



Ridgefield

H I G H S C H O O L
STUDENT-PARENT HANDBOOK

2024-2025

Revised 6/28/24

Ridgefield High School
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Ridgefield, Connecticut 06877

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rhs.ridgefield.org

Updates to this handbook will be published on the Ridgefield High School website.

Ridgefield Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age or disability in providing education services. Karen M. Dewing (kdewing@ridgefieldps.net) has been designated to coordinate compliance with the nondiscrimination requirements of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended. Dr. Elizabeth Hannaway (ehannaway@ridgefieldps.net) has been designated to coordinate compliance with the nondiscrimination requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

Ridgefield Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of disability by denying access to the benefits of district services, programs, or activities. To request information about the applicability of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), interested persons should contact Mr. Joe Morits (jmorits@ridgefieldps.net) or Dr. Elizabeth Hannaway (ehannaway@ridgefieldps.net).

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Mission Statement

Our educational community strives to cultivate a highly engaging and personalized learning environment that encourages individual growth, resilience, citizenship and empathy.

Core Values

To achieve our mission, Ridgefield High School commits to developing individuals who demonstrate the following skills and/or attributes:

- **Collaboration**—contributing responsibly to rigorous and complex issues;
- **Innovation**—finding creative solutions to authentic problems;
- **Mindfulness**—developing awareness of presence and respectful interconnectedness;
- **Communication**—utilizing skills for a wide variety of audiences and purposes;
- **Knowledge**—synthesizing and applying new information; and
- **Resilience**—rebounding from challenges and adversity.

Preface

The material covered within this student handbook is intended as a method of communicating to students and parents/guardians regarding general district information, rules and procedures and is not intended to either enlarge or diminish any Board policy, administrative regulation or negotiated agreement. Material contained herein may therefore be superseded by such Board policy, administrative regulation or negotiated agreement. Any information contained in this handbook is subject to unilateral revision or elimination from time to time without notice. Consult the district's website or the individual school's website for any significant changes.

This booklet is written for our students and their parents/guardians. It contains required and useful information. Because it cannot be as personal a communication as we would like, we address students not directly as “you” but rather as “the student,” “students,” or “children.” Likewise, the term “the student’s parent” may refer to the parent, legal guardian, or other person who has agreed to assume responsibility for the student. Both students and parents/guardians need to be familiar with the District’s Student Code of Conduct and school safety and security plans which are intended to promote school safety and an atmosphere conducive for learning.

The Student Handbook is designed to be in harmony with Board policy. Please be aware that the handbook is updated yearly, while policy adoption and revision may occur throughout the year. Changes in policy that affect portions of this Handbook will be made available to students and parents through newsletters, web pages, and other communications.

Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination

Each student is encouraged to develop and achieve individual educational goals. The district will provide every student with equal educational opportunities regardless of race, color, creed, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, religion, age, economic status, marital status or disability. No student will be excluded on such basis from participating in or having access to any course offerings, student athletics, counseling services, employment assistance, extracurricular activities or other school resources. Programs and activities shall be accessible and usable by individuals with disabilities as prescribed by law.

Mrs. Karen Dewing (kdewing@ridgefieldps.net) is the designated district compliance officer, who will coordinate compliance with the nondiscrimination requirements of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Equality of Opportunity Statement

District schools recognize and accept the need to prepare students to live and work productively in an increasingly diverse society. This is an integral part of the school system's commitment to offer an educational program of excellence, which includes teaching students awareness and understanding of the diverse cultures and heritages that form our society.

Ridgefield High School will not tolerate student behavior which insults, degrades or stereotypes any race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, physical or mental condition or ethnic group.

Campus Information

Calendars and Important Dates

District Calendar

The district calendar is available on the district website at www.ridgefield.org → About Us → District Calendar

Marking Period and Grade Reporting Dates

Please consult the RHS homepage at rhs.ridgefield.org for marking period closing dates and dates for access to mid-quarter comments and report card grades through the PowerSchool Portal.

Important Testing Dates – School Code (070640)

PSAT 8/9 School Day (9th Grade)	Spring 2025
PSAT/NMSQT	Saturday, October 26, 2024
SAT only	Saturday, October 5, 2024**
SAT/SAT Subject Tests	Saturday, November 2, 2024
SAT/SAT Subject Tests	Saturday, December 7, 2024
SAT only	Saturday, March 8, 2025
PSAT 10 School Day (10th Grade)	Spring 2025
SAT School Day (11th Grade)	Spring 2025
SAT/SAT Subject Tests	Saturday, May 3, 2025**
SAT/SAT Subject Tests	Saturday, June 7, 2025**
ACT	Saturday, September 14, 2024
ACT	Saturday, October 26, 2024
ACT	Saturday, December 14, 2024
ACT	Saturday, February 8, 2025
ACT	Saturday, April 5, 2025
ACT	Saturday, June 14, 2025
NGSS	Spring 2025

**RHS serves as a test center for only these dates.

AP Test Dates*

Monday, May 5, 2025
 Tuesday, May 6, 2025
 Wednesday, May 7, 2025
 Thursday, May 8, 2025
 Friday, May 9, 2025

Morning Session

Biology, Latin
 Chemistry, Human Geography
 English Literature and Composition
 African American Studies, Stats
 Italian Lang., US History

Afternoon Session

European History, Microeconomics
 US Gov. & Pol.
 Comp. Sci. A, Comparative Gov./Pol.
 Japanese Lang., World Hist. Modern
 Chinese Lang., Macroeconomics

Monday, May 12, 2025
 Tuesday, May 13, 2025
 Wednesday, May 14, 2025
 Thursday, May 15, 2025
 Friday, May 16, 2025

Calculus AB, Calculus BC
 French Lang., Precalculus
 English Lang., German Lang.
 Art History., Spanish Lang.
 Physics 1, Spanish Lit.

Music Theory, Seminar
 Env. Science, Physics 2
 Physics C: Mech.
 Comp. Sci. P., Physics 2: E & M
 Psychology

AP Studio Art Portfolios are due Friday, May 9, 2025.

*Please Note: All test dates are subject to change. Visit <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/> for the most up-to-date information.

Event Dates

Please check the calendar section of the RHS <https://rhs.ridgefield.org/Calendar> website page for event dates and information.

Schedules

Schedules

All Important schoolwide schedules are posted to the RHS website at rhs.ridgefield.org →Quick Links→Students or Parents→ [Schedules](#)

- These schedules are updated on a regular basis, and changes will be communicated to students, parents, and staff.

Security

School Resource Officers

The School Resource Officers are members of the Ridgefield Police Department assigned to Ridgefield Public Schools assisting administrators in their attempt in providing a safe and controlled climate for our students. The SROs are involved in intervention and prevention programs. Besides being active high profile law enforcement officers, the School Resource Officers are resources for students, parents, and teachers, working hand in hand with the administration of the school. The School Resource Officer assists with finding solutions while maintaining a safe educational environment.

School Security Officers

The School Security Officer's responsibility is to protect the school community by performing security functions and supporting a safe school climate. These officers have many years of experience and are here to support all students and staff and to be a resource on Safety and Security within the building. School Security Officers are expected to respond to emergency situations decisively and with the highest level of good judgment and professional competence. It is important to note that School Security Officers are not police officers; thus, they are prohibited from performing police functions.

Security Personnel

Ridgefield Public Schools security personnel promote safety of the total school community. Members of the security team assist the administration and staff in providing a safe and controlled climate for our students.

Student Areas And Access

Areas for Unscheduled Time

The following areas are available for student use for eating and relaxing:

Quiet Conversation and Personal Music Areas

- **Student Center Courtyard** – located adjacent to the Student Center and across from the School Store.
- **Library Patio** – located adjacent to the library at the front of the building.
- **Promenade** – located between the Student Center and staff parking lot.
- **Learning Connections Rooms** - Rooms B212 and B219

Casual Conversation and Music Areas

- **Butterfly Courtyard** – located outside the Student Center on the auditorium side.

Asbestos

Legislation requires all school buildings to be reevaluated to determine if asbestos is present and if it poses a significant health hazard to the building's occupants. The District has plans on file showing the location of asbestos in each building and measures undertaken to comply with regulations to maintain a safe school environment. Requests to review these plans may be made in the Main Office.

Athletics Office

The Athletics Office is a place where students may obtain information on teams, tryouts, practices, and schedules. Practice and game changes are immediately updated on the RHS website. In addition, changes are announced when possible.

Attendance Office

The Attendance Office is available for parents to excuse their children and for students who need passes to leave early or to leave for emergency appointments during the day. It is located in the Main Office (flagpole) Entrance hallway.

Cafeteria Accounts

All students in the Ridgefield Public School system are automatically set up with an account in the district cafeteria payment system. Parents and guardians have a choice of payment options for depositing money into a student's individual account including secure online payment and personal check. Students may make purchases with cash at any time or use cash to add funds to their account. Families are responsible for any unpaid balances on a student account. More information is available on the www.ridgefield.org website.

Copier

A copier is available for student use in the LLC.

College Conference Center

The College Conference Center is located in a shared office with Student Life (SLO) adjacent to the Student Center. Students may be directed to this space to meet for Counseling Seminars as well as for College Admission Representative visits.

Elevator

Elevators are located in the F Wing across from the restrooms and across from the LLC. Elevator use is for handicapped access and for students and staff with injuries or conditions that prevent them from using the stairs. Students who are not injured or do not have a condition preventing them from using the stairs are not permitted to use the elevators. Disciplinary action can result if this type of behavior is exhibited.

Exchange Students

After reviewing and ensuring all [RPS BOE Policy 5111.1](#) criteria are met, a written request should be submitted directly to the RHS Counseling Supervisor for approval and next steps.

Fitness Center

The Metzger Fitness Center has a variety of weight lifting and aerobic exercise machines for use during physical education class and under the supervision of a coach. The center may open for use periodically after school.

Health Office

The Health Office is located between the Main Office and the girls locker room. The nursing staff is available for students who are ill, injured, or require medication.

Identification Cards

Any person on the school premises is required to show identification when requested to do so by any school authority. Students are issued ID cards every year and are required to carry their ID cards whenever they are on campus. All students are issued an ID card that acts as a library card, as well as an official identification card for special resources and programs. ID cards also carry stickers that identify Open Campus periods. Students must present their ID cards to reenter the building after 7:45 a.m. and anytime a staff member requests to view it. A student who does not show an ID card may be referred to the grade level dean. Students will be charged five dollars for a replacement ID.

Learning Connections Spaces

Learning Connections Spaces are located in rooms B212 and B219. These spaces have been designed for students and teachers to use throughout the day as a flexible workspace outside of a typical classroom setting. These rooms can be used for small group work among students, students/teacher conferences, meetings with teachers, work on interdisciplinary projects, etc. Students may make appointments with teachers or drop in when a teacher is available in these spaces.

Library Learning Commons

Students are required to scan their ID upon entering the Library Learning Commons.

Two certified Library Media Specialists teach classes and assist students throughout the school day. During free periods, students can choose to sit at study carrels, cafe tables, soft seating, or counter-style seating where they can recharge devices. Students may also work together at tables in the collaboration areas.

During scheduled classes, students will be learning in one of our two classrooms. The Mark Twain classroom has flexible seating, while the Toni Morrison classroom is set up in collaboration stations with whiteboards and large screen TVs for presentations and group research.

The LLC is, first and foremost, a place of academic betterment; disruptive behavior to the learning environment will result in being asked to leave the LLC.

RESOURCES: Our [website](#)

Please visit our website, where you'll find 50+ databases, numerous online magazines and newspapers, eBooks, audiobooks, a vetted open-resources page, and fiction/non-fiction texts covering all levels and learning disciplines. Everyone has access to NoodleTools, a web-based citation maker that guides students with MLA and APA citation formats.

CHECKOUTS:

- **District policy *REQUIRES* a current school ID (or a clear picture of the ID on a cell phone) for both textbook and technology check-outs.**
- The LLC has a limited number of loaner Chromebooks for individual student check-out for the school day. Students must assess the Chromebook upon checkout and *immediately* report any damage to avoid fines.
- Students should bring damaged 1:1 chromebooks and chargers to the LLC to receive a replacement.

Visitors to the LLC are expected to respect the rights of others to quiet, independent study, as well as to demonstrate respect for the library staff, equipment, and materials. Students are reminded **to enjoy their food and drinks before entering the library** (water is allowed). Digital devices may be used but should not be disruptive to others using the library (no phone calls, please). Students are asked to set their cell phones to silent.

All library materials have specific loan periods and check-out limits. These include:

CIRCULATION TYPE	CHECK-OUT LIMIT	LOAN PERIOD	RENEWABLE	FINE
Loaner Chromebooks	1	1 school day, no overnight	no	If not returned by the end of the day, students will incur a \$300 replacement fine, deleted from the student account upon check in.
Loaner Chromebook Chargers	1	1 school day, no overnight	no	If not returned by the end of the day, students will incur a \$30 replacement fine, deleted from the student account upon check in.
Reference Book	1	Check out at end of day, 1 overnight	no	Cost of book if not returned.
Book	6 at a time	15 days	Yes, once	Cost of book if not returned.
Textbook	1	1 class period, may not be removed from the LLC	no	Cost of book if not returned.

Lockers and Personal Item Storage

Lockers - Students are assigned a locker at the beginning of the school year to provide a place to store clothing, books and other articles necessary for use during the school day. Students may use hallway lockers; however, due to limited movement around the building, students are encouraged to carry all necessary materials for the day in their backpacks. The student has no property interest in any locker. Lockers are subject to inspection by the administration to protect the health and welfare of the student body. Students are responsible for keeping the interior of their lockers clean and will be held financially liable for any damage to the locker's interior. Students should keep their lockers locked at all times and not share their combinations with other students. See an administrative assistant for any locker problems. Students should not bring large amounts of cash or valuable personal items to school. The school is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

Gym Lockers – Students are not assigned individual gym lockers; however, lockers are available in the locker room to store personal items. Students should provide their own locks to store items of value during gym class and practice. Locks should be removed at the end of class or practice.

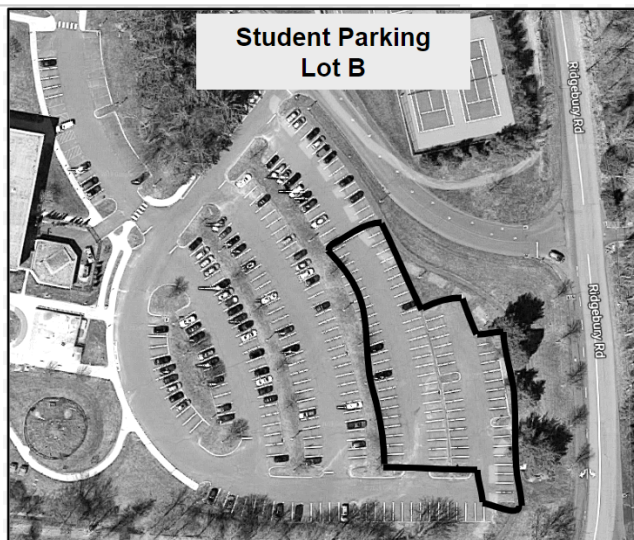
Athletics Lockers – Student athletes who participate in an RHS sport are assigned an athletics locker which is large enough to accommodate backpacks, sports bags and equipment. The student is responsible to ensure all their personal belongings are kept in the locker while they are participating in their sport. The school is not responsible for items left unattended in the locker room. At the end of the sports season, athletes must remove all of their belongings from the lockers, at which time locker combinations are changed for security purposes.

Lost and Found

Lost clothes and books are placed on the shelves adjacent to the Student Life Office and should be claimed within two weeks. All unclaimed items are donated to a charity at the end of each marking period.

Parking Lot

Students with a parking sticker can park in one of two lots located on campus. Lot A is located on the Community Entrance side. Lot B is located on the Promenade side. Students can park in Lot B excluding specific teacher parking spaces.



Restrooms

Restrooms are available for all students and staff, including single-use gender-neutral rooms. No persons are permitted to loiter and/or socialize in groups in any of the restrooms. This includes keeping stalls to one person at a time. Disciplinary action can result if these types of behaviors are exhibited. In accordance with CT law, RHS provides free access to menstrual products.

School Counseling Center

The School Counseling Center is located across from the LLC. School counselors, psychologists, and social workers are available to students who may drop in or schedule an appointment in the appointment books located on each counselor's office door.

Student Center

The Student Center is available for all students and staff throughout the day. A light breakfast is served from 7:00 a.m. until 9:15 a.m., and lunch is available during the third period of the day. À la carte items are available after the lunch periods. Students are responsible for keeping the room in an orderly condition. Trash should be deposited in the containers provided so that students can enjoy a clean work, meeting, study and eating area.

Student Store

The Student Store is located between the Student Center and the Music wing and is open periodically.

Telephones

There are telephones available in the Student Life Office and the Main Office for local calls.

Visitors

All visitors must have a scheduled appointment prior to entering school grounds. Visitors will be asked to check in with the guards at both the gate to the parking lot and at the desk inside the Flagpole Entrance. Visitors must provide identification and wear a visible visitors' badge at all times and will be escorted to their destinations by a staff member. All visitors must checkout with security and exit the building at the end of their scheduled meeting.

Food Delivery Services

Food delivery services, including DoorDash™, UberEats™, etc., are not permitted to deliver to campus during school hours. These services will be denied entry to the RHS campus.

Student Visitors

Prospective RHS students wishing to tour the school should reach out to the RHS Counseling Department. Tours are periodically scheduled with counseling staff throughout the year. Student visitors are not permitted to shadow a student or attend classes. Visitors must wear a visible visitors badge at all times. No visitors are allowed on school grounds during the midyear and final examination schedules, on the day prior to a school vacation, or on the last day of classes. The administration reserves the right to restrict visitors.

Communication

School Communication

Chain of Communication

See Appendix E on page 122.

Website

The school website (rhs.ridgefield.org) has a variety of information about the school.

PowerSchool Portal

The Ridgefield Public Schools use PowerSchool as their student data management system. The PowerSchool Portal provides students and parents timely and secure access to student information including attendance, grade and progress reporting, fees and obligations, schedules, unofficial transcripts and athletic information (athletic participants only). Parents have access to information for all family members while students may access only their own records.

The PowerSchool Portal may be accessed through the district website at www.ridgefield.org. To access the PowerSchool Portal you will need a login ID and password which you may also obtain on the district website at www.ridgefield.org. User accounts for new students and parents are created at the time of registration.

School Cancellation

In the case of hazardous conditions, school may be delayed, dismissed early or canceled for the day. This information will be communicated through our district website, local media outlets, and via email/text (if you have signed up to receive these communications).

Emergency Notification

The district uses an emergency phone notification system to notify students, parents and teachers of emergency information. The program uses phone numbers and email addresses on file in our school computer system. Please notify the school if there are any changes to your contact, email or phone information. Ridgefield High School uses an automated contact system that will send out important information via email and/or phone messages using the parent contact information on file.

Notification of Missed Classes

RHS has an automatic dialing service that calls home when a student has an unexcused absence or tardy recorded for that day. Student attendance is also available on the PowerSchool Portal.

Superintendent Messages

The Superintendent communicates information pertaining to Ridgefield Schools, including Ridgefield High School, through various means. Email notifications, phone messages, and news agencies may be used to communicate important messages including weather related and emergency closings.

Parent Meetings

Open House – Open House is an evening program held in early September and is an opportunity for parents to follow their child's schedule and receive information about each class from the teacher.

Parent/Teacher/Student Conferences – Parents are encouraged to become partners in their child's educational successes. Conferences with teachers may be held at any time during the school year. Parents and students, as well as teachers, counselors or administrators, may initiate a conference.

Per Ridgefield Public Schools [BOE policy 1110.1](#), RHS will provide opportunities for parent-teacher conferences to occur (virtually and/or in person) during the school year. A parent or student may arrange a conference with an individual member of the school staff or a group conference with school staff members. Conferences are held during school hours but every effort will be made to accommodate parent schedules.

PTSA Blast

The Parent Teacher Student Association at Ridgefield High School prepares an email newsletter that contains a variety of information on activities and events at the high school. Contact the PTSA to sign up to receive this information. The PTSA publishes a Student Directory for its members in addition to the newsletters.

Awards Ceremonies

Academics and Activities – There will be a senior awards ceremony to recognize the achievements of our 12th grade students.

Senior Award Criteria

- Alternative High School
 - Demonstrated a positive attitude and effort consistently
 - Served as a role model to fellow students
 - Contributed greatly to a welcoming school environment
 - Showed significant academic and social-emotional growth
- Business
 - Took a significant amount of business courses offered in our program of studies
 - Displayed leadership in one or more Business department clubs (FBLA, DECA, Investment Club)
 - Earned excellent grades in Business and Finance courses
 - Demonstrated exemplary characteristics of a business leader including resilience, innovation, collaboration, as well as empathy
- Engineering
 - Earned academic grades in their engineering courses that places them in the top 10% of all seniors who meet requirement
 - Shown a passion for and individual growth in the field of engineering
 - Presented a positive influence upon classmates and the classroom environment
 - Displayed innovation, knowledge, mindfulness, and resilience in the activities of the classroom
 - Collaborated and communicated effectively with classmates while working on projects
- English
 - Possesses passion, commitment, dedication and excellence in the discipline of English
 - Participated in our electives or extra-curricular clubs or received commendation from other institutions in the areas of public speaking, reading and/or composition
 - Demonstrated continual growth over time
 - Achieved exceptional skills in English Language Arts
 - Exhibits stellar writing ability via publication or assessment review
 - Displayed leadership in the classroom via kindness, helpfulness, empathy, mindfulness, and excellence during discussion, peer-editing and writing conferences

- Family and Consumer Sciences
 - Outstanding All Around student of Family and Consumer Sciences Department
 - Taken at least 3 FCS courses over their tenure at RHS
 - Demonstrated growth over time in each course
 - Represents the core values of the FCS department ([See mission statement](#))
 - Showcases being an outstanding community member through a variety of service work
 - Ideally an active member of FCCLA (Family, Career, & Community Leaders of America)
 - Outstanding student in Culinary Arts
 - Successfully completed up to Culinary Two or Advanced Culinary in the FCS program
 - Demonstrated personal development and skills growth over time in foods-based courses
 - Interested in attending post-secondary training in the realm of Culinary Arts
 - Achieved successful grades/completed course work determined by the [course rubric](#) which includes:
 - Professionalism
 - Safety and Sanitation
 - Working Cooperatively
 - Finished products
 - Positive attitude (a reflective, mindful, and collaborative student)
- Health
 - Was an innovative member of the class who proactively contributed ideas, displayed active listening skills, collaborated with peers, respected different viewpoints, and demonstrated empathy
 - Showed an interest in the topic of health and wellness
 - Embraced a healthful lifestyle
 - Is considering a health-related career (considered but not required)
- Math
 - Shown continued enthusiasm for and dedication to the field of mathematics
 - Demonstrated their content knowledge and resiliency by earning a high math unweighted GPA
 - Personalized their learning experience by taking math department classes beyond graduation requirement
 - Participated in math competitions outside of the classroom (NEML, Moodys, Math Team, AMC, AIME, USAMO)
 - Collaborated and communicated effectively with classmates throughout their math courses
- Reading Department
 - Completed multiple reading courses
 - Demonstrated critical, creative, and innovative thinking
 - Contributed to a welcoming, engaging, and collaborative environment
 - Modeled kindness, compassion, and empathy towards classmates and teachers
 - Demonstrated skills and attributes through exemplary work product
- Science
 - Demonstrated mindfulness and knowledge by earning 5 or more credits in science courses taken at RHS and are enrolled in science-based clubs
 - Displayed passion, curiosity, & engagement
 - Demonstrated proficiency by maintaining high grades in science courses
 - Shown individual growth in science classes
 - Embodied kindness, empathy, & leadership
- Social Studies
 - Civic Participation Award
 - Practiced admirable democratic values
 - Expressed empathy through their civic work at school and in the local community
 - Demonstrated they are an informed democratic citizen
 - Engaged in innovative civic action in school and community
 - Served their school and community as a leader

Most Passionate Student

- Demonstrated high ability to make connections with social studies topics in the classroom.
- Possessed intrinsic motivation and interest in the discipline
- Practiced active engagement in making connections to current affairs and real-life application
- Expressed social studies knowledge by participating and excelling in a high number of courses in the department
- Showed passion in the subject area by engaging with the content in the larger RHS community

Most Outstanding Student

- Expressed social studies knowledge by interacting with content at an increasingly complex and analytical level
- Pursued individual growth as they continually deepened their understanding of the social sciences
- Participated actively in the subject area by engaging with the content in the larger RHS community.
- Collaborated well and took on leadership roles with others in our courses
- Participated in a high number of social studies courses

Student Growth Award

- Demonstrated a commitment to individual growth and resilience by improving their understanding of and engagement in the social sciences throughout their time at RHS
- Possessed a willingness to go beyond core expectations to push themselves to improve as a learner, a student, and a member of the academic and civic community
- Worked to become a leader through the improvement of their own self-advocacy and leadership skills

● Technology

- Shown individual growth in the field of technology
- Presented a positive influence upon classmates
- Revealed a passion for technology
- Demonstrated collaboration and communication by working with a team to engineer technological solutions to problems
- Utilized knowledge and created innovation when designing technological solutions
- Displayed mindfulness and resilience when faced with challenges and has used failure as an opportunity to learn and create stronger technological solutions

● Visual and Performing Arts

- Managed time effectively
- Demonstrated innovation through creative solutions to authentic problems
- Modeled citizenship and mindfulness through awareness of presence and respectful interconnectedness
- Exhibited resilience and persistence when faced with adversity in pursuit of achievement
- Utilized communication skills when finding solutions to conceptual and compositional problems and sharing them with with a wider audience

● World Language

- Demonstrated global citizenship and mindfulness as demonstrated and seen through an enthusiastic and collaborative attitude toward World Language study
- Shown communication and resilience as demonstrated through a high proficiency level in one or more languages taken at the Honors or AP level in World Languages
- Displayed knowledge and innovation through active participation and risk-taking in language courses taken throughout his or her language career at the high school

Athletics – Awards are given at the close of each season and/or the end of the school year.

Academic Progress

Grade Reporting

Quarter grades are a reflection of student performance for a marking period. Midyear and final exam grades are reported during the quarter the exam is given. Parents and students can review grades on the portal at any time during the school year for up-to-date grade information. At the end of each marking period, after quarter grades have been finalized, parents will be notified through our automated messaging system.

Online Grade Book - Portal

We are providing the following summary regarding the online gradebook access.

- Logging assignments
Generally, teachers will post assignments in the gradebook after completing the grading task for the entire class. The assignment posting will offer specifics in terms of the assignment weight, due date, and a title that informs parents/students of the assignment's general content.
- Grading
Together with their departments, teachers determine how assignments are weighted and calculated. Please refer to teachers' grading rationales for this information. Generally, teachers will post grades for a given assignment upon completing the evaluation of the assignment for the class. The time it takes a teacher to complete a grading task for a class will vary based on the type of assignment; long-term assignments may take longer for a teacher to assess.
- Concerns about assignments and scores
We wish to underscore the importance of a student's self-advocacy skills. Students should communicate concerns directly to the teacher with regard to assignments or scoring. If proper resolution cannot be achieved, students or parents may elect to send a follow-up email to the teacher. We encourage students to be proactive as they work toward mastering skills and content.
- How to interpret the gradebook
Please understand that the gradebook is a snapshot in time; one assignment or grades based on a limited number of assignments can misrepresent overall performance. We encourage parents and students not to focus on individual assignments but general trends and patterns in the submission and overall quality of work. The information posted on a teacher's gradebook is subject to change. The information posted is not the official Student Transcript.
- Portal information
Please make sure that all student and parent contact information in the portal is correct, especially the email address, so all parties receive timely communications from teachers.

Please be mindful that online gradebook access is just one of the tools available for teachers, students, and parents to communicate regarding student progress. We encourage teachers and students to have honest and ongoing conversation about the student's performance in the class.

Contacting the School

Important Numbers and Website

Phone: (203) 894-5750
Alternative HS: (203) 431-2878
Website: rhs.ridgefield.org
District Office: (203) 894-5550

Contacting Teachers

Teachers may be contacted either through Voicemail or Email. A teacher's email address consists of the first initial of the first name, last name and ridgefieldps.net. For example, if your teacher's name is Jane Doe, her email address will be jdoe@ridgefieldps.net. The Ridgefield voicemail system may be accessed 24 hours a day at (203) 894-5750. A staff directory is available on the RHS website. Teachers will discuss curriculum, instruction, and grading with parents.

Who to See for Questions and Concerns

Our goal is to direct you to the person closest to a need or concern.

