

Riverdale Kingsbridge Academy

MS/HS 141



Family and Student Handbook

2026-2027

WELCOME BACK, TIGERS!

WELCOME BACK TO ALL OF OUR RKA TIGERS!

I AM SO EXCITED TO GET STARTED WITH THE 2026-2027 SCHOOL YEAR! I HOPE THAT YOU USE THIS YEAR AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXPAND YOURSELVES AND YOUR EXPERIENCES. HAVE YOU EVER CONSIDERED TRYING A NEW SPORT OR ACTIVITY? MAYBE YOU'VE BEEN CURIOUS ABOUT WHAT HAPPENS AT OUR AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES, BUT NEVER GAVE THEM A TRY? RKA HAS A WEALTH OF OPPORTUNITIES IN STORE FOR YOU FROM ATHLETICS, ACTIVITIES, AFTER SCHOOL CLUBS AND MORE. PLEASE PAY ATTENTION TO DAILY ANNOUNCEMENTS AND USE THIS HANDBOOK TO LEARN MORE ABOUT WHAT WE HAVE TO OFFER.

**WITH TIGER PRIDE,
LORI O'MARA
PRINCIPAL**

Important Staff Contacts				
Last name	First Name	Email	Role	Location
O'Mara	Lori	LOMara@schools.nyc.gov	Principal	101
Prado-Romero	Miledys	MPrado-romero2@schools.nyc....	Assistant Principal	109
Calpin	Celestine	ccalpin2@schools.nyc.gov	Assistant Principal	214
Waterbury	Adam	awaterbury2@schools.nyc.gov	Assistant Principal	239
Pecharo	Dana	dpecharo@schools.nyc.gov	Assistant Principal	145
Brownstein	Jessica	JBrownstein@schools.nyc.gov	Assistant Principal	308
Purdy	Stephanie	SPurdy@schools.nyc.gov	Activities	B24
Gordian	Martha	MGordian@schools.nyc.gov	Counseling in Schools	126
Riverapen	Tori	Vrivera35@schools.nyc.gov	Counseling in Schools	126
Ferreira	Deana	DFerreira@schools.nyc.gov	Dean - Grades 7 (A-L), 8 (all)	208A
DiCanio	Robert	RDiCanio@schools.nyc.gov	Dean - Grades 11, 12	339
Aponte-Acosta	Jennifer	JAponte-Acosta@schools.nyc.gov	Guidance - Grade 7 (A-L), 8 (all)	230
Byrd	Joslie	JByrd2@schools.nyc.gov	Guidance - High School (A-Gn)	303
Lockhart-Lee	Soremi	Slockhartlee@schools.nyc.gov	Guidance - High School (Pb-Z)	303
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Oguaghu	Andrew	AOguagha4@schools.nyc.gov	Guidance - Related Services	156
Payne	Melissa	MPayne3@schools.nyc.gov	Guidance - High School (Go- Pa)	306
Cuello-Gutierrez	Johanna	JCuelloGutierrez@schools.nyc.g...	Guidance- Grades 6 (all), 7 (M-Z)	112
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Callan-Grima	Nicole	NCallanGrima@schools.nyc.gov	School Assessment Team	223
Maldonado	Ivan	Imaldonado4@schools.nyc.gov	School Assessment Team	100
Edmond	Lesly	LEdmond@schools.nyc.gov	Senior Advisor / Athletic Director	B24
Bradshaw	Courtney	CBradsh2@schools.nyc.gov	Dean - Grades 9,10	B23
Burrowes	Mark	MBurrowes3@schools.nyc.gov	Dean - Grade 6, Grade 7 (M-Z)	177
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BELL SCHEDULE 2026-2027

Full Day

8:15 AM		Warning Bell
8:20- 9:05	Period 1	
9:07-9:52	Period 2	
9:55-10:40	Period 3	HS Lunch
10:43-11:28	Period 4	8th Grade Lunch
11:31-12:16	Period 5	HS Lunch
12:19-1:04	Period 6	6th Grade Lunch
1:07-1:52	Period 7	7th Grade Lunch
1:55-2:40	Period 8	

All Wi-Fi enabled devices are prohibited in school or they must be placed in Wi-Fi blocking pouches. Students are expected to arrive early enough to secure devices in pouches before proceeding to classes.

Students arriving to period 1 classes after 8:20 AM will be marked late on the daily attendance.

Half Day Schedule

8:15 AM		Warning Bell
8:20- 9:05	Period 1	
9:07-9:52	Period 2	
9:55-10:40	Period 3	HS Lunch
10:43-11:28	Period 4	8th Grade Lunch

RKA operates on a four day cycle. Students attend classes on a rotation. Cycle days are listed on the [Family Calendar](#).

