

The VP Press

September 20, 2024



What's in this edition of the VP Press?

1. Principal's Message
2. VP Two Weeks in Review!
3. Spotlight on VP's Front Office Staff
4. Curriculum Corner
5. Upcoming Events
6. Important Information

1. *Principal's Message*

Dear VP families,

As we reflect on the first month of the school year, I am filled with a sense of gratitude for our wonderful VP community. Our students have shown remarkable enthusiasm and dedication to their learning, and our teachers continue to inspire and guide them in exceptional ways. It has also felt great to welcome back some of our annual fall traditions including the Ice Cream Social, picture day and our first visit to the VP garden with Kaleidoscope Garden. Each of these events is sponsored and supported by the PTA and I cannot thank them enough for all their hard work and creativity in providing these meaningful "extras" for our children.

This September we also welcomed our new preschool students at VP. This lively and adorable group of young learners is a wonderful addition to our VP family. We're so happy they're here! If you have any questions about the VP Preschool Program, please direct them to Christina Salvestrini at csalvestrini@ridgefieldps.net.

Lastly, we want to wish Mr. Mike Fraioli the best as he moves on from Veterans Park. Mr. Fraioli has been an instrumental part of VP and he will be deeply missed. He will be here until early October and we wish him all the best in his next professional endeavor.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership. We look forward to a successful and fulfilling year ahead.

Kind regards,
Sheri Prendergast, Ed.D.

2. VP Two Weeks in Review!









Picture Day Candids!





Thank you for coming to Open House!



World Language @ VP!

Sra. Quattrocchi was joined by Allyson Power, Ridgefield High School Spanish teacher and _____.



Math @ VP!



3. Spotlight on VP's SSO, Denis O'Donnell

On your next visit to school, please welcome our new School Security Officer, Denis O'Donnell!

Denis joined our team of Ridgefield School Security Officers after a 30 year career in law enforcement as a police officer for the town of Greenwich, the University of Connecticut and, most recently, as the Director of Safety and Security at Sacred Heart University in Fairfield.

Denis and his son Brandon (10) love football and traveling to New England Patriot games whenever they can.