Concern

Student performance
Curriculum/instruction/grading
Counseling-related issues
Discipline
Attendance
Medical issues
Clubs
Athletics
Adult personnel
Stolen items
Locker problems
Sexual Harassment

Contact

Teacher, School Counselor
Teacher first, then Department Chair/Senior Teacher
School Counselor
Dean first, then Assistant Principal
Attendance Office
Nurse
Student Life Office
Coach first, then Athletics Director
Assistant Principal first, then Principal
Teacher, Coach, Dean, then Assistant Principal
Administrative Assistant
Teacher, School Counselor, Dean, Assistant Principal

If your question does not fall in any of the above categories, the first point of contact should be an administrative assistant. These staff members can either help you or direct you to a person who can assist you. If a student needs to discuss an issue and does not know where to start, we suggest starting with the school counselor. A parent's initial contact for any academic issue should be the teacher.

Messages for Students

Students will be asked to pick up their messages at the Student Life or Main Office to minimize class disruptions. Additionally, we request parents to refrain from texting students during class periods to ensure an uninterrupted learning environment.

Academics

Graduation/Grade Level Requirement/Academic Requirements

For updated graduation requirements, course requirements, and information about course changes, please visit the RHS Program of Studies page rhs.ridgefield.org > Quick Links > Program of Studies OR click the following link here: [RHS Program of Studies](#).

Promotion, Retention and Placement

Students at Ridgefield High School must take a minimum number of courses each semester as follows:

9th and 10th Grade: 7 courses | 11th and 12th Grade: 6 courses

(Alternative course schedules are permitted with the approval of the administration.)

Grade Level Assignment: To advance to the next grade level at the conclusion of an academic year, a student must successfully complete the following credit requirements:

- Complete 6 credits - Advance to Grade 10
- Complete 12 credits - Advance to Grade 11
- Complete 18 credits - Advance to Grade 12

Subjects taken in grades 7 and 8 are not counted toward the requirements for graduation. These include, but are not limited to, subjects such as Algebra I, Earth Science, Spanish I, or French I. Participation in the Commencement ceremony is contingent upon fulfilling all graduation requirements prior to the ceremony.

Homework

RIDGEFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Policy 6154

GENERAL REGULATIONS

A student's selected course of study will determine the amount of time the student spends on homework each day. Students should consider that enrolling in multiple advanced level courses may considerably increase the overall homework load. Within the RHS Program of Studies, all courses are annotated with a Homework Code indicating the level or degree to which homework is present in the course. Teachers teaching the same courses will employ similar homework practices.

RHS Homework Codes

Code	Time Allotment	Nights per week for most students
H1	Approximately 10-20 minutes of homework required	0-3 nights a week
H2	Approximately 20-35 minutes of homework required	3-5 nights a week
H3	Approximately 35-50 minutes of homework required	4-5 nights a week

The Student will...

- Check Google Classroom on a daily basis for assignments.
- Keep track of their assignments in a systematic way and manage long-term assignments.
- Be aware that time spent taking a break or use of devices not related to school work is not included in time allotments

Homework (cont.)

for homework.

- Manage their time in a way that allows for homework completion and healthy sleep habits.
- Advocate for their individual needs by meeting and communicating with teachers to discuss questions or concerns.

The Teacher will...

- Assign homework that is purposeful and engaging.
- As assigned, articulate the purpose, directions, expectations and due dates for homework and long-term projects.
- Clarify the type of feedback and when/how feedback will be communicated to the student.
- Aim to post homework in Google Classroom by 2:30 PM. The latest homework can be posted is 3:30 PM. Posted assignments need to be discussed in class the same day.
- Homework will be due at a time determined by the teacher and accordance with current research on healthy sleep habits for adolescents.
- Monitor the time at which homework assignments are submitted/posted and address concerns as needed.

Parents can help by...

- Providing a supportive environment and time for homework that promotes healthy sleep habits.
- Monitoring the time at which homework assignments are completed.

RHS Homework Practices...

- For days off identified on the school calendar, any class can assign homework as long as the assignment is given two days prior to the time off or is due two days after the time off.
- Homework will NOT be assigned during emergency school closures.
- No homework will be assigned over school vacations. Advanced Placement (AP) classes can assign work due after the break as a long-term assignment, provided the work is assigned at least two weeks before the vacation and not due the day of return.
- The percentage that homework counts towards a quarterly grade will be consistent within each course and level and may not exceed 10%. Homework, if it is included as a category for a quarterly grade for a course, cannot be grouped with other grading categories.

Grading

Grades/Grade Point Average (GPA)

Students earn grades based on a number of factors. These factors include individual student performance, curriculum demands, efforts of a student in class, standards of the school, and requirements of the teacher and the department. Teachers establish the criteria for the grading of student work and grades are earned through student efforts and success in meeting those criteria.

Grade	Range	GPA
A+	95-100	4.5
A	90-94	4.0
B+	85-89	3.5
B	80-84	3.0
C+	75-79	2.5
C	70-74	2.0
D	65-69	1.0
F	0-64	0

An unweighted Grade Point Average (GPA) is included on the report card for each marking period. All courses that give letter grades are included in the GPA calculation.

Weighted GPA

A weighted GPA is calculated upon completion of eleventh grade and is reported to colleges on the transcript. All courses taken at RHS are included in the weighted GPA. Core courses in the following areas receive bonus weight:

- honors courses in English, social studies, math, and science (0.5 bonus)
- fourth and fifth years of a world language (0.5 bonus)
- AP courses, UCONN courses (1.0 bonus)

The transcript is the official record of a student's academic life. If circumstances arise in a student's life that affect a student's grades, such as illness or a personal crisis, the staff may use a number of options to communicate this to college admissions officers.

Advanced Placement Courses

Details regarding our advanced placement course offerings can be found in the [RHS Program of Studies](#).

Honor Roll Criteria

Honor Roll designation is based on an unweighted GPA and is awarded for each marking period.

Designation	Academic Average
High Honors	3.9 or higher
Honors	3.4 to 3.89

A student is not listed on the honor roll if an "Incomplete" grade has been given in any course. In addition, a student with any grade lower than a "C" will not be considered eligible for the honor roll.

Incompletes

Certain circumstances in a student's life, such as illness, may necessitate that work is completed after the end of the marking period. In this case, the student will receive an "I" (Incomplete) on their report card to indicate this. All marks of "I" for a marking period or for an exam must be resolved by the midpoint of the following marking period. Any incomplete not resolved by the midpoint of the next marking period will be converted to the underlying numeric grade. The deadline for fourth quarter incompletes is August 1. A student receiving an incomplete is not eligible for honor roll designations.

Valedictorian

The valedictorian is selected based on the following: The student having the highest Weighted Grade Point Average calculated after the 7th semester. To be eligible, the student must have been in attendance at Ridgefield High School for their entire junior year.

Online Learning

Please refer to the [RHS Program of Studies](#) on the RHS website for detailed information regarding online learning.

Auditing a Course

A course audit allows students to explore a course they can't fit into their schedule. To pursue an audit, they must seek permission from the teacher, department chair, and administrator. If approved, the student will be enrolled with an "AU" (Audit) grade. Audited courses don't count for graduation credits. Classroom capacity may limit audits, and auditing students could be removed to accommodate credit-earning students.

Academic Assistance

Academic Enrichment, Academic Improvement, and Credit Recovery

Ridgefield High School offers many opportunities for students to complete graduation requirements and explore additional areas of interest throughout their high school years.

Academic Enrichment

Students may elect to take select online courses for Academic Enrichment. For more information on Academic Enrichment options, see [RHS Online Courses-Options, Guidelines, and Department Criteria](#).

Academic Improvement

Students wishing to improve their understanding of a core graduation requirement in which they earned a passing grade of “D” may do so by repeating the course during the regular academic year or over the summer at the Ridgefield Summer Learning Program. For more information on Academic Improvement options, see [Ridgefield Summer Learning Program](#).

Credit Recovery

Students needing to retake a failed graduation requirement may qualify for summer or online Credit Recovery courses. For more information on Credit Recovery options, see [Ridgefield Summer Learning Program](#) and [RHS Online Courses-Options, Guidelines, and Department Criteria](#).

Extra Help

Teachers are available for extra help for students at a variety of times depending on the teacher and their schedules. At a minimum, teachers are available by appointment for virtual and/or in-person extra help at least once per week. Students wishing to receive extra help should speak in advance with their teacher to arrange for a mutually agreed upon time for additional help. The need for extra help takes precedence over all co-curricular and athletic activities.

FLEX

The RHS FLEX period is a collaborative partnership between RHS Staff and students dedicated to providing timely interventions, remediation, enrichment, and extension opportunities. It begins at 7:25 AM and aims to support our students' academic needs. Attendance is expected during FLEX for all students and required for all students who have been scheduled into a session. Failure to regularly attend FLEX may result in consequences aligned with our RHS attendance procedures.

To ensure flexibility, students have the ability to schedule themselves into FLEX sessions that best suit their needs. Additionally, teachers have the authority to schedule students into FLEX sessions, and these assigned sessions cannot be altered by the student.

Ridgefield Summer Learning Program

The Ridgefield Summer Learning Program is open to all Ridgefield Public School students, grades 9 – 12 and provides opportunities for credit recovery and academic improvement in various subjects.

Academic Improvement (RSLP)

Students wishing to improve their understanding of a core graduation requirement in which they earned a passing grade of “D” may do so by repeating the course through the Ridgefield Summer Learning Program or during the regular academic year. Both the original course and the repeated course will appear on the student’s official transcript as follows:

- Final Grade of D: Both courses will appear on the student's transcript; Both grades will count toward the GPA; Credit will be awarded for the first course taken only
- Final grade of C or better: Both courses will appear on the student's transcript; only the original C will count toward the GPA; Credit will be awarded for the first course taken only; The repeated course will appear on the transcript with a grade of "AU" (Audit)

Credit Recovery (RSLP)

A course required for graduation in which a student earns a grade of "F" may be repeated over the summer for credit recovery. To qualify for credit recovery the student must be recommended by the classroom teacher. Both the failed course and the summer course will appear on the student's transcript. Both grades will count toward the GPA. Credit will be awarded for the summer course if successfully completed.

Peer Tutoring

The Ridgefield Chapter of the National Honor Society provides peer tutoring to any Ridgefield High School student. The arrangements for tutoring should be made through the student's school counselor who will contact the Tutoring Chairperson. If a tutor is available, they will be assigned to the student.

Academic Integrity

Procedure

Ridgefield High School promotes integrity and good citizenship through its programs and policies. The school cultivates a sense of honor both in and out of the classroom. Our procedure with respect to dishonesty in any form encourages both personal and civic virtue. Cheating and plagiarizing are not only academically dishonest but also a violation of ethical behavior and, as such, will not be tolerated.

Cheating

Cheating is either giving or receiving unauthorized assistance on any type of school-related work. In specific classroom or homework situations, individual teachers will determine what is or is not authorized as legitimate assistance.

Cheating includes, but is not limited to:

- copying or allowing someone to copy homework, a report, quiz, test, or any other assignment;
- asking someone else to write or rewrite an essay, do part or all of an assignment or report, or do research for a paper;
- using artificial intelligence in a manner outside of the parameters outlined by the instructor;
- using cheat sheets on a test or quiz, or inappropriately using any electronic device (e.g., storing unauthorized information in a retrievable form);
- using either printed or electronic sources as substitutes for completing an assignment, (e.g., watching a video, reading Cliff Notes®, Spark Notes®, Pink Monkey® or any similar source instead of the literary work; reading an English translation of a work assigned to be read in a world language; etc.);
- illicitly acquiring the answers to a quiz or test, or the quiz or test itself before taking it; and
- taking credit for group work without making the assigned contribution to that group's work.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the act of copying or paraphrasing words or ideas from different sources without appropriate formal acknowledgement. It also encompasses presenting the work of others, including works generated using artificial intelligence (AI) and large language model (LLM) tools, as one's own. This applies to various forms of creative or intellectual expression, such as written texts, ideas, research findings, artwork, and more. It is not acceptable for any student to submit work as their own if it originates from a source other than their own intellect.

To uphold academic integrity, teachers may utilize district-approved technology to assess the originality of assignments.

This technology plays a crucial role in identifying potential instances of plagiarism, ensuring that students take ownership of their work.

By acquiring the ability to express information in their own words, students can avoid unintentional plagiarism while enhancing their critical thinking abilities.

Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, when a student:

- “cuts and pastes” printed or electronic text (from the Internet or elsewhere) into their paper and presents it as their own
- consults an internet or print source to “get ideas” that they then incorporate into a paper, without proper attribution
- submits a paper written by another, including AI, tutor, parent, sibling, or friend, while claiming to be the author
- puts another’s, including AI and Large Language Models (LLMs), ideas “in their own words,” without documenting the source

Consequences for cheating or plagiarizing:

Whenever a teacher determines that cheating or plagiarizing has taken place the following will occur:

- The teacher will meet in private with the student or students. At such a meeting the teacher will reinforce expectations as well as the values of honesty and student responsibility.
- The teacher will assign a grade of zero to the assignment on which the student has cheated or plagiarized.
- At a teacher’s discretion, the work may be submitted again for credit, or an alternative assignment is undertaken in place of the originally submitted work, in order to compensate for the grade of zero. The zero remains part of their academic record.
- The teacher will notify the parent and grade level dean to maintain a record.

Use of Artificial Intelligence tools in the academic setting:

We recognize the growing influence of artificial intelligence (AI). With a goal of properly preparing our students for a world where use of AI tools is ubiquitous and to ensure the responsible and ethical use of AI, we have established guidelines for students regarding its acceptable use in the academic setting.

It's important to note that each department/teacher may have their own specific rules and expectations when it comes to utilizing AI in their courses. Each teacher will clearly communicate their expectations and boundaries regarding the use of AI via their course syllabus, and direct written and oral communication. These guidelines may vary depending on the subject and assignment requirements.

When using AI for assignments, students should be aware of the following:

- **Familiarize Yourself with Course-Specific Rules:** Each teacher will provide specific guidelines for using AI tools in their class. It is crucial to understand and adhere to these rules to meet the expectations set by the teacher.
- **Seek Approval and Clarification:** If you plan to use AI tools for an assignment, it is advisable to seek approval and clarification from your teacher beforehand. They can provide guidance on the acceptability of certain tools or techniques and ensure alignment with the learning objectives.
- **Maintain Academic Integrity:** While AI can be a valuable resource, it's essential to maintain academic integrity. Plagiarism, whether using AI-generated content or any other source without proper attribution, is strictly prohibited. Always give credit to the original sources and cite them appropriately.
- **Understand Assignment Expectations:** Be sure to thoroughly read and understand the assignment expectations before incorporating AI. Some assignments may require original work, while others may allow the use of AI-generated content. It's important to know the specific requirements to avoid any misunderstandings.
- **Use AI as a Tool for Learning:** AI can be a powerful tool for research, analysis, and problem-solving. Embrace it as a resource to enhance your learning experience. However, remember that AI should not replace critical thinking and your own intellectual growth.

By following these guidelines, students can responsibly and effectively use AI tools in their coursework while respecting the individual requirements set by each teacher. Remember, the goal is to leverage AI as a supportive tool to enhance your learning journey.

Student Support Services

School Counseling Services

School Counseling

The Ridgefield High School Counseling Program, in the spirit of wellness, supports the academic, social and civic endeavors of all students. Our goal is for students to develop the following skills:

Personal/Social

- problem-solving, decision-making, communication and self-advocacy skills
- resiliency
- responsibility for oneself and others
- awareness and respect for differences
- awareness of developmental and emotional growth

Academic

- an awareness of academic strengths and learning style
- a positive sense of self through the exploration and pursuit of interests and talents
- a balance among home, school and community responsibilities

Post-Secondary Planning

- career awareness and post-high school planning: college, technical institutes, internships, etc.

As professional school counselors, we are committed to supporting our students in developing behaviors that promote and maintain lifelong physical, emotional and social wellness.

School counselors meet with students in classroom settings and are available for drop-in conversations and by appointment. For appointments, students should scan the QR code located in the school counseling office. They will then be directed to an online calendar to select an appointment. Students should arrange to meet with their school counselor during their open periods or before or after school. Parents are encouraged to call the school counselor if home life conditions are affecting school work or performance. The services of a school psychologist, social worker, and Teen Talk counselor are also available when needed.

Post-High Secondary Planning

Although graduation seems a long way off for 9th- and 10th-grade students, it is important to realize that future opportunities depend on a student's entire high school career. Therefore, formal post-secondary planning begins as soon as students enter the high school. School counselors work with students as early as the 9th grade year to get an early start planning an appropriate high school program and preparing for the future. The school counselor can assist in exploring the issues, information, and essential skills which affect the student's post-high school choices. In the junior and senior years, the student and family work more closely with their school counselor to research and apply for admission to colleges or to other programs which meet identified needs.

The RHS school counseling program assumes that emphasis on balanced and challenging educational experiences afford students the greatest satisfaction and preserves the greatest numbers of options after graduation. The program recognizes that college admission officers and employers consider a wide range of items when evaluating candidates, such as:

Importance of the High School Curriculum

The courses a student takes and the grades they achieve represent the most important criteria considered by admissions personnel. Colleges want to see that students have taken advantage of the educational opportunities offered to them and have applied themselves consistently. Therefore, students and parents need to select courses carefully.

Involvement in Activities

Engagement in co-curricular activities in both school and community enhances the high school experience and broadens a student's knowledge. Colleges want students who will be involved on campus so they look for students who have contributed to their school or community. Many colleges see the quality and depth of a candidate's commitment to athletics, clubs and organizations, and worthy causes to be significant to the admission decision. Community service activities show responsibility to the world beyond home and high school. Colleges prefer students who are significantly involved in a small number of activities rather than a minor participant in a long list of clubs.

Character

Colleges, as well as future employers, want responsible, trustworthy individuals with positive attitudes. It is important to have a high school record that demonstrates integrity and respect for community rules. A student will request letters of recommendation from their school counselor and at least two teachers to include with the college applications.

SAT/ACT

College entrance exams measuring critical reading, math aptitude, and writing are typically taken toward the end of the junior year. The best preparation for these exams is consistent attention and effort in classroom studies. A practice SAT (PSAT) for juniors is offered in October at the high school. Sophomores who would like extra test-taking experience and have completed a year of geometry may also take the test. The state of CT offers the SAT to all juniors.

Other Factors

Special talents, skills, and interests; alumni relationship; geographic location; and intended major are some of the other factors relevant to admission decisions.

Graduation Survey

All graduating seniors must complete a short graduation survey that will be available to them in Naviance beginning in April of their graduating year. The most important purpose of the survey is to ensure all students list their final post high school plan to allow for an efficient process to send final transcripts. This survey also asks students to update their college acceptance information in order to keep our records accurate for future students as well as asks information to inform and improve school counseling services.

Resources

The School Counseling Center has a variety of resources including the following:

- web based programs for college and scholarship searches and career exploration (e.g., Naviance)
- career interest inventories that are administered to students in a classroom setting
- scholarship applications and information on the RHS School Counseling website
- internship and summer enrichment opportunities on the RHS School Counseling website

College Planning - The School Counseling Center section of the RHS website offers comprehensive information on post high school planning to assist students with their career and college needs. Students are able to complete college and career searches, personality inventories, research financial aid and scholarships and a variety of other tasks to assist with their college and career planning through Naviance.

College Representative Visits – Many college representatives host information sessions at RHS, especially in the fall. Interested students may attend and students must sign up via Naviance and take place in room F116. Students should check with their teachers for permission to miss class at least one day in advance of the session. The schedule of college representative visits can be found on Naviance. Interested students are encouraged to register on Naviance to attend a college representative visit.

College Fair – The Ridgefield High School College Fair is held in April. Over 100 college representatives gather to answer questions and provide students and parents with information about their schools. This event is geared towards juniors but is open to sophomores as well.

Financial Planning Workshop – In late fall there is an evening meeting for students and their parents to familiarize them with the process for financing an education, including details on the FAFSA.

Social and Emotional Supports

The school's social and emotional services provide intervention and support for students, families, and staff. These include consultation, assessment, counseling, and liaison with community professionals to design appropriate educational and social interventions.

The school psychologists aid in the assessment of a student's educational and/or behavioral needs. The continuum of services available to students can include observation in the classroom; consultation with students, families and outside professionals; and interpretation of comprehensive psychological evaluations. The school psychologist formally reviews and reassesses students placed in special education programs and services.

Social Work Services

The social workers provide a broad range of services. Resources include case management; crisis intervention; group work; faculty, staff and parent consultation; and community collaboration. The focus of counseling is upon those issues which have had an adverse effect upon the student's academic performance and current school adjustment. Some issues may include the transition of students returning to the campus from hospitalization; freshmen entering the high school; and seniors preparing to leave. The social worker also provides prevention programs for mainstream students as well as for those in special education. School personnel, students themselves, peers or parents may initiate a request for services.

Homeless Students

Homeless students, as defined by federal and state legislation, will have all programs, services, and transportation that other students enjoy and may continue to attend the school of origin. The District has reviewed its existing policies and regulations to remove barriers to the enrollment and retention of homeless children and youth. Homeless children and youths are defined as "individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence." Homeless children have the right to attend the school of origin "to the extent feasible," unless doing so is contrary to the request of such student's parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth.

Any homeless child or youth denied school accommodations shall continue in attendance or will be immediately enrolled in the school selected by the child in the school district. A written explanation of the reasons for denial of school accommodations in a manner and form understandable to such homeless child or youth, or parent/guardian, will be provided. Information will also be provided regarding the right to appeal the decision of the denial of accommodations. The homeless child or youth is entitled to continue in attendance during all available appeals. A homeless student who is not in the physical custody of a parent/guardian, shall have full access to his/her educational and medical records in the Board's possession.

Programs

RHS Developmental School Counseling Curriculum

In addition to meeting with students individually through drop-in and scheduled meetings, the RHS Counseling Department offers a structured developmental school counseling program for all students. This program provides a grade-level specific series of lessons for our students. These lessons will be incorporated into our student's schedules at

various times throughout the year through Adaptive Scheduler. Topics covered will include, but not be limited to, career and post-secondary planning, goal setting, RHS scheduling, PSAT/SAT overview, etc. While a grade will not be issued, attendance at these meetings is mandatory.

Senior Internship Program

The Senior Internship Program is held during the last six weeks of the senior year. It is an opportunity for seniors to work full-time in a career setting to learn more about an area they are interested in and to obtain valuable full time work experiences.

Math/Literacy Assistance

There will be times throughout the day when assistance in math, reading, and writing support will be available. Interested students should see their school counselor for more information.

Testing Programs

Dates for these testing programs are found in the Calendar section.

PSAT & PSAT/NMSQT

RHS offers the PSAT 8/9 to all 9th graders and the PSAT 10 to all 10th graders during the school day. More information about the PSAT can be found at www.collegeboard.com. The PSAT/NMSQT is available in the fall for Saturday testing at RHS for interested juniors. The PSAT/NMSQT is a test in preparation for the SAT test and serves as a qualifier for National Merit Scholarships. All PSAT and PSAT/NMSQT testing is digital. School day testing is free for students and students do not need to register. There is a fee for Saturday testing when a student chooses to sign up for the PSAT/NMSQT.

SAT/SAT School Day Testing

SAT School Day testing is a state requirement for all grade 11 students. SAT School Day is typically in the spring, is at no cost to the student, and the student will automatically be registered for the exam. SAT School Day is a digital SAT.

The SAT is also administered at various times during the year for optional Saturday testing. RHS is a host to SAT Saturday testing typically for the October, May & June test dates. More information about the SAT, including registration, can be found at www.collegeboard.com and in the School Counseling Center. All SAT exams are digital and include a math component and a reading & writing component.

ACT

The American College Testing program (ACT) is a three-hour examination which measures the student's ability in English, reading, mathematics, natural science and an optional writing component. More information about the ACT, including registration, can be found at www.act.org and in the School Counseling Center. Starting in the spring of 2025, the science section will be optional for online based testing. Stay tuned to www.act.org for ongoing changes.

Advanced Placement (AP)

Advanced Placement tests are given in May to those students who have been enrolled in AP courses throughout the school year. Colleges may grant credits and/or advanced standing on an individual basis as a result of AP test scores. Students are automatically registered for their AP Exam when they join the AP Classroom for their course. AP Exams are ordered in mid November. More information about the AP test can be found at www.collegeboard.com.

Important Test numbers

RHS SAT Test Center Code Number for Saturday testing: 07-505

RHS CEEB Code Number for School Day testing: 070640

Health Services

Care of Students

The RHS Health Office is staffed with three Registered Nurses. Health services are provided for students that require nursing and emergency care. Individualized health services are provided for students who have acute, chronic, and mental health conditions. School nurses collaborate with students, family and staff regarding student health concerns. Nurses work closely with the guidance department and participate in Planning and Placement Teams, Section 504 Teams and School Crisis Teams to support student learning and success.

Special Health Needs

A student with a medical/psychological condition or daily medication should be known to the RHS Health Office prior to the student entering school. Ridgefield Public Schools are committed to ensuring that students who have special health care needs receive the support and services necessary. Parents who have a child with special health care needs are encouraged to speak with the school nurse.

Privacy

The RHS Health Office is committed to ensuring student privacy. Health information will be shared with faculty and staff members only when necessary and appropriate.

Student Medication

For students who must take medication during school hours, the nurse must have written authorization from both a health care provider and parent. A completed "Medication Authorization Form" must be signed by the student's physician and parent. If the student requires an Epipen, an "Emergency Health Care Plan" form will also need to be completed. "Authorization for the Administration of Medicine by School Personnel" forms are available in the nurse's office and on the school website. The medication must be in its original container, clearly labeled with the student's name, authorized prescriber's name, date it was ordered, name of the medication, dosage and directions for administration. Parents should notify the nurse concerning any changes in the prescribed dosage. A new Medication Authorization form is required annually.

Acetaminophen and Ibuprofen may be administered by the school nurse with completion of the parental consent form found on the parent portal. Students are generally not permitted to carry any medication during the school day. RHS has a formulary of approved medications for self-administration by students once we have been provided authorization from the parent and physician. State law requires that the parent or a responsible adult must pick up unused medication within one week of its completion or by the last day of school, or it will be disposed of by the school nurse.

Administration of Medication

Parents of students requiring medication during school should contact the school nurse. Special forms are required to permit the administration of medicine in school. They are available from the school nurse. All medication must be in its original container with proper labels.

In cases in which a student is able to self-administer medication, the parents or guardians must submit a signed statement that the medication must be taken during the school day and the student is capable of administering the medication. The statement must be accompanied by a physician's, dentist's or advanced practice registered nurse's statement indicating the necessity and naming the medication, the strength, and the prescribed dosage. It must specify the schedule on which it is to be taken and the details of administration. Such statements must be renewed at the beginning of each school year.

A student with asthma or an allergic condition may carry an inhaler or an EpiPen or similar device in school at all times if he/she is under the care of a physician, physician assistant or advanced practical nurse and such practitioner certifies in writing that the child needs to keep an asthmatic inhaler or EpiPen at all times to ensure prompt treatment of the child's asthma or allergic condition and to protect the child against serious harm or death. A written authorization of the parent/guardian is required.

A school nurse, or in the absence of the nurse, a "qualified school employee" may administer epinephrine in a cartridge injector for the purpose of emergency first aid to students who experience allergic reactions but were not previously known to have serious allergies and therefore do not have prior written authorization of a parent/guardian or qualified medical professional for the administration of epinephrine. Parents/guardians may submit in writing to the school nurse and school medical advisor that epinephrine shall not be administered to his/her child.

A school nurse, or in the absence of the nurse, a "qualified/school employee" may administer anti-epileptic medication to a specific student with a medically diagnosed epileptic condition that requires prompt treatment in accordance with the student's individual seizure action plan. Written parental permission and written order from a physician is required.

A student with diabetes may test his/her own blood glucose levels if the student has written permission from his/her parent/guardian and a written order from a Connecticut licensed physician. The time or place of such testing shall not be restricted.

A school nurse or the principal will select a qualified school employee to, under certain conditions, give a glucagon injection to a student with diabetes who may require prompt treatment to protect him/her from serious harm or death. Written parental permission and written order from a physician are required.

School bus drivers are trained to administer epinephrine in a life-threatening anaphylactic reaction to a student who is in need of emergency care due to a medically diagnosed allergic reaction.

The District does not allow the ingestion of marijuana for palliative (medical) use in any school, on school grounds or at school-sponsored activities, on or off school grounds.

MEDICATION ON FIELD TRIPS

The same state regulations and school policies apply to medication on field trips as in school during the day. Students who have a self-administration plan must carry their own medication on a field trip, just as they do during the school day. These requirements include over-the-counter medications. It is best to speak with the school nurse two to three weeks in advance of a field trip to make sure that your child will have access to appropriate medication and assistance, if needed, during a field trip.

Ill or Injured Students

Students exhibiting signs of contagious disease are best cared for at home to facilitate recovery and to prevent the spread of illness to other students. The school nurse will ask a parent/guardian/emergency contact to pick up any student who becomes ill during school hours or who has an illness or injury that, in the professional judgment of the school nurse, needs to be observed at home or evaluated by a medical doctor. 911 will be called in a health or mental health emergency for immediate transportation of a student to the hospital.

Health Assessments/Physical examinations

In accordance with the Ridgefield Board of Education and Connecticut state requirements, each ninth grade student is required to have a health assessment. This mandated health assessment must be completed and performed by a legally qualified practitioner. The results of this exam must be recorded on the blue State of Connecticut Health Assessment Record (HAR-3) and returned to the school nurse. A physical exam is considered current if it has been completed within 12 months before the date the student enters school. New RHS students of any grade level are also required by Connecticut State Law to have a physical examination documented on the HAR-3 form. All students participating in interscholastic sports are required to have an annual physical examination. The HAR-3 form can be used as the required sports physical. Only one physical exam per year is required for tryout and participation in interscholastic sports. It is the parent's/student's responsibility to inform the nurse/coach of any medical conditions.

Immunizations

New students must provide proof of immunizations before entering RHS. Students cannot begin classes without required immunizations. Please refer to the RPS website or contact the Health Office with any questions regarding immunization requirements.

Exclusion From School

Board of Education policy requires that a record of immunizations and Health Assessment Physical be provided prior to the student's first day at Ridgefield High School to assure that all students are adequately protected from preventable communicable diseases. Connecticut law states that students who are not in compliance with these health requirements must be excluded from school until the immunizations and health records are submitted.

Medical Excuse – Physical Education

If a student is to be medically excused from physical education, parents should notify the school nurse and the student's school counselor. A medical note must be provided to the school nurse from the treating physician with a specific start and end date. No open-ended exclusions are permitted.

Emergency Information

Emergency contacts and contact phone numbers are important when a student is injured or becomes ill. It is the family's responsibility to provide up-to-date medical information, emergency contacts, and telephone numbers. Please contact the Ridgefield Board of Education to make changes to the information.

Attendance

Absences

It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure compliance with the State of Connecticut's compulsory school attendance requirements (Connecticut General Statute 10-184). Students are required to attend class on a regular basis and be on time for class. Regular class attendance increases the student's probability of successful performance and fosters the development of punctuality, self-discipline, and responsibility.

If a student is absent, he or she may not participate in any athletic team or school activities scheduled on the day of that absence. Students excused from school are responsible for contacting the teachers of any classes missed and making up any outstanding assignments within the time frame designated by the teacher. Maintaining a strong attendance record makes students eligible for certain privileges such as on-campus parking, open campus permissions, or eligibility for class trips and certain organizations. Details regarding attendance record impact on these privileges can be found in the respective section of the handbook.

Individual student attendance information may be accessed through the PowerSchool Portal.

Notifying the Attendance Office

In order to excuse an absence, parents/guardians can report the absence through the online attendance portal or call the attendance office, at (203) 894-5750 (then press 2), within 48 hours of the absence.. Students must sign in at the Attendance Office if they arrive late to school. For dismissal during the day, parents/guardians are required to notify the attendance office by 11:00 a.m. on the day of the dismissal. Students may not remain in the building when they have been excused by a parent. Notes (and possibly additional documentation) are required for students with total absences (unexcused and excused) in excess of nine.

Online Attendance Portal

If you choose to enter an absence through the online portal, you do not need to call the attendance line. However, we still encourage you to periodically check your child's attendance record for accuracy.

Please be aware that once a student reaches specific attendance thresholds, access to the online attendance portal will be restricted. This aligns with state guidelines, which mandate additional documentation in such cases. These attendance thresholds consist of:

- Nine daily or individual class excused absences.
- Four unexcused daily or individual class absences within a 30-day period.
- Ten unexcused daily or individual class absences within a year.

How to enter an absence through the attendance portal:

- From the [parent portal](#) you will select Attendance Monitor from the left navigation menu
- Then click the Report New Attendance button
- Enter the Absence Date (leaving the second date blank to report for today only)
- Select from the "What is the reason for the absence" drop-down
- For **Full-Day Absences ONLY:**
 - Select Yes in the Is this absence for the whole day drop-down
- For **Early Dismissal, Late Arrival, or Partial Day Absences:**
 - Select No in the Is this absence for the whole day drop-down
 - You will be prompted to enter the Time Range of the absence
- Enter an explanation in the Explanation text box (this explanation IS visible to teachers and the attendance office)
- Click Submit

As always, we ask that you report any absences as soon as possible. You can enter absences ahead of time through the online attendance portal.

Excused Absences

The State Board of Education definitions establish two levels of criteria for an absence to be considered an excused absence (see table below).

Level	Total # of Days Absent*	Acceptable Reasons for a Student Absence to Be Considered Excused	Documentation Required within 10 Days
1	One through nine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Any reason that the student's parent or guardian approves. - Student Mental Health Wellness- per Public Act 21-46, An Act Concerning Social Equity and the Health Safety and education of Children. Students are permitted two non-consecutive absences per school year to attend to emotional and psychological well-being in lieu of attending school. 	Parent or guardian phone call is required.
2	Ten and above	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Student illness (Note: to be deemed excused, an appropriately licensed medical professional must verify all student illness absences, regardless of the absence's length). - Student's observance of a religious holiday. - Death in the student's family or other emergency beyond the control of the student's family. - Mandated court appearances (additional documentation required). - The lack of transportation that is normally provided by a district other than the one the student attends (parental documentation is not needed for this reason). - Extraordinary educational opportunities pre-approved by district administrators. (additional documentation required). 	Parent or guardian note and in some cases additional documentation (see details of specific reason).

* Note: The total number of days absent includes both excused and unexcused absences.

Important Attendance Considerations

- Students may be asked to provide documentation explaining the reason for any absence. In these cases, please provide a medical professional's note.
- Parents must provide a medical professional's note for excused absences in excess of 10 days. Documentation must be submitted to the Attendance Office upon the return to school.
- Parents may not excuse students from any class if the student remains in the building. Any student found on campus during the time in which he or she has been excused will be subject to disciplinary action.
- A child whose total number of absences at any time during a school year is equal to or greater than 10 percent of the total number of days that the student has been enrolled at the school during the school year is considered a "chronically absent child."

Early Dismissal from School

In order to dismiss a student from school during the school day, please follow the procedures as outlined below:

- Call the Attendance Office before 11:00 a.m. stating the time and reason for dismissal.
- The student should report to the Attendance Office to receive a pass for the specified early dismissal time.
- The student should give the pass to the security officer upon leaving campus.

A parent must call the school before the student can be excused. The school nurse may dismiss a student early in the event of illness, with parental notification. If a student leaves school due to illness, they may not return to school later in the day to participate in any co-curricular activity.

Students who have completed their scheduled classes for the day may leave school grounds early with the appropriate sticker on their ID card and a signed release which can be completed in the PowerSchool Parent Portal. Students may not return to school until after the school day has been completed with the exception of students with Open Campus privilege. The ID sticker serves as their pass and is shown to the security officer upon leaving the campus.

Unexcused Absences

All absences other than those outlined above are considered unexcused. Students with an unexcused absence forfeit the opportunity to earn credit for assignments completed and/or collected during the missed class. The following also constitute unexcused absences:

- leaving class before being officially dismissed
- three (3) tardies of under 20 minutes
- one tardy of over 20 minutes
- truancy

Students must report to all classes and remain there until a supervising teacher arrives or until an administrator dismisses them. If a teacher is late to class, students are expected to wait until the teacher, administrator or a staff member arrives. If a teacher or substitute does not arrive within five minutes, one student in the class should report this to the office.

The Attendance Office will notify the parent or guardian of the unexcused absence or tardy. Notifications are sent at 6:00 p.m. daily for unexcused absences or tardies occurring on that day. Absences and tardies can also always be viewed on the parent portal. The teacher will notify the student of the unexcused absence when the student returns.

Tardiness

A student is considered tardy if they arrive to class after class has started, but less than twenty minutes into the period. A student who is tardy three times within a marking period is considered to have an unexcused absence.

Long-Term Absences

Parents should notify the Attendance Office and school counselor in the event of a long-term absence. School counselors can arrange for alternate instruction or tutoring if the situation requires it.

Truancy

Students are required by Connecticut State Law to attend school until the age of 18 inclusive. A student with 4 (four) unexcused absences in one month or 10 (ten) unexcused absences in a school year will be considered a truant. Parents have the responsibility to assist school officials in remedying and preventing truancy. School staff are mandated by the state to report excessive absences or patterns of concern.

Vacations While School is in Session

It is the responsibility of parents and students to make arrangements for the loss of instruction caused by absences due to a family vacation. Parents are urged to schedule family vacations during the regular school vacation time. Families should be aware that school cancellation days during the winter months may extend the date for the last day of school. Please consider the possibility that the school year may be extended through the last week of June when making summer plans.

College Visits and Recruiting Opportunities

College selection is important to your future experiences. We encourage a comprehensive exploration process using college resources, school counselors, college visits, recruitment opportunities, and college fairs. We expect you to schedule these experiences strategically around your current academic schedule. Absences for these activities do not meet the CT State Department of Education requirements to be considered “excused” and will be unexcused absences if they occur beyond the 9 absences allowed by the state.

FLEX Attendance

Attendance is expected during FLEX for all students and required for all students who have been scheduled into a session. Failure to regularly attend FLEX may result in consequences aligned with our RHS attendance procedures. Students that accrue more than ten “NS” (not scheduled) records during a single quarter will be required to meet with their grade level dean, administrator, and counselor to plan for effective use of the FLEX period and discuss potential consequences.

Conduct

Student Conduct

Responsibilities

Students are responsible for conducting themselves properly in a responsible manner appropriate to their age and level of maturity. They must accept responsibility for misbehavior and engage with school staff to identify how a different choice of action could result in a better outcome. The district has authority over students during the regular school day and while going to and from school on district transportation. This jurisdiction includes any school-related activity, regardless of time or location, and any off-campus school-related misconduct, regardless of time or location.

Student responsibilities for achieving a positive learning environment in school or school-related activities include:

1. Attending all classes, regularly and on time.
2. Being prepared for each class with appropriate materials and assignments.
3. Being dressed appropriately.
4. Showing respect toward others, engaging in civil discourse.
5. Behaving in a responsible manner.
6. Paying required fees and fines.
7. Abiding by the code of conduct.
8. Obeying all school rules, including safety rules, and rules pertaining to Internet safety.
9. Seeking a change in school policies and regulations in an orderly and responsible manner, through appropriate channels.
10. Cooperating with staff investigations of disciplinary cases and volunteering information relating to a serious offense.

Students who violate these rules will be subject to disciplinary action and shall be referred when appropriate to legal authorities for violation of the law.

Students at school or school-related activities are prohibited from:

1. Engaging in academic dishonesty, including cheating, intentionally plagiarizing, wrongfully giving or receiving help during an academic examination, and wrongfully obtaining test copies or scores.
2. Throwing objects that can cause bodily injury or damage property.
3. Leaving school grounds or school-sponsored events without permission.
4. Directing profanity, vulgar language, or obscene gestures toward other students or staff.
5. Disobeying directives from school personnel or school policies, rules, and regulations.
6. Being disrespectful or directing profanity, vulgar language, or obscene gestures toward teachers or other school employees.
7. Playing with matches, fire, or committing arson.
8. Committing robbery or theft.
9. Damaging or vandalizing property owned by the school, other students, or school employees.
10. Disobeying school rules on school buses.
11. Fighting, committing physical abuse, or threatening physical abuse.
12. Committing extortion, coercion, or blackmail; that is, forcing an individual to act through the use of force or threat of force.
13. Name-calling, making ethnic or racial slurs or derogatory statements that may substantially disrupt the school program or incite violence.
14. Engaging in inappropriate physical or sexual contact disruptive to the school environment or disturbing to other students.
15. Assaulting a teacher, staff member or other individual.
16. Selling, giving, delivering, possessing, using, or being under the influence of drugs such as: marijuana; a controlled substance or drug; or an alcoholic beverage.
17. Possessing a deadly weapon, dangerous instrument, firearm, martial arts weapon, or weapon facsimile.
18. Possessing prescription drugs which are given to a person other than to whom the drug is prescribed.
19. Smoking or using tobacco products, including electronic nicotine delivery systems (e-cigarettes) and vapor products.

20. Hazing, bullying.
21. Behaving in any way that disrupts the school environment or educational process.
22. Using electronic devices during the school day in school buildings, without prior approval of the principal.
23. Violating the district's Internet Safety policy and/or Online Social Networking Policy.
24. Cheating, plagiarizing, including by electronic means.
25. Threatening in any manner, including orally, in writing, or via electronic communication, a member of the school including any teacher, a member of the school administration or another employee, or a fellow student.
26. Taking, storing, disseminating, transferring, viewing or sharing of obscene, pornographic, lewd or otherwise illegal images or photographs, whether by electronic data transfer or other means, including but not limited to texting and emailing.
27. Violating any state or federal law which would indicate that the student presents a danger to any person in the school or to school property.
28. Damaging in a willful manner school electronic equipment and/or software.

Students are urged to participate in efforts to build a positive school climate as well as alternatives to exclusionary discipline such as restorative circles or peer monitoring.

Discipline Philosophy and Policy

Rights and Responsibilities

The discipline policy at Ridgefield High School applies to any student who is on school property, who is in attendance at school or at any school-sponsored activity, or whose conduct at any time or any place interferes with or obstructs the missions or operations of the school district or the safety or the welfare of students or employees.

All persons associated with Ridgefield High School – students, parents, staff and board members – are working together toward fulfilling the educational goals and objectives of the school system. All students have the right to pursue these goals and objectives unhindered by disruptions or other infractions. All students also have the responsibility to abide by rules and regulations established and maintained for the general welfare of students. The individual student must understand that these rules and regulations are intended to benefit the school as a whole and that membership in a group usually requires a reasonable degree of personal sacrifice. When anyone's rights are violated or when someone is not acting according to the rules and regulations, we must all be concerned; and appropriate action must be taken.

The student who is accused of committing an infraction has the following rights under Conn. Gen. State Statutes, Sec. 10-233c: to be informed of the specific nature of the infraction, to present the facts before any disciplinary action is taken, and to be disciplined fairly.

Disciplinary procedures used at Ridgefield High School range from an informal conference to expulsion from school. The procedure to be used depends upon the seriousness of the infraction, the specific circumstances of the situation, and the individual's overall pattern of behavior. Possession, use or distribution of alcohol or drugs, false fire drills, weapons, assault, and other major disruptions are considered serious infractions. A series of minor infractions committed by the same student can also constitute a major infraction. This is proper since the student who repeatedly commits infractions has a demoralizing effect on the general student body and staff. In addition to the usual school procedures, criminal infractions must also be reported by school personnel to the police and other officials.

District Discipline Policy

The Ridgefield Board of Education recognizes that order in the classroom, school, and school functions is a necessary prerequisite for learning. If pupils unreasonably disrupt this order, it may be necessary to exclude them from the classroom and/or school setting. Ridgefield Board of Education policy allows students to be searched, and school desks and lockers to be searched.

Any pupil whose conduct on school grounds or at a school-sponsored activity violates a publicized policy of the Board, or seriously disrupts the educational process or endangers persons or property may be expelled. Expulsion proceedings are required (Conn. Gen. State Statutes, Sec. 10-233d) when there is reason to believe that a pupil 1) was in possession of a firearm, deadly weapon, dangerous instrument or martial arts weapon on school grounds or at a school-sponsored activity; 2) off school grounds did possess a firearm or did possess and use such a firearm, instrument or weapon in the commission of a crime; or 3) on or off school grounds offered for sale or distribution a controlled substance. Any such exclusion shall take place in accordance with Section 10-233a through 10-233h of the Conn. Gen. State Statutes. Cases of possession of controlled substances shall be brought to the Superintendent for consideration of additional action including the initiation of expulsion proceedings. Habitual or repeated suspensions may be grounds for expulsion.

Disciplinary procedures at Ridgefield High School range from an informal conference to a recommendation for expulsion. For all infractions, the school reserves the right to impose more serious discipline including suspension and/or expulsion in cases where the conduct is seriously disruptive of the school process.

Students are subject to discipline, including suspension and expulsion from school for misconduct even if such misconduct occurs off school property and during non-school time. Under Board policy a student may be suspended or expelled from school for conduct off school property that violates a publicized policy of the Board, a policy in this handbook, is seriously disruptive of the educational process, or endangers person or property.

Video surveillance cameras are used in public areas and school buses for security and to assist in maintaining student safety (see Security section).

Expectations

Activities

School rules apply to all school-sponsored activities, on or off-campus, including, but not limited to, athletic events, field trips, club activities, and dances. Participation in any school activity is considered a privilege. Students in violation of school rules at these events may be suspended from participation in future events in addition to disciplinary action.

Alcohol and Drugs

Drug and alcohol use is against the law. The Board of Education prohibits their possession, use, or distribution on school property, at school-sponsored events, or on school-provided transportation. No alcoholic beverages or controlled drugs, as defined by Connecticut law, are permitted on school property. If a student must take medication during the school day, the medication must be left with the school nurse who will make arrangements for dispensing it. Since the use of alcohol presents several safety concerns, any student suspected of being under the influence of alcohol may be asked to take a breathalyzer test. If a student refuses to take a breathalyzer test, the student's parents will be called and asked to take the student home. Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken.

Disciplinary action will be taken when any of the following situations occur:

- a student is found in possession of alcoholic beverages, controlled drugs, performance enhancing substances, intoxicants, or drug paraphernalia on school premises or at a school activity conducted off campus;
- a student is under the influence of, sells, or provides to other students alcoholic beverages, controlled drugs, performance enhancing substances, or intoxicants on school premises or at a school activity conducted off campus;
- a student off school grounds offers for sale or distribution a controlled substance;
- a student possesses or transfers drug paraphernalia on school premises or at a school activity;
- a student possesses, sells, or provides prescription medication to other students on school premises or at a school activity conducted off campus;

- a student is under the influence of prescription medication that has not been prescribed to the student, on school premises or at a school activity conducted off campus;
- a student uses a legally prescribed drug or over the counter medication in any way other than in the manner it was originally prescribed;
- a student is knowingly in the presence of or has knowledge of another person in possession of, using, or distributing controlled drugs, intoxicants, performance enhancing substances or alcoholic beverages and fails to inform proper personnel; or
- the misrepresentation of a liquid or substance as a controlled substance.

Disciplinary Action

- The parent, student, and school counselor will be notified.
- The student will receive a suspension (see Disciplinary Summary for more information).
- The student will be referred to the social worker/school psychologist for a consultation.
- In the case of possession of alcohol, a controlled substance or drug paraphernalia, the police will be notified and the student will be referred to the superintendent for consideration of additional action including the initiation of expulsion proceedings.
- In the case of the sale or distribution of controlled substances, the police will be notified. In accordance with Conn. Gen. State Statutes (Sec. 10-233d) the school system is required to recommend for expulsion any student who, on or off school grounds, offers a controlled substance for sale or distribution.

The Ridgefield Canine Unit may be used on school grounds. Parents should note that under Connecticut law they can be held legally responsible for providing minors with alcoholic beverages or drugs.

Animals and Pets

Animals and pets are not permitted on school property during school hours without permission. In addition to any consequences for disrupting the school day, students who bring animals onto school grounds and involve them in activities that are harmful will be subject to the cruelty to animals provision of civil law.

Bullying and Cyberbullying

Bullying of a student by another student is prohibited. Such behavior is defined as an act that is direct or indirect and severe, persistent or pervasive which:

- A. causes physical or emotional harm to an individual,
- B. places an individual in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm, or their property,
- C. infringes on the rights and opportunities of an individual at school.

Bullying shall include, but need not be limited to, a written, oral, or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics. (The student against whom the activity is directed must be attending school in the same district as the students engaged in the activity.)

Teen dating violence means any act of physical, emotional or sexual abuse, including stalking, harassing and threatening that occurs between two students who are currently in or have recently been in a dating relationship.

Examples of bullying include, but are not limited to:

1. Physical violence and attacks
2. Verbal taunts, name-calling and put-downs including ethnically-based or gender-based verbal put-downs
3. Threats and intimidation
4. Extortion or stealing of money and/or possessions
5. Exclusion from peer groups within the school
6. The misuse of electronic communications for the purpose of bullying, harassing, or sexually harassing other students

within school or out of school (“cyberbullying”)

7. Targeting of a student based on the student’s actual or perceived “differentiating” characteristics such as race; color; religion; ancestry; national origin; gender; sexual orientation; gender identity or expression; socioeconomic or academic status; physical appearance; or mental physical, developmental, or sensory disability.

Students who engage in any act of bullying or teen dating violence, on school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by the Board of Education, or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the Board of Education, and outside of the school setting if such bullying:

1. creates a hostile environment at school for the victims,
2. infringes on the rights of the victim at school, or
3. substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school, are subject to appropriate disciplinary action up to and including suspensions, expulsion and/or referral to law enforcement official.

Student and/or their parent may file a written report of conduct they consider bullying. Students may also make an informal complaint of conduct that they consider to be bullying by verbal report to any school employee, who will promptly reduce the complaint to writing and forward it to the Safe School Climate Specialist for review and action. Students and/or parents can contact the main office, a dean, counselor, administrator, or mental health support staff to inquire about the process for making formal, informal, and/or anonymous complaints. The complaint procedure is also posted on the District’s website and the school website. Students and parents are permitted to make anonymous reports of bullying. Parent written reports and student anonymous reports will be investigated by the Safe School Climate Specialist but no disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

The Safe School Climate Specialist is responsible for taking a bullying report and investigating the complaint. Parents/guardians of the alleged perpetrator of the bullying act and the parents/guardians of the student against whom such alleged act was directed will receive prompt notification that such investigation has begun. The results of the investigation will be provided not later than 48 hours after its completion, verbally and by electronic mail. Parents/guardians of students involved in a verified act of bullying will be invited to attend at least one meeting at school. Safe School Climate Specialists are required to receive mental health first aid training.

Bus Behavior

Students are expected to behave in a safe manner and follow all school rules while riding the bus. Inappropriate behavior may result in the suspension of bus privileges in addition to disciplinary action.

Cell Phones

To ensure a focused learning environment, cell phone use is strictly prohibited in the classroom without explicit teacher permission. Teachers have added cell phone guidelines to their respective course syllabi and most teachers require students to place cell phones in holders or out of sight for the duration of a class. Cell phone infractions are reported to our Deans for appropriate consequences.

Class Dismissal

All classes meet for the full period. If circumstances necessitate a change in this policy, only an administrator may dismiss the class. Students who dismiss themselves from class before a teacher arrives in class will be considered as cutting that class. In situations where a teacher or substitute does not arrive for a class, one student from the class should report the situation to the Main Office. The remaining students should wait for direction from an administrator.

Corridors and Outdoor Areas

Because of the physical characteristics of the school, certain regulations are necessary to promote a good educational atmosphere:

- Noise and loud talking near the building are not permitted because it disturbs nearby classrooms.
- Gathering in corridors and noise in corridors must be avoided for the same reason. Classroom corridors should be clear during class periods. Students should go to lockers between periods rather than during a lunch period. In certain cases, if a student must go to their locker for necessary materials while classes are in session, they should do so as quickly and quietly as possible. The student must leave the corridor immediately after obtaining the needed materials.

Dances/Proms

Students will not be allowed to attend a dance unless their Signature Packet has been e-signed and all of their obligations have been cleared. No tickets are sold at the door for any dances. All students must take a Breathalyzer test before entering the dance. All students must bring and present their student IDs before entering the dance. Guests may be brought to the Junior and Senior proms. Guests must not be older than 21 years of age. Students' guests at proms must submit a S.O.B.E.R. form, obtained from the Student Life Office, prior to purchasing a ticket. Students' guests at proms must take a Breathalyzer test. No guests are permitted at any other school dances, including homecoming.

Dress

Student dress may be regulated and students are encouraged to dress in clothing appropriate to the school situation. Restrictions on freedom of expression may be applied whenever the mode of dress is unsafe, disruptive to the educational process, or contrary to law. Administrators will use reasonableness and discretion when determining the appropriateness of attire. The school staff will enforce the dress code in a consistent manner that does not reinforce or increase marginalization or oppression of any group based on race, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, cultural observance, or household income or body type/size. Enforcement of the dress code will be gender neutral.

Any school dress which impairs safety or increases the risk of injury to self or others, causes discomfort to others (e.g., uncleanness, malodorousness, inappropriate language), causes distraction or disruption of the learning environment, advertises or advocates the use of alcohol or drugs, pornography, or is libelous or inherently contains unreasonable potential to upset and hurt others is prohibited.

Electronic and Recording Devices

See Technology.

Field trips

Students are not allowed to drive to field trips. A parent may drive their child to or from a field trip with the permission of the teacher if extenuating circumstances exist that necessitate this action. Field trip participation is designed to be a rewarding extension of classroom learning. To ensure a positive and safe experience for all students, participation is based on good academic standing and responsible behavior.

- Students who consistently meet academic expectations (avoiding failing grades or incompletes in multiple classes) and maintain a good attendance record (within the threshold of excused absences and no unexcused absences) will be eligible to participate.
- Students who fall outside these guidelines will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The teacher/assistant principal will discuss the situation with the student (and possibly their parents) to determine if there's a path to participation that addresses any concerns.

Food and Food Serving Areas

Students need to leave any areas where they consume food or beverages clean and free of debris or garbage. Failure to do so repeatedly could result in disciplinary consequences. Students should not return to the serving area beyond the cash registers with the food they have already purchased.

Gambling

Gambling and/or promoting gambling (pools, raffles, etc.) in any form is not permitted in school or on school grounds.

Harassment

Students are prohibited from harassing staff and other students. Harassment includes any unwelcome verbal or physical conduct, contact or communication that is motivated by or related to individual characteristics that create an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational environment. Although harassment that creates a hostile environment may take many different forms, some examples include name-calling and other derogatory comments, jokes, gestures or looks, posting or distribution of derogatory pictures, notes or graffiti, blocking, pushing, hitting, or other forms of physical aggression. Students who feel they are victims of harassment should speak with a dean or school counselor.

Hazing

Students are prohibited from participating in any hazing activities. Hazing is defined as any activity that recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student for the purposes of initiation or admission into or affiliation with any student organization. Hazing by any student, athlete, or club member is strictly prohibited. No student shall plan, direct, encourage, aid, engage in, permit, condone or tolerate hazing. Any student involved in hazing, or any other conduct associated with a hazing incident such as assault, verbal threat, disruption of the school day, stealing, vandalism, indecent behavior or any other conduct prohibited by Board Policy will be subject to disciplinary action including suspension and possible expulsion from school (see Appendix A). Additional disciplinary penalties may occur when a student is involved in student leadership, clubs, activities, and/or athletics based on the conduct expectations of those entities.

Identification Cards

Any person on the school premises is required to show identification when requested to do so by any school authority. Students are issued ID cards every year and are required to carry their ID cards whenever they are on campus. All students are issued an ID card that acts as a library card, as well as an official identification card for special resources and programs. ID cards also carry stickers that identify Open Campus periods. Students must present their ID cards to reenter the building after 7:35 a.m. and anytime a staff member requests to view it. A student who does not show an ID card may be referred to the grade level dean. Students will be charged five dollars for a replacement ID.

Laser Pointers

Laser pointers are not permitted in school.

Search and Seizure

School authorities are authorized to conduct searches of students or their property when reasonable suspicion indicates that a particular student is in possession of an item or a substance that represents a material threat to school routine, or is prohibited by school board regulations or by law, or violates the RHS code of conduct. Student property shall include, but not be limited to purses, cellphones, bookbags, lockers, and vehicles.

School authorities in cooperation with the local police department reserve the right to conduct sniff searches with dogs

of school property and student-driven cars.

If school officials determine a search of a student's belongings is warranted, they will separate the student from said belongings by placing them in a secure location (this includes securing a student's cell phone during an investigation). When the need to search a student arises, the student will be asked to give their consent to the search. If the student is insubordinate and unwilling to give consent to the search, there is reasonable cause for a school administrator to notify the SRO or another police officer. To ensure the safety of all students and staff, the police officer will participate in the search of the students belongings.

For details regarding RPS Search and Seizure policies reference: 5145.12

School Property

Care is expected for books, lockers, uniforms, Chromebooks, and other equipment that may be loaned for student use. Students are expected to reimburse the school for loss or damage to property loaned to them. If a student has an obligation to the school, e.g., library books, they will not be allowed to attend dances, obtain a parking sticker, participate in graduation, or do other activities until the obligation has been cleared.

Students are to keep the school building and the campus grounds free from litter.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is illegal and is forbidden by Ridgefield Board of Education policy. Sexual harassment is generally defined as any unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal, visual or physical conduct of a sexual nature, made by someone from or in the education setting.

Students are legally protected against sex discrimination and sexual harassment by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, a federal law prohibiting discrimination in schools on the basis of sex. Sex discrimination is also covered under Connecticut state law. Students have a right to participate in all school and classroom activities in an atmosphere free from sexual harassment, and they have a responsibility not to engage in sexual behavior that is unwelcome or offensive to others.