MY SCHEDULE				
	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				

Academic Items

Classes

All students are programmed for courses as needed to meet graduation and promotional benchmarks. When there is an opportunity for choice, counselors will work with students in the process. It is very important that all students actively participate in the program-planning phase when announced.

Grading

The school year is divided into six marking periods, each with its own report card. Marking periods end in October, December, January, March, May and June, and are listed in the RKA Family Calendar.

RKA issues report card grades in single increments between 60 and 100. Grades between 65 and 100 are passing grades. Anything graded 64 and under is a failing grade.

Course-specific grading policies will be distributed on course syllabi.

All students should expect major exams at the end of the term (January and June), although this will look different for our High School and Middle School Students.

- At the MS level they will be handled during class time and included under assessments in the grading.
- HS students in grades 9-12 and 8th grade students taking Biology and Algebra should expect to have uniform finals administered during class time. Those finals will account for a significant percentage of the term grade for HS students—10%.

Credit Accumulation

High school students earn credits at the end of each term (January and June). Students who do not earn credits required for graduation at the end of the term will need to attend summer school or PM school if available.

Late Assignments

Turning in assignments on time is an important piece of the student's responsibility to their own learning. New material continues to be presented, and students who do not turn in assignments on time have a tendency to fall behind on the new learning. Late work will be accepted for three days (3 school days) only. After the 3 days have passed, no late work will be accepted. Students handing in work late can expect a deduction in grade: 20% off the earned score if handed in within that time frame.

If a student is absent with a doctor's note, the student has three days following their date of return to hand in missed assignments and arrange any necessary make-up exams without penalty. For example a student is absent Monday and Tuesday and returns on Wednesday. The student has Thursday, Friday and Monday to hand in the missed work.

Teachers will indicate a "0" in the Jupiter platform until the work is handed in.

Jupiter Platform

Teachers at RKA use Jupiter Ed as the online grading system. Participating teachers provide students and their parents with periodic updates on homework completion, test grades, and more. Once the initial invites have been shared with parents in the first week of school, our Parent Coordinator in the main office can help parents gain access to the Jupiter platform.

Learning Platform

We will be using Google Classroom (GC) through the NYCPS G Suite. All students must activate their NYCPS student email account (@NYCStudents.net). Some assignments will be submitted through GC and some will be done by hand with pen and paper. Guidance Counselors can help students who need to reset their passwords. Guardians can be added to Google Classrooms to receive weekly updates. Contact your child's guidance counselor for assistance with Google Classroom.

Virtual Learning

Although virtual learning will not be the norm for most students in 2026-27, teachers will be posting a Zoom link in their Google Classrooms to be used in case there is a situation where the class or school will need to move collectively to the virtual environment. Students should not expect that their teachers will be "Zooming" with them

individually if they are absent. Students may not “Zoom” in from extended trips or vacations. As per the NYCPS calendar Election Day in November 2026 is an instructional date and students should expect to Zoom into their classes from home that day.

Communicating with Staff

Every New York City public school teacher has a NYCPS email address. This is an excellent way to keep in touch, especially for “quick” questions. The teachers will print their email addresses on their syllabi; they can also be found on the school website, www.RKA141.org. You should expect a response within 48-72 hours during the school week.



Communication from the school

School staff will call or email you if there are issues they feel need to be discussed. Teachers may also contact you through Jupiter Ed. Emails announcing general activities or information will be communicated by the Parent Coordinator and Principal.

Twitter and Instagram will be used for celebratory communications.

NYCSA Accounts

Parents should register for the NYCPS NYCSA account to receive official NYCPS updates, report cards, test grades, and transcripts. Families can contact our Parent Coordinator for assistance with their account.

Parent meetings

All teachers have preparation periods during the day. Parents may arrange to meet with a teacher during this time. Teachers are also accessible by email. Teacher email lists are available on our school website and will be sent home with students.

Supply List

Supply lists can be found on our school website, rka141.org. Students are expected to bring their Wi-Fi protective Yondr pouch, notebook, and calculator as well as other materials required throughout the year each day.

Daily Announcements

Students will receive daily announcements through their Grade-level Google Classroom. Students should check in daily to learn about activities.

Assemblies

RKA Guidance staff frequently hold assemblies, meetings, or classroom visits to emphasize the importance of student academic progress. These materials are often shared with families. Please heed the importance of these conversations and presentations to ensure students remain on track.

Special Recognition

Students who earn over 90% in a marking period will be named to the Principal's List of High Achievers. Their names will be posted in the school. At the end of year, students who have earned a 90 in every period will be invited to their grade level's awards ceremony and recognized by their families, peers and faculty.

Students in Grade 7 and 10 who earn a cumulative 90% at the January term for the preceding 3 Terms will be invited to join the National and National Junior Honor Society. In order to be inducted, students must complete other requirements such as completing Community Service.

Plagiarism

Finally, a note about plagiarism. Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of someone else's ideas or words. This includes information that is copied directly from books or the internet (including Chat GPT and other AI platforms) as well as from other students. Your teachers will show you the proper way to give another person credit for his or her words and thoughts so that you can include them safely and honestly in your work.

Students must remember that copying another student's work (homework, class work, reports, essays, tests, projects– ANYTHING!) is a dishonest practice. Students who do so can expect not to receive any credit for the copied work, and students who allow others to copy can expect the same. Students found to be plagiarizing will not be allowed to join the National Honor Society or participate in Student Council for at least one year. Your teachers would much rather read what you have to say in your own words than to read someone else's. And, truthfully—you are only cheating yourself when you copy someone else's work.



Organizational Items

Absences

Students are expected to be present every day for school. This is the one sure-fire way to ensure that you are making the most academic progress possible. It is also an excellent habit to get into as most employers look for prospective employees with a strong work ethic and impeccable attendance record.

Occasionally, students are absent from school due to a doctor's appointment, family business or illness. These absences are coded as "explained" and do contribute to the students overall attendance. These absences **must** be documented with an official note from the doctor or a parent. Notes must be shown to each individual teacher and turned into the official class teacher at the start of the next day so it can be taken to the school's Attendance Office. All work missed by an excused absence should be made up, and it is the student's responsibility to arrange this with each teacher.

Absences not explained in this way will be treated as cutting (see below) and any missed work cannot be made up.

Regular punctual attendance is critical to student success. All students who attend less than 90% per year are considered chronically absent. Daily attendance is taken in period 1 classes and period attendance is taken in every class. Parents will use the NYCPS Grades and Attendance System to check their child's attendance. Attendance outreach will also be provided through this system. If a student is not present in the official attendance period (period 1), families can expect an automated call and email to the contact information reflected in the school's official database (ATS). Even if the child subsequently attends school (for example if the student enters school during Period 2) this notification will still go home. Families suspecting an inconsistency should first check Jupiter Ed to see if their child has been marked present in the classes before calling the main office

Cutting

Cutting is defined as being absent from one or more classes without an acceptable excuse. This includes instances when a student is in the building but not in class, being one or more periods late to school without an acceptable excuse, or leaving the school building early. Acceptable excuses include doctor's appointments, family business or illness. In order for the absence to be marked explained, a legitimate note from the

doctor or parent is required and must be shown to each teacher whose class was missed.

Students who cut can expect to serve after school detention or be suspended according to the Citywide Behavioral Expectations. Repeat offenders can also expect to be excluded from school activities such as trips and dances. School work missed while cutting cannot be made up.

Lateness

Students are expected to be punctual to school and to every class throughout the day. Students are late to school in the morning if they are not present and seated in first period class at 8:20 AM. After 8:30 AM, students must use the entrance under the arcade, and after 9:00 AM use the main entrance. They will receive a late pass to show to their classroom teacher. Students with three latenesses must serve an after school detention to make up for time missed. Repeated behavior will result in additional consequences including detentions or exclusion from dances, trips, or other privileges.



Students are late to class when they are not in their designated seats when the bell rings. This means that students should not be lingering in halls and stairwells, or hanging out in doorways at the start of the period. Students must sign the late log maintained by each teacher, and teachers will refer students who are frequently late for after school detention or other consequences.

Students who demonstrate less than 90% punctuality risk being barred from school events and trips.

All Wi-Fi enabled devices are prohibited in school or they must be placed in Wi-Fi blocking pouches. Students are expected to arrive early enough to secure devices in pouches before proceeding to classes. Students arriving to period 1 classes after 8:20 AM will be marked late on the daily attendance.

Use of the Hall Pass

Occasionally, students will need to leave the classroom and must have a hall pass to do so. This ensures that teachers and staff know where students are in case of an emergency. Students must ask teachers for the use of the pass. Only one student at a time may leave the classroom. Students may not leave the classroom during the first and last 5 minutes of any period so that attendance records are accurate.

- The plastic pass is for restroom use only. Students will use their ID card to scan in outside the restroom so we will have a record for safety purposes.
- One-way passes must be filled in completely and are used when sending students to various offices on campus. No student will be sent out of the classroom without verification that there is an adult in the office to receive him or her. Students may not be given a pass to the library to complete homework assignments.

ID Cards

All students are issued school ID cards, and are expected to display them at all times- especially in the case of an emergency. 6th grade students will receive an ID card with their SKU but once they have their picture taken in October, they will be issued a new ID Card with their picture. If your child loses his/her ID card, the replacement cost is \$2.00. ID Cards will be used for library circulation, meal service and signing in late.

Hallways and Staircases

Students are expected to use the hallways and staircases in a quick and courteous manner. Students should walk to their right in the hallway and move directly from one place to another without lingering, touching, running, horsing around, or blocking traffic. For travel in between most classes, middle school students should use the stairs in the main corridor. High school students may use the stairs in both the new and old wings. Middle school students should use the old wing stairs. All students should follow their dean's instructions for staircase use upon entering and exiting the cafeteria. Students creating disruptions in the hallways and staircases will serve detention or another Consequence, as outlined in the Chancellor's Behavioral Expectations.



Safety Drills

We will be conducting all safety drills as outlined by the NYCPS. During drills, students are expected to follow the directions of school officials. During drills, students are expected to remain silent so that directions can be conveyed and heard.

Transportation

Many students in grades 6-12 are eligible for an OMNY Card to use public transportation. Distribution of the cards is determined by the student's address and they are distributed within the first week of school.

Sixth graders are eligible for yellow bus service if they live at least a mile from the school. The distance is determined by the Office of Pupil Transportation (OPT), not the school. Parents may opt for an OMNY Card instead of the yellow bus. A student may not switch back and forth between the yellow bus and an OMNY Card. During the first few days of school, you may find an extended waiting period for the yellow bus, as the drivers “settle in” to their new schedules and routes. We strongly suggest you bring your child yourself—or have a backup plan—for the first few days, if possible. The OPT hotline is 718-392-8855.

Library

Students are welcome to use the library with their ID card and program displayed. Hours of operation for the library will be posted, and library usage will be monitored, to meet social distancing capacity guidelines. Students will be rotated through on a schedule which corresponds to lunch periods to ensure that all students have some Open Access time. All students must exit the library at the end of the period.

The library computers are available for printing reports during Open Access or after school. Students may not go to the library to finish or print assignments for other classes during instructional time because the librarian is usually busy with whole-class visits. Please plan in advance to avoid last minute printing “emergencies.”

In order to maintain a clean environment for all, no food or drink is allowed in the library.

Common Areas

Common areas such as the cafeteria, gymnasium, locker room, and auditorium, are off-limits to students except at such times as they are assigned there (for example: your lunch or gym period). Students should never be unsupervised in these areas. Students found in these areas when unassigned shall be deemed “cutting,” and applicable consequences shall follow.

Lunch

All students will have a designated lunch period and an assigned location. Students should arrive at their designated location quickly once the bell has rung. Students will need their ID card for lunch service as it facilitates the quickest service. Students have the option of bringing their own lunch.

Arrival/Dismissal

Student arrival and dismissal are two very important times for student and staff safety. Between roadway traffic and the large numbers of students moving around the building, it is important to follow the procedure and directions of staff members very carefully.

- 6th- Auditorium Doors
- 7th- Under the arcade
- 8th- Exit E- on Independence Ave close to 236 (the old HS Entrance)
- 9th and 10th- Glass door to rear of cafeteria (closer to Arcade)
- 11th and 12th- Glass door to rear of cafeteria (closer to PS 24)

Yellow buses for 6th graders park by the Auditorium entrance

Yellow buses for eligible Special Education students park by the Main Entrance

Public (MTA) buses pull up by Arcade on Independence Ave.

RKA Wi-Fi Enabled Device Protocols Effective 9/4/2025

Students will not be permitted to use or access their personal internet-enabled electronic devices upon arrival at school until the end of the school day. The school day is defined as

the period from the moment students enter the school building until the last class of the day ends, including during lunch. Instruction takes place from 8:20 AM to 2:40 PM. Students will be able to use school/NYCPS-issued devices during the school day when needed for instruction in classes.

1. COLLECTION/STORAGE

- Upon arrival, students must power off their devices.
- Students will place their devices in their school-issues pouch with their ID card and secure it using the locking mechanism in front of school staff. Students must use designated arrival and dismissal locations to ensure staff coverage and assist in orderly entry and departure
 - 6th- Auditorium Doors
 - 7th- Under the arcade
 - 8th- Exit E- on Independence Ave close to 236 (the old HS Entrance)
 - 9th and 10th- Glass door to rear of cafeteria (closer to Arcade)
 - 11th and 12th- Glass door to rear of cafeteria (closer to PS 24)
- Students will store their locked pouches in their lockers or bookbags for the day.
- At the end of the school day, students will unlock their pouch at their dismissal location.
- They will remove their device(s) and lock their pouches before leaving the school.
- Students with approved early dismissal will be able to unlock their pouch in the main office with the assistance of front office staff.
- In the event that a storage device, such as a pouch, is lost or damaged, the school will collect \$25 from the student/student's family for a replacement.

Examples of damage include but are not limited to:

- Deep scratches on the globe and on the green ring around it.
- Intentional pen marks on the inside of the Pouch
- Bent Pins
- Pin and button not fully recessing due to pin damage
- Deep scratches on the globe and on the green ring around it
- Removing or rendering unusable the ID card holder

2. EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

- In case of emergency or exigent circumstances, parents or guardians can call the Parent Coordinator in the main office at 718-796-8516 x1002 or Cindy Murat, Pupil Accounting Secretary at 718-796-8516 x 1004 to reach their child.
- In case of emergency or exigent circumstances, students may access phones in the main office to reach their parents or guardians.
- In case of emergency or exigent circumstances, the school will use GAMA (based on email address in ATS) to communicate information to parents or guardians.

- Here is how parents/guardians can access the automated messaging system if they have not already done so: ([Directions](#) for setting up [NYCSA account](#) to access GAMA among other functions)

3. EXCEPTIONS

- Students are allowed to use their device if they have an individualized education program (IEP) or 504 Plan that includes use of an internet-enabled device and do not have a DOE-issued device for such purpose.
- Parents/guardians must contact Adam Waterbury (AWaterbury2@schools.nyc.gov) if a student requires an exception for reasons such as: medical monitoring/treatments (for example to monitor blood sugar or other similar circumstances), if student is a caregiver, for approved language purposes (such as translation or interpretation services if no other means are available), or where otherwise required by law.
- The principal/designee may authorize use for an educational purpose.
- Exceptions will be processed and approved within 7 days of email receipt.

4. **DISCIPLINE-** Students who use electronic devices in violation of the NYCPS Discipline Code, the school's policy, Chancellor's Regulation A-413, and/or the NYCPS Internet Acceptable Use and Safety Policy ("IAUSP") will be subject to progressive discipline. This means that the disciplinary responses will escalate based on the nature and frequency of the violation. As provided in the State law, a student may not be suspended solely on the grounds that the student accessed a personal internet-enabled device in violation of school policy. Repeated incidents of insubordination (i.e. refusal to surrender or store device) may result in a suspension if approved by the Office of Safety and Youth Development.

- **RKA's Progressive Discipline** in regards to banned wi-fi items possession/use.
 - **The first violation** of the RKA Wi-Fi Enabled Device Protocols will result in a verbal warning and reminder about the expectation for following the cell phone/Yondr pouch policy. Device will be collected and returned at the end of the day.
 - **The second violation** of the RKA Wi-Fi Enabled Device Protocols will result in a phone call home. Devices will be collected and returned at the end of the day.
 - **The third violation** of the RKA Wi-Fi Enabled Device Protocols will result in an in person parent conference. PBIS Tiger Tokens will be erased. Device will be collected and returned only to the parent at that conference.
 - **The fourth violation** of the RKA Wi-Fi Enabled Device Protocols will result in after school detention. PBIS Tiger Tokens will be erased. Device will be collected and returned to the parent only after the consequence has been completed.
 - **The fifth violation** of the RKA Wi-Fi Enabled Device Protocols will result in loss of privileges which depend on the school calendar (ie next upcoming special event/activity/trip). PBIS Tiger Tokens will be erased. Device will be collected and returned only to the parent at an in-person conference.
 - **The sixth violation** of the RKA Wi-Fi Enabled Device Protocols will result in class removal or Principal's Suspension. PBIS Tiger Tokens will be erased. Device will be collected and returned only to the parent at an in-person conference.

- All subsequent violations may result in further principal suspensions and additional parent conferences and interventions to address the students' continued non-compliance.
- Please note that students who repeatedly violate the RKA Wi-Fi Enabled Device Protocols may be ineligible to participate in specific RKA events, ceremonies, trips.

5. OTHER: If lost or stolen

- In the unlikely event that an electronic device is stolen or damaged at school, parents can submit a claim to the Comptroller's Office. More information on submitting a claim is available on the [Comptroller's webpage](#).

RIVERDALE KINGSBRIDGE ACADEMY

NO WI-FI ENABLED DEVICES

NYS LAW

ONLY SCHOOL-ISSUED OR APPROVED DEVICES PERMITTED IN SCHOOL BUILDING
ARRIVAL BELL TO DISMISSAL BELL

☒ **TURN OFF DEVICES/ITEMS**
☒ **SEAL IN POUCH WITH ID WITH STAFF**
☒ **STORE IN OWN LOCKER OR BAG UNTIL UNSEALED BY STAFF AT THE END OF THE DAY**

CONFISCATION & CONSEQUENCES

☒ **EARN 5 TIGER TOKENS EVERY WEEK FOR FOLLOWING THE RULE**

1. STUDENT/ADMIN CONFERENCE; ITEMS RTN'D END OF DAY
 2. PHONE CALL HOME; ITEMS RTN'D END OF DAY
 3. PARENT PICK UP OF DEVICE; ITEMS RTN'D TO PARENT ONLY
 4. AFTER SCHOOL DETENTION; ITEMS RTN'D TO PARENT ONLY AFTER CONSEQUENCE COMPLETE
 5. LOSS OF PRIVILEGES; ITEMS RTN'D TO PARENT ONLY END OF DAY
 6. CLASS REMOVAL SUSPENSION; ITEMS RTN'D TO PARENT ONLY AFTER CONSEQUENCE COMPLETE

Citywide Behavioral Expectations

There are many actions listed in the Citywide Behavioral Expectations (Discipline Code). Each is listed with a corresponding consequence. Some are quite serious, such as Principal's or Superintendent's suspensions or, if necessary, police action. We would like to highlight some of the key rules which we feel contribute to a safe, healthy atmosphere. It is our expectation that students abide by these rules for the good of our students and school community.

Students should not engage in the following behaviors:

- Using, selling, or distributing drugs or alcohol.
- Fighting or physical contact with students, staff, or community members.
- Vandalism or defacement of any school, public, or personal property.
- Theft of another's or school property.
- Use of foul language with students, staff, or community members.
- Possession or use of weapons.
- Harassment of other students or faculty.

Students who use the internet should do so in a positive and respectful manner. Websites such as Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, and TikTok have many social networking applications. Students should be kind, and use discretion when posting information about themselves or others. Remember, if you don't have something nice to say, don't say anything at all.

Bullying is defined as repetitious harassment of others. This can be through the use of words, writing (internet, texts, notes), physical intimidation, name calling, or inciting others to participate in harassment of others. Incidents of bullying will be handled by the deans on a case-by-case basis. If you feel bullied, you should speak with your dean or another trusted adult.

Although it seems there are many rules to be followed, together we can have an RKA and a community that we are all proud to call home!

Students who wish to participate in extracurricular activities, such as Student Government or Varsity Athletics, are expected to surpass these minimum standards of behavior. Policies specific to these groups are posted on our website.

Dress Code

Every institution or business has an accepted standard of dress. RKA maintains a dress code that is conducive to safety, learning, and modesty. Students should arrive at school in proper dress every day. Students who do not abide by the dress code will be asked to adjust what they are wearing. If they are unable to do so, parents will be contacted to provide appropriate dress. Repetitive behavior will result in detention or other consequences.

The dress code is listed below:

- **Clothing** with offensive images or language are not permitted in NYC Schools. This includes, but is not limited to: bias, violence, gangs, drugs and/or alcohol.
- **Tops:** No tank tops, tube tops, halter tops, strapless tops, or tops that expose the midriff. All undergarments must be covered by the top or blouse worn. Basketball jerseys and sleeveless shirts are allowed, provided a shirt with sleeves is worn underneath.
- **Shorts:** Shorts that fall within 4 inches of the knee are okay. Short-shorts are not acceptable.
- **Skirts:** Skirts that fall within 4 inches of the knee are okay. Mini-skirts are not acceptable.
- **Jeans and pants:** Jeans and pants must be free of tears and holes especially in the thigh or hip area. Pants must be worn at waist level and cover the midriff and undergarments.
- **Shoes:** Sandals that stay on the entire foot are okay, but flip flops are not. They present a safety hazard when walking around the school.
- **Headgear:** Non-religious headgear such as do-rags or bonnets are permitted; however hats and ski masks are not permitted. Students will be asked to take them off and put them away. Religious headgear is always permitted.

Student Lockers

Having a locker is a privilege, and students should treat it as such. Students will fill out a Locker Card to register for a locker after selecting one and placing a lock on the locker during the sign-up window. Students will be issued lockers on a first come/first served basis. Students who do not get a locker will be able to place items such as coats in their first period classroom. Only students in grades 7-12 are able to sign up for lockers.

Students who register for a locker agree to the following:

- I will use only the locker assigned to me.
- I understand that all school rules must be followed in relation to my school locker. I know that I cannot store any items in my locker that are not regularly allowed in school according to the Citywide Behavioral Expectations. In addition, lockers may be searched by school personnel. I understand that I have no right to privacy in my locker.
- I understand that school lockers are school property. I will not alter the appearance of my assigned locker in any way (stickers, mirrors, wallpaper, etc.). As the locker is school property, any damage to the locker to which I am assigned will be my responsibility.
- I will be charged for any repairs to and/or replacement of the locker for which I have been found responsible. I understand that I will not receive report cards or transcripts if I owe any money for locker damage.
- I understand that my locker is for the storage of my coat and personal belongings, and I agree to place my items in my locker when I arrive at school, and retrieve them only before lunch and after dismissal.
- I understand that I may not visit my locker at any other time during the school day.
- I understand that lockers should be used quickly and that I should not linger or “hang out” in locker areas.
- I must provide my own lock for use on my locker.
- I will not give my locker combination to anyone, and no other student may use my locker.
- The school is not responsible for loss or theft of items in the locker as I am providing my own lock and keeping that combination to myself.

Community School

RKA was founded as a community school. Local parents, community members and politicians sought to make this place a safe haven for students who live in the Riverdale Kingsbridge community. They felt that the young people of this area deserved a good local school to attend, and they fought very hard to make it a reality. It is important for the future of our school that we maintain a good relationship with all community members.

While RKA students are entering and exiting the school, when they are out in the community, and when they are at after school functions such as sporting events or trips, they are representing the school, themselves, and their family. If we want to maintain RKA as a special school, it is vital that students maintain their high behavior standards when they are in these situations. Students should use courtesy in leaving the school area quickly and calmly at dismissal. Students using public transportation should behave in a mature and respectful fashion while waiting for and riding the bus. Students walking on the footbridge and in our local community should be respectful of local community members, shop owners, and their buildings.

In order to develop our school as a vibrant organization, help build a relationship with our community and instill a sense of responsibility in our student body, RKA requires all high school students to earn 40 hours of community service to meet graduation requirements. It is recommended that students complete this at a rate of 10 hours per year. Students can earn community service within RKA by serving on Team Tiger, or they may work with an organization that suits their own interests and passions, or they can select from one of the partnerships established by the school. Ms. Brownstein in room 308 can provide access to volunteer opportunities and Mr. Maldonado will update your community service record based on the log sheets placed in the mailbox by the main office. Remember, all of your community service hours must be documented by a school official or a representative of the organization with which you served.

Honor Society members have additional requirements. Each inductee must complete 10 hours of community service per year (in addition to graduation requirements). There are several other requirements as well. Please see Ms. Hope or Ms. Brownstein for more information. First-time Honor Society Inductees are celebrated at the Spring Induction Ceremony. Returning members are recognized at their grade-level awards ceremony in late Spring.



Extra-Curricular Activities

RKA offers a wide variety of extra curricular activities for our students in Grades 6-12, although some are applicable for a particular grade band only.

Spirit Weeks

All students are encouraged to dress up for Spirit Weeks when they are announced for particular grades. Spirit Weeks are used to celebrate special events, coincide with cultural months, or commemorate other calendar items.

Clubs

RKA offers after school clubs to our students. Many of our clubs sponsor an event or produce a product to enhance our school.

Some examples of clubs offered in recent years are:

- *Write to Roar*- Literary and Arts
- Photography Club
- Black Student Union
- Video Game Club
- Arts and Crafts
- Money Inc
- Model United Nations
- Creative Writing
- Dungeons and Dragons
- Debate Club
- Chess
- Band
- Chorus
- Key Club
- Science Olympiad
- Gender Sexuality Alliance

Student Government/ Student Council

The RKA Student Government (HS) and Student Council (MS) operate in close conjunction with the RKA Administrative team. Our student leaders are selected from among their peers and help plan and execute many school activities. They also provide feedback and suggestions to the RKA Administrative team. The students who serve on

the Student Government and Student Council have exemplary academic, attendance, and behavioral records, but most of all a true love of the school and a desire to work collaboratively to improve RKA.

Academic and Artistic Contests

RKA encourages our students to strive for greatness through our academic and artistic contests. Some of these are school-specific and some engage our students with other students in other schools. In school examples have included a Spelling Bee, Black History Essay Contest, Hispanic Heritage Essay Contest, March into Reading and Fall into Reading. Science Olympiad and the Ezra Jack Keats Bookmaking Contest showcase our students against other schools. Students also have an opportunity to submit pieces to arts contests such as the Bronx Borough Arts Fair.

PSAL Athletics

RKA offers our students in grade 9-12 a wide variety of varsity-level competitive sports. Students must try out and be selected for teams as well as meet or surpass other attendance and academic eligibility. General questions can be sent to our Athletic Director, Les Edmond at LEdmond@schools.nyc.gov.

Fall Sports (begin in August)

- Girls Soccer
- Boys Soccer
- Girls Volleyball
- Girls and Boys Cross Country

Winter Sports (begin in November)

- Co-ed Wrestling
- Boys Basketball
- Girls Basketball
- Co-ed Cheerleading

Spring Sports (begin in February)

- Softball
- Baseball
- Co-ed Golf
- Girls and Boys Track & Field



Middle School Athletics

CHAMPS sports are offered to our Middle School students. The selection varies from year to year. The last several years we have offered Wrestling, Fitness Club, and Tennis.

We also offer a short-term intramural athletics program (6-8 week season) in partnership with our varsity teams and the RNH such as basketball, volleyball, and softball. Students do not need to attend RNH to participate in the intramural program.

Theatre and Talent Shows (through partnership with RNH)

RKA and RNH partner to bring theatrical and performance opportunities to our students. Auditions are held for all productions, and announcements will be made so that all students who are interested have an opportunity to be involved in some way. We typically have a Fall Drama, Spring Musical, and a Spring Talent Show.

*****RNH Afterschool*****

Our community partner, Riverdale Neighborhood House, provides a no-cost after school program which includes homework help, and choice-based social, physical, artistic, academic, and cultural activities for students. For information on enrollment families should contact RNH through their website: <https://www.riverdaleonline.org/>.

Student Support

Help is Here

Sometimes, we could all use someone to talk to. We are a pretty big school, and we want to make it easier for you to know who you can turn to. Wherever you see the “Help is Here” symbol below, please know that the staff member there is ready, willing, and able to talk with you about whatever is on your mind. We want to help; help is here.



Social Emotional Learning

Dealing with all the different emotions and social interactions which we must as humans in a busy and often rushed society can be challenging. A big part of maturity is recognizing how we connect to others socially and how we express, communicate, deal with and compensate for our emotions. Adolescents at the Middle and High School levels can all use a time and a space to talk and learn about their emotions and social interactions.

Some Middle School students will have Advisory or Restorative Circles as part of their program. A Circle is a safe space where students work in a smaller group with a counselor or other trained staff member. A Circle provides a time and a space to communicate feelings and learn from one another. Circles help students develop empathy and compassion and learn to appreciate and respect various viewpoints.

All HS students will have Social Emotional Learning embedded into classes and through special guidance visits.

Peer Mediation

Peer mediation is an opportunity for students to help on another work through conflicts. Students are referred for Peer Mediation through a dean or guidance counselor or administrator. Peer Mediation is never recommended for bullying situations or situations containing a power imbalance.

Tiger Tokens

At RKA we hope that our students exemplify “Tiger Pride.” To that end we teach these values throughout the school. Students who demonstrate Tiger Pride will earn Tiger Tokens. These Tiger Tokens can be redeemed for tangible items and invitation to special events through the Tiger Token Trading Post. All staff members and students have access to an app called PBIS Rewards to award, track and redeem the tokens. To us, Tiger Pride means:

- Punctuality
- Respect
- Independence
- Determination
- Enthusiasm



Services for Students with Special Needs

The NYC Public Schools provides special education services to students across the city in the vast majority of schools. Our school services students with a range of special needs.

Many of our special education students are enrolled in middle and high school classes with students who do not have disabilities. In some cases, these students are in “Integrated Co-Teaching” classrooms (ICT), in which a general education teacher and a special education teacher work together to provide a nurturing differentiated environment. Other special education

students attend smaller classes where they work closely with a special education teacher for academic subjects. If, as a result of an evaluation done by the School Assessment Team (SAT), parents and the school determine that a child has a disability which requires special education services, we actively work to make certain that student is provided with the appropriate service. This process is regulated by the Principal and the Assistant Principal for Special Education.

504 Accommodation Plans

A 504 plan is designed to accommodate the unique needs of an individual with a disability as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is the first civil rights law guaranteeing equal opportunity for more than 35 million Americans with disabilities.

Children who have disabilities, but whose disabilities do not interfere with their ability to progress in general education and who are not eligible for special education services, may be entitled to a 504 Accommodation Plan. School districts must ensure that students with disabilities have meaningful opportunities to participate in all aspects of school on an equal basis with students without disabilities.

504 Plans serve to help students thrive academically and build greater advocacy and awareness of how to manage their diagnosis. 504 Plans are not meant to modify academic expectations but are meant to provide accommodations for the student to access the curriculum. To that end, students should be involved as much as possible in the 504 planning process to provide the most impactful accommodations. It is RKA's expectation that students be involved in the 504 meeting. To support growth in executive function and development of social emotional and management needs, students, parents/guardians, and school staff must participate in collaborative implementation meetings such as checklist creation and classroom and/or testing accommodation development or other supports.