplished in a variety of ways by academic intervention, small group counseling, monthly classroom guidance lessons and individual school based counseling.

We hope to serve as a bridge between parents, administrators and teachers in order to facilitate collaborative communication between home and school.

Change of Name and/or Guardianship:

An updated birth certificate or legal court papers must be presented to the school secretary if a student is changing his or her name.

A change in guardianship must be documented with the proper court papers. These papers must also be presented to the district registrar.

School Nurse:

The nurse is on duty every day from 8:15 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. If a child requires medication to be administered during the school day, the following regulations must be followed in accordance with Board of Education policy: (*Mrs. Aguilar - 201-336-9857*)

1. A note signed by the parent and physician must be submitted to the school nurse, containing the following information:
 - A. student's name
 - B. name of medication
 - C. purpose of medication
 - D. time(s) to be administered
 - E. dosage
 - F. possible side effects
 - G. termination date for administering the medication
2. The school nurse will administer the medication, and return unused medication to the parent.
3. Parents must inform the nurse of any change in student's health or medication.
4. The school district may reject requests for administration of medication.

If a child becomes ill in school, a parent (or adult designated by the parent) will be contacted to pick the child up from school. A child cannot be sent home from school without an adult.

Office Phone Use by Students:

Students are allowed to request usage of the school phones to contact their parents in the event of important information which must be communicated promptly.

Students are NOT permitted to use school telephones to make after-school plans.

Textbooks:

All textbooks issued are the responsibility of the student. They must be covered throughout the school year. If books are lost, stolen, or badly damaged then a fine will be assessed. Report cards will not be issued until such fines have been paid.

Lunch Program:

Students may go home for lunch, but they must be signed out by a parent or guardian. **Phone calls will not be accepted as permission.**

Application for Free or Reduced Price Meals:

You will be provided with the opportunity to apply for Free or Reduced School Meals. Forms are sent home on the first day of school and must be returned immediately. **Your child's previous eligibility for Free or Reduced Price Meals will continue for thirty school days.** Additionally, if your **income** status changes, you may apply for the lunch program at anytime simply by coming to the Main Office for an application.

Daily Procedures for Students in the Breakfast Program:

- The Cafeteria will be open to students for breakfast each morning at 8:20AM.
- Enter through the Bergen Avenue doors nearest to the Gymnasium.
- Breakfast must be eaten inside, at the assigned table.
- Students must insert all garbage inside the bag in which breakfast came and have it ready for pick up by a Breakfast Aide.
- Students must remain in their seats until dismissal for lineup at 8:40AM. At this time they will move directly to their designated line up areas.

Homework:

Homework is an extension of classroom instruction. It is designed to improve, reinforce, and master learning for higher levels of achievement and understanding. Assignments may consist of reading, writing, studying and/or other activities required by the classroom or special subject teachers.

It is important that assignments are completed and turned in on time. The quality of submitted homework is essential to the overall evaluation of each student's academic progress.

In the event of a child's absence, homework assignments should be requested by 9:00 a.m. to allow the teacher time to prepare the work. Assignments will be ready at 3:00 p.m.

See the Ridgefield Park Information Guide for further information.

Grading:

Gr. 1-4 – First and second graders receive report cards 3 times per year, after each marking period. They are graded on items in all academic areas as follows:

- 4 = Exceeds Standards
- 3 = Achieves Standards
- 2 = Approaching Standards
- 1 = Needs Support
- N/A = Not Assessed at this time
- S/M = Standard Previously Met

Physical Education Classes:

All students in Grades K- 1 are required to participate in physical education. They are graded on participation, preparedness, attitude, and effort.

Sneakers and non-restrictive clothing are required attire. Rubber-soled shoes are not suitable. The wearing of jewelry is discouraged for safety reasons. Thomas Jefferson is not responsible for lost jewelry or items of value.

If a student cannot participate in physical education for medical reasons, he/she will be excused only if a note from the parent is on file.

Long term illness or injury requires a note from a physician. This note will remain on file in the nurse's office. When the student is allowed to participate again, a note from a physician giving permission to participate must be presented to the nurse.

School Rules and Regulations:

A. Classroom:

General class rules are as follows:

1. Be on time by lining up in the appropriate area beginning at 8:20 AM. All students should be in their classrooms no later than 8:40 AM.
2. Come to class prepared and work very hard . . . all the time!
3. Be polite and positive about yourself and others.
4. Respect your own property and the property of others.
5. Keep work areas clean and neat.
6. Follow directions and safety procedures.
7. Do assigned homework and make-up work.

The teacher will also have additional rules and regulations specific to his/her own classroom setting.

B. Hallway:

1. Always walk quietly and in an orderly fashion.
2. Keep from crowding, pushing, shoving, tripping, or running.
3. Yelling or shouting is prohibited.
4. Do not disturb other classes, especially by looking through doorways.
5. Students should pick up loose litter and deposit it in the nearest waste can.

C. Lunchroom:

1. Do not push or cut in front of others while waiting on line.
2. Use good table manners.
3. Talking is permitted, but yelling is not.
4. Keep tables and floors clean.
5. Do not take food out of the lunchroom.
6. Lunches are eaten at assigned tables.
7. Throwing food or other items is prohibited.
8. Do not touch, buy, or trade another's lunch.

Failure to follow lunchroom rules may result in the child being suspended from eating lunch in school for a number of days to be determined by the principal or the teacher-in-charge. Parents are then responsible for picking up their child and providing lunch.

D. Playground:

1. Take turns and wait your turn when playing games.
2. Make safety your number one priority.
3. Go to the adult in charge when a problem arises.
4. Line up when the bell rings.

E. Restroom:

1. Classes may be escorted as a group to the restroom at times designated by the classroom teacher.
2. Enter and leave promptly.
3. Discard paper towels in the waste cans.
4. Flush all receptacles after use.
5. Do not climb on or deface restroom facilities or walls.

F. Other actions that could result in consequences/remediation include, but are not limited to:

1. Fighting
2. Insubordination – (disobedience to authority)
3. Possession of a dangerous weapon (requires a superintendent/parent/child meeting for reinstatement)
4. Use of inappropriate language
5. Vandalism
6. Possession of an illegal substance
7. Excessive truancy
8. Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying (see district HIB Policy for additional detail)
9. Disruption/disregarding school rules/inappropriate behavior

Consequences/remediation for violating the rules above will be determined with consideration as to age, developmental maturity, severity of incident, and degree of harm.

Potential consequences/remediation for infractions can range from admonishment, teacher or administrative detention, temporary removal from classroom, deprivation of school privileges, out-of-school suspension, and counseling services or whatever the principal deems appropriate. More severe incidents could result in long term suspension, report to law enforcement, and even expulsion.

Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying

Acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying are strictly prohibited!

"Harassment, intimidation, or bullying" means any gesture or written, verbal, or physical act that takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, or on a school bus and that:

- a. is motivated by any actual or perceived characteristic such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical, or sensory disability; or,
- b. by any other distinguishing characteristic; and
- c. a reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, that the act(s) will have the effect of harming a student or damaging the student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to his person or damage to his property; or
- d. has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or group of students in such a way as to cause substantial disruption in, or substantial interference with, the orderly operation of the school.

Consequences and appropriate remedial action for students who commit acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion.

You may access the complete Board Policy on harassment, intimidation and bullying on the district and school web pages

Electronic Devices in School

Handheld Computer Games/Radio-CD Players, PSP'S, iPods, Nintendo DS, or any electronic games in school:

****The above items are not permitted in class. In the event that these items are brought to class, they will be confiscated and kept in the principal's office until parental contact is made. Thomas Jefferson is not responsible for lost items.****

Computer Technology, Internet & email Guidelines:

District staff will teach proper techniques and standards for participation, for guiding student access to appropriate sections of the network.

Users of the network facilities are responsible for respecting and adhering to the network computing policy. Any attempt to break the law through the use of the network will result in litigation against the offender by the proper authorities. If such an event should occur, the Ridgefield Park Board of Education will fully comply with the authorities to provide any information necessary for the litigation process. The Ridgefield Park Board of Education is actively pursuing available computer technology to increase teaching and learning opportunities. The electronic network facilities, which include telecommunications and Internet access, are tools for life-long learning and are to be used in a responsible, efficient, ethical, and legal manner. Internet access will propel us further into the information age by allowing us to communicate and share information with a variety of groups.

The Ridgefield Park School District is responsible for securing its network and computing systems to a reasonable and economically feasible degree against unauthorized access and/or abuse, while making them accessible for authorized and legitimate users. This responsibility includes informing users of the expected standards of conduct and the disciplinary or legal consequences of not adhering to them. District staff will teach proper techniques and standards of participation for guiding student access to appropriate sections of the network. Any attempt to violate the provisions of this policy will result in disciplinary action and permanent revocation of use accounts regardless of the success or failure of the attempt.

Networking and Computing System Security

A user of the network will be allowed to access only authorized networks or the computer systems attached to these networks. Therefore, the following are prohibited:

Using systems and/or networks in an attempt to gain unauthorized access to remote systems.

Any attempt to bypass security systems on any network computing system, including but not limited to:

- Decryption of system or user passwords.
- Attempting to secure a higher level of privilege on any network system.

Unauthorized violation of copyright laws including but not limited to:

- Copying system files.

- Duplicating copyrighted materials such as third-party software, without the express written permission of the owner or without the proper license.

Attempting to “crash” network systems or programs.

Any willful development or introduction of computer “viruses”, disruptive or destructive programs, into the district network or any external network is prohibited. This includes any efforts to consume network resources to the exclusion of others.

Any other actions that may be deemed inappropriate.

General Computing/E-Mail Policy

Once a user is granted permission to access the electronic network facilities, the user is solely responsible for all actions while using the equipment. Therefore, the following actions are prohibited:

- a. Any deliberate action which damages or disrupts a computing system or network, alters its normal performance, or causes malfunction, regardless of the system location or time duration.
- b. Deleting, copying, or modifying any files and/or data belonging to other users without their prior consent.
- c. Transmitting and/or processing files containing obscene, indecent, lewd material or other material which explicitly or implicitly refers to sexual conduct.
- d. Transmitting any material in violation of a United States or state regulation. This includes, but is not limited to copyrighted and threatening materials.
- e. Impeding other users through mass consumption of system resources.
- f. Using facilities and/or services for unauthorized commercial purposes.
- g. Forging or attempting to forge electronic mail messages.
- h. Attempting to read, delete, copy, modify, or view without permission, other users’ e-mail.
- i. Sending or attempting to send harassing, obscene, and/or threatening e-mail to another user.
- j. Attempting to send unsolicited junk mail, “for profit” messages, or chain letters.
- k. Or any other action that is deemed inappropriate.

The Ridgefield Park electronic network facilities are to be used exclusively for education related functions and applications. System administrators have access to all files, including e-mail files. Users will have no expectation of privacy with regard to said files or e-mail. System administrators will not normally inspect the contents of files or e-mail sent by one user to an identified addressee, or disclose such contents to other than the sender or an intended recipient, without the consent of the sender, or an intended recipient, unless required to do so by law or policies of the Ridgefield Park School District, or to investigate complaints regarding files or e-mails which are alleged to contain defamatory, abusive, obscene, profane, sexually oriented, threatening, racially offensive, or illegal material. Further, the Ridgefield Park Schools are obligated to cooperate fully with local, state, or federal officials in an investigation concerning or relating to any e-mails transmitted on or misuses of the electronic network facilities.

Smoke Free School District:

Smoking in all school facilities in the district is prohibited as per Board of Education policy. This ban applies to all school employees and visitors to the school and athletic fields and in vehicles used when transporting students.

Fire Drills:

State law mandates one fire drill and one emergency drill per month. During these drills, please do the following:

1. Immediately follow your teacher’s direction.
2. Do not talk when lining up, moving through the halls or outside the building.
3. Walk swiftly and carefully.

School Bus:

School bus transportation is available for designated students only. Local police officials will strictly enforce laws governing traffic and school busses. When driving a motor vehicle, do not pass the school bus when its red lights are flashing.

Students who are disruptive on the bus pose a safety risk to the driver, other students, and themselves. Students who are disruptive on

the bus may have their bus privileges suspended. Length of suspension will be determined by the principal. Disruptive bus students require a meeting with the school principal, the student's parent(s), and the student.

District Student Dress Code:

The district student dress code policy is as follows:

1. School requires an environment and atmosphere in which the business of learning can take place without undue distraction. Attire entirely suitable for playing field or the beach is not appropriate for the classroom.
2. Attire appropriate for school includes:
 - a. **Boys:** Trousers, shirt, socks, and suitable footwear.
 - b. **Girls:** Dress, skirt, or slacks, suitable top, socks and suitable footwear.
3. Among the specific items which are deemed inappropriate attire are:
 - a. bandanas, hats, leather or denim jackets, or any coat or jacket exclusively for outdoor wear, halters, undershirts, backless blouses, excessively tight mini-skirts or dresses, spandex pants, flip flops, high platform shoes or shorts (**see #4 below**).
 - b. Any attire, which leaves the midriff exposed is considered inappropriate for school. In addition, open weave net shirts are permissible only if worn over another garment.
4. Mid-thigh length shorts and short sets may only be worn in appropriate weather. No short-shorts are permitted.
5. These regulations also require that sneakers and/or tie shoes be laced and tied.
6. General standards of decency in dress will suggest to individuals additional personal measures they may wish to take.
7. Shirts and other garments with inappropriate sayings or advertisements for alcohol, drugs, and tobacco are **not** permissible in a school setting.