If a student believes that they are a victim of sexual harassment, the student should immediately inform a teacher, school counselor, dean or administrator. The administrator will take action to investigate the allegations. Jarret Pepe, Assistant Principal, is the RHS Sexual Harassment Officer and can answer questions, concerns or hear complaints. A copy of the sexual harassment policy is contained in Appendix D, or can be obtained from a dean or administrator.

Skateboards

Skateboards are not permitted on campus due to damage caused to public property and the risk of injury.

Smoking , Vaping, CBD and Tobacco

Smoking, vaping, and possession of tobacco/nicotine products in any form, including vaporizers, chewing tobacco, electronic cigarettes, and tobacco/nicotine delivery devices, is not permitted at any time on campus, on any school transportation vehicle, or off-campus school activity. Vaporizers, chewing tobacco, electronic cigarettes, and tobacco/nicotine delivery devices are not permitted anywhere on school grounds because of the hazard posed to health by both use and subsequent disposal. Students found with a vaporizer, chewing tobacco, electronic cigarettes, or tobacco/nicotine delivery devices are subject to the same disciplinary action as smokers.

Students are not permitted to be under the influence of any controlled drugs, narcotics, substances, or mind-altering substances, whether they are legal or illegal. This includes any product containing cannabidiol (CBD), whether derived from hemp or cannabis, regardless of the THC (tetrahydrocannabinol) content or its legality under state law.

Disciplinary Action

Any student in violation of this policy will be subject to the following consequences:

1st Infraction	Five sessions of detention
2nd Infraction	One day of in-school suspension
3rd Infraction	Three days of in-school suspension
4th Infraction	Five days of in-school suspension

****Note:** Any suspensions as a result of smoking, vaping, or tobacco will be accompanied by mandatory counseling sessions.

Each violation for smoking or possession of tobacco or cigarettes will be referred to the Ridgefield Police Department for an infraction ticket. The Ridgefield Police Department will forward the referral to the courts for disposition.

Technology

District Policy on Artificial Intelligence (AI)/Generative Computing

Most popular AI products currently available to the public do not meet the state of Connecticut educational privacy standards and have a user age rating of 18+ (examples ChatGPT, Google Gemini). For these products, students cannot use their district accounts to interact with these platforms. This new technology is ever-changing and as new developments happen these policies may be updated. As a district, we are exploring AI products for student and educator use. A district approved AI product may be made available to students at some point, during that time the teacher will give permission for the students to use that product or service.

Current AI Policy

- Unless otherwise specified by the classroom teacher, all submissions, whether in draft or final form, to meet course requirements (including and not limited to a paper, project, exam, computer program, oral presentation, or other work) must be the student's own work.
- In those scenarios where a classroom teacher permits the use of AI tools, students must clearly acknowledge the source and the level of AI involvement.
- Classroom teachers reserve the right to dictate to students the platform in which they can complete their work. *(Example, a teacher may assign a project to be done entirely in a monitored Google document.)*

District Provided Personal Learning Devices and BYOD

Students in grades 4-12 will receive a Personal Learning Device. Grades K-3 will have devices provided to them in class and may take them home if needed. Parents and students must sign and agree to the student device and guidelines provided by the district. Devices will be collected prior to summer break for grades 5, 8, and 12 and issued at the start of the school year for grades 4, 6, and 9.

Parents are financially responsible for damages, loss, or theft of the device. Please do not add stickers to the Chromebook, removing the stickers can damage its frame. You may be charged a cleaning fee if the Chromebook is returned with stickers on it. If you'd like to customize your Chromebook we recommend getting a protective case or sleeve and decorating that. Students who withdraw, are expelled, or terminate enrollment for any other reason must return their devices along with accessories on the date of departure. Failure to do so will incur a fine.

High school students have the option to bring their own device (BYOD). This device must have a full keyboard and be able to run the Google Chrome browser *(Examples, MacBook, Windows laptop)*. All ninth graders are issued a district Chromebook at the start of the school year. During their four years at the high school if they wish to use their own device, they can hand in their district issued Chromebook to the LLC at any time.

Students are allowed one free Chromebook replacement a year if they should accidentally damage it. If it is found that the student intentionally damaged their device they will incur a fee for a full replacement.

Student Issued Chromebook Fees:

Lost or Non-Repairable Chromebook.....	\$300
Lost Charger.....	\$30
Partly Damaged.....	Prices vary due to the type of damage
Chromebook Cleaning.....	\$15 (if chromebook is excessively dirty or covered in stickers)

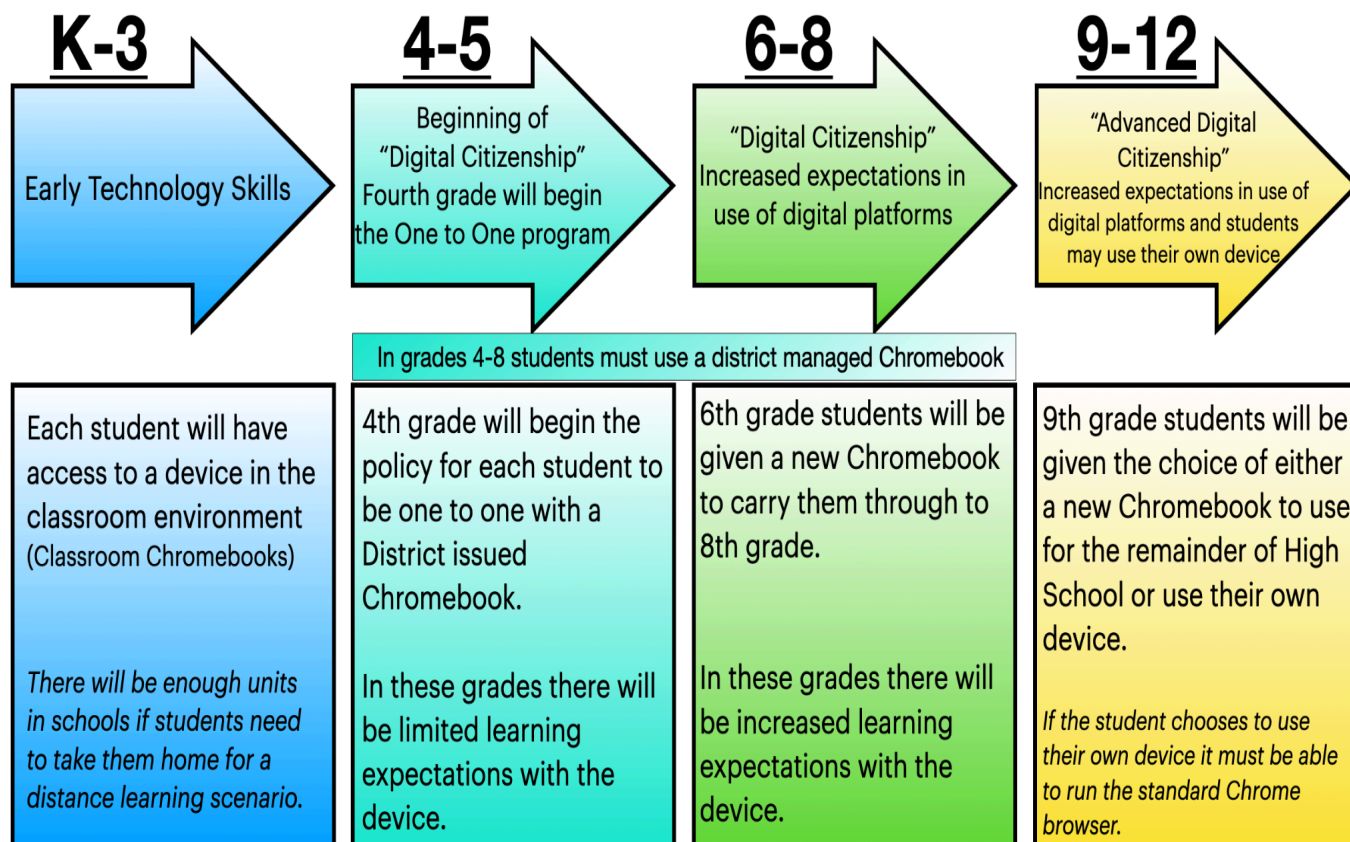
If a student forgot their Chromebook or personal device and need a device to get through the day, there are loaner Chromebooks offered in the LLC (*when available*). These must be returned at the end of the school day.
See below for loaner Chromebook fees.

Chromebook Loaner Fees:

Lost or Non-Repairable Loaner Chromebook....	\$300
Lost Charger.....	\$30
5 Day Late Fee.....	\$15 per week

For a [Video Explanation Click Here](#)

2024-25 Chromebook Distribution



Computer Network Code of Conduct

Use of the network, which includes the Ridgefield Public Schools computer network as well as the internet, shall be in support of education and research that is consistent with the mission of the school. Internet use is limited to those students who have completed the appropriate agreement form and have received approval.

Computer Resources

District resources have been invested in computer technology to broaden instruction and to prepare students for an increasingly computerized society. Use of these resources is restricted to students working under a teacher's supervision and for approved purposes only. Parents/guardians will be asked to sign a user agreement regarding appropriate use of these resources. Violations of this agreement may result in withdrawal of privileges and other disciplinary action.

Students and parents/guardians should be aware that all use of district computers, including email, are not private and may be monitored by staff.

Federal law requires the district to place filtering devices on school computers to block entry to visual depictions that are obscene, pornographic, harmful or inappropriate for students as defined in the Children's Internet Protection Act and as determined by the Superintendent or their designee.

Email

The Ridgefield Public Schools' technology equipment and networks provide local and Internet email for both curricular and administrative purposes. Acceptable use of the network and Internet for email encourages communications that support teaching, learning, and other school-related activities.

Parents/guardians, teachers and administrators are encouraged to use **other** forms of communication for these areas:

1. Communication or questions related to a student's IEP documents.
2. Time-sensitive communications that may not be read or responded to immediately (i.e., "My child will be picked up by Mrs. Jones today).
3. Communications discussing any legal matter involving students, teachers or administrators.

The use of email for the following areas is prohibited:

1. Communications that harass or threaten any student, parent or employee of the Ridgefield Public Schools.
2. Frivolous communications (i.e., the latest jokes, etc. forwarded amongst friends).

The Ridgefield Public Schools ask parents/guardians to recognize that teacher/administrator assignments and schedules vary and that they may not be able to respond to email questions and communications immediately. Teachers will attempt to respond to emails in a timely manner and are encouraged to check email at least once per day.

Students, teachers, parents/guardians, and administrators should recognize that email is supported using equipment owned and maintained by the Ridgefield Public Schools. All email is subject to review and monitoring to address specific concerns or legal requirements.

Internet Safety/Filtering

Federal law requires the district to place filtering devices on school computers to block entry to visual depictions that are obscene, pornographic, harmful, or inappropriate for students as defined in the Children's Internet Protection Act and as determined by the Superintendent or their designee. The complete Computer Technology Acceptable Use Policy can be obtained from the Office of the Superintendent of Schools or through the Parent Portal.

Photographs/Filming Website Pictures

On occasion, school administration, district administration, or teachers shall choose to place student work or student photographs on the school district websites. The complete Board of Education policy and/or permission slip concerning the use of student work and photographs on the district website is available from the Office of the Superintendent of Schools or through the Parent Portal.

Complete Board of Education policy, and/or permission slips concerning the use of student work and photographs on the district website and photographs/filming by the media are available from the Office of the Superintendent of Schools through the Parent Portal.

Photos, Videotapes, Video Conferences

Occasionally Ridgefield Public Schools photograph or videotape students involved in activities or projects for presentation at educational conventions and conferences. The picture and tapes are used to train other teachers' instructional assistants and administrators. Should you desire more information or if you wish that your child's likeness not be used for professional development activities or for publicity outside the school district, please notify the administration in writing.

On occasion, district administration, school administration or teachers may choose to place pictures of students on the district-run websites for the purpose of highlighting activities done in our classes. The complete Board of Education Policy and/or permission slips concerning the use of student work and photographs on the district website is available from the Office of the Superintendent of Schools or through the Parent Portal. You will be presumed to have consented to the release of student photographs and student work on the website if you do not notify the school administration either in writing to the Principal or through the Parent Portal.

PowerSchool Parent Portal

Access your child's academic, attendance, and demographic records through the PowerSchool Parent Portal.

Technology – Acceptable Use Policy

The Ridgefield Public Schools provides open and reliable digital infrastructure and resources for students and staff to be ethical and skilled learners and users of information, media, and technology. Therefore, Ridgefield Public School students and staff need digital resources to learn and apply skills in relevant and rigorous ways. Staff and students use technology anywhere and anytime, including through the use of district-assigned devices that are educationally appropriate and aligned to student educational needs. The District's technology enables all students and staff to communicate, learn, share, collaborate and create, to think and solve problems, and to personalize their learning and teaching.

The Ridgefield Board of Education directs the Superintendent and their designees to create strong digital educational systems that support innovative teaching and learning, provide appropriate staff development opportunities, and develop procedures to support this policy.

Ridgefield Public Schools provides computers, computer systems, software and other digital resources as well as network access privileges for students and staff to carry out the mission of the District in an environment that ensures up-to-date information, management, and communication services. Responsible use of these resources, both in and out of school, is expected of all students and staff.

Students and staff use the property of Ridgefield Public Schools, including the computers, computer systems, software, and other electronic resources for those activities directly related to teaching, learning, and/or management. The equipment, infrastructure and software, other digital resources, and the network are not to be used for personal gain or illicit/illegal activity by any user.

All users are hereby made aware that the Ridgefield Public Schools monitors and stores digital records of the use of computers, computer systems, networks, and any other forms of digital resources unless specifically protected by federal or state law. Therefore, Ridgefield Public Schools reserves the right to bypass any or all individual or group passwords to determine the activity on any or all district-owned computers, computer systems, software, online systems, and any other electronic resources.

Infringement upon, or disrespect of, the rights of other members or users or violation of the Acceptable Use Policy may result in the loss of network privileges and other disciplinary action including, but not limited to, suspension, expulsion, termination of employment, and/or referral to appropriate law enforcement agencies.

Legal References: Connecticut General Statutes

1-19 (b)(11) Access to public records. Exempt records.

10-15b Access of parent or guardians to student's records.

10-209 Records not to be public

11-8b Transfer or disposal of public records. State Library Board to adopt regulations. (46b-56 (e)) Access to Records of Minors.

53a-18-2b Harassment in the first degree: Class D felony. (As amended by PA 95-143)

Connecticut Public records Administration Schedule V - Disposition of Education Records (Revised 1983).

18 USC § 25 10-2522 electronic communication Privacy Act

20 U.S.C. Sections 6777, No Child Left Behind Act

20 U.S.C. 254 Children's Internet Protection Act of 2000

47 U.S.C. Children's online Protection Act of 1998

Federal Family Educational rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (section 438 of the General Education Provisions Act, as amended, added by section 513 of P. L. 93-568, codified at 20 U.S.C. 1232g.)

Dept. of Educ. 34 C.F.R. Part 99 (May 9, 1980 45 FR 30802) regs.

Implementing FERPA enacted as part of 438 General Educ. Provisions act (20 U.S.C. 1232g)- parent and student privacy and other rights with respect to educational records, as amended 11/21/96.

Public Law 94-553, the Copyright Act of 1976, 17 U.S.C. 101 et. Seq.

Policy adopted: April 22, 2016

Technology – Acceptable Use Regulation

These procedures are written to support the Acceptable Technology Use Policy of the Ridgefield Public Schools and to promote positive and effective digital citizenship among students and staff.

The district retains control, custody, and supervision of all computers, digital resources, and data owned, subscribed to, or leased by the district. The Board of Education reserves the right to monitor all technology resource activity by employees, students, and other system users. Employees and students have no expectation of privacy in their use of school computers, including e-mail messages and stored files.

Employees and students are expected to use appropriate judgment and caution in communication concerning students and staff to ensure that personally, identifiable information remains confidential.

Terminology

Technology Resources/Devices - Ridgefield Public School computers, tablets, e-mail, mobile devices, cell phones, networks, digital subscriptions, information/data systems, the Internet, peripherals, portal, and any other

technology-based tools.

Users – Anyone, including but not limited to staff, students, Board of Education, visitor/guest, consultant, or external vendor, that access the RPS technology resources.

Safety

To the greatest extent possible, users of technology resources will be protected from harassment and unwanted contacts. Any user who receives threatening or unwelcome communications should bring them to the attention of a teacher or administrator.

Users must be aware that there are many services available on the Internet that could potentially be offensive to certain groups of users. The District cannot eliminate access to all such services, nor can they identify all of them. Individual users must take responsibility for their own actions when navigating the technology resources.

Security, Filtering and Monitoring

Security on the technology resources is a high priority. If users of the technology resources of the Ridgefield Public Schools identify a security problem, the user must notify a teacher or administrator at once without discussing it or showing it to another user.

Users must not use another individual's account. Any user identified as a security risk will be denied access to the technology resources of the Ridgefield Public Schools.

Filtering should be viewed as one of a number of techniques used to manage users' access to the Internet and encourage acceptable use. Internet filtering should not be viewed as a foolproof approach to preventing access to inappropriate material. Occasionally, students and/or staff may access websites that are objectionable. These should be reported to the superintendent/designee for consideration to be blocked by the filtering system.

In accordance with the Children's Internet Protection Act, filters will be maintained to block websites deemed to be obscene, pornographic, and/or harmful to minors.

No Expectation of Privacy

The district reserves the right to monitor, inspect, copy, review and store, without prior notice, information or any other data communicated, created, or accessed using district digital resources. No user should have any expectation of privacy when using the district's network. The district reserves the right to disclose any electronic messages to law enforcement officials or third parties as appropriate. All documents are subject to state and federal public records disclosure laws.

In an environment where learning can take place anytime and anywhere, the Ridgefield Public Schools is committed to providing age-appropriate teaching and learning opportunities for students to use technology tools. To facilitate that, five user levels are defined for the purposes of organizing supervision for group instruction and personal use of these information resources. All employees must receive training on acceptable use of RPS technology resources annually at the start of the school year or at the time of hire.

Digital Citizenship is a curriculum framework to teach students to be responsible, legal, ethical, and safe in their use of digital resources. The district provides ongoing Digital Citizenship lessons to students.

The Superintendent will establish the protocol for annual acceptance of the Acceptable Use Policy by parents, students, staff, visitors, guests, and all other users. Annual acceptance by parents may be done through implied consent (receipt of policy with opt out of acceptance) or required signature.

District Provided Personal Learning Devices

Students in grades 4-12 will receive a Personal Learning Device each fall. Students in grades 9-12 will have the option of receiving a district assigned device in the fall or agreeing to bring in their own technology device (meeting district requirements, a computer that can run the chrome browser) to school everyday. Parents and students must sign and agree to the student device sign out sheet and guidelines provided by their respective schools. Devices will be collected prior to summer break and issued at the start of the school year. Parents are financially responsible for damages, loss, or theft of the device. Students who withdraw, are expelled, or terminate enrollment for any other reason must return their devices along with accessories on the date of departure.

Personal Learning Device Temporary Sign-out

Ridgefield Public Schools students who have the option of borrowing technology equipment are responsible for its use and condition. Devices are only borrowed during the school day and must be returned the same day.

Personal Technology

Some users are permitted to use personal devices while connected to the RPS wireless network. Student use of personal devices is approved by the teacher. Use of personal devices is governed by the BYOT policy 6141.328.

Connecting personal devices to district computers (scanners, printers, mobile phones/tablets, etc.) is not permitted unless provided authorization in advance by the Director of Technology or designee. Connecting external drives (USB flash drive or equivalent) is permitted. Connecting to personal cloud resources to access data for educational uses is permitted.

Users are strictly prohibited from installing personal software onto any RPS device or RPS software on personal devices at any time without the prior authorization of the Director of Technology or designee. The use of district resources that do not get installed on a local device is permitted on personal devices.

Due to the confidentiality of student data, assessment data, employee data, and confidential organizational data, the downloading and storing of confidential data on personal devices is not permitted.

Confidentiality and Data Guidelines

The Ridgefield Public Schools abides by all state and federal laws with regard to student, staff, and organizational data. Guidelines, protocols, and service contracts are continually monitored and updated to ensure all data systems, cloud-based resources, locally installed applications, databases, and vendors protect and secure the confidentiality and privacy of student, employee and organizational data (Ridgefield Public Schools Data). This set of data includes, but is not limited to, student records, assessment data, family demographic data, employee data, and email.

Confidentiality and overall use of these online resources is protected by law, including the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), and the Ridgefield Public Schools Acceptable Use Policy.

- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) protects the privacy of student education records and gives parents the right to review student records. Under FERPA, the school district or institution or person acting on the behalf of the school district may maintain educational records, which includes records, files, documents, and other materials that contain information directly related to a student. School officials may only provide student records to third parties with the permission from the parent or eligible student. Directory information may be released if parents do not object to any disclosures.
- Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) applies to commercial companies and limits their ability to collect personal information from children under 13. No personal student information is collected for commercial purposes. The district will annually inform parents and collect permission that allows the school to act as an agent for parents in the collection of information within the school context. Permission is granted by

the acceptance of the annual Acceptable Use Policy. The school's use of student information is solely for education purposes. Student information that is “collected” is described as (projects, documents, email, files, username and password).

District Guidelines and Expectations

The Ridgefield Public Schools expects all employees and external service providers, acting on behalf of the Ridgefield Public Schools, to take all measures to protect student, employee, and organizational data. As such, the following guidelines and procedures are to be adhered to by employees, vendors, and service providers.

- All student, employee, and organization data (Ridgefield Public Schools data) is the property of the Ridgefield Public Schools
- All computers, tablets, smartphones, cloud-based resources, or servers that store and/or have access to Ridgefield Public Schools data must be password protected at all times when not actively in use by the user.
- All cloud-based resources, software, mobile device apps and third parties with access to data must be approved for use by the Director of Technology or assigned designee. Approval for installation or use of these resources is dependent on educational appropriateness, compatibility with resources, availability of support, organizational needs, and adherence to the Confidentiality and Data Guidelines. The procedures for approval of resources and third parties will be reviewed and communicated annually to staff and publicly posted on the district website.
- Ridgefield Public Schools data may be accessed via cloud-based resources and apps while on mobile devices or personal (non-RPS) devices, however such data may not be downloaded for storage on personal (non-RPS) technology.
- Access to and/or storage of Ridgefield Public Schools data must be purged and permanently deleted at the termination of employment, service contract/subscription, or consulting.
- Access to Ridgefield Public Schools data will only be provided after acceptance and signature of the Acceptable Use Policy, which contains the Confidentiality and Privacy of Data guidelines.
- Ridgefield Public Schools data is not to be shared with a third party, including parents or community residents, unless permitted by FERPA, COPPA, CIPA PPRA, or FOI and within the parameters of the type of data that may be released.
- Email containing personally identifiable student information may constitute an educational record and thus be subject to disclosure under FERPA and may, under certain circumstances, be subject to FOI. Staff must comply with FERPA in all email communication with anyone other than the parent(s) of the student or the eligible student.

District Publishing Guidelines

Any distribution of educational records, including digital records, must comply with FERPA, district policies, and professional standards. District, school, and individual use of digital resources to distribute intellectual property, images, videos and information shall be related to school curriculum and instruction, school-authorized activities, and other information relating to school and district goals and ensure the safety and security of all students and staff.

- All distributed content shall follow the standards for ethical behavior in regard to information and communication technologies by showing respect for the principles of intellectual freedom, intellectual property rights, and the responsible use of the information and communication technologies.
- All distributed audio and video recordings of classroom activities shall follow ethical standards by posting content that has been recorded with the intent to be shared online and with permission by those being recorded.
- All content shall be age-appropriate to safeguard students by shielding the identification of students' identification and locations. Content may include names of individuals; however identifying information, such as names of family members, e-mail addresses, addresses and phone numbers will remain private.
- Content shall not contain objectionable material or point to objectionable material. The determination of what

constitutes objectionable material shall be made on a case-by-case basis, as determined by the Director of Technology and a Building Administrator. The distribution of content shall follow district policy, copyright law, and fair use Guidelines.

Copyright

Downloading, copying, duplicating and distributing software, music, sound files, movies, images or other copyrighted materials without the specific written permission of the copyright owner is generally prohibited. However, the duplication and distribution of materials for educational purposes are permitted when such duplication and distribution fall within the Fair Use Doctrine of the United States Copyright Law (Title 17, USC) and content is cited appropriately.

Responsibilities

Users need to become familiar with their responsibilities while using the Ridgefield Public Schools technology resources.

Users agree to always adhere to the following standards and expectations for conduct.

1. Behave ethically, safely, legally, and responsibly when using technology resources

- a. Refrain from utilizing proxy gateways, or similar technologies, to bypass technology monitoring and filtering.
- b. Handle technology devices with care. Refrain from deleting, destroying, modifying, abusing, moving resources without permission, and/or accessing unauthorized technology resources.
- c. Do not breach or disable network security mechanisms, or compromise network stability or security in any way. or download/modify computer software in violation of the district's license agreement(s) without authorization from the Technology Department.
- d. Acceptable use of technology defined within the Acceptable Use Policy covers use of all Ridgefield Public Schools technology resources assigned to and used within schools and off-site.

2. Use technology resources to transmit communications or access information only for legitimate educationally relevant purposes and to access educationally appropriate content.

- a. Refrain from sending any form of communication that breaches the district's confidentiality and data privacy requirements, or the confidentiality of students.
- b. Refrain from sending any form of communication that harasses, threatens or is discriminatory.
- c. Refrain from accessing any material that is obscene, harmful to minors or prohibited by law.
- d. Refrain from using social network tools for personal use. Professional use and a student academic use is defined in RPS policies 4118.51 (4218.51) and 6141.322.
- e. Use communication and collaboration tools (email, voicemail, blogs, etc.) respectfully and professionally.

3. Respect the privacy of others and treat information created by others as the private property of the creator.

- a. Maintain confidentiality of your username and password by not sharing it with others and not using another person's username and password.
- b. Maintain the integrity of files and data by not trespassing, modifying, copying or deleting files of other users without their consent.
- c. Protect the confidentiality and safety of others when sharing work and images.
- d. Protect the privacy and confidentiality of students, staff and Ridgefield Public Schools by adhering to the Confidentiality and Data Guidelines.
- e. Share, post and publish only within the context of the District Publishing Guidelines.
- f. Respect copyright and fair use laws; these policies and procedures apply in digital contexts, as well. Plagiarism is prohibited.

4. All technology assigned to staff, students, or visitors are property of Ridgefield Public Schools and are to be kept secure and in working condition.

- a. Any device provided to staff or students by the Ridgefield Public Schools is the property of Ridgefield Public Schools and therefore must be returned to appropriate administrators, teachers, or Technology Department staff upon request.
- b. Upon departure from the Ridgefield Public Schools assigned devices are to be returned promptly to the Technology Department.
- c. Damaged and non-functioning devices are to be returned immediately to the Technology Department for repair.
- d. Staff and students are financially responsible for theft and damage caused by neglect or improper use.

Consequences

The Ridgefield Public Schools will not be responsible for unauthorized financial obligations resulting from the use of, or access to, Ridgefield Public School's computer network or the Internet. Ridgefield Public Schools assumes no responsibility for any unauthorized charges made by employees including but not limited to credit card charges, subscriptions, long-distance telephone charges, equipment and line costs, or for any illegal use of its computers such as copyright violations.

Users of the technology resources of the Ridgefield Public Schools shall be responsible for damages to the equipment, system and software resulting from deliberate or willful acts.

Illegal use of the technology resources of the Ridgefield Public Schools, intentional deletion or damage of files or data belonging to others, and copyright/fair use violations or theft of services will be reported to the appropriate legal authorities for possible prosecution and other consequences.

The employee or student shall be responsible for any losses, costs or damages incurred by the district related to violations of district policy or these regulations for which they are responsible.

Violation of the Acceptable Technology Use Policy and Regulation or in these procedures could be cause for disciplinary action, including suspension or revocation of network and computer access privileges of employees and students as well as other permissible disciplinary actions, up to and including expulsion or termination, as defined in other student and staff policies and administered by district administration.

Regulation approved: April 12, 2016

Disciplinary Action

Level I – 10-day suspension of network privileges

- Inappropriate use of technology

Level II – 1 day of In-School Suspension

- Material or software that is obscene or profane.
- Material or software that is inappropriate to the educational setting.
- Files that place large demands on network resources such as, but not limited to, unauthorized games, videos, music, downloads and images.
- Violation of copyright laws, usage and licensing agreements, stealing of intellectual property, and plagiarism.
- Operating a business or unauthorized commercial activity.
- Unauthorized transmittal of files (including FTP) or installation of software.

Level III – 5 days In-School Suspension

- Material that is discriminatory, threatening, harassing, or sexually explicit.
- Use of websites, proxies, software or other means that allow digital transmission or access in violation of firewall restrictions or legally mandated web-filtering systems.

Level IV – 10 days of Out-of-School Suspension, restitution, police referral, referral to the superintendent for possible expulsion

- Use of hardware, software or systems to gain unauthorized access to the district systems or another person's account, materials, information or files.
- Material or software that damages, or has the potential to damage, computer hardware or software, systems, or networks.
- Use of technology to disrupt the educational process.
- Use of the school district network to engage in illegal activities or to violate local, state or federal law.

As new technologies become available, the school reserves the right to designate appropriate disciplinary action as warranted.

Unauthorized Areas

Students are not permitted in the parking lot, on the Tiger Hollow site, on the lower fields and in any areas identified by posted signs, during school hours.

Unauthorized Occupancy

Intentional incitement of, or participation in, an unauthorized occupancy by any group of students or others of any part of the school or the school premises, and/or failure to leave such school premises or other facility promptly after having been directed to do so by an administrator or other person in charge of such building or facility is not permitted.

Weapons

The possession and/or use of any weapon or dangerous instrument in any school building, on student transportation vehicles or at a school-sponsored activity is prohibited. In accordance with Conn. Gen. State Statutes (Sec. 10-233d) the school system is required to recommend expulsion for any student in possession of a firearm, deadly weapon, dangerous instrument, or martial arts weapon.

For all of the previous infractions, the school reserves the right to impose more serious discipline including suspension and/or expulsion in cases where the conduct is seriously disruptive of the school process.

Disciplinary Procedures

After School Detention

After-school detention is held from 2:20 - 3:00 p.m. Students will be notified of their assigned detention at least 24 hours prior to the detention. Parents will be notified, via phone call, of the assigned detention.

Counseling

At the discretion of the dean or the administrator, counseling services provided by a school counselor, school social worker or school psychologist may be substituted for all or part of a disciplinary action.

Saturday Detention

Saturday detention is held on designated Saturdays from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Students must bring assignments to work on or reading material. Students may not have music players, playing cards, or other diversionary activities. Students will be sent home if they are not prepared to work and additional disciplinary action will be taken.

In-School Suspension

In-school suspension is held in the in-school suspension room beginning at 7:25 a.m. It is a serious disciplinary action. Students should bring assignments to work on or reading material. Rules of the in-school suspension room are as follows:

- Preparation:
 - o Be prepared to work on assignments. This includes a charged laptop (if applicable), notebooks, pens, pencils, and any textbooks or materials you may need. Assignments will be provided or accessed through Google Classroom.
- During In-School Suspension:
 - o Remain seated and focused on completing assigned work throughout your suspension period.
 - o Maintain a quiet and respectful environment. Talking is discouraged to minimize distractions.
 - o Non-academic activities, such as playing music, cards, watching movies, or video games, are not permitted.
 - o Cell phones and other personal electronic devices are not allowed.
- Food and Breaks:
 - o Please bring lunch, drinks, and any necessary snacks with you.
 - o Restroom use is permitted only with permission from the in-school suspension monitor and within designated areas.
- Dismissal:
 - o In-school suspension ends at the official school dismissal time (2:15 PM).
 - o Students with shortened schedules who have followed all guidelines may leave campus at their usual dismissal time.
- Consequences:
 - o Misbehavior during in-school suspension will result in further disciplinary action reported to the grade-level dean.
 - o Participation in extracurricular activities (sports, clubs, performances) is not allowed on in-school suspension days.
- Additional Notes:
 - o These guidelines promote a productive and focused environment for completing schoolwork during in-school suspension.
 - o Maintaining a positive and respectful attitude is expected.

Out-Of-School Suspension

Out-of-school suspension is a serious disciplinary action which removes the student from the academic setting. We at Ridgefield High School believe that in suspending a student from school, we are remanding the student to the custody of a parent or guardian for an appropriate period of time. We expect that it offers the student and parent an opportunity to reflect upon the nature of the infraction as well as on the student's responsibility regarding future behavior. A parent or guardian may be asked to accompany the student to school at the end of any suspension and meet either with the dean or with the Assistant Principal. This meeting establishes both the tone of future behavior and the school's expectations regarding the student's re-entry into the academic setting. Students who have been assigned an out-of-school suspension are not allowed on school grounds or at school activities at any time during the period of the suspension.

Disciplinary Review

A student whose discipline record shows habitual and repeated behavior infractions of at least five (5) individual suspension actions or 15 total days of suspension within one year may be brought before the high school administration team for review. The team may also consider for review any student who has accumulated eight suspension actions or a total of 24 total days of suspension within a two-year span.

The administrative team consists of the principal, assistant principals and class deans. For the review process, the principal acts as chairperson of the review team. The administrative team reviews the student's behavior record as to type and number of offenses, and length of suspensions. Any significant activity perpetrated by the student and deemed disruptive to the education of students or the school by the administrative team may also be referred to the principal. The principal will meet with the parent(s) and student to inform the student that in the event of continuing or additional behavioral problems, the principal may refer the student to the Superintendent of Schools for consideration for expulsion.

Expulsion

Any student whose conduct on school grounds or at a school-sponsored activity violates a publicized policy of the Board, or seriously disrupts the educational process or endangers persons or property may be expelled. Expulsion proceedings are required (Conn. Gen. State Statutes, Sec. 10-233d) when there is reason to believe that a pupil 1) possessed or used a firearm, deadly weapon, dangerous instrument or martial arts weapon on school grounds or at a school-sponsored activity; 2) off school grounds possessed a firearm or used or possessed a firearm, instrument or weapon in the commission of a crime; or 3) on or off school grounds offered for sale or distribution a controlled substance. Any such exclusion shall take place in accordance with sections 10-233a to 10-233h of the Conn. Gen. State Statutes. Cases of possession of controlled substances shall be brought to the Superintendent for consideration of additional action including the initiation of expulsion proceedings. The Superintendent may also recommend expulsion proceedings for other serious violations of school policy or for any student referred by the principal through the Disciplinary Review process.

Disciplinary Summary

A dean has been assigned to each grade level to review reports of misbehavior and administer discipline as needed. All disciplinary actions are taken at the discretion of the dean and/or administrator up to or including the maximum stated in the disciplinary summary table. School community service and counseling may be used in place of all or part of any disciplinary action.

LEVEL I

Offense	Possible Disciplinary Action
Bus problem	Warning, and/or suspension of bus privileges
Missing detention	1 Saturday detention
Misrepresentation of the truth; false information/lying	3 Detentions
Panhandling	3 Detentions, referral to school counselor
Parking violation	See Parking Policy in Transportation Section Possible loss of parking privileges
Unauthorized area	2 Detentions
Unexcused absences (three)	1 Saturday detention
Other inappropriate behavior (spitting, throwing snowballs, littering, etc.)	3 Detentions

ISS = In-School Suspension

OSS = Out-of-School Suspension

LEVEL II

Offense	Possible Disciplinary Action
Inappropriate/disruptive behavior (assembly, athletic event, class, etc.)	2 day ISS
Food fight	3 days ISS; loss of Student Center privileges
Gambling	1 day ISS
Incitement of truancy	1 day ISS
Leaving school grounds/Transporting a student off grounds without permission	1 day ISS
Missing ISS	2 days ISS
Missing Saturday detention	1 day ISS
Obscene language/profanity	1 day ISS
Trespassing	3 days ISS; police referral
Unauthorized occupancy	3 days ISS

ISS = In-School Suspension

OSS = Out-of-School Suspension

LEVEL III

Offense	Possible Disciplinary Action
Break-in or unauthorized entry	5 days ISS; police referral
Digital equipment or recording devices (inappropriate use of)	5 days ISS
Disruption of school day	5 days OSS; police referral
Endangering students or staff/ intent to cause injury	10 days OSS
Fighting/altercation/physical aggression	10 days OSS; possible police referral
Hazing	10 days OSS; referral to school counselor; possible police referral
Obscene behavior/gestures; indecent behavior	5 day ISS, referral to school counselor
Insubordination	3 days ISS
Irritant substances/mace/ laser pointer	(possession) 1 day ISS (use) 4 days OSS
Profanity toward staff member	3 days ISS
Theft/Stealing	5 days ISS; possible police referral
Threats/intimidation/bullying/harassment; verbal or physical/biased behavior	10 days OSS; referral to school counselor; possible police referral
Tobacco/cigarettes/vaporizer/ nicotine delivery devices(possession/use)	See Smoking policy; police referral
Trespassing	3 days ISS; police referral

ISS = In-School Suspension

OSS = Out-of-School Suspension

LEVEL IV

Offense

Possible Disciplinary Action

Alcohol – Abuse/under the influence of

5 days OSS; see Alcohol and Drug Policy

Alcohol – Possession

5 days OSS; police referral; see Alcohol and Drug Policy

Arson

10 days OSS; police referral

Battery/assault – staff member/student

10 days OSS; possible police referral

Drugs – Abuse/under the influence of

5 days OSS; see Alcohol and Drug Policy

Drugs/drug paraphernalia - Possession

5 days OSS; police referral; possible referral for expulsion; see Alcohol and Drug Policy

Drugs – Sale or distribution/intent to sell

10 days OSS; police referral; mandatory referral for expulsion; see Alcohol and Drug Policy

Drugs - In the presence of the use, sale, possession, or distribution

5 days OSS; see Alcohol and Drug Policy

Prescription medication - sale/distribution/ intent to sell/possession/use

10 days OSS; possible referral for expulsion; see Alcohol and Drug Policy

Endangering students or staff/ intent to cause injury

10 days OSS, possible police referral

False fire alarm

10 days OSS; police referral; possible referral for expulsion

Fireworks/explosive devices/ incendiary devices

10 days OSS; police referral; mandatory referral for expulsion

Technology - unauthorized use of/ unauthorized access of school computer networks

10 days OSS; police referral; possible referral for expulsion; see Technology-Acceptable Use Policy

Vandalism - malicious destruction of individual, private or school property

10 days OSS; police referral

Facsimile weapon

10 days OSS; police referral

Weapons - possession/use

10 days OSS; police referral; mandatory referral for expulsion

ISS = In-School Suspension

OSS = Out-of-School Suspension

For all offenses at all levels, additional disciplinary actions up to and including possible expulsion as indicated by Board policy, may be required depending on the nature, severity or frequency of the offense. Incidents involving police referrals may result in arrests.

Incidents involving damages, theft, cleanup, or other services require restitution.

Student Rights

Student Rights

Nondiscrimination Statement

The Ridgefield Public Schools are committed to a policy of equal opportunity/affirmative action for all qualified persons. The District does not discriminate in any employment practice, education program, or educational activity on the basis of race, color, religious creed, sex, age, national origin, ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability (including, but not limited to, intellectual disability, past or present history of mental disorder, physical disability or learning disability), genetic information, or any other basis prohibited by Connecticut state and/or federal nondiscrimination laws. Inquiries regarding the District's nondiscrimination policies should be directed to:

Karen Dewing, Title IX Coordinator
Ridgefield Public Schools
70 Prospect Street
Ridgefield, CT 06877
(203) 894-5550 kdewing@ridgefieldps.net

RHS Title IX Officer:
Jarret Pepe, Asst. Principal
jpepe@ridgefieldps.net
203-894-5750

Section 504 questions should be directed to:

504 Coordinator
Elizabeth Hannaway, Ed.D., Assistant Superintendent of Special Services
70 Prospect Street
Ridgefield, CT 06877
(203) 894-5550

Child Abuse, Neglect and Sexual Assault

All school employees, including teachers, superintendents, administrators, coaches of intramural or interscholastic athletics, paraprofessionals and other professional school staff including school counselors, paraprofessionals, social workers, psychologists, licensed nurses, physicians, licensed behavior analysts, and substitute teachers are obligated by law (C.G.S. 17a101) to report suspected child abuse, neglect, or if a child is placed in imminent danger of serious harm or sexual assault by a school employee to the Connecticut State Department of Children and Families Services. Specific procedures governing the reporting of abuse and neglect are in effect, and staff receives training in their use, as required by state law. Reporting of child abuse, neglect and sexual assault by a school employee is a responsibility which is taken seriously. If there is any doubt about reporting suspected abuse, neglect or a sexual assault, a report will be made. The school will work with the parents and appropriate social agencies in all cases. Child abuse is defined as any physical injury inflicted by other than accidental means or injuries which are not in keeping with the explanation given for their cause. Improper treatment such as malnutrition, sexual molestation, deprivation of necessities, emotional abuse, cruel punishment or neglect are also considered child abuse.

Directory Information

The Ridgefield Public Schools take every reasonable effort to protect the privacy rights of students and their families. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), allows directory information to be released unless the student or student's parent/guardian objects. Directory information means information contained in an education record that would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed.

The Ridgefield Schools will disclose directory information unless the student or student's parent/guardian objects. Directory information includes such information as the student name, street address, email address, telephone number, grade and homeroom class, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, degrees and awards received, videotaping/broadcasting, photographs for local newspapers, school web pages and displays, and name of parent or guardian. Parents must indicate, in writing, their desire to have any or all of the directory information pertaining to their children withheld from being considered directory information.

Directory information will be released solely for legitimate educational reasons at the discretion of the Superintendent or their designee.

The National Defense Authorization Act of 2002 requires, upon a request made by military recruiters or an institution of higher education, access to secondary school students' names, addresses, and telephone listings. However, a parent of a secondary school student or the student themselves, if they have reached the age of majority ("eligible student"), may object to the release of the student's name, address, or telephone listing to military recruiters or an institution of higher education without prior written parental consent. A parent or eligible student who objects to the disclosure of such information without prior consent may file a notice in writing of said objection to the high school principal at any time.

Annually, the Ridgefield Schools shall notify parents of the district's right to disclose directory information as defined herein. Parents shall be provided ten (10) school days to indicate in writing their desire to have any and all of the directory information pertaining to their children withheld from being considered directory information.

Family Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Board of Education, in compliance with the requirement of federal law and regulations, shall inform parents annually of their rights in regard to their children's records. The Ridgefield Board of Education provides you with the following notice:

Notification of Rights Under FERPA for Elementary and Secondary Institutions

The Family Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's educational records. They are:

The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the District receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit a written request to the school principal that identifies the record(s) that they wish to inspect. The principal will make arrangements for access and notify the parents or eligible students of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

The right to request the amendment of the student's records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate or misleading. Parents or eligible students may ask Ridgefield Public Schools to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write the school principal (or director of Special Education in situations that involve special education records), and clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the District decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the District will notify the parent or eligible student in writing of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception which permits disclosure without consent is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the District as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement personnel); a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom the District has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist) or a parent or student serving on an official committee (such as a

disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing their task). A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill their professional responsibility. Upon request, Ridgefield Schools will disclose educational records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.

The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the District to comply with the requirement of FERPA. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA is:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
600 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-4605

Limited English Proficient (LEP) Students

Parents of Limited English Proficient (LEP) Students/English Learners participating in a language instructional program will be notified within 30 days of their child's placement in the program. The notification will include an explanation of why, a description of the program, and the parent's rights to remove their child from the English Learners program. In addition, the notification will explain how the program will help the child to develop academically, learn English and achieve the standards necessary for promotion.

Students not meeting the English mastery standard or demonstrating limited progress will be provided with additional language support services which may include, but are not limited to, English as a Second Language program, sheltered English programs, English Immersion programs, summer school, after-school assistance, homework assistance and tutoring. Students after 30 months in a bilingual program will not be offered additional bilingual education.

Magnet Schools

It is recognized that some students may benefit from attendance at a magnet school not limited by school district boundaries. District students may enroll directly into a magnet school, with which the District does not have a participation agreement, on a space available basis. The District will be responsible for any tuition for such enrollment, but not for transportation, unless the magnet school is within the boundaries of the school district. Tuition will not be paid by the district for students placed by their parents/guardians in a pre-school (PK) magnet program. Parents/Guardians are required, not later than two weeks following an enrollment lottery for an inter-district magnet school, to notify the district of their child's enrollment or placement on a waiting list for enrollment in the coming school year.

Migrant Students

A full range of services will be provided to migrant students, including applicable Title I programs, special education, gifted education, vocational education, language programs, counseling programs and elective classes. Parents/guardians of migrant students will be involved in and regularly consulted about the development, implementation, operation and evaluation of programming.

Pesticide Application

Only certified pesticide applicators shall be used in schools for any non-emergency pesticide use in school buildings or on school grounds. Pesticide applications are limited to non-school hours and when activities are not taking place. Areas to receive pesticide application will be posted and a written record of all pesticide applications will be maintained for five years. Parents/guardians and staff who want to receive advance notice of all pesticide use will be listed on a registry and such notice will be provided as required by law (Schools without an integrated pest -management plan must send prior notice by mail.). Parents/guardians who want to be notified prior to pesticide applications inside their child(ren)'s school assignment area may contact the RPS Facilities Director, Mr. Joseph Morits (jmorits@ridgefieldps.net). Note: If the district is implementing the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) concept, similar requirements as above must be met. Notice will be provided at least 24 hours in advance of the application of a pesticide either on the school's homepage or on the

school or district's primary social media account.

Psychotropic Drug Recommendation

School personnel is prohibited from recommending the use of psychotropic drugs for any student enrolled within the school system. School nurses, nurse practitioners, district medical advisor, school psychologists, school social workers and school counselors, may recommend that a student be evaluated by an appropriate medical practitioner. Further, the District is prohibited from requiring a child to get a prescription before he/she may attend school, be evaluated to determine eligibility for special education or receive special education.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is illegal and is forbidden by Ridgefield Board of Education policy. Sexual harassment is generally defined as any unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal, visual or physical conduct of a sexual nature, made by someone from or in the education setting.

Students are legally protected against sex discrimination and sexual harassment by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, a federal law prohibiting discrimination in schools on the basis of sex. Sex discrimination is also covered under Connecticut state law. Students have a right to participate in all school and classroom activities in an atmosphere free from sexual harassment, and they have a responsibility not to engage in sexual behavior that is unwelcome or offensive to others.

If a student believes that they are a victim of sexual harassment, the student should immediately inform a teacher, school counselor, dean or administrator. The administrator will take action to investigate the allegations. Jarret Pepe, Assistant Principal, is the RHS Sexual Harassment Officer and can answer questions and concerns or hear complaints. A copy of the sexual harassment policy is contained in Appendix D or can be obtained from a dean or administrator.

Social Services Agencies

Periodically, social service agencies, law enforcement officials, courts, and state agencies providing human services ask us for assistance in the prevention, identification, and treatment of abuse. Section 17-106 of the Connecticut General Statutes authorizes our cooperation with these agencies. Teachers, principals, paraprofessionals and other professional school staff are obligated by law (Conn. Gen. Stat. 17a-101) to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the Connecticut State Department of Children and Families Services. Specific procedures governing the reporting of abuse and neglect are in effect.

Student Records

A student's school records are confidential and are protected by federal and state law from unauthorized inspection or use. A cumulative record is maintained for each student from the time the student enters the district until the student withdraws or graduates. This record moves with the student from school to school.

By law, both parents, whether married, separated, or divorced, have access to the records of a student who is under 18 or a dependent for tax purposes. A parent whose rights have been legally terminated will be denied access to the records if the school is given a copy of the court order terminating these rights.

The principal is custodian of all records for currently enrolled students at the assigned school. The Superintendent is the custodian of all records for students who have withdrawn or graduated. Records may be reviewed during regular school hours upon completion of the written request form. The record's custodian or designee will respond to reasonable requests for explanation and interpretation of the records.

Parents of a minor or of a student who is a dependent for tax purposes, the student (if 18 or older), and school officials

with legitimate educational interests are the only persons who have general access to a student's records. "School officials with legitimate educational interests" include any employee such as an administrator, teacher, support staff, Board of Education member, attorney, agents, or facilities with which the district contracts for the placement of students with disabilities, as well as their attorneys and consultants, who are:

1. Working with the student;
2. Considering disciplinary or academic actions, the student's case, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for a student with disabilities under IDEA or an individually designed program for a student with disabilities under Section 504;
3. Compiling statistical data; or
4. Investigating or evaluating programs.

Certain other officials from various governmental agencies may have limited access to the records. Parental consent is required to release the records to anyone else. When the student reaches 18 years of age, only the student has the right to consent to release of records.

The parent's or student's right of access to, and copies of, student records does not extend to all records. Materials that are not considered educational records, such as teachers' personal notes on a student that are shared only with a substitute teacher and records pertaining to former students after they are no longer students in the district, do not have to be made available to the parents or student.

A student over 18 and parents of minor students may inspect the student's records and request a correction if the records are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy or other rights. If the district refuses the request to amend the records, the requester has the right to a hearing. If the records are not amended as a result of the hearing, the requester has 30 school days to exercise the right to place a statement commenting on the information in the student's record. Although improperly recorded grades may be challenged, parents and the student are not allowed to contest a student's grade in a course through this process. Parents or the student have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education if they believe the district is not in compliance with the law regarding student records. The district's policy regarding student records is available from the principal's or superintendent's office.

Copies of student records are available and a fee may be charged. Parents may be denied copies of a student's records (1) after the student reaches age 18 and is no longer a dependent for tax purposes; (2) when the student is attending an institution of post-secondary education; (3) if the parent fails to follow proper procedures and pay the copying charge; or (4) when the district is given a copy of a court order terminating the parental rights. If the student qualifies for free or reduced-price meals and the parents are unable to view the records during regular school hours, upon written request of the parent, one copy of the record will be provided at no charge.

Certain information about district students is considered directory information and will be released to anyone who follows procedures for requesting it, unless the parent objects to the release of any or all directory information about the child. This objection must be made in writing to the principal within ten school days after the issuance of this handbook. Directory information includes a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, major field of study, grade levels, photograph, e-mail address, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, awards received in school, and most recent previous school attended.

Military recruiters or institutions of higher learning shall have access to secondary school students names, addresses and telephone listings, unless a parent/guardian or secondary student aged 18 or over requests in writing that such information not be released.

The District will release to the Parent Teacher Association the names, addresses, telephone number and grade levels of students (unless the District is informed by September 15 of the school year that designation of such directory information has been refused as to a particular student) provided such information is to be used by the PTA for its own school activities or school business.

The District, when a student moves to a new school system or charter school, will send the student's records to the new district or charter school within ten business days of receiving written notice of the move from the new district. Unless

the parents/guardians of the student authorize the record transfer in writing, the sending District is required to send a notice when the records are sent to the new district.

Parents and eligible students have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the District to comply with the requirements of FERPA. Complaints may be addressed to: Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 5400 Maryland Avenue, S.W., Washington, DC 20202-4605.

The district's HIPPA Privacy Officer is Andrée Fitzgerald (afitzgerald@ridgefieldps.net), RPS Nursing Coordinator.

Student Records: Preferred Name

Students requesting to make a change to their current identity characteristics (preferred name, gender preference, and/or pronoun preference) in PowerSchool should consult with their school counselor.

Surveys

Students will not be required to participate without parental consent in any survey, analysis, or evaluation that concerns:

1. political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student's parents;
2. mental or psychological problems of the student or the student's family;
3. sex attitudes or behaviors;
4. illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating and demeaning behavior;
5. critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships;
6. legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, and ministers;
7. income; or
8. religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or the student's parents.

In addition, parents have the right to inspect, upon request, a survey that is to be administered by a school to a student, prior to its use. Parents will be notified at least two weeks in advance of any survey that will be given to their children. Click [here](#) and [here](#) for the complete privacy policies.

The District will not collect, disclose or use personal information gathered from students for the purpose of marketing or selling that information, or providing it to others for that purpose.

Teacher and Paraprofessional Qualifications

Parents have the right to request information about the professional qualifications of their child's teacher(s). The response will indicate whether the teacher is certified for the subject matter and grade taught; the teacher's undergraduate major and any graduate degrees or certifications a teacher may have. Parents will also be advised, if requested, as to whether the child is provided service by paraprofessionals and their qualifications.

Title I

Comparability of Services: All district schools, regardless of whether they receive Federal Title I funds, provide services that, taken as a whole, are substantially comparable. Staff, curriculum materials and instructional supplies are provided in a manner to ensure equivalency among district schools.

Parent and Family Engagement: Parents of a child in a Title 1 funded program will receive a copy of the district's parental and family engagement involvement policy, including provisions of an annual meeting and involvement of parents in the planning, review and implementation of Title 1 programs and opportunities for parents and family members to participate in the education of their children.

Transportation and Parking

Bus Transportation

Buses are provided for transportation to and from school, and specific bus stops are available online at the Ridgefield Public School website and in the Student Life Office. Each student riding a school bus must carry a student ID card, which must be presented if requested. Students are expected to conform to safety regulations and demonstrate courtesy and respect for the bus driver. Students who misbehave on buses will be subject to disciplinary action and suspension of bus privileges.

In the morning, students should arrive at school before the 7:20 a.m. warning bell is sounded. Buses will pick students up at the end of the school day at 2:15 p.m. The Main Office at the high school handles problems with bus transportation.

Late Buses

Late buses are provided for the convenience of students who receive extra help after school, are involved in a club or activity, participate in interscholastic sports, or must remain after school for any reason. Late buses are available at approximately 4:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. at the Community Entrance. Late buses are available at 2:30 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. on scheduled early dismissal days. There is only one late bus at 2:30 during exams.

Parent Drop Off and Pick Up

Drop Off – is at the Main Entrance by the flagpole. For safety reasons please do not drop your child off at the other parking lots.

Pick Up – is by the curve at the Promenade Entrance in the Staff Parking Lot. Please exit by going around the Staff Lot through the lower tier. Buses have the right of way when leaving school, and they travel in a group. For safety and scheduling reasons, buses will not stop to let cars into the traffic lane. Because of traffic congestion, we encourage all students to ride the bus.

Be aware that cars parked in visitor parking spaces at the flagpole entrance are blocked by buses from 2:00 p.m. until the buses exit the campus.

Transportation Safety Complaints/Procedures

All complaints concerning school transportation safety are to be made to the Transportation Coordinator. A written record of all complaints will be maintained and an investigation of the allegations will take place.

Parking

Obtaining a Parking Permit

Parking is contingent upon satisfactory attendance at school. Parking permit application information is available in the Main Office. Students who are awarded a permit may register and obtain parking stickers for up to two (2) vehicles.

A driver's license, a \$200 registration fee, and the registration of the car(s) (2 maximum), for which the parking sticker is being obtained are required. No parking permit will be issued to any student who has outstanding obligations or who has not completed the electronic signature for the Student Handbook. Lost parking stickers may be replaced for a \$25 fee.

Parking is primarily a senior class privilege. Seniors will have the opportunity to obtain a parking pass before juniors. Seniors will be able to purchase their passes a few weeks before the school year starts. Seniors who will receive their

license later in the school year may still reserve a spot for when they do obtain their license. Juniors will also be able to submit applications for parking, but these applications will not be reviewed until the senior application period has ended; juniors can register their car(s) on a first-come, first-served basis as there are fewer spaces available. A parking letter will be shared with families during the summer with more specific information about the dates parking permits will be sold.

Freshmen and sophomores are not eligible for regular parking privileges; however, once seniors begin their internships, sophomores with a valid license may register for a parking permit at no charge for the balance of the year. Any 10th grade student who parks illegally may lose the privilege of parking during Senior Internships and additional infractions may lead to the loss of parking privileges in the student's junior year.

Parking Regulations

Parking Stickers – Parking stickers should be permanently affixed to the lower right side of the front window on the passenger's side. Parking stickers are only valid for the year in which they were issued. All previous years' parking stickers are to be scraped off the window. If a registration number changes or if plates are transferred to another vehicle, students must register the change with the Main Office.

Up to two parking stickers can be issued per student, provided the student registers both vehicles. Both vehicles must belong to the student or the student's family. Any student who wrongfully shares their parking sticker(s) will be subject to disciplinary action (see Parking Violations).

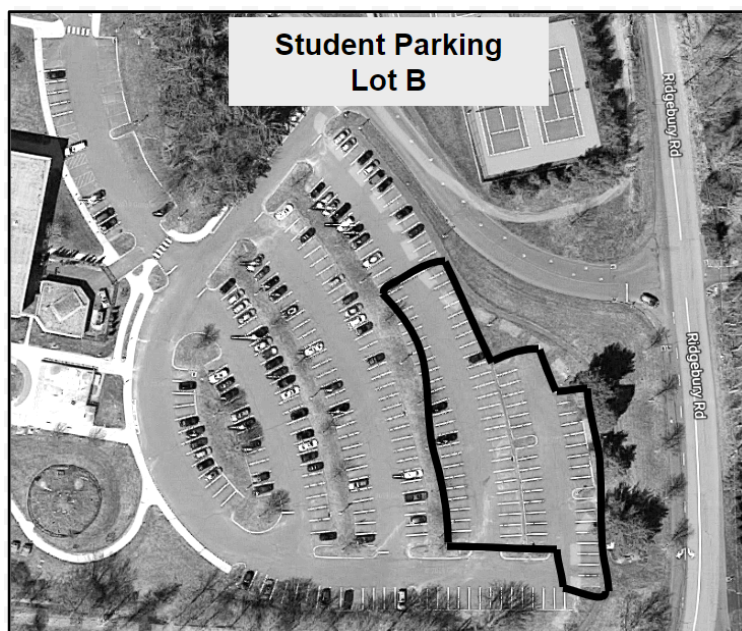
A legal parking sticker is one that has been purchased through the Main Office, is registered to a specific vehicle corresponding to that student, and is properly adhered to the windshield of the registered vehicle. Parking without a valid sticker or in an unauthorized area will jeopardize the student's ability to obtain parking privileges during current and future school years, and the student will be subject to disciplinary action.

Parking Lots - The student parking lot (Lot A - Community Entrance side) and a designated section of the staff parking lot (Lot B) are the areas reserved for students with parking permits. Students may park in appropriate spots in Lot A or B. Students who drive motorcycles to school must also park in appropriate spots. Vehicles parked outside these areas are subject to ticketing and/or disciplinary action. Parking spaces are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Temporary Parking Passes - Seniors or juniors who have not purchased a parking sticker and have an extenuating circumstance may request permission for day parking in the Main Office. Please note, a fee of \$5 per day will be charged.

Driving Responsibilities - Students must exercise caution and good judgment while operating vehicles, and are responsible for their vehicles at all times. Any infraction involving a motor vehicle may result in a withdrawal of parking privileges and/or disciplinary action. The following are not permitted:

- blocking traffic, "standing" in roadways or parking lots, unsafe use of a vehicle, disruptive activity;
- attempting to avoid the gates/guards at either entrance;
- loitering in cars or the parking lot area;
- excessive speed;
- reckless driving; and
- parking on the grass, in handicapped spaces, or in other non-approved spaces.



All students leaving campus prior to the end of the school day must stop and show an appropriate pass to the security officer. **Any driver leaving campus who is not authorized to do so, or who transports someone off campus who is not authorized to leave, may have their campus parking privileges permanently withdrawn and is subject to disciplinary action.**

Parking Violations

The following disciplinary actions will apply for parking violations.

Violation	Level	Disciplinary Action
Parking w/o sticker or with illegally obtained sticker	1	Ineligible to apply for a parking permit for one quarter and \$10 Day Fee per ticket.
	2	Saturday detention, \$10 Day Fee per ticket. Ineligible to apply for a parking permit for the remainder of the semester. Vehicle tow warning and letter home.
	3	Two Saturday detentions/ \$10 Day Fee per ticket. Ineligible to apply for a parking permit for a full year. Vehicle towed and letter home
	4	In-school suspension, \$10 Day Fee per ticket. Vehicle towed. Ineligible to apply for parking privileges at any time and letter home.
Violation	Level	Disciplinary Action
Parking illegally w/sticker registered to student	1	Verbal warning
	2	Saturday detention. Loss of parking privileges for one quarter, letter home, and removal of the sticker.
	3	Two Saturday detentions. Letter home. Loss of parking privileges for one semester, and removal of the sticker.
	4	In-School Suspension. No longer eligible for parking privileges. Letter home and removal of the sticker.

NOTE: All Level 2, 3, and 4 parking infractions are subject to police ticketing.

Any 10th grade student who parks illegally will lose the privilege of parking during Senior Internships and the loss of parking privileges will apply to the student's junior year.

Illegally parked cars will be ticketed and subject to disciplinary action. Students are not to park in the Scotts Ridge Middle School lots at any time.

The administration may have vehicles towed away at the owner's expense if any of the above procedures are violated. The registered owner of the car is responsible for all towing and storage charges, and the school is not responsible for any damage incurred should towing be deemed necessary.

Open Campus

Open Campus

Open Campus Procedures

Open Campus is a privilege that supports the growth of independence in our 11th and 12th grade students. RHS reviews students' attendance, grades, and behavior in consideration of granting and maintaining Open Campus eligibility. RHS does not bear the responsibility of supervising students during the periods that they are permitted to leave campus under the Open Campus policy. The student and their parent(s) are responsible for the student's behavior while they are off campus. Parents are better equipped to assess their child's driving ability and/or level of independent responsibility than school personnel. Thus, it is essential that RHS and parents work in partnership to determine if Open Campus is an appropriate option for your child.

A. Application.

Students, together with their parents, are required to apply for the Open Campus privilege by checking off the electronic signature for Open Campus on the PowerSchool parent portal. Should you wish to cancel your child's Open Campus privileges, submit a written request to the Attendance Office.

B. Application review.

The Deans will be responsible for evaluating applications. To qualify for Open Campus, a student must have:

- Minimum GPA of 2.5 for the preceding marking period
- Five or fewer unexcused tardies during the preceding marking period
- No more than two unexcused single period absences during the preceding marking period
- Completed Signature Packet on file

The student's disciplinary history and FLEX period attendance will also be reviewed. Any student who has been suspended for any offense during their preceding year will come under administrative review to determine eligibility for their Open Campus application. Deans will inform students of their status. Students rejected for excessive tardies and/or unexcused absences may reapply the following marking period.

C. Approved Applications.

A student who is Open Campus eligible will receive a sticker to attach to their ID card that identifies when they may leave campus. As is current practice, in order to leave, students will be required to sign-in/out and show their ID cards (with sticker) to the Security Guards.

D. Ongoing Review

Open Campus is a privilege, not a right. It will be incumbent upon students to maintain Open Campus privileges. The following requirements will be reviewed for students participating in Open Campus:

- Attendance will be reviewed at the time of Report Cards
- GPA will be reviewed at the time of Report Cards
- Any student suspended during the school year will lose Open Campus privileges pending administrative review

Revocation of Open Campus Privileges - If a student does not continue to meet the Open Campus eligibility requirements, their Open Campus privileges will be revoked. In that case, the sticker will be removed and replaced with one showing no Open Campus permission. Parents will be notified. Students will lose their privilege for the remainder of the marking period, after which they may reapply for Open Campus using the standard application. The RHS Administration and/or parents have the right to rescind Open Campus at any time.

Student ID – Any student returning to school from Open Campus must show their ID upon re-entering the school. Any student who has a schedule change must obtain an updated sticker from the attendance office.

Student Life

Student Life Office

Purpose

The purpose of the Student Life Office is to promote and coordinate student activities at RHS. The office seeks to encourage student involvement in the life of the school and to assist students in learning how to organize and work together to implement activities. Located adjacent to the Student Center, the Student Life Office is open during the school day from 7:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Often working in conjunction with the Student Government, the Student Life Office is responsible for coordinating these areas:

announcements	field trips
assemblies	graduation
awards ceremonies	identification cards
class activities	lost and found
club activities	school calendar
facilities use	special program events
	working papers

Advisory Program

Every student at Ridgefield High School belongs to an advisory group, which is led by a faculty member. The group is small, and whenever possible the members remain the same for a student's four years. The goal of the program is to promote students' social-emotional and academic well-being and encourage students to be responsible members of the community. Advisory groups discuss important topics pertaining to the school or to the students themselves. Conversations may be led by staff members or students. Topics can include information about new policies, handling stress, or events that have occurred at school or in the students' lives.

Clubs

Ridgefield High School encourages the formation of clubs representing a wide range of student interests. The Student Life Office assists students and advisors in forming and running clubs. See the Student Life Office website for details on club offerings.

National Honor Society

Members of the Ridgefield High School Chapter of the National Honor Society have a special distinction as part of the only honor society affiliated with RHS during their senior year.

The purpose of the Ridgefield High School Chapter of the National Honor Society is to serve the school and the community. Member services include the Red Cross Blood Drives, the Peer Tutoring Program, Middle School Homework Clubs and various service projects in the community.

The National Honor Society Faculty Council will convene to determine those students who meet the criteria for membership. More information on eligibility and the application process can be found below.

Scholarship

- Have an overall weighted GPA of 3.9 based on five semesters of completed course work
- Have been attending Ridgefield High School for a minimum of one semester.

Leadership

- Exemplify leadership qualities and maintain a positive influence on their peers.
- Successfully hold a leadership position/role in at least one school and/or community organization (without pay or grade).
- Must be demonstrated by the student actively planning, organizing, and then implementing their project.
- Demonstrate initiative and dependability in school activities.
- A recommendation from an adult supervisor for the leadership role will be required. References cannot be the parent or family member of the candidate.

Service

- Actively participates in one or more organizations, performing a minimum of 35 hours of volunteer service for the organization that is different from their leadership experience. A student must not receive either pay and/or grade for these services.
- A recommendation from an adult supervisor for each community service project will be required. References cannot be the parent or family member of the candidate.
- Volunteer dependable and well-organized assistance.
- Readily render any requested service to school or community.

Character

- Uphold principles of morality and ethics.
- Demonstrate the highest standards of honesty and reliability.
- Comply with all school and civil rules and regulations.
- Show courtesy, concern and respect for others.
- Disciplinary records will be considered.

Attendance:

- Students will exhibit exemplary attendance in all classes.
- Disqualifiers for attendance:
 - o 5 total unexcused tardies to class per semester or
 - o 3 full days of unexcused absences per semester or
 - o 3 unexcused individual class absences per semester
 - o Excessive absences for medical reasons will be reviewed on a case by case basis

Application and Eligibility

A review of the student's application including service (35 hours) and leadership (1 role) plus their records, including academic, attendance and discipline will be considered during their junior year.

Students who are academically eligible will be notified by PowerSchool in early February. Applications for the Ridgefield High School National Honor Society will be available on PowerSchool (information about how and when to access will be

sent out). Each student is responsible for completing the application thoroughly and submitting the application and recommendations on or before the due date stated on PowerSchool.

Eligible juniors will have the opportunity to apply during the second semester of their junior year. Eligible students who were not accepted in their junior year will have a second opportunity to apply at the beginning of their senior year.

Student Government

Student Government

Student Government consists of an Executive Board and four Class Councils. The Executive Board provides leadership and representation for the entire student body and focuses on issues and projects affecting the entire RHS community. Major Student Government activities include: the Fall Homecoming Dance and Spirit Week, the annual Freshman Dance, government elections and a variety of service projects. Executive Board positions include: President, Vice President of Rights and Responsibilities, Vice President of Activities, Secretary, Treasurer, Public Relations Officer, and Community Outreach Officer.

Class Councils

Class Councils provide leadership and representation for each of the four classes and focus on issues relating to their individual classes. Class Councils are responsible for planning and organizing their Junior and Senior Proms and graduation ceremonies. Major effort is dedicated toward fundraising for the prom and Senior Banquet. Class Council positions include: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Public Relations Officer, and up to ten Senators.

Elections and Meetings

Executive Board and Class Council elections are held each spring, and elected officers govern throughout the following year. Freshman Class Council elections occur early in September each year. The entire Student Government, including all Class Councils, meet for one period each week on a rotating basis. The Executive Board meets after school once a week. Each Class Council meets once a week before or after school.

Student Life Communication

Announcements

The Public Address system is available for daily announcements for school organizations. Permission to make announcements must be obtained through the Student Life Office. Announcement forms are available in the Student Life Office and should be submitted in advance. Forms must be signed by the appropriate supervising adult. Announcements are posted online at the RHS website.

Bulletin Boards

School organizations may place notices on bulletin boards or designated areas in the Student Center. Announcements of events and activities taped to walls or doors without prior approval will be removed. Permission must be requested from the Student Life Coordinator. The principal has final approval for all postings.

Athletics

Athletics Philosophy

Athletics Program Mission Statement

The Ridgefield High School Interscholastic Athletics Program is comprised of student-athletes, coaches, staff, and volunteers striving for excellence in sportsmanship, leadership, and success in competition. We are united through our commitment to developing skilled student-athletes and teams. We promote honor, dedication, and respect for ourselves, teammates, and opponents.

Statement of Purpose

A comprehensive and balanced Interscholastic Athletics Program is an integral part of the total educational process. While the high school athletics program serves as an arena for the student-athlete to develop and display their talents, student-athletes must, in turn, be willing to accept the responsibility to self, to team and to school. The value of athletics as an educational tool provides opportunities for mastery of foundational learning expectations and exiting competencies. The student-athlete will demonstrate self-discipline, emotional control, and the ideals of good sportsmanship.

Participation in Interscholastic Athletics is a privilege, not a right. Through participation in our athletics program, student-athletes will continue to develop the Core Values of Ridgefield High School:

- **Collaboration**—contributing responsibly to rigorous and complex issues;
- **Innovation**—finding creative solutions to authentic problems;
- **Mindfulness**—developing awareness of presence and respectful interconnectedness;
- **Communication**—utilizing skills for a wide variety of audiences and purposes;
- **Knowledge**—synthesizing and applying new information; and
- **Resilience**—rebounding from challenges and adversity.

Student-Athlete Responsibility

A student-athlete assumes a leadership role when they are on an athletics team. As a member of a team, a student athlete serves as a role model. They are admired and respected by many, including younger athletes, and their behavior and actions often have a significant impact on others. The student athlete plays an essential role in the promotion of sportsmanship and must accept the responsibility to always display high standards of sportsmanship. The student body, the community and other communities judge our school by the conduct and attitudes of student athletes both on and off the field. Because of this leadership role, student-athletes can contribute greatly to school spirit and community pride by consistent demonstration of the following ideals.

A model student athlete will:

- Accept the responsibility and privilege the student athlete has in representing their school and community by learning and showing teamwork, sportsmanship and discipline in all aspects of the game.
- Demonstrate respect for self, coach, teammates, opponents, officials, and spectators by exhibiting good character and conducting themselves as a positive role model.
- Follow all aspects of the Athletics Training Expectations and RHS Rules.
- Work to get into top notch physical condition.
- Try to be the best they can be, in every athletic practice/contest.
- Have a thorough knowledge of, and abide by, all rules of the game and CIAC.
- Work for the good of the team at all times.
- Cheer for your team, not against your opponent.
- Congratulate opponents in a sincere manner following either victory or defeat.
- Refrain from the use of illegal or unhealthy substances to gain an unfair advantage.
- Never promote or participate in hazing or initiations.

Participation and Eligibility

League Affiliation

Ridgefield is a member of the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC), which is affiliated with the National Federations of State High School Associations and the Fairfield County Interscholastic Athletic Conference (FCIAC). Additionally, our girls' ice hockey program is a member of the Connecticut High School Girls Hockey Association (CHSGHA), our ski team is a member of the Connecticut Interscholastic Ski League (CISL) and our boys' rugby team competes as a member of CT Rugby. Ridgefield athletes are governed by the rules, regulations and requirements of each of these respective organizations. The following schools are also members of the FCIAC: Bridgeport Central, Danbury, Darien, Fairfield Ludlowe, Fairfield Warde, Greenwich, Brien McMahon, New Canaan, Norwalk, St. Joseph, Stamford, Staples, Trumbull, Westhill, and Wilton.

Eligibility

Student eligibility for participation in interscholastic athletics is decided in accordance with Board of Education policy, and Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC) and Fairfield County Interscholastic Athletic Conference (FCIAC) rules. A copy of the CIAC by-laws is available for reference in the Athletics Office or online at: <https://ciac.fpsports.org/resources/Resources/Handbook.pdf>

While not a comprehensive list of eligibility requirements (use the link above for more details), the following CIAC eligibility rules apply to all student-athletes looking to participate in the RHS Interscholastic Athletic Program:

- A student must be officially registered as a student at RHS.
- Student athletes at all levels of play, including freshman, junior varsity and varsity, must conform to all Ridgefield Board of Education academic requirements and all CIAC eligibility requirements.
- Eligibility for fall sports is determined by the number of credits received toward graduation at the close of the previous school year, not the fourth marking period grades. Credit must have been received in at least four courses for which credit was not previously received to be eligible for fall sports participation. This may include credits earned during the summer. Thereafter, marking period grades, not semester grades, are used to determine eligibility. A student athlete must take a minimum of four (4) courses and earn passing grades in four (4) courses, in addition to meeting the academic requirements of RHS, to achieve eligibility. For additional information on academic eligibility, speak to the Athletics Director.
- Per RPS BOE Policy, students must maintain a minimum Quarter GPA of 2.0 in order to remain academically eligible to participate in RHS Athletics programs. Students may appeal to the Principal and Athletics Director if their GPA for the most recently completed academic quarter is between 1.5 and 2.0. If the appeal is approved, an academic agreement will be established and academic monitoring will follow. The administration reserves the right to repeal an agreement if the student does not complete the agreement requirements. Students will be allowed to appeal one time in their high school career.
- First time ninth grade students are automatically eligible for the first marking period.
- Student eligibility is determined each quarter on the date that final grades for the quarter are uploaded to PowerSchool and available for students/parents.
- Course failures may not be made up for eligibility purposes in any manner until the next report period grades are distributed. For athletic purposes, course incompletes must be made up within ten (10) school days following the date that student eligibility was determined for that marking period. During that time, incomplete grades are viewed as failing grades in regards to CIAC eligibility criteria. Year-end failures may be made up through successful completion of RHS approved summer school courses in the courses failed.

- A student has eight consecutive semesters, or four consecutive years of eligibility from the date of entry into ninth grade, to be eligible for interscholastic competition. No student athlete shall participate in the same sport more than four (4) seasons in grades 9-12, at any school. Date of entry is defined as the first date of enrollment as a grade nine student taking four (4) or more high school subjects.
- A student will not be allowed to start a season or compete during a season in which their twentieth (20th) birthday falls.

Students who fail to meet the eligibility requirements in any marking period will be immediately excluded from participation in interscholastic athletics until the completion of the next marking period when grades are re-evaluated.

In-Season Requirements

Participation in non-school athletic contests, practices, camps, etc., in the same sport during the high school season may affect an individual athlete's eligibility and could negatively impact the RHS team. Speak with the athletics director before participating in these events to avoid violation of CIAC rules and to discuss any questions or concerns.

The following requirements apply to all student athletes.

- An athlete may change sports up to the date of the first scheduled varsity contest in the sport he/she wishes to leave. However, an athlete may NOT change teams or sports once that student has participated in a contest at any level or seven days after the first scheduled varsity contest date in the sport he/she is leaving.
- Participation as an individual or as a member of a non-school sponsored team in a sports competition, practice, showcase, tryout, camp or clinic at any level of play including professional in the same branch of athletics during the authorized contest season will render the athlete ineligible for all interscholastic athletics unless said athlete is reinstated by the CIAC Board of Control. (Season is defined as the date of the first contest for that school and concludes with either the final CIAC tournament game or New England championship.)
- A student-athlete may participate in practices or contests in cross country, golf, gymnastics, indoor track, outdoor track, swimming, and tennis as an individual (unattached) and not as a member of a team during the authorized contest season without loss of interscholastic eligibility provided the following criteria are met:
 1. Compliance with weekly limitations for the specific sport (Exception: golf)
 2. In cross country, gymnastics, swimming, indoor track, outdoor track and tennis, no more than four (4) unattached outside meets per season are permitted. In the sport of golf no more than eight (8). Athletes in these sports may practice but not compete with a non-CIAC team during the season. Such practices may not interfere with or replace member school practices.
 3. Prior approval of athletic director, coach, principal and parent.
 4. Prior arrangements to complete academic lessons, assignments, tests, etc.
 5. Student and parent agree to not accept, directly or indirectly any awards, gifts, trips, merchandise, etc. which would be in violation of CIAC regulations.
 6. Athletes will not miss any CIAC-sponsored tournament contest for which he/she is eligible unless excused by the CIAC board of control. It is the philosophy of the conference that student-athletes owe loyalty to their school and team. During the regular season, the school administration will make the determination as to whether a student athlete may be excused from a contest to attend an event as an "unattached" competitor.

- Participation in Olympic or college tryouts, college showcases, college auditions or student clinics during the authorized contest season, including CIAC tournaments, in the same sport, is permissible provided all the following are met:
 1. each event is limited to one (1) day in duration;
 2. the member school principal must grant permission if there is any loss of school time;
 3. the member school coach determines the event does not interfere with any functions of the in-season school program; and
 4. Written consent is given by the school administration and athletic department prior to the student attending such activities.
 5. Member schools will inform the CIAC staff of students who are approved to attend
- Student athletes are permitted to receive individual lessons in their sport during the season.
- Student athletes may not attend camps during the high school contest season.

Out-of-Season Requirements

Generally, student athletes are permitted to participate in any activity or sport they wish to during the off-season without being in violation of CIAC rules. There are limitations for participation in camps, clinics or other organized activities which the coach or school is involved in. A full copy of the CIAC rules is available for reference in the Athletics Office or at the CIAC website at <https://ciac.fpsports.org/resources/Resources/Handbook.pdf>

Residency

Student athletes under the age of eighteen (18) must reside with their parent or legal guardian (as determined by the Probate Court) to be eligible to participate in interscholastic sports at RHS. Residence with and support by any individual other than the parent or legal guardian, for a period of one year or more, establishes residency of the student for athletic purposes.

Transfer Rule

Transferring from one CIAC school to another may have implications for athletic eligibility. Students who plan to transfer to RHS should contact the Athletics Director to discuss the effects of the transfer on their eligibility. The following apply:

- Students who transfer from one CIAC school to another at the end of grade nine (9) will be immediately eligible at their new school provided they are otherwise eligible.
- Students who transfer in grades 10-12 from one CIAC member school to another with a corresponding change of legal address and are residing with their parent(s) or legal guardian will be immediately eligible provided they are otherwise eligible.
- Students who transfer from one CIAC school to another in grades 10-12 without a corresponding change of legal address may be subject to a 50% sit-out in the first varsity sport played at their previous school and the sport they wish to play at their new school. Families with a child in this scenario should check with the Athletics Director to see if this rule will apply.

- Transfers for athletic reasons are not allowed. Students who transfer from one CIAC school to another for athletic reasons will be subject to a one year restriction on playing in the sport they played the previous year.

Expectations of Athletes

Standards and Expectations

Participation in the Ridgefield Interscholastic Athletics Program is a privilege granted to individuals who possess the ability, attitude and desire to represent the student body, the school district, and the Ridgefield community in a manner we can all be proud of. Therefore, athletes are held to higher standards and expectations and student athletes must, in turn, be willing to assume certain responsibilities that accompany this privilege.

There are standards and expectations in the areas of academics, citizenship, training expectations and sportsmanship that must be met by participants, and it is essential that student athletes and parents be thoroughly familiar with all rules and regulations governing athletic participation in Ridgefield. The student athlete serves as a reflection of their coach, team, family, school, and community. Students are expected to display high standards of behavior, remain chemical free, exemplify good sportsmanship, show respect for others, and meet all CIAC and Ridgefield High School eligibility requirements. Furthermore, as with all privileges, it is important to remember that the school reserves the right to revoke the privilege of participation if the participant does not comply with these rules, regulations and expectations. Students are expected to behave with respect and concern for the rights, safety and welfare of all individuals while participating in the athletics program.

Ridgefield High School students who wish to participate in the athletics program must set priorities and make wise choices. Academic performance takes precedence over participation in athletics. Students who must receive extra help after school or make up academic work should bring a note from the faculty member to their coach upon arriving at practice. Any disciplinary action, including detentions, takes precedence over athletic practices. Suspensions take precedence over both athletic practices and contests. The following rules, in addition to disciplinary action as outlined in the Discipline Procedures section of this handbook, will apply to all athletes participating in interscholastic athletics at Ridgefield High School.

Team Specific Expectations

Coaches will provide to all student athletes, in writing, any additional rules and regulations specific to that sport and his/her coach, not covered in this handbook. These rules will be provided in writing at the team orientation meeting which is held at the beginning of each season and will be explained fully with all team members and parents. These rules adopted by the head coach for a particular team will be approved by the Athletics Director and kept on file in the Athletics Office.

Athletics Training Expectations

All athletes participating in any sport at Ridgefield High School are to be chemical free. Participation in high school athletics is a privilege. The following Athletics Training Expectations are in effect during an athlete's season of play beginning with the first day of practice. Student athletes will be held accountable for these expectations on or off campus, 24/7. The school reserves the right to invoke team discipline for any violation of these expectations, including those violations that occur off campus and/or out of season.

An athlete is prohibited from the possession, use, distribution or sale of the following:

1. Alcohol, stimulants, controlled substances and drug paraphernalia.
2. Performance enhancing substances (e.g., anabolic agents, diuretics, peptide hormones, analogues and any other substances identified as banned by the NCAA and the USOC).

Additionally, the use of tobacco (in any form including chewing tobacco and tobacco/nicotine delivery devices including vaporizers) by an athlete is prohibited.

Violations: Violations will be reported by the coach, dean, assistant principal or athlete to the Athletics Director. The Athletics Director/grade level Assistant Principal will be responsible for the administration, enforcement, and monitoring of the policy. Parents of athletes will be notified in writing of any offense requiring disciplinary action.

All coaches at the beginning of their seasons will review these expectations with team members. Parents and athletes are required to sign a release stating they have read the regulations and agree to abide by them

Disciplinary action for violations: Violations are cumulative for all sports played during a school year, carrying over into subsequent seasons.

ALCOHOL, STIMULANTS, CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES, DRUG PARAPHERNALIA PENALTY:

Athletes found in violation of a training expectation will be suspended as follows:

1st Offense - 20% of regular season games (*no suspension will be less than two games*).

2nd Offense - An athlete will be suspended from the team for the entire season.

3rd Offense - An athlete will be suspended from participating on any team for the remainder of the school year.

Performance enhancing drugs penalty: The CIAC Board of Control requires that member schools report any student athlete use of performance enhancing substances. A student athlete who has been determined to have used, in or out of season, androgenic/anabolic steroids or other performance enhancing substances shall be declared ineligible for all CIAC controlled activities for one hundred eighty (180) school days on each occurrence. The one hundred eighty (180) school day period of ineligibility commences on the day the CIAC Board of Control makes such determination.

Distribution or Sale of a Controlled Substance penalty: An athlete will not be permitted to participate in the athletics program for one hundred eighty (180) school days following the violation commencing with the imposition of the penalty.

TOBACCO USE PENALTY:

Athletes found in violation of the tobacco (this includes vaporizers and other nicotine delivery devices) use training expectation will receive the following consequences:

1st Offense – written warning

2nd and Subsequent Offenses – 1 game suspension for each offense.

While serving an athletic suspension the student athlete:

- Cannot attend or participate in any athletic contests.
- Must complete a re-entry interview with the Athletics Director and coach.

Note: While serving a school suspension, athletes may not attend or participate in any practices or contests.

Athletes who violate athletics training expectations are not eligible to receive RHS postseason Athletics Awards, Scholarships and other school/community awards involving character and leadership.

Captains found guilty of violating athletics training expectations will lose their position as captain and will not be eligible to be named captain of a team until three seasons of play have passed from the date of the violation (including the season in which the violation occurred).

Violations of Standards and Expectations

Violations of standards and expectations include, but are not limited to, the following behaviors:

Hazing/Initiation – Hazing and/or initiation activities of any type are inconsistent with the educational goals of the Ridgefield Board of Education and Connecticut State Law and are prohibited at all times. A copy of the Ridgefield Public Schools Hazing Policy can be found in Appendix A. Team members are responsible to report any hazing or harassment incidents to their coach and/or the Athletics Director immediately.

Student Athletes/Team Captains that organize and/or participate in any hazing/initiation activities will be immediately dismissed from the team for the remainder of the season. In addition, captains will lose their position as team captain. The school reserves the right to invoke discipline for incidents of serious misconduct that occur off campus and off-season.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct Fighting/Taunting – Any athlete ejected from a contest for unsportsmanlike behavior or fighting is ineligible to participate in the next contest at the same level of play (even if the next contest does not occur until league or CIAC tournament play or next year). Unsportsmanlike behavior includes taunting, which is defined as, but is not limited to, any actions or comments by coaches or players which are intended to bait, anger, embarrass, ridicule or demean other players, coaches or game officials.

Upon the second disqualification, if that violation is for initiating a fight or retaliating in a fight, that student athlete will be dismissed from the team for the remainder of the season.

Any student athlete or coach who physically assaults an official, coach, opposing player or spectator will be immediately dismissed from the team for the remainder of the season.

Unacceptable Behavior – It is the athlete's responsibility to be aware of and to conform to the expectations, rules and regulations that comprise responsible and successful student/athlete behavior. Student involvement in unacceptable behavior is considered to be a serious violation of the athletics code and school policy. These behaviors include, but are not limited to:

- theft and assault
- malicious destruction of individual, private or school property
- infraction of school rules requiring administrative action
- misconduct by an athlete that is potentially detrimental to the school or athletic program or school district
- hosting or attending any event where under-age drinking or the use of illegal drugs is occurring

Disciplinary Action

For behavior that violates school rules, school disciplinary action will apply. In addition, there may be athletic discipline.

Examples of athletic discipline include, but are not limited to: loss of a starting position, loss of captaincy, game suspension, team suspension or community service.

Violation of athletics behavioral standards and expectations may also jeopardize a student's eligibility to receive postseason athletics awards, scholarships and other school/community awards.

Students are reminded that participation in athletics is a privilege and expectations for acceptable behavior apply at all times. The school reserves the right to invoke discipline for incidents of serious misconduct that occur off campus and off-season.

Attendance

Attendance at Practice and Games

Participation on an athletic team is a privilege granted after a student's academic responsibilities are met. Attendance in the classroom is an important requirement for a good education as is attendance at team activities.

Students participating in athletic practices and games are expected to attend **all of their classes** that day. Students exhibiting a pattern of tardies or absences (both excused and unexcused), as determined by the Athletics Director, may be prevented from participating in athletic practices and/or contests.

Participation in Physical Education

No athlete may participate in team activities if he/she has a medical excuse for physical education class. Athletes who do not participate in their physical education class on the day of a practice or contest are not eligible to take part in that day's practice/contest.

Practice and Game Schedules

Practice/Game Schedule Changes and Cancellations

Schedules for all team practices and games are available on the Athletics website at <http://rhs.ridgefield.org/Athletics>.

Students are advised to check for schedule changes after 12:30 pm, as everything possible is done to go ahead with scheduled competitions and practices. Please be aware that weather will, most likely, not be a factor for games scheduled to play on a turf field. We ask that students not stop by the Athletics office and parents not call for scheduling updates, so that we may focus on getting timely information out to the entire school.

In the event of an official school closing or weather related early dismissal, all scheduled contests and practices are automatically canceled.

Sunday/Holiday/Days of Religious Observance

Consistent with Board of Education Policy on recognition of religious holidays, it is the practice of the Athletics Department not to schedule games on religious holidays. In planning both FCIAC and CIAC League activities, the executive board attempts to avoid conflicts with major religious observances. Absence from practice to celebrate a religious holiday shall be an **excused absence**. Coaches **will not** penalize athletes observing religious holidays. Athletes/parents need not be concerned that your standing/position on the team will be affected by observing religious holidays. It is the responsibility of the athlete/family to inform the coaching staff of an intended absence due to a religious observance. Further:

- No Sunday game/practices may start before 11:00 a.m.
- Scheduling of practices, including Sunday and school holidays, is at the discretion of the coach with the approval of the athletics director.
- Practices and games are not scheduled on days of important religious holidays.
- Athletes will not be penalized for absences due to religious observances.

The Ridgefield Board of Education has adopted the following policy in accordance with the CIAC Sunday rule. A regular season postponed game is permitted on Sunday under these conditions:

- the postponement of a scheduled Saturday game
- agreement of the two competing schools to play on Sunday

- a postponed Friday night game may be played on Sunday only if a site is not available on Saturday, or if severely adverse weather conditions exist on Saturday
- the CIAC may grant permission for other sports to play on Sunday afternoons due to unforeseen circumstances and with mutual consent of both schools

Further, the Board approves the use of Sundays after 12:30 p.m. for regular season and league tournament make-up games in all sports upon the mutual agreement of both schools. Should local board of education policy prohibit a member school from CIAC tournament participation on a Sunday, reasonable attempts will be made to offer an alternate competition date

Athletics Vacation Policy

Vacations and other out of school activities, without prior approval from the coach, are not valid reasons for missing practices and contests. Family vacations that interfere with organized practice and/or games should be discussed with the coach prior to the season in a timely manner. The following regulations have been developed to be fair to all, especially to the athlete who may have no choice but to go with the family, and to the athlete who has to take the absent athlete's place during practice and contests that occur during the vacation period. If an athlete is on vacation during the season he/she should be prepared to sit out a certain number of games depending on the level of the sport (Freshman, JV or Varsity).

Due to weekly game limitations set by the CIAC and length of schedule, conflicts during vacation period cannot be avoided. The FCIC and CIAC do not schedule around vacations. This is impossible to do because there is no one standard vacation week for all Connecticut Public Schools. Athletes and parents need to be aware that games over vacations will be played and/or forfeited and not changed. This is a League as well as State policy. Please refer to Appendix B for the complete Athletics Vacation policy.

Teams

Teams Offered

Ridgefield High School offers a wide variety of opportunities for students wishing to participate in athletics.

FALL PROGRAMS

Cheerleading (V, JV)
Cross Country (V, JV) – Boys/Girls
Dance (V)
Field Hockey (V, JV, FR) – Girls
Football (V, JV, FR)
Golf (V, JV) - Boys
Soccer (V, JV, FR) – Boys/Girls
Swim/Dive (V, JV) – Girls
Volleyball (V, JV, FR) – Girls
Unified Sports - Soccer

WINTER PROGRAMS

Basketball (V, JV, FR) – Boys/Girls
Cheerleading (V, JV)
Dance (V)
Ice Hockey (V, JV) – Boys
Ice Hockey (V) – Girls
Indoor Track (V, JV) – Boys/Girls
Co-ed Ski (V, JV)
Swim/Dive (V, JV) – Boys
Wrestling (V, JV)
Unified Sports - Basketball
CLUB Fencing

SPRING PROGRAMS

Baseball (V, JV, FR) – Boys
Golf (V, JV) - Girls
Lacrosse (V, JV, FR) – Boys/Girls
Outdoor Track (V, JV) – Boys/Girls
Rugby (V, JV) - Boys
Softball (V, JV) – Girls
Tennis (V, JV) – Boys/Girls
Volleyball (V, JV) – Boys
Unified Sports - Volleyball
CLUB Rugby - Girls

V = Varsity, JV = Junior Varsity, FR = Freshman

CLUB Sports operate as outlined in the Club Sport Procedure section below

Trying Out For a Team

Information concerning tryouts for the fall, winter and spring seasons is available on the RHS Athletics Webpage at: <http://rhs.ridgefield.org/Athletics>. Unless there are extenuating circumstances, seasonal kickoff meetings will be held prior to each sports pre-season for students interested in trying out for a sport. Detailed information on those meetings is also made available seasonally on the athletics website.

Students may try out for any sport while at Ridgefield High School as long as they remain eligible and are in good standing with Athletics Department policies. A student athlete should select their sport carefully for the following reasons:

- An athlete will not be allowed to drop one sport for another except with the permission of the coach prior to the first game of the team they want to transfer to and before the official roster has been given to the Athletics Department for eligibility verification. If the athlete is cut from one sport he/she may try out for another sport in the same season, providing that the first contest in the receiving sport has not been played. An athlete removed from a sport for disciplinary reasons will not be allowed to join another team in the same season.

Team Selection

The coaching staff makes team selections after a tryout period at the start of the season. In certain sports no cuts are made. In others, cuts may be necessary due to safety (facility or player/coach ratio), time limitations (reasonable opportunity for active participation in practice and/or games) or budget constraints.

Individuals selected as team members shall be considered as members of the team through the completion of that regular sports season unless they are removed for disciplinary reasons, academic ineligibility or mutual agreement between player and coach.

Club Sport Procedure

In order for a sports team to be considered for approval by the Board of Education as a Club Sport, the organizers must submit a written request to the Athletics Director/Principal. Following review and preliminary approval of the proposal by the Athletics Director/Principal, the recommendation will be forwarded to the Superintendent of Schools for submission to the Board of Education. Only after the Board of Education approves the request will the Club Sport be allowed to operate.

Parties submitting the request to form a Club Sport must provide the following information:

- Documentation of student interest adequate to support a viable competitive team.
- Qualified coach(es) will coach the Club Sport. Coaches must have a coaching permit issued by State of Connecticut standards and must attend pre-season athletic department meetings conducted by the RHS AD.
- Proven and sustained availability of appropriate competition within reasonable distance from the school by submitting a copy of the Club's proposed athletic schedule to the AD. The AD will provide scheduling support to the Club.

Parties submitting the request to form a Club Sport must agree to the following:

- The Club Sport will be formed in compliance with non-discrimination regulations of Title IX.
- It will arrange for adequate and appropriate facilities for practices and games.
- All costs of funding the program will be absorbed by the participants. (coach stipends, supplies, equipment, entry fees, facilities, officials and transportation).
- All athletes will comply with the rules and regulations set forth by all governing agencies: Ridgefield Board of Education, Ridgefield High School, FCIAC and CIAC. Club Sport members will comply with all eligibility requirements of RHS and CIAC.
- Submission of a team roster within one week of the start of the season to the Athletics Director.
- Submission of all required forms (parent consent, emergency consent to treat, current physical) to the athletics office.
- The RHS Athletics Training Expectations must be followed by all participants. All athletes participating in any sport at Ridgefield High School are to be chemical free.
- Club Sport program will be supervised by the Athletics Director.

- Transportation will be provided by bus to and from all competitions for teams, not individual competitors. Individual competitors may not drive themselves to competitions.

The Board of Education will consider applications that meet the requirements above. In acting on applications, the Board of Education will consider all relevant factors, including but not limited to (1) the content of the application, (2) overall athletic opportunities already provided to students in the Ridgefield Public School, (3) the impact of the proposed Club Sport on school district compliance with Title IX, (4) financial constraints the Board of Education may confront in the future, (5) the likelihood that the organizers will be able to raise adequate funding to sustain the team as a Club Sport for at least three years, (6) the long-term sustainability of the activity as a varsity sport.

If the Board of Education approves the activity as a Club Sport, it will assume responsibility for liability insurance. Participants will be eligible for athletic honors and awards if granted Club Sport status. The Club Sport will be reviewed annually by the AD/Principal. If the Club Sport continues to grow and develop as a program over a minimum three-year period with positive annual reviews, the AD/Principal may recommend the Club Sport be granted Varsity status with Board of Education funding after considering all relevant factors, including those listed above. A Club Sport, that has fulfilled the above mentioned requirements and has had positive annual reviews, may request that the AD/Principal recommend to the Board of Education that Varsity status be granted after two years. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education may grant final approval to the Club Sport transitioning to a varsity team in the athletics program. In such case, the Board of Education will provide the funds to cover team costs in the athletics' budget.

The Board of Education reserves the right to accept or reject an activity as a Club Sport and/or financially supported athletic program.

Unified Sports®

Unified Sports® is a registered program of Special Olympics that combines approximately equal numbers of athletes with and without intellectual disability on sports teams for training and competition. All Unified Sports® players, both athletes and special partners, are of similar age and matched sport skill ability. Unified Sports® teams are placed in competitive divisions based on their skill abilities, and range from training divisions (with a skill-learning focus) to high level competition.

RHS successfully launched its Unified Sports program in the spring of 2017 and has competed in all three sports seasons (fall, winter, spring) ever since. Anyone interested in participating should contact Athletics Director Dane Street. There is more information on Unified Sports available through the CIAC website at:
<https://ciac.fpsports.org/TenantHTML.aspx?D=&F=Unified%20Sports.html>

Participation Requirements and Fees

Ridgefield High School Athletics Registration

Registration is required to participate on a Ridgefield High School Interscholastic Team at the Varsity, Junior Varsity or Freshman level. All online forms must be completed through the PowerSchool Parent Portal before a student can participate in the RHS Athletics program. It is highly recommended that online forms be submitted two weeks prior to the start of the season.

Parents can register their child for a sport by accessing the "High School Page Links" tab on the lower left side of the screen. From there, you must select each of the following links and complete these steps:

On the "Athletic Registration and Consent" page:

- Sign the ten required online forms. Both Parent/Guardian and Student need to read and sign:

RHS Parent - Student Agreement
Concussion Student and Parent Informed Consent
Sudden Cardiac Arrest Student and Parent Informed Consent
Exertional Heat Illness Student and Parent Informed Consent
Mental Health and Student Athletes Student and Parent Informed Consent

- Select the sport for which the student will be registering
- Click "Submit"

On the "Online Emergency Treatment Consent Form" page:

- Verify the contact information or make changes as needed
- Input Insurance information
- Digitally sign the bottom of the form
- Click "Submit"

A physical examination is required annually for student athletes. Exams are valid for 13 months in order to comply with insurance requirements and also to facilitate scheduling with physicians. It is highly recommended that freshman submit the State of CT Health Assessment form as it is required for admittance into 9th grade. Physical examination forms are posted on the RHS Athletics webpage. Completed forms can be submitted in hard copy to the RHS Nurses or the RHS Athletics department or via email to rhsnurses@ridgefieldps.net

The Pay-to-Participate fee per athlete per season is \$150 and is assessed at the time of registration. Payments must be made through MySchoolBucks via the PowerSchool Parent Portal.

The "Athletic Information" link allows you to view all registration information including the date of most current physical exam on file.

Athletic Participation Fee

In accordance with Ridgefield Board of Education policy, all student athletes trying out for or practicing with an athletic team at Ridgefield High School are required to pay a participation fee prior to the first day of tryouts or practice. This fee will be \$150 per sport, per season for all grade levels (9-12). (Note: Club sports operate financially independent of the RHS Athletics budget and may require a different fee per participant)

REFUND POLICY:

- If a student is not selected for an athletic team, a refund of the pay-to-participate fee will be processed.
- The fee for a student athlete who withdraws prior to the first official game of the season may be refunded upon receipt of a written request to the department of athletics. An email is sufficient to request a refund.
- The fee for a student athlete who is injured and unable to compete during the entire contest season may be refunded upon receipt of a written request to the department of athletics. An email is sufficient to request a refund.

FEE WAIVERS: Students who qualify under the District's "*Free Lunch and Reduced Lunch Program*" will have their participation fee waived. Others who may need assistance are also eligible to request an Athletics Fee hardship waiver. To do so, families must complete the Hardship Waiver request form in its entirety and submit it, and all required documentation, directly to the Ridgefield Public Schools Business Office. The form can be downloaded from the RHS Athletics website.

Equipment / Uniforms

Each student is responsible for and must wear the equipment and uniforms that are issued. The students must pay for any lost or damaged equipment or uniforms. Any student in possession of school equipment not directly issued will face disciplinary action which may jeopardize further participation in the athletics program.

Responsibility for Equipment / Uniforms:

- All school issued equipment will remain the property of the school and must be properly cared for by the student/athlete to whom it is issued.
- It is the responsibility of the student athlete to ensure that the equipment is returned at the end of the season or departure from the team.
- Any student athlete failing to return a uniform or obligation payment (at the rate of the replacement cost) at the end of any season is ineligible for play in the next year's sport season until the account is cleared.
- Game uniforms should only be worn on the day of the contest upon approval from the coach.

Athletic Lockers and Personal Item Storage

When possible, all student athletes who participate in an RHS sport will be assigned an athletics locker which is large enough to accommodate backpacks, sports bags and equipment.

Responsibility Regarding Locker Rooms:

- Student athletes should not bring valuable items to school.
- The school is not responsible for, nor is it liable for a student athlete's personal property.
- It is the student's responsibility to ensure all their personal belongings are kept in the locker while they are participating in their sport.
- Lockers should be locked at all times and combinations not shared with anyone.
- Lockers will be cleaned out at the conclusion of each sport season, at which time locker combinations are changed for security purposes

Team Captains

All Ridgefield High School team captains are expected to be leaders on their teams and in the school community, foster team and athletic program spirit and pride, set examples of academic integrity in the classroom, and follow the policies and procedures outlined in this handbook. In addition, they must serve as positive role models to the youth of Ridgefield.

The role of a team captain for a Ridgefield High School athletic team is a key leadership position and carries with it a tremendous responsibility. The captain is viewed as a mature leader who is looked upon by students, athletes, coaches and administrators to set a positive example for team pride, fair play, dedication and school spirit. Ridgefield High School captains are expected to conduct themselves with honesty, leadership, compassion, and integrity. Captains who are unwilling or unable to meet these requirements will be relieved of their position.

Selection Process

Following the conclusion of each athletic season, captains may be selected for a team for the following season. Coaches may decide to delay the naming of captains until the beginning of the following season if they feel it is in the best interests of the athletes and the program to do so.

Seniors will be given first consideration to be selected as Team Captain, provided they are qualified. Underclassmen are eligible to be selected as captains if they demonstrate the leadership characteristics and personal attributes necessary to

successfully fill the role. To be eligible for selection as a Captain, an athlete must meet the criteria stated in the *Captains' Expectations*. Both in and out of season, team captains are expected to be appropriate role models in the school community. A captain who, in or out of season, commits a violation of the *Captains' Expectations* will risk their position as a team captain. Captains in season who violate the *Captains' Expectations* will lose their captaincy. The RHS Administration reserves the right to reject a nomination for captaincy based on a student's prior record at RHS and revoke any captaincy if there is a violation of the *Captains' Expectations*.

The head coach will exercise good judgment, common sense and the advice of the athletics director in selecting a candidate or candidates for captaincy. Coaches may use various methods (written application, team vote, interview, etc.) to help assess an athlete's candidacy for captaincy, but ultimately the nomination of candidates for captaincy is a decision that rests with the head coach. All captain nominees will meet with the head coach and the athletics director prior to approval. Students accepting the responsibility and honor of a captaincy must adhere to the *Captains' Expectations* and sign the *Captain's Pledge*, as must their parents/guardians.

Please Note

Students interested in being a Captain are encouraged to demonstrate their leadership skills and abilities to teammates and coaching staff throughout their high school careers.

Captains' Expectations

Selection to the position of team captain carries with it tremendous responsibility. Before accepting this key leadership position, students must weigh the responsibilities that come with it. Students accepting the role of captain will be expected to:

- Conduct themselves in a manner consistent with Ridgefield High School expectations for acceptable behavior and citizenship.
- Follow the *Athletic Training Expectations* in and out of season.
- Adhere to the Ridgefield Public schools *Hazing Policy*.
- Follow the Code of Conduct stated in the *Captain's Pledge* in and out of season. Failure to meet these expectations will risk a student's position as a team captain.

Captains are expected to be major contributors to the tone and direction of a team both on and off the field. Personal qualities coaches look for in captains include:

- Role model - hard working, committed, dedicated, humble, leader by example, integrity, dependable, unwavering convictions, and positive attitude.
- Well respected by teammates and the school community.
- Good citizenship - respectful, loyal, cooperative, trustworthy, unselfish, honest, caring, with a great deal of pride in the school and its positive reputation.
- Committed to being chemical free - will not use tobacco, alcohol or illegal drugs.
- Good school behavior - punctual, acceptable academic progress, and abides by school rules.
- Athletic qualities - well skilled, dedicated, committed to the sport, displays good sportsmanship, hard-working, and has good communication skills.
- Willing to act as the liaison between teammates, coaches, director of athletics, and other appropriate school personnel.

Coaches should expect that Captains will:

- Live up to the expectations of the position.
- Lead by example on and off the field.
- Not be afraid to step out of the crowd, that is; to speak to teammates making poor or inappropriate choices.
- Be a motivator (encouraging, modeling).
- Be a role model for good sportsmanship.

Captains can be of great assistance in actively working to encourage teammates to follow the athletic training expectations during the sports season and in preventing the use of tobacco, alcohol, illegal drugs, or any other inappropriate substances.

Athletics Disciplinary Actions

Both in and out of season, team captains are expected to be appropriate role models in the school community. A captain who, in or out of season, commits a violation of the *Captains' Expectations* as stated in the *Captains' Pledge* and the *Athletics Training Expectations* will risk their position as a team captain. Captains in season who violate the *Captains' Expectations* will lose their captaincy. The RHS Administration also reserves the right to revoke any captaincy if there is a violation of the *Captains' Expectations* out of season. Any captain who violated the *Captains' Expectations* will not be eligible to receive post season RHS Athletic Awards/Scholarships involving character and leadership.

Captains' Pledge

The following pledge is required of all Team Captains. Failure to meet these expectations will risk a student's position as a team captain.

"I realize being selected to the position of team captain carries with it more responsibility than being just a team member; others in the school and greater community look up to me as a leader and role model. I will do my best to exemplify the qualities that the Administration, Athletics Department, Head Coach and school community expect of me. I pledge to adhere to the Captains' Expectations in and out of season.

I pledge to:

- *Conduct myself in a manner consistent with the Ridgefield High School expectations for acceptable behavior and citizenship as outlined in the Student-Parent Handbook.*
- *Adhere to the guidelines stated in the Captains' Expectations in and out of season.*
- *Follow the Athletics Training Expectations by remaining chemical free. I will not use tobacco, alcohol or illegal drugs.*
- *Adhere to the Ridgefield Public Schools Hazing Policy.*
- *Attend Captains' Council sessions*
- *Earn the respect of my teammates, the school community and the larger Ridgefield community.*
- *Be a good citizen. I will demonstrate respect, loyalty, cooperation, trustworthiness, selflessness, honesty, compassion and pride in my school and its positive reputation.*
- *Demonstrate good school behavior. I will be punctual and abide by school rules.*

- *Demonstrate positive Academic Qualities. I commit to academic progress and my best effort.*
- *Demonstrate positive Athletic Qualities. I commit myself to good skills, dedication to the sport, good sportsmanship, hard work, teamwork and communication skills.*
- *Be willing to act as the liaison between teammates, coaches, director of athletics, and other appropriate school personnel.”*

Captains’ Practice

“Captains’ practice,” no matter how well intentioned on the part of the team captains, violates CIAC policy and jeopardizes eligibility. The Ridgefield High School Athletics Department fully supports the CIAC position on captain’s practices for safety and liability reasons, and captain’s practices are expressly forbidden. An adult presence (parent or volunteer) does not make a captain’s practice legal.

Captains’ Council

Captains’ Council is a leadership program designed specifically for the high school athlete/leader. In addition to developing leadership skills, Captains’ Council will promote sportsmanship, school spirit and community service. The council also acts as a means of communication among the school athletes and the school administration. All varsity team captains for the current school year are members and are expected to attend all meetings and leadership training programs. The RHS Administration reserves the right to revoke any captaincy for students who do not attend the scheduled leadership training sessions.

General Information

Dress on Game Days

The RHS Athletics Department understands and appreciates the team spirit and pride that our student athletes demonstrate. However, “dress up” days, the practice of “kidnapping” students, and any other inappropriate spirit activities ARE NOT PERMITTED. What appears to be harmless fun to some almost always leads to some students feeling humiliated and distraught, is a distraction to the school day and is in violation of the Ridgefield Board of Education Hazing policy (Appendix A).

Team spirit must be shown in an appropriate and respectful manner. The following are examples of appropriate dress: wearing team uniforms, warm-ups, shirts/ties, dresses, etc. The following are examples of inappropriate dress: wearing beachwear, togas, wearing undergarments (spandex) as outer-garments, etc. Additionally, total face and body painting at school is not allowed.

Any questions regarding this policy should be discussed with the RHS Athletics Director.

Posters and Promotions

The Athletics Department supports promoting team activities through any upbeat and appropriate means that reflect good taste and appropriate message. Please be sure that any game announcement/flyers have been approved by the athletics department, and are posted in appropriate locations within the school property. Students found guilty of offensive or unauthorized promotions face possible disciplinary action.

Athletics Trainer

Ridgefield High School employs the services of a full-time Certified Athletics Trainer (ATC) in order to provide immediate care in the event of injury. The ATC is scheduled to be in the training room every day before practice for taping, treatment

and consultation. When requested, the ATC will supervise rehabilitation in order to minimize the risk of re-injury. The trainer, however, is not here to replace the family's own medical specialist. The trainer provides immediate emergency first aid. The ATC works in conjunction with the athletics director, coaches, orthopedic physicians and other healthcare professionals to create a teamwork approach when caring for the athlete.

The ATC circulates the campus during practice hours and most game days.

Injuries, Concussion and Sudden Cardiac Arrest Awareness

All injuries incurred while participating in the Ridgefield High School Interscholastic Athletics Program must be reported to the athletics trainer and coach. The trainer and/or coach will administer first aid at the time of the injury. Should additional medical attention be required, the athletic trainer/coach will arrange to have the athlete transported to the hospital and parents will be notified immediately.

Return to Play

When an athlete has been injured while participating in an interscholastic sport, before their return to the activity, he/she must present a written release from the doctor so that he/she can resume participation in the sport. This release must be given to the athletics trainer, school nurse and coach, and a copy of the release will be forwarded to the athletics director. This form may be downloaded from the RHS Athletics Webpage. Note: In instances of concussion, a release from a doctor signifies that a student may begin the RHS Return to Play protocol under the supervision of the Athletics Trainer(s).

Concussion Awareness Information

The State of Connecticut has followed the enacted concussion legislation requiring all schools provide concussion education to Student Athletes and Parents. The Connecticut Association of Schools - Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CAS-CIAC) strongly recommends that all Student Athletes and Parents view the CAS-CIAC video on concussions and concussion management. This information is incorporated into the RHS Pre-season Kickoff meetings. Additional information is available on the Concussion Awareness Information page of the CIAC Medical Handbook (<http://concussioncentral.ciacsports.com/>)

Concussion Awareness information on Parent Portal

This consent form was developed to provide students and parents with current and relevant information regarding concussions and to comply with Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.) Chapter 163, Section 149b: *Concussions*.

Student and Parent Sudden Cardiac Arrest Informed Consent Form on Parent Portal

This document was developed to provide student-athletes and parents/guardians with current and relevant information regarding sudden cardiac arrest to comply with Connecticut General Statutes Chapter 163, Section 10-149f: SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST AWARENESS EDUCATION PROGRAM.

Student and Parent Exertional Heat Illness Informed Consent Form on Parent Portal

This document was developed to provide student-athletes and parents/guardians with current and relevant information regarding Exertional Heat Illness to comply with Connecticut General Statutes Public Act No. 21-87, Section 1-f: An Act concerning Education and Training in Exertional Heat Illness for Coaches, Parents, Guardians and students.

Student and Parent Mental Health and Student-Athlete Informed Consent Form on Parent Portal

This document was developed to provide student-athletes and parents/guardians with current and relevant information relative to mental health of student athletes and to help identify and assist in supporting their mental health needs.

Parents are required to log on to the Parent Portal to read and sign the Concussion Awareness, Sudden Cardiac Arrest, Exertional Heat Illness & Mental Health information. In the PowerSchool Parent Portal there is a navigation bar on the left side of the screen. Look for and click on **High School Page Links** and then **Athletics Registration & Consent** to find all the required consent forms.

Insurance

The athlete's family insurance policy is the primary carrier for any medical costs incurred as a result of sports injuries. The Board of Education requires all students participating in athletics to enroll in the group accident insurance policy covering all interscholastic sports. The policy is an "Excess Coverage" policy, which is a form of insurance which reimburses for medical expenses, within the policy limits, only to the extent that basic family medical insurance does not. If there is no family insurance in effect at the time of an injury, the sports insurance will cover the claim to the extent of the policy provisions.

In submitting a claim, the steps outlined below must be followed:

- The family insurance is the primary carrier and all bills must first be submitted to the family insurance company.
- All bills unpaid by the primary insurance company can then be submitted to the Ridgefield Public School's Athletics Department insurance company after the completion of the required claim form. Claim forms will be completed by the athletic trainer and sent home to the parents/guardian of the injured athlete. The claim form and bills must be mailed to the insurance company within 90 days of the date the injury occurred. Do not submit bills to the RHS Athletics Department. They will not be paid by the school system.

Transportation and Parking

Bus Travel and Trips

It is the policy of the Ridgefield Board of Education to provide transportation to/from all "away" contests. In addition:

- **ALL student athletes are expected to ride the team bus to/from all contests.**
- If a student athlete is not going to travel on the bus with their team to/from an event, the parent/guardian must complete the [Request for Alternate Transportation](#) form. **This form must be signed by the parent/guardian, indicating the name of the adult who will be transporting the student. Completed forms must be submitted to the student's coach prior to the day being requested.**
- **Student athletes are not permitted to drive themselves to or from athletic contests at any time, for any reason regardless of their age.**
- Student athletes will be expected to follow all rules and regulations governing how students behave on the school bus to ensure a safe trip.
- **Exception:** Parents and/or guardians are to be aware that golf and ice hockey practices are not held on the school campus and there are no shuttles available to these sites. Therefore, athletes' families are to provide their own transportation to and from practice.

Food

Due to student food allergies, no food is to be consumed on buses transporting students to and from athletic events. All bus drivers have been provided with training on the effects of food allergies and emergency actions to be taken, if necessary. Only food that is pre-packaged may be brought on the bus. Water is the only beverage that may be consumed on the bus.

Parking on Campus Property

During athletic practices and contests on days when school is in session, student athletes are expected to park in the Community Entrance parking lot at Ridgefield High School. Student athletes are not allowed to park their vehicles at either Scotts Ridge Middle School or Tiger Hollow Stadium. Parking at Tiger Hollow is reserved for the handicapped and athletic staff working the games. The Ridgefield Police Department monitors parking and will issue tickets to illegally parked vehicles.

Leaving Messages for Coaches

Each coach's email address is available on the RHS Athletics webpage. Every coach will communicate to their team the best method to contact them. Coaches do not stop at the Athletics Office on a daily basis so parents and students are encouraged to communicate with coaches per the coach's instructions. Please do not contact coaches at home.

Messages and questions regarding tardiness, absences, practice game schedules, team sports questions, etc., should all be directed to the coach in the manner specified at the Team Orientation meeting and **not be called into the RHS Athletics office.**

Parent Information

Parental Support is Key to an Athlete's Success

Parents can be a tremendous asset to the attainment of the Athletic Department's goals and the goals of your child. Ridgefield parents have traditionally provided support, loyalty and encouragement to the teams and the school staff. The school system believes that only through a close level of cooperation and communication between the parents and the school, can the necessary guidance, leadership, concern, and encouragement, so important during your son/daughter's teenage years, be provided. All parents are encouraged to support our teams by attending as many athletic contests as possible.

When a child becomes involved in our program, parents have a right to understand what expectations are placed upon their child. This begins with clear communication from the coach of the child's program. It is essential that parents and athletes demonstrate respect for coaches. The coach has been appointed to a leadership and decision making position. Their responsibility is to the individual participant, the team, and the school system. As a result, all coaches have been instructed to make the best decisions they can and not to bow to parent or fan pressure relative to athletics and/or coaching decisions. In all instances, an environment of mutual respect and civility should prevail and the appropriate steps for a solution should be followed.

COMMUNICATION YOUR CHILD SHOULD EXPECT FROM THEIR COACH

- Philosophy of the coach
- Team rules and expectations for all players on the team
- Team requirements; i.e., level of commitment, fees, equipment, off-season conditioning
- Procedure should your child be injured during participation
- Location and times of all practices and contests
- Team communications
- Discipline that results in denial of your child's participation

COMMUNICATION COACHES EXPECT FROM STUDENT ATHLETES

- Concerns expressed directly to the coach
- Absences due to illness
- Notification of any schedule conflicts well in advance (planned vacations)
- Specific concerns with regards to a coach's philosophy and or expectations

Appropriate Concerns to Discuss with Coaches

- The treatment of your child, mentally and physically
- Ways to help your child improve
- Concerns about your child's behavior

It is difficult to accept a child not playing as much as hoped. Coaches are professionals. They make judgment decisions based on what they believe to be best for all students involved. Based on the list above, certain things can be, and should be, discussed with a child's coach. Other things, such as those that follow, must be left to the discretion of the coach.

Issues NOT Appropriate to Discuss with Coaches

- playing time (playing time issues should be discussed between athlete and coach first)
- team strategy
- calling plays
- other student athletes
- selection of captains
- special awards

There are situations that may require a conference between the coach and the parent. These are encouraged. It is important that both parties involved have a clear understanding of the other's position. When these conferences are necessary, please follow the steps outlined in the Chain of Communication, to help promote a resolution to the issue of concern.

Solving Conflicts – Chain of Communication

We understand that parents have great interest in the welfare of their child and that it is possible that, from time to time, disagreements between the coach and the parents may occur.

All issues between an athlete and a coach should **FIRST** be dealt with between each other. If the conflict cannot be resolved between the coach and athlete, then the athlete should make an appointment with the athletics director to inform him/her of the problem. At this time parents are urged to make appointments with the coach to share their concerns. In the event that acceptable solutions cannot be secured the parent should then contact the athletics director. If additional discussions are required to resolve the problem, the parent has the right to appeal decisions through the administration.

These are the steps that should be followed until there is a resolution to the problem:

- athlete and coach
- athlete and athletics director
- parent and coach
- parent and athletics director
- parent and principal

The correct procedure to contact a coach is not to leave a message in the Athletics Office. Parents may contact the coach directly at the phone number or email address distributed at the pre-season orientation meeting. Please do not contact the coach at home unless requested to do so. Please do not attempt to confront a coach before or after a contest, a practice, or event. These can be emotional times for both the parent and the coach. Meetings of this nature do not promote resolution. If the coach does not respond to your message, email the athletics director, Dane Street, at dstreet@ridgefieldps.net or telephone at (203) 894-5750 and he will contact the coach on your behalf.

What can a parent do if the meeting with the coach did not provide a satisfactory resolution?

1. Call and set up an appointment with the athletics director to discuss the situation.
2. At this meeting the appropriate next step can be determined.

Parent spectators have made significant contributions to the fine reputation Ridgefield has earned in the display of good sportsmanship. Serving as positive role models for our student body, they have exhibited the highest ideals of good sportsmanship.

Together, parents and coaches can provide the necessary guidance, leadership, concern, and encouragement, which are so important during the high school years.

Information for the College Bound Student Athlete

Many college sports are regulated by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), an organization founded in 1906 that has established rules on eligibility, recruiting, and financial aid. The NCAA has three membership divisions: Division I, Division II, and Division III. Institutions are members of one or another division according to the size and scope of their athletic programs, and whether they provide athletic scholarships.

The NCAA Eligibility Center has launched a new website, NCAA Eligibility Center, to help high school student-athletes successfully transition to college. The online content gives student-athletes and counselors a broad look at the initial-eligibility process and detailed information about common eligibility situations.

Prospective student-athletes and their parents can find valuable information on NCAA eligibility via the following link:

http://fs.ncaa.org/Docs/eligibility_center/Student_Resources/CBSA.pdf

Helpful resources in the eligibility center include the following documents:

Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete

Initial Eligibility Brochure

Division I Initial-Eligibility Requirements

For the large number of student-athletes at the high school level, athletic scholarships will not be offered. Therefore, the following recommendations may be used in pursuing financial aid and/or acceptance to the college or university which best matches the athlete's abilities and interests.

- Discuss with your school counselor the range of colleges for which you are academically qualified.
- Talk with your coach about the level of competition he/she feels you might be best suited to participate in (i.e. Division I, II, III, or Junior College).
- Narrow your college selection list to a reasonable size, taking into consideration the quality of academic and athletic programs, determining whether they are right for you. Be realistic about your choice.
- Find the name of the coach in your sport at each college on your list. (Use the National Directory of College Athletics in the guidance office).
- Request your high school coach to write a personal letter to the college coach highlighting your transcript, academic achievements, and interests as well as a thorough and detailed discussion of your athletic accomplishments (statistics, clippings, letters earned, records set, honors). A videotape should be made during the season for availability to college coaches.
- Decide where you wish to apply. Few college coaches will take an interest in you unless you formally apply. Initiate, don't react.
- Remain in touch with the coaches after applying. Inquire about the status of your application and financial aid. If possible, visit the college and the coach - sell yourself as a person and a student athlete.
- A letter from a college coach is an overture, NOT an offer.

- Be familiar with NCAA visitation rules (check with your coach).
- Financial Aid is based on need. Applications for financial aid as well as other scholarships are available in the school counseling office.
- You may choose to continue your sports career even though you are not involved in intercollegiate competition. Most colleges and universities have extensive, competitive intramural programs for men and women.

Sportsmanship

Spectator Sportsmanship

Ridgefield High School expects a high standard of conduct from all players, parents, and spectators at athletic contests. Inappropriate spectator behavior reflects poorly on Ridgefield High School and may result in the loss of spectator privileges, and disciplinary action. We need to be positive role models for other spectators.

We will:

- Be in control at all times; taunting, baiting, physical retaliation will not be tolerated.
- Be considerate of opposing players and coaches.
- Be gracious in victory and sportsmanlike in defeat.
- Respect the judgment of and accept the decisions made by the officials and/or coaches.
- Treat officials and opponents with the respect due them as fellow human beings.
- Show respect for the facilities – both at home and at our opponents.
- Support our cheerleaders in a positive manner.

We will not participate in:

- The booing or taunting of anyone or cheering an injury to an opponent.
- The use of profanity or any abusive language and/or inappropriate gestures of any kind.
- The throwing of objects.
- Use of noisemakers of any kind.
- Negative comments.
- Targeting a player/coach/spectator from the opposing team or using names/numbers of opposing players.

Athletic event procedures:

When attending athletic events at Tiger Hollow and the RHS Gymnasium

- No bags or backpacks will be permitted into the game.
- Outside food or beverages are not permitted.

Athletic Awards

All athletes will be eligible to receive the following awards upon completion of the season, if they are recommended by their coach, approved by the athletics director and meet all criteria listed.

Regulations and Procedures

Varsity letters in all sports shall be awarded by the school upon the recommendation of the head coach who shall consider the following as requirements for an award:

- A player must have been regular in attendance at all practices/games.
- A player shall have observed all *Athletics Training Expectations*.
- A player shall have conducted him/herself in a most exemplary manner both on and off the field, exhibiting good sportsmanship to their coach, teammates and opponents.
- A player shall have successfully completed the season in good standing.
- The head coach may award Varsity letters at their discretion. The head coach will provide their criteria for earning a varsity letter in writing to all athletes at the beginning of each season.
- All award policies must be approved by the athletics director.

Letters

Varsity

A Varsity letter will be given when the athlete earns Varsity credit by satisfactory participation at the Varsity level in any sport during a particular year. A pin designating the sport and certificate of participation will be included. If an athlete letters in more than one sport, they will be given an additional pin and certificate to designate the sport, but not an additional letter. Only one varsity letter will be issued during an athlete's career at RHS.

Junior Varsity

A Junior Varsity certificate will be given when the athlete earns Junior Varsity credit by satisfactory participation at the Junior Varsity level in any sport during a particular year. If an athlete participates in more than one Junior Varsity sport, he/she will receive a certificate for each additional sport.

Freshman

A Freshman certificate will be given when the athlete earns Freshman credit by satisfactory participation at the Freshman level in any sport during a particular year. If a freshman athlete participates in more than one Freshman sport, he/she will receive a certificate for each additional sport.

Please note: If an athlete is brought up to participate at a higher level for the last couple of games (e.g., Junior Varsity player brought up to play Varsity), they will receive credit for their regular season play, not the higher level.

Certificate of Participation

A certificate of participation will be awarded to each athlete who finishes an athletic sport season and is on the final athletic award program roster.

FCIAC Exemplary/Seasonal Scholar Athlete Awards

These honors are awarded from the FCIAC to an athlete on a varsity team who has high academic achievement for the marking period associated with their season. The guidelines for this award will be based on the student's GPA for the corresponding marking period, while also taking into consideration attitude and sportsmanship on the court or field. The minimum GPA to warrant consideration for these awards is a 3.5 cumulative average.

Appendices

Appendix A – Board of Education Policy on Hazing (5131.91)

Hazing

The Board of Education finds that the practice known as “hazing” is dangerous to the physical and psychological welfare of students and is prohibited in all school activities.

A. Definition

Hazing includes, but is not limited to:

- engaging in any offensive or dangerous physical contact, restraint, adduction, or isolation of a student, or
- requiring or encouraging a student to perform any dangerous, painful, offensive, or demeaning physical or verbal act, including the injection of any substance, exposure to the elements, deprivation of sleep or rest, or extensive isolation, or
- subjecting a student to any dangerous, painful, offensive, or demeaning conduct, or to conduct likely to create extreme mental distress, for any purpose, including as a condition of membership or initiation into any class, team, group, organization, or school activity sponsored by, or permitted to operate under the auspices of a school of the District.

B. Prohibition

Hazing is prohibited in all schools of the District, whether on or off school property, and whether during or outside school hours.

Hazing, harassment, intimidation or any act that injures, degrades, or disgraces a student or staff member will not be tolerated.

C. Enforcement and Reporting

1. School officials, employees, and volunteers:
 - a. Shall not permit or tolerate hazing;
 - b. Shall intervene to stop hazing that is threatened, found, or reasonably known or suspected to be occurring; and
 - c. Shall report known or suspected hazing to the school administration or the Superintendent.
2. Any student who believes he or she has been the victim of hazing shall report the matter to the school administration or the Superintendent.
3. Any District administrator that receives a report of hazing shall provide written notice to the Superintendent, setting forth the report and the administrator’s proposed plan for investigation.

D. Investigation

1. All reports of hazing shall be investigated by the Principal or his/her designee. Where violations of criminal law may have occurred, the Principal or designee shall notify the appropriate law enforcement agency.
2. Upon completion of the investigation, the Principal or designee shall submit a written report on the investigation and its results to the Superintendent.

E. Discipline

1. Any student who engages in such behavior is subject to disciplinary action, according to applicable procedural requirements, including suspension, expulsion or referral to law enforcement officials.
2. No person in charge of a school-sponsored activity will permit the above-mentioned behavior. Violations will result in disciplinary action according to applicable procedural requirements. Such discipline may include reprimand, suspension, discharge or termination.

(cf. 5114 - Suspension/Expulsion)

(cf. 5131 - Conduct)

(cf. 5145.5 - Sexual Harassment)

Policy adopted: October 24, 2011

Appendix B – Athletics Vacation Policy

Vacations and other out of school activities, without prior approval from the coach, are not valid reasons for missing practices and contests. Family vacations that interfere with organized practice and/or games should be discussed with the coach prior to the season in a timely manner. The following regulations have been developed to be fair to all, especially to the athlete who may have no choice but to go with the family, and to the athlete who has to take the absent athlete's place during practice and contests that occur during the vacation period. *If an athlete is on vacation during the season he/she should be prepared to sit out a certain number of games depending on the level of the sport (Freshman, JV, or Varsity). The higher level of competition the higher the expected dedication.*

Varsity

Athletes are required to be at all practices/contests during vacation periods. ***Unexcused absences will affect their acceptance as a team member.*** If not excused by the coach/Athletic Director, the number of contests the athlete misses during the family vacation will be the maximum number of contests he/she misses upon returning to the team. In addition to missing contests, athletes must earn their positions back on the team.

JV / Freshman

The number of contests the athlete misses during the family vacation will be the maximum number of contests he/she misses upon returning to the team. In addition to missing contests, athletes must earn their positions back on the team.

- In the event of a family emergency, it is the coaches' discretion if there will be any missed game time.
- Additional rules or regulations adopted by the head coach for a particular team will be approved by the Athletic Director. Such additions will be in writing and on file in the office of the Athletic Director and will be provided in writing to all student/athletes on that team. Student/athletes are asked to establish priorities and then live by their decision regarding any personal conflicts.

Due to weekly game limitations set by CIAC and length of schedule, conflicts during vacation periods CANNOT be avoided. The FCIAC and CIAC do not schedule around vacations. This is impossible to do because there is no one standard vacation week for all Connecticut Public schools. Athletes and parents need to be aware that games over vacations will be played and/or forfeited and not changed. This is a League as well as a State policy.

Appendix C –DISQUALIFICATION / EJECTION RULE – ATHLETE/COACH

The CIAC establishes guidelines and tone for acceptable and appropriate behavior at all CIAC contests including league tournaments and playoffs. Given this charge, it is CIAC's responsibility to be pro-active and responsive to the growing issues of sportsmanship and violence in sports. A strong consistent statement reflecting zero tolerance for violence in sports must become standard operating procedure for all schools. This is to be considered a minimum standard.

The CIAC Disqualification / Ejection Rule is in effect for all CIAC contests including league playoffs and tournaments that engage officials who have been assigned by Board commissioners from CIAC registered officials organizations, or directly by the school or by the CIAC.

THERE IS NO APPEAL PROCEDURE THAT A SCHOOL MAY USE RELATIVE TO DISQUALIFICATIONS.

Disqualification is a judgment call by an official and as such is not appealable. Until the official(s) leaves the site the game official(s) is in charge and may take any action deemed to be appropriate, even to the extent of reversing an earlier decision to eject a player or coach. Whenever possible, both schools (coaches on site) must be made fully aware of all final decisions on game disqualifications. **Once the game official(s) leaves the site of the contest all decisions on game disqualifications are final.**

The following policies for disqualification by an official shall apply in all sports:

1. Any student-athlete who physically assaults an official, coach, opposing player, spectator or other person in attendance at the event may be deemed immediately ineligible for the remainder of the season.
2. When an athlete is ejected from any CIAC contest the athlete is ineligible to participate in the next contest at the same level of play (even if the next contest does not occur until league or CIAC tournament play or next year). If one or more different level contests are scheduled prior to the next contest at the same level of play, the athlete shall be ineligible to participate in the next (but no more than one) contest at each level of play. The ejected player cannot be in attendance at the game for which he/she is serving their suspension.
3. When a player is ejected from a contest he/she can remain on the bench or sidelines as long as their presence does not interfere with the contest in any way. Never should an athlete be sent away from the site without adult supervision. Coaches are responsible for the care and safety of students and should not be placed in a position which does not allow them to provide reasonable care and supervision.
4. When a coach is ejected from any CIAC contest the coach is ineligible to participate in the next two contests at the same level of play (even if the next two contests do not occur until league or CIAC tournament play or next year). If one or more different level contests are scheduled prior to the next two contests at the same level of play, the coach shall be ineligible to participate in the next two contests at each level of play. The ejected coach cannot be in attendance at the games for which he/she is serving their suspension.
5. When a member school's coach is ejected from a game for an infraction as prescribed by the rules, the game may not continue until the member school replaces the ejected coach with a certified coach. The coach must leave the premises. If this cannot be accomplished within fifteen (15) minutes after the ejection, the official in charge will declare a forfeit win for the opposing team.
6. Upon receiving a second disqualification for initiating a fight or retaliating in a fight (as determined by the game official), that student-athlete will be declared ineligible for the remainder of the season.
7. The school's first incident of non-compliance, for reasons other than defiance of the disqualification rules, will result in forfeiture, a \$250 fine and the athlete or coach must serve the disqualification penalty; a school's second incident of non-compliance will prohibit the school from entry in the next CIAC tournament for that sport, or from the remainder of the current tournament if the disqualification occurs during a CIAC tournament or during

the last regular season contest/day of competition. However, when a school willfully defies CIAC disqualification rules and regulations the school and/or coach will be subject to further action by the CIAC Board of Control.

8. Any CIAC varsity team that accumulates five (5) or more disqualifications in more than one contest during the regular season including the league's tournament will be barred from CIAC post-season competition. In the event that five or more disqualifications occur in a single game, CIAC staff will evaluate whether schools will be barred from CIAC post-season competition. All disqualifications must be reported to CIAC by the school and the officials group. Any misconduct or disqualification of a coach will count towards the team's total number of disqualifications. Multiple disqualifications during CIAC tournaments are subject to disciplinary action by the CIAC sports committee and the CIAC Board of Control. Note: Please see the girls lacrosse, ice hockey and soccer sports packets for additional penalty regulations specific to these sports.

9. Disqualifications from the last contest of one season carry over to the next season in that sport for undergraduates and coaches, or the next season of participation in any sport for seniors.

10. If the CIAC or National Federation playing rules for a sport specify an additional penalty, the additional penalty will apply. The CIAC disqualification rule applies to all game or meet disqualifications with the exception of reaching the limit of personal fouls in basketball and lacrosse; reaching the limit of technical violations in wrestling; or being disqualified by the rules in ice hockey and lacrosse, which does not require a next game disqualification. This rule does not apply to individual event disqualifications such as in swimming or track and field.

11. Each game official will notify their assignor for that game who will notify the CIAC office via the online disqualification notification system. The athletic director or principal of the school having the disqualified player/coach must notify their next opponent. The school is responsible to implement all CIAC disqualification rules even if the official does not report the disqualification in a timely manner.

- **Definition of ASSAULT** – An assault is defined as an attack which attempts to injure one physically.
- **Definition of TAUNTING** – Taunting includes, but is not limited to any actions or comments by coaches or players which are intended to bait, anger, embarrass, ridicule or demean other players, coaches, or game officials. Included in this is conduct that berates, needles, intimidates or threatens based on gender, ethnic origin or background and conduct that attacks religious beliefs, size, economic status, speech, family, special needs, or personal matters. Examples of taunting that would lead to ejection include, but are not limited to, physical and verbal intimidation outside the spirit of the game (“trash talk”), reference to sexual orientation, “in-the-face confrontation” by one player to another, standing over, straddling a tackled or fallen player, etc.
- **PENALTY** – In all sports, game officials are to consider taunting a flagrant, unsportsmanlike foul that disqualifies the offending bench personnel or athlete from that contest/day of competition and the player or coach from the following contest/day of competition, i.e. the CIAC player/coach ejection rule will be invoked. A warning may be given, but is not required before ejection. In soccer, an accumulation of two yellow cards in one game against the coaching personnel or team bench will constitute a red card against the head coach and all disqualification rules will apply. (Refer to soccer red card rules and the soccer tournament document.)

Appendix D –Sexual Harassment Policy

Students

5145.5

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Students

Sex Discrimination (Title IX) and Sexual Harassment

It is the policy of the Ridgefield Board of Education (the "Board") for the Ridgefield Public Schools (the "District") that any form of sex discrimination or sexual harassment is prohibited in the Board's education programs and activities, whether by students, Board employees or third parties subject to substantial control by the Board. The Board does not discriminate on the basis of sex in the education programs or activities that it operates and the Board is required by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and its implementing regulations ("Title IX") and Connecticut law not to discriminate in such a manner. Discrimination or harassment on the basis of sex includes discrimination or harassment on the basis of gender identity or sexual orientation.

Students, Board employees, and third parties are expected to adhere to a standard of conduct that is respectful of the rights of students, employees and third parties. Any student or employee who engages in conduct prohibited by this Policy shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion or termination, respectively.

For conduct to violate Title IX, the conduct must have occurred in an education program or activity of the Board; the conduct must have occurred within the United States of America; and the complainant must be participating in or attempting to participate in the education program or activity of the Board. Conduct that does not meet these requirements still may constitute a violation of Connecticut law or another Board policy.

The Superintendent of Schools shall develop Administrative Regulations implementing this Policy and in accordance with Title IX and Connecticut law (the "Administrative Regulations").

Sex discrimination occurs when a person, because of the person's sex, is denied participation in or the benefits of any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

Sexual harassment under Title IX means conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following:

- (1) An employee of the Board conditioning the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of the Board on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct (i.e., quid pro quo);
- (2) Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the Board's education programs or activities; or
- (3) "Sexual assault" as defined in 20 U.S.C. 1092(f)(6)(A)(v), "dating violence" as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(10), "domestic violence" as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(8), or "stalking" as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(30).

Sexual harassment under Connecticut law means conduct in a school setting that 1) is sexual in nature; 2) is unwelcome; and 3) denies or limits a student's ability to participate in or benefit from a school's educational program. Sexual harassment can be verbal, nonverbal or physical. Sexual violence is a form of sexual harassment.

Reporting Sex Discrimination or Sexual Harassment

It is the express policy of the Board to encourage victims of sex discrimination and/or sexual harassment to report such claims. Students are encouraged to report complaints of sex discrimination and/or sexual harassment promptly in accordance with the appropriate process set forth in the Administrative Regulations. The Board directs its employees to respond to such complaints in a prompt and equitable manner. The Board further directs its employees to maintain confidentiality to the extent appropriate and not tolerate any reprisals or retaliation that occur as a result of the good faith reporting of charges of sex discrimination and/or sexual harassment. Any such reprisals or retaliation will result in disciplinary action against the retaliator, up to and including expulsion or termination as appropriate.

Any Board employee with notice of sex discrimination and/or sexual harassment allegations shall immediately report such information to the building principal and/or the Title IX Coordinator, or if the employee does not work in a school building, to the Title IX Coordinator.

The Ridgefield Public Schools administration (the "Administration") shall provide training to Title IX Coordinator(s), investigators, decision-makers, and any person who facilitates an informal resolution process (as set forth in the Administrative Regulations), which training shall include but need not be limited to, the definitions of sex discrimination and sexual harassment, the scope of the Board's education program and activity, how to conduct an investigation and grievance process, and how to serve impartially, including by avoiding prejudgment of the facts at issue, conflicts of interest, and bias.

The Administration shall make the training materials used to provide these trainings publicly available on the Board's website. The Administration shall also periodically provide training to all Board employees on the topic of sex discrimination and sexual harassment under Title IX and Connecticut law, which shall include but not be limited to when reports of sex discrimination and/or sexual harassment must be made. The Administration shall distribute this Policy and the Administrative Regulations to staff, students and parents and legal guardians and make the Policy and the Administrative Regulations available on the Board's website to promote an environment free of sex discrimination and sexual harassment.

The Title IX Coordinator for the Ridgefield Board of Education is the Director of Personnel.

Any individual may make a report of sex discrimination and/or sexual harassment to any Board employee or directly to the Title IX Coordinator:

Ridgefield Public Schools
Director of Personnel
90 East Ridge Road
Ridgefield, Connecticut 06877
(203) 894-5550 x1206

Any Board employee in receipt of allegations of sex discrimination or sexual harassment, or in receipt of a formal complaint, shall immediately forward such information to the Title IX Coordinator. Students may also make a report of sexual harassment and/or sex discrimination to the:

U.S. Department of Education
Office for Civil Rights, Boston Office
U.S. Department of Education, 8th Floor,
5 Post Office Square, Boston, MA 02109-3921
(617) 289-0111

Students may also make a report of sexual harassment and/or sex discrimination to the: Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities

450 Columbus Boulevard
Hartford, CT 06103-1835
(Telephone: 860-541-3400 or Connecticut Toll Free Number: 1-800-477-5737).

Legal Reference:

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C. § 1681, et seq.

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 34 CFR Section 106.1, et seq.

Gebser v. Lago Vista Independent School District, 524 U.S. 274 (1998)

Davis v. Monroe County Board of Education, 526 U.S. 629 (1999)

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-15c - Discrimination in public schools prohibited.

Policy adopted: December 12, 2011

Policy revised: May 24, 2021

Policy revised: April 4, 2022

RIDGEFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Ridgefield, Connecticut

RHS Chain of Communication

WHOM DO I CALL WITH A QUESTION OR SUGGESTION?

Ridgefield High School's communication protocols are designed to foster direct, open, and respectful interactions, ensuring that problems and concerns are resolved quickly and efficiently. The protocol prioritizes involving the staff member closest to the situation, as they typically possess the most relevant information. In some instances, additional personnel may be involved to address specific situations. For different topics, appropriate communication channels are provided below.

We highly encourage parents and residents to ask any questions they may have concerning school matters. We value your feedback and are committed to maintaining transparent and effective communication within our school community. [RHS Teacher and Staff Directory](#)

Athletics:

STEP 1: Coach; if not resolved... STEP 2: Director of Athletics; if not resolved... STEP 3: Assistant Principal; if not resolved... STEP 4: Building Principal

Attendance

STEP 1: RHS Attendance Office; if not resolved.... STEP 2: Grade Level Dean and/or School Counselor; if not resolved... STEP 3: Assistant Principal; if not resolved... STEP 4: Building Principal

Classroom issues involving an Individual Child (classroom procedures, behavior, grades, schedule, etc.)

OR

Curriculum and Instruction (subject matter being taught, teaching strategies, textbooks and materials used, etc.)

STEP 1: Classroom Teacher; if not resolved... STEP 2: Department Chairperson/Leader; if not resolved... STEP 3: Assistant Principal; if not resolved... STEP 4: Building Principal

Counseling

STEP 1: School Counselor; if not resolved... STEP 2: Counseling Supervisor; if not resolved... STEP 3: Assistant Principal; if not resolved... STEP 4: Building Principal

Medical Concerns

STEP 1: School Nurse; if not resolved... STEP 2: Director of Nursing Services

Open Campus

STEP 1: RHS Attendance Office; if not resolved.... STEP 2: Grade Level Dean; if not resolved... STEP 3: Assistant Principal; if not resolved... STEP 4: Building Principal

Other School Activities

STEP 1: Activity Advisor; if not resolved... STEP 2: Student Life Coordinator; if not resolved... STEP 3: Assistant Principal; if not resolved STEP 4: Building Principal

Other Transportation Concerns (Behavior on school buses, etc.)

STEP 1: Grade level Dean and/or School Counselor; if not resolved... STEP 2: Assistant Principal; if not resolved... STEP 3: Building Principal

Parking

STEP 1: RHS Main Office Administrative Assistant; if not resolved.... STEP 2: Grade Level Dean; if not resolved... STEP 3: Assistant Principal; if not resolved... STEP 4: Building Principal

Residency

STEP 1: School Counselor; if not resolved... STEP 2: Counseling Supervisor; if not resolved... STEP 3: Assistant Principal; if not resolved... STEP 4: Building Principal

School Personnel

STEP 1: Supervisor; if not resolved... STEP 2: Building Administrator (Assistant Principal/AD); if not resolved... STEP 3: Building Principal

Social Work/Psychology

STEP 1: Social Worker/School Psychologist; if not resolved... STEP 2: RHS Special Education Supervisor; if not resolved... STEP 3: Assistant Principal; if not resolved... STEP 4: Building Principal

Special Education:

STEP 1: Teacher or Service Provider; if not resolved... STEP 2: Case Manager; if not resolved... STEP 3: Special Education Supervisor; if not resolved... STEP 4: Assistant Principal; if not resolved... STEP 5: Building Principal

Special Education Transportation

STEP 1: Case Manager; if not resolved... STEP 2: Special Education Supervisor; if not resolved... STEP 3: District Transportation Manager

Transportation (Pickup, route problems, etc.)

STEP 1: District Transportation Director

Use of Building/Field Requests:

STEP 1: RHS Student Life Office/Athletics Office; if not resolved... STEP 2: Assistant Principal/Athletics Director; if not resolved...STEP 3: Building Principal

