

Ridge Mills Elementary School Handbook



Mr. Michael Flagg, Principal

7841 Ridge Mills Road

Rome, NY 13440

(315) 334-1280

www.ridgemills.romecsd.org

Ridge Mills Elementary School

Vision and Mission Statements

VISION

Ridge Mills students, parents and staff will be the best they can be by working hard, learning a lot and most importantly, being good to each other.

MISSION

Ridge Mills is dedicated to cultivating the academic, social and emotional potential of each student. We at Ridge Mills foster a learning community where students, staff and parents participate in being the best they can be. Instruction is driven by the rigor of the Common Core Learning Standards and meaningful data. Our vision will enable our school to improve student proficiency levels as measured by Fountas and Pinnell benchmark assessments.



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Important Phone Numbers

Main Office - Mrs. Louise Esposito: 334-1281

Nurse - Mrs. Carrie McMahon: 334-1294

Cafeteria - Ms. Tracey Bird: 334-1289

Transportation - Mr. Andy Thompson: 338-6550

Time Schedule

School Hours: 9:10am-3:10pm

Drop Off Doors Open: 8:40-9:10am

Breakfast Available: 8:40-9:10am

2 hour delay: School begins at 11:10am, no breakfast served

Day 1-5 Schedule

All Rome elementary schools operate on a five day schedule. The first day of school will be a “Day 1” and the schedule will rotate through Days 1-5. Only days when school is in session will count in the rotation; vacation days and snow days do not count. Most aspects of the school’s schedule will be based on this five day rotation, such as specials and IEP/Rtl services.

Code of Conduct

Ridge Mills students are expected to follow the Rome City School District Code of Conduct at all times. A summary of the Code of Conduct was provided in the district calendar. It is also available on the Rome City School District website at www.romecsd.org.

School Expectations

The Ridge Mills School vision statement is “Work Hard, Learn A Lot, but Most of All, Be Good to Each Other.” Each student is expected to follow this statement every day. Students and staff are respectful and kind to each other and make sure Ridge Mills is a safe place to learn and grow. Individual teachers will also have their own classroom rules, procedures, and behavior/discipline plans, which are explained each year at Open House.

The core expectations of respect, kindness, and safety are taught and modeled to all students. These expectations are consistent across all settings. Examples of school-wide expectations include:

- Be Respectful:
 - Follow directions from staff
 - Use polite language
 - Show care for school property
- Be Kind:
 - Support and encourage others
 - Help others in need
 - Treat others the way you want to be treated
- Be Safe:
 - Give others personal space
 - Keep your hands and feet to yourself

Discipline

Mistakes are opportunities to learn. Consequences are fair, consistent, and intended to teach students appropriate and adaptive ways to behave.

Parents Make the Difference

We recognize that all parents want the best for their children. At Ridge Mills, we do as well. Partnerships between schools and families always lead to the best outcomes for kids. As your child's first teachers, your influence and expertise is welcomed. Learning happens not only in our classrooms, but also in your homes and in the community. Please review the following suggestions, which may be helpful for your children:

- Get to know your child's teacher by attending Parent-Teacher conferences and reaching out when needed. Your feedback is valuable and helps to paint a picture of your child's strengths and needs.
- Talk with your children about what they do at school and demonstrate a positive attitude about education. A positive attitude emphasizes how enjoyable and rewarding learning can be. It also helps your child build confidence and excitement about learning.
- Set up routines at home. Set limits on television, video games, and internet time.
- Encourage your child to read at home. It could be anything of interest or that they are excited about. Whether it is a novel, a recipe, a magazine or anything in between, the important thing is that they are reading. Jervis Library is an excellent source for reading material and family events.
- Foster independence and responsibility. Mistakes are opportunities to learn.

Security Procedures

All school doors are locked at all times during school hours. A doorbell is available at the main door, where parents can be let in from the Main Office. All visitors must sign in at the Main Office. Please be advised that parents are not permitted to visit classrooms during the school day without prior permission from your child's teacher.

Emergency Drills

While we hope that none of these situations ever arise, it is important for our students to know what to do in an emergency. Therefore, each year we have several fire and lockdown drills. We also have a school evacuation plan in place, which is not practiced with students, but is reviewed with the staff each year.

Directory Information

Directory information is verified yearly via the Demographic Information sheet. Please read through this form thoroughly and make any needed changes. This form is also used for press release permissions. If you do not wish for your child's name and/or picture to be published in the media, please send a letter to the school as well as to the superintendent's office. When you receive this form, please complete it and return it to school with your child as soon as possible. If you have a change in address, phone number, or emergency contact information during the school year, please contact your child's teacher as well as the Main Office as soon as possible.

Bus Procedures

When buses arrive, students who eat breakfast at school will go to the cafeteria. Other students will remain on their buses until the bell rings at 9:10.

At the end of the day, students are dismissed to their buses at 3:10. Kindergarten students are walked to their buses by their teachers first, followed by the rest of the students. Staff members are available to assist students as needed.

Drop Off/Pick Up Procedures

Drop Off/Pick Up Doors are located at the car loop near the north end of the school. These doors are open each morning from 8:40-9:10am. A staff member will be available to let students in. Students who are dropped off prior to 9:10 will go to the cafeteria, where supervision is provided until the bell rings at 9:10. Breakfast will be available for purchase.

Students who are picked up from school should bring a note to their teacher at the beginning of each school year indicating that they will be a parent pickup, rather than a bus student. Staff members will be available at the Pick Up Door to ensure that students are released safely to their parents.

A few reminders to keep your children safe and the car loop running smoothly:

- If you wish to walk your child to/from the door, please use the parking spaces and walk your child across the car loop.
- Please do not park in the medical center parking lot.
- If you wish to remain in your car, please wait in the lane closest to the school. As cars pull up to the sidewalk, students will be released by staff members. Children will not be allowed to cross the car loop without an adult.

Late Arrival/Early Dismissal

It is important that students arrive to school on time each day, and remain at school for the entire school day. However, we realize that there will be exceptions when your child will need to sign in to school late and/or leave early due to an appointment, illness, etc.

- If your child arrives to school after 9:10, you will need to sign him/her in at the Main Office. Mrs. Esposito will give your child a tardy pass to take to his/her teacher. We ask that parents not walk their children to class, as this is disruptive to teachers and classrooms.
- If you need to pick your child up before 3:10, you will need to sign him/her out at the Main Office. When you arrive, Mrs. Esposito will call your child's classroom to have him/her sent to the Main Office to meet you. If possible, please send a note with your child with the approximate time that you will pick him/her up. This will assist us in having your child ready.

Changes in Pick Up/Bus

If your child has a change in their typical dismissal procedure, such as getting picked up instead of riding the bus, or riding a different bus than scheduled, the school must be notified **in writing**, before 10:00am. Please send a note with your child in the morning, or send an email to your child's teacher AND Mrs. Esposito (lesposito@romecsd.org). Otherwise, children will be dismissed via their typical procedure (bus/pick up). This process exists to ensure the safety of all students. Change requests made by phone and/or late in the day often lead to unnecessary mistakes and confusion.

Notes from the School Nurse

- New students need to bring immunization records when they enter school, including the required series of kindergarten immunizations. The district has also requested a form filled out by the student's dental provider to show their dental needs are being met.
- If your child has a health issue that requires special consideration, please call the nurse's office at 334-1294 to discuss it.
- When a student requires medication at school, it must be in the original bottle with a script on it for school. A Permission to Administer Form is also needed to give legal authorization to distribute the medication. This is necessary even for over the counter medication, such as ibuprofen. Please call the nurse for the order form to be filled out by the doctor.
- When a student has had a fever, or has been vomiting at all, they should not come to school until they have been fever free or NOT vomiting for 24 hours without the aid of medication. This will protect their classmates and teachers, and will also protect them, as their immune system is compromised at that time and they could become more sick.
- When a student has been to the ER or doctor, and needs to not participate in gym, a note is needed from the ER, Urgent Care or doctor that states why and how long they need to stay out of gym. If they are out of gym, for their safety they cannot participate in recess, as they could injure themselves.

Notes from the School Nurse

- Sometimes children need a change of clothing while in school. This could be caused by wet slides or grass, or due to an accident for the younger children. We ask that parents provide a change of clothing for their child to be kept in their lockers or cubbies in the event that they should need to change for any reason. This will prevent us from having to call you to bring a change of clothes in the event that we do not have clothing that will fit your child. Also, many times children are not willing to wear clothing that is not their own.
- Please make sure that the school always has an up to date phone number in case of an emergency. If something happens to your child and the phone numbers are not working, you could miss a call that informs you of an emergency and directs you where to go.

Student Absences

If your child is absent from school, you will receive an automated phone call telling you that your child was marked absent. If your child will be absent for more than one day, you may call the Main Office in the morning, and work can be picked up at 3:10. When your child returns to school, you must send in an excuse explaining the reason for his or her absence. Teachers will submit these excuses to the office for your child's file.



Snow Days/Weather Delays

In the event of inclement weather, the Rome City School District may declare a snow day or two hour delay. There are several ways that you can be notified: local television/radio stations, an automated phone call, email, or text message from the school district, and the district's website or facebook page. If you need to update your phone number for automated calls or text messages, please send a note to Mrs. Esposito in the Main Office.

Specials

Students at Ridge Mills participate in a variety of "specials" during each five-day cycle: Art, Music, Physical Education, Library, and Computer. Each class will have a different schedule for their specials; this information will be provided by teachers so you can help your child be prepared.

A few notes on specials:

- Physical Education: Sneakers are required for every class. Please make sure your child wears sneakers on his/her scheduled days.
- Library: Students will be allowed to check out 1-2 books from the Library each week, depending on their grade level. Students must return checked out books before they are allowed to check out additional books. If books are not returned, or are returned damaged, a bill will be sent home so that a replacement can be purchased.



Curriculum

The K-6 curriculum is aligned to NYS Learning Standards in ELA and Math. You may find the NYS Learning Standards at www.engageny.org. Teachers will provide grade-specific curriculum information at Open House.

Universal Screening

The Rome City School District uses STAR Math as the universal screening tool for Math and the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System to measure student reading levels.

Students who do not meet benchmark criteria on these screenings will be considered for AIS/RtI services in reading or math. Please refer to the next page for more information about available services.

AIS/RtI and CSE Services

Ridge Mills has a variety of support services available to our students through CSE (Committee on Special Education) and AIS/RtI (Academic Intervention Services/Response to Intervention). These services are often provided in a small group in order to support students at their individual level.

These services include:

- AIS/RtI Reading
- AIS/RtI Math
- Resource Room
- Counseling
- Speech Therapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Physical Therapy

Lunch

- All students will have a 30 minute lunch period each day. Lunch monitors supervise students during this time.
- Students can bring their lunch from home, or may purchase a lunch from the cafeteria. Each day there are several choices for lunch: the main menu item, an alternative (usually a sandwich), and peanut butter and jelly. Menus are sent home each month so that you and your child can decide if he/she would like to buy lunch or bring lunch from home. Menus are also available on the district website. Students will sign up each day in their classrooms for their desired lunch choice.
- Milk, ice cream, and chips are also available to purchase in the cafeteria each day.
- Each student will have an account in the cafeteria and an assigned “lunch number.” Students can pay for lunch each time they buy, or can pre-pay in the cafeteria or on www.myschoolbucks.com. For student accounts in good standing, pre-payment of \$50.00 will include an extra \$5.00 added to your child’s account.
- Free/reduced price lunch is available for families who meet income requirements. Applications are available in the school cafeteria or on the district website. These applications must be re-filed each school year. Contact the district Lunch Office at 338-6555 with questions.
- Prices:
 - Lunch: \$1.90
 - Reduced Price Lunch: \$0.25
 - Milk: \$0.50
 - Ice Cream: \$0.75
 - Chips: \$0.50



Recess

- When students finish eating lunch, they will be able to have recess time. Recess is supervised by the lunch monitors.
- Students will be taken outside for this recess time as often as possible, including in the winter. Children must have snow pants, boots, hats, and gloves/mittens to play in the snow. Students who do not wear boots must stay on the blacktop. If you would like, you may send spare winter clothing to be kept in your child's locker for the winter season. Please put your child's name on all belongings in case items are lost.
- Alternate indoor activities will be provided when weather does not permit outdoor recess, such as in cases of rain or extreme cold/wind chill.

Breakfast

- Breakfast is available from 8:40-9:10 each morning.
- If a student's bus is late in arriving to school, they will still be able to receive breakfast before going to class.
- Breakfast menus are provided each month, and are also available on the district website.
- Breakfast choices include a main menu option or cereal with milk.
- Breakfast Price is \$1.25. (Reduced Price is \$0.25.)
- More information about cafeteria accounts, free/reduced price meals, and pre-payment is provided in the "Lunch" section of this handbook.



Student Recognition

- Pillar of Pride - Teachers choose students who demonstrate outstanding character values in their school and community. Parents of honored students are invited to a recognition ceremony and ice cream social, held four times each school year.
- Good Character Slips - Staff members can nominate students for recognition any time they are caught showing good character. Students are recognized by having their nominations read on the morning announcements.

Lost and Found

It is not recommended that your child bring valuable items to school. However, a Lost and Found box is located in the cafeteria for items such as lunch boxes, sweatshirts, mittens, books, etc, that may be lost or accidentally left at lunch, at recess, or in the hallways. Labeling easily misplaced items such as lunch boxes, water bottles, and coats will assist staff in returning lost items to their owners.

Dignity for All Students Act

New York State's Dignity for All Students Act (DASA) seeks to provide the State's students with a safe and supportive environment free from discrimination, intimidation, taunting, harassment, and bullying on school property, a school bus, and/or at a school function. For more information, please go to: www.p12.nysed.gov/dignityact. There is also more information in the RCSD Code of Conduct.

Parent Communication

Communication with parents is crucial to the success of our children. Teachers will provide their contact information to parents at the beginning of each school year. In addition, other opportunities to learn about your child's educational program and progress include:

- Open House - You will meet your child's teacher as well as receive some general information about expectations for the school year and the grade level curriculum.
- Parent Teacher Conferences - You will meet individually with your child's teacher and discuss his/her progress.
- Report Cards - Report cards are emailed to parents four times per year. Printed copies are available upon request from the Main Office. Please make sure the school has your most current email address so that you will receive your child's report card.
- Newsletters - Sent home each month, newsletters will inform you of upcoming events as well as share updates about the exciting things our students are doing.
- Event Reminders - The PTG sends reminders about events, fundraisers, spirit days, etc.
- Take-Home Folders/Agendas - Each student will be given a red take-home folder. Teachers use these folders to send home homework and important notices. Please check this folder daily, and remove items in the "Keep at Home" section. Notes to your child's teacher should be sent to school in this folder.



Want to Get Involved?

Join the PTG!

The Ridge Mills PTG (Parent-Teacher Group) is an integral part of our school community. We encourage all of our families to get involved to make Ridge Mills the best it can be for our children. It is our goal as a PTG to meet the needs of our students, teachers and parents.

Meeting dates and times are listed on the district calendar. We understand that in today's busy world it is not always possible to make it to a PTG meeting, but we hope you will consider getting involved in some way. We are always looking for volunteers - just an hour or two of your time makes a big difference!

The PTG holds several fundraisers throughout the year in order to fund our many events and activities for the school community. Some of our PTG-sponsored activities include:

- "Family Fun Nights" such as Trick or Treat Street and Baking Night for the Rescue Mission
- Popcorn served at lunch on Spirit Days
(usually the last Friday of each month)
- August Ice Cream Social and year-end Fun Day
- Ice cream for honored students and their families at Pillar of Pride ceremonies

If you have questions about the Ridge Mills PTG,
please feel free to email us at:
ridgemillsptg@gmail.com.

You can also follow us on facebook -
just search for Ridge Mills Elementary PTG!



Ridge Mills Staff List



Principal: Mr. Michael Flag
School Secretary: Mrs. Louise Esposito
School Nurse: Mrs. Carrie McMahon
School Counselor: Ms. Ashley Lewis
School Psychologist: Mrs. Kelly Yuzakewich

Kindergarten:

Mrs. Kellie Combs
Mrs. Emily Potter

First Grade:

Ms. Ashley Engle
Mrs. Megan Frisch

Second Grade:

Mrs. Emily Call
Mr. Christopher Takacs
Mrs. Joselyn Waufle

Third Grade:

Ms. Leah Closinski
Ms. Kelley Sanzone

Fourth Grade:

Mrs. Gretchen Costello
Mrs. Erica Renzi

Fifth Grade:

Mrs. Jennifer Calandra
Mrs. Tatum Falvo

Sixth Grade:

Mrs. Sue Kaier
Ms. Kristin King

Special Education:

Mrs. Melissa Amodio
Mr. Tom Gates
Mrs. Shelly Zappavigna

Special Areas:

Mr. Larry Bevilacqua, Physical Education
Mrs. Mary Lou Kernan, Art
Mrs. Maura Tarbania, Computer
Mrs. Cathy Woodruff, Library
Miss Allison Young, Music
Mr. Bob Verminski, Music
Ms. Juliette Incandela, Music

AIIS Reading

Mrs. Michelle Rood
Mrs. Barbara Rothwell
Mrs. Julie Winberg

AIIS Math

Mrs. Tricia Biron

Speech-Language Pathologist:

Ms. Kristen Meiss

Occupational Therapists:

Mrs. Jennifer Conniff
Mrs. Annette Granato

Physical Therapist:

Mrs. Janelle Broedel

Cafeteria:

Ms. Tracey Bird
Ms. Tammie Smith

Teaching Assistants:

Mrs. Elin Beer
Mrs. Lynda Brown
Mrs. Kerry Furney
Mrs. Betty Gressel
Mrs. Andrea Hand
Mrs. Theresa Harding
Mrs. Jodi Hawkins
Ms. Tammy Henry
Mrs. Mary-kay Maitland
Ms. Denise Parry
Mrs. Diane Smolinski
Mrs. Amy Strohl
Mrs. Carol Sturbin

Monitors:

Mr. David Caldwell
Ms. Kathy Jones
Mrs. Charlotte Madonna
Mr. Scott Malorzo
Mr. Gary Rice
Mr. Roger Trificana

Custodians:

Mr. Bob Smith
Mr. Alex Miller
Mr. Matt Seigler

Work hard, learn a lot, but most of all, be good to each other!



Ridge Mills Elementary School
“Be the Best You Can Be!”