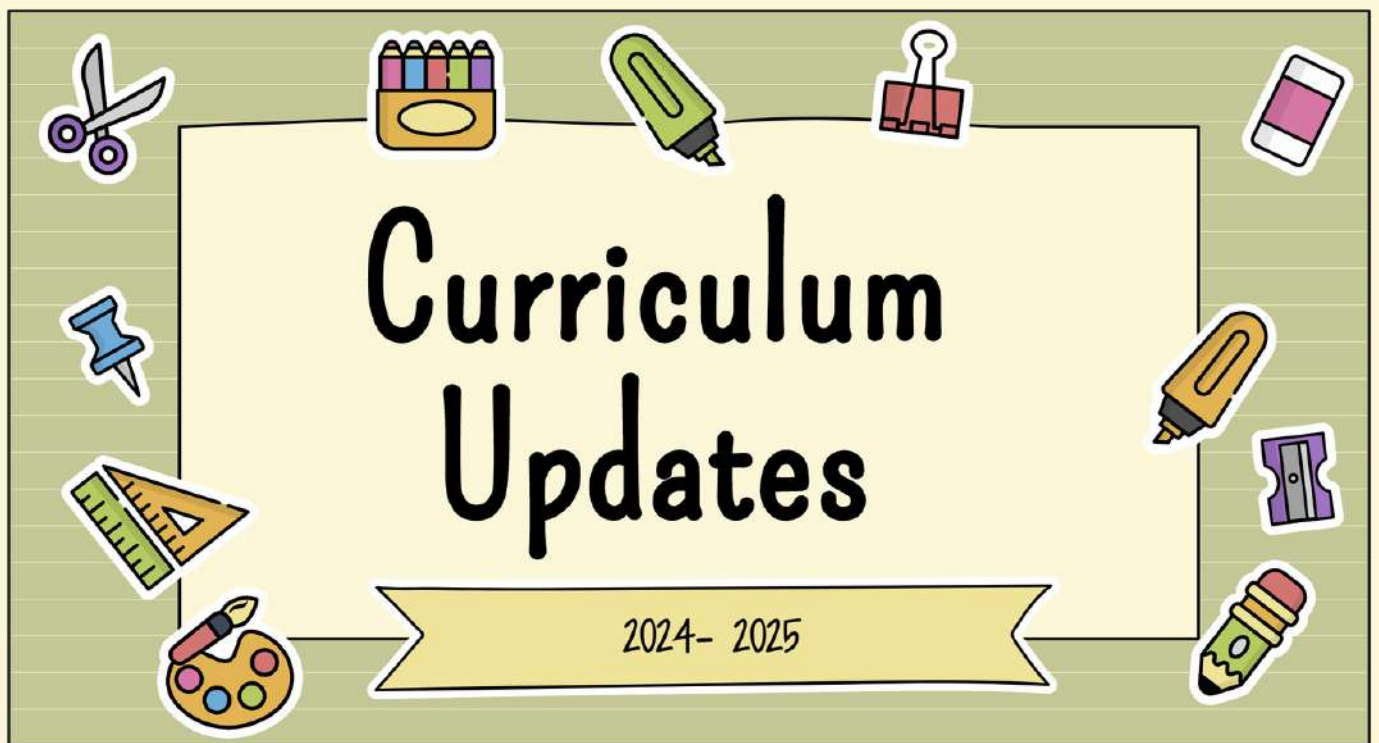




They also love going to the beach and playing with their trio of Dachshunds- Maggie, Oliver and Ranger (pictured), a six month-old rescue from Texas.

Denis brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to our school and we are so lucky to have him as an important part of our VP community.

4. Curriculum Corner





Bookworms Shared Reading



Kindergarten

- Based on scientifically proven practices and research
- Aligned to the CCSS for text difficulty
- Supports oral language, vocabulary, and building knowledge (dialogic reading)
- Question types increase in complexity



Grades 1 and 2

- Based on scientifically proven practices and research
- Aligned to the CCSS for text difficulty
- Teacher-supported grade-level reading that targets fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension
- Students read a high volume of authentic trade books
 - 4 modules across the year of connected texts to build background knowledge



What is Shared Reading?*



- a scientifically researched, interactive reading lesson that is taught in a whole class, or small group setting
- purposeful reading practice that involves the teacher and students reading aloud from an enlarged text as the teacher explicitly models the skills of proficient readers, including reading with fluency and expression
- an opportunity for students to improve vocabulary and comprehension skills through engaging discussions and varied questioning techniques
- a dedicated time to access challenging texts from various genres such as narrative stories, poems, informational texts, and more.

*Reading Rockets



[Math]odology

think!
MATHEMATICS



Kindergarten

- Focuses on foundational mathematical concepts delivered through playful, engaging activities.
- Builds strong number sense, problem solving, and logical thinking from an early age.



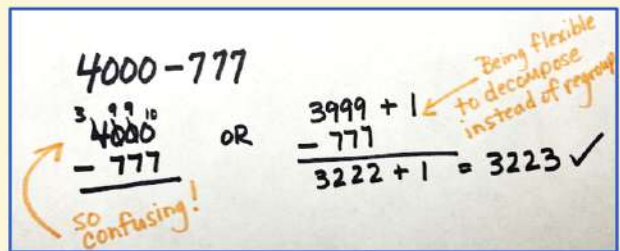
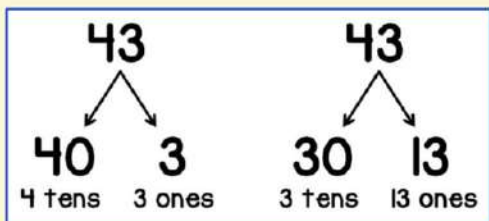
Grades 1-5

- Creates environments where students can reason, problem-solve, and communicate mathematically with enthusiasm and confidence.
- Delivers meaningful math instruction that enables all learners to explore and connect different concepts.



What Does It Mean to Think Flexibly About Numbers?

Number sense, or the ability to think flexibly about numbers, allows students to understand the relationships between numbers, apply different strategies to solve problems, adapt to various situations, and build a deeper conceptual understanding of math. Having number sense empowers students to think creatively and efficiently when working with numbers in real-world contexts.



5. Upcoming Events!

Mon. 9/23	Tues. 9/24	Wed. 9/25	Thurs. 9/26	Fri. 9/27
PTA Enrichment Programs begin			VP Walking Bus - Sponsored by the PTA	
Mon. 9/30	Tues. 10/1	Wed. 10/2	Thurs. 10/3	Fri. 10/4
			No School - Rosh Hashanah	



Walking Bus: Thursday, September 26th at 8:45am

Join us for the VP tradition of being part of our "walking bus" to school!

Meet us in one of three in-town locations: St. Mary's School parking lot, Jesse Lee Church parking lot, or in front of the Ridgefield Library on Main Street, and walk to school together! Siblings (and dogs!) welcome. Meet at 8:45 for an 8:50 departure. Have your cameras ready and send your photos to vpesyearbook@gmail.com.

6. Important Information

Attendance

The State Board of Education has defined two levels of criteria for an absence to be considered an excused absence.

"Level 1" includes the first nine absences and these days are considered excused absences for any reason that the student's parent or guardian approves. The parent or guardian must submit either written or oral documentation within ten school days of the student's return to school.

Excused "Level 2" absences are the days beginning at the tenth absence and meet one or more of the State's acceptable reasons. For more information regarding the acceptable reasons, please visit the [Connecticut State Department of Education Guidelines for Absences](#).

If your child reaches the thresholds below, you will receive a notification. The notifications will lag the actual absences. For example, your child may reach their 6th absence on a Wednesday and you may not be notified until the following Monday.

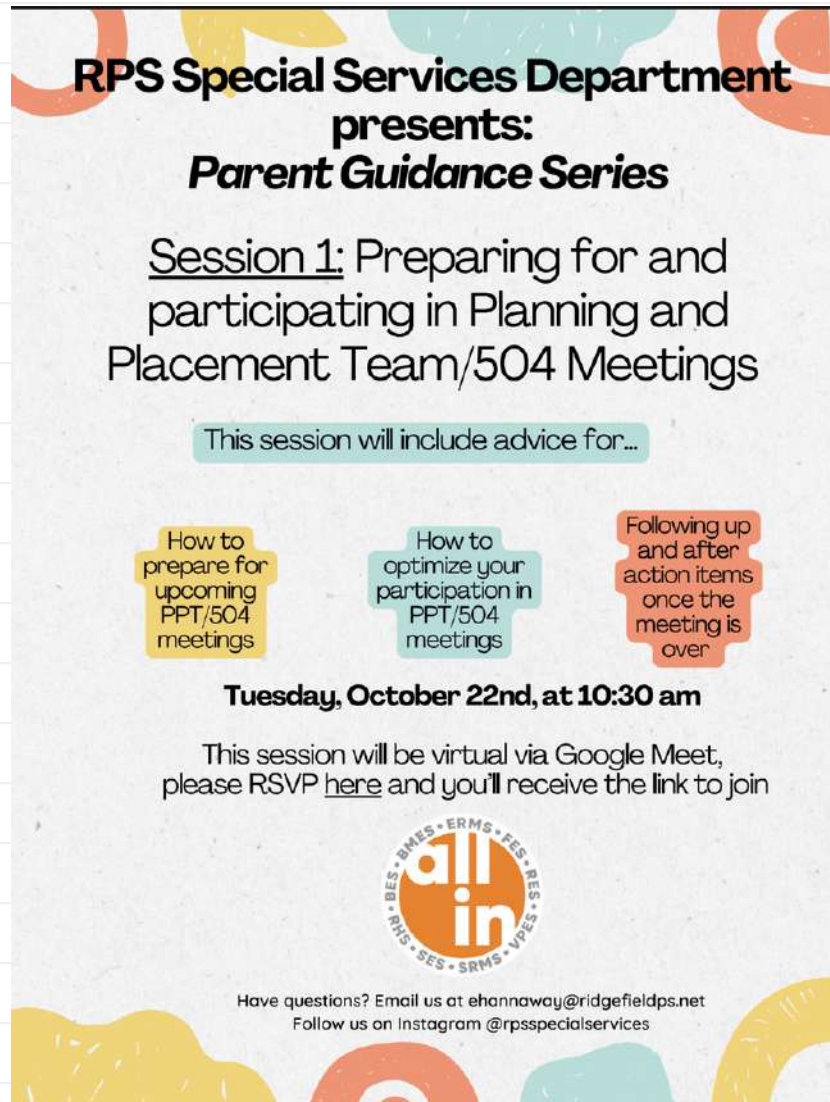
Typical attendance notification thresholds.

- At 6 absences a notification is emailed.
- At 9 absences a notification is emailed.
- At 9 absences and 6 unexcused, a notification is emailed.
- At 9 excused absences and 10 unexcused absences, a truancy notification is emailed.

RPS Special Services Parent Guidance Series

Come join us for the first of our RPS Special Services' Parent Guidance Series: Preparing for and Participating in PPT Meetings on October 22nd at 10:30 am. [See this flyer for information on this virtual event, and a link to RSVP](#). Our goal is to provide parents and caregivers with useful information so they can approach these conversations with confidence. This session is open to

any RPS parent or guardian. We'll be recording the presentation component of the event and posting for parents who can't attend, and then opening up to a Q&A session (non-recorded!) after.



**RPS Special Services Department
presents:
Parent Guidance Series**


**Session 1: Preparing for and
participating in Planning and
Placement Team/504 Meetings**

This session will include advice for...

- How to prepare for upcoming PPT/504 meetings
- How to optimize your participation in PPT/504 meetings
- Following up and after action items once the meeting is over

Tuesday, October 22nd, at 10:30 am

This session will be virtual via Google Meet,
please RSVP [here](#) and you'll receive the link to join



Have questions? Email us at ehannaway@ridgefieldps.net
Follow us on Instagram @rpspecialservices

*Please see the letter from our Elementary Health teacher,
Kristin DiMarino*



RIDGEFIELD ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

NANCY CARON
Farmingville Elementary

KEITH MARGOLUS
Branchville Elementary

MARY SCALISE
Ridgebury Elementary

BECKY LAUS
Barlow Mountain Elementary

JILL KATKOCIN
Scotland Elementary

SHERI PRENDERGAST
Veterans Park Elementary

September 2024

Dear Parents and Guardians,

My name is Kristin DiMarino, and I am a health education teacher in the Ridgefield Public Schools. This year, I will be visiting your child's classroom to teach one or two health education lessons tailored to their grade level. Depending on their grade, students will be learning about germs and the immune system or substance awareness in an age-appropriate manner.

In Kindergarten, second grade, and fifth grade, these lessons will also fulfill the state requirement for HIV/AIDS education, which is taught in a planned, systematic, and ongoing program by certified health educators. Please note that HIV/AIDS will not be mentioned until fifth grade. Below, you will find a brief outline of the lessons for each grade:

Kindergarten (Two 30-minute lessons)

Main Focus: Handwashing, covering coughs and sneezes with their elbow, and not sharing items that have been in their mouths.

- Students will learn how germs are spread and identify ways to prevent them from spreading.
- They will practice health-enhancing skills, such as proper handwashing and coughing or sneezing into their elbow.

1st Grade (One 30-minute lesson)

Main Focus: Medicine

- Students will define what medicine is and recognize the importance of following medicine safety rules.
- They will learn how to access health information, such as identifying trusted adults they can go to if they need help.

2nd Grade (Two 30-minute lessons)

Main Focus: How germs are spread.

- Students will learn how germs enter the body and how to prevent this, including age-appropriate discussions about avoiding contact with bodily fluids.
- They will practice health-enhancing and decision-making skills to prevent illness.

3rd Grade (One 40-minute lesson)

Main Focus: The effects of nicotine on the body and analyzing influences.

- Students will learn about the effects of nicotine on the body.
- They will develop the skill of analyzing influences to better understand what affects their choices.

4th Grade (One 40-minute lesson)

Main Focus: Helpful and harmful drugs, and refusal skills.

- Students will learn to differentiate between helpful and harmful drugs.
- They will practice refusal skills to effectively respond to peer pressure.

5th Grade (Two 40-minute lessons)

Main Focus of Lesson 1: How the body's natural barriers prevent germs from causing illness.

- Students will identify the body's natural barriers against germs and learn how to care for them to maintain a strong immune system.
- They will set a personal health goal using goal-setting skills.

**A separate letter will be sent out to 5th-grade parents and guardians in the spring regarding the second lesson on HIV/AIDS.*

For a comprehensive overview, the health curriculum is available on the Ridgefield Public Schools website. If you have any questions regarding the health lessons, please feel free to reach out to me directly at kdimarino@ridgefieldps.net.

Sincerely,

Kristin DiMarino

Health Education Teacher
Ridgefield Public Schools

A link to the letter is located below:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/18GEPZYmRCDLe0r-CO902ZRu5CaxeZztOvJFaa1VSNI/edit?usp=sharing>

docs.google.com

Order your VP Spirit Wear!

New Merchandise for 2024-25 VP Eagles!

The VP Spirit Wear store is back, and we are proud to unveil fresh new designs (as well as some favorites) to our VPES school families and faculty. Orders may be placed until 10am Monday, September 30th. Items are expected to be ready the week of October 21st, and may be picked up from either Custom Ts or Veterans Park.

To shop, visit <https://shop.tsandmore.com/vetspark/shop/home> or scan the QR code above. As this is a PTA fundraiser, all proceeds will directly benefit the VP students and staff.

Questions? Please reach out to our VP Spirit Wear chair, Jill Cosgrove, at vpptaspiritstore@gmail.com.



CUSTOM TS N MORE

VETERANS PARK STORE

Orders must be placed before Sept 30th at 10AM.
Orders expected to be ready for pickup the
week of October 21st.



Clothing items are made to order. Because of this we do not do exchanges, refunds, or returns.



AND MORE...!

Updates from Mrs. Canavan, School Nurse

The Nurse's Office

Hearing and Vision Screenings

The health office will be doing CT State mandated hearing and vision screenings for grades 1,3,4 and 5 students over the next several months. If there are any concerns observed during the screenings, parents/guardians will be notified via a referral letter. Please reach out if you have questions.

Head Lice Information

Head lice: They're the words no parent wants to hear. Head lice can be acquired by anyone, but it is most common in kids ages 5-12. According to the CDC every year as many as 6-12 million children are affected by head lice. The good news is that head lice are not harmful and can be treated. Please check your children's hair frequently throughout the year. To detect, treat and prevent head lice, it helps to know more about them.

The first case of head lice has already been reported in our community this year. Please ensure you check your child's head and let the nurse's office know of positive cases.

Below I have included a link below to an article titled Head Lice: What Parents Needs to Know. Please take a few minutes to read the article. It provides parents with a good source of information about head lice detection, management, and treatment.

[Lice information](#)

24-25 RPS Student Handbook



https://docs.google.com/document/d/1zjhwShPh-LvU2FS3RY_iVvRSNnOs2b0dPtGp2bhJ1ZI/edit#heading=h.t407x_xhvh3jg

K-5 Student-Parent Handbook

2024-2025



Important Back to School Information and Dates

Please keep this information handy to refer to throughout the school year.

K - 5 School start date: August 27, 2024*
School hours are from 9:10 a.m.- 4:00 p.m.

Start	2-Hour Delay	3- Hour Delay	Early Dismissal	Extended Early Dismissal	Regular Dismissal
9:10am	11:10am	12:10pm	12:15pm	1:15pm	4:00pm

Please note: Occasionally weather conditions may worsen rapidly over the course of the morning hours, In such instances, the administrative team may decide on closing schools according to the extended early dismissal times. Please remember that children should not be dropped off at school before **8:55am** as there is no supervision prior to that time.

**Preschool families, please follow the arrival/dismissal times and procedures provided by Christina Salvestrini.*

Meet the SPECIAL EDUCATION TEAM

VETERANS PARK ELEMENTARY



2024-25

Dorothy Miller, Special Education Teacher

Christine Kilkenny, Special Education Teacher

Kelly Rigney (Feeney), Pathways Special Education Teacher

Alicia Wimmer, Occupational Therapist

Colleen Howarth, Speech-Language Pathologist

Jeff Lovelace, School Psychologist

Sara Myjak, Part Time School Psychologist

Frans Van Vliet, Physical Therapist

Allison Romeo, Special Education Clerical Para

Samantha Colmanetti, Preschool

Janice Kovach, Speech-Language Pathologist, Preschool

Any students who receive special education services will be contacted by their child's case manager during the first week of school to share important information.

Grades 3 - 5 World Language



World Language

Grades 3-5
Spanish language instruction
30 minute lessons
In the classroom
Once every six days



Jill Quattrocchi



Please Join the VP PTA! (Click link below)

BECOME A
MEMBER

2024-2025 Membership is Now Open

Our Membership sign-up form is now Live. Please join the Veterans Park PTA to become a member and support your school community. PTA Membership is annual - even if you were a member last year, you will need to renew.

vppta.membershiptoolkit.com



Visiting Veterans Park

VISITS BY APPOINTMENT ONLY

- If you are coming to VP for a meeting or a classroom visit, the staff member organizing the visit/meeting will have you added to our VP Visitor's Log.
- If you wish to enter the school building for other reasons, you need to complete the Google Form via the [VP Visitor Google Form](#) in advance or scan a QR code when you arrive at the building.
- Please be sure to have your driver's license to be scanned once you are admitted to the building.
- All visitors should enter through the main doors - never enter in from another aspect of the school.
- We will have a table available at the main entrance for you to drop off any items for your child. We will provide post it notes and markers so that you can label the item with your child's

name and teacher so that they will receive the item.



Essentials



- Each K to 5 class will have a 45 minute essential per day (Art, Library, Music, or P.E.)
- Preschool will participate in a modified essential period
- We will continue to follow the six day A-F day schedule
- Please find the essentials rotation below

		Essentials Rotation by Grade-Level Teacher (First Half)					
		A Day	B Day	C Day	D Day	E Day	F Day
PK	Pre K	PE	ART	MUS	PE	LIB	MUS
Kinder	Bender	LIB	PE	LIB	MUS	PE	ART
	Dunphy	MUS	LIB	PE	LIB	ART	PE
Grade 1	Guernsey	ART	PE	MUS	LIB	PE	MUS
	Tibbits	MUS	ART	PE	MUS	LIB	PE
Grade 2	Cummins	PE	MUS	LIB	PE	MUS	ART
	Gero	MUS	LIB	PE	MUS	ART	PE
Grade 3	Craig	ART	PE	LIB	MUS	PE	MUS
	Flynn	PE	ART	MUS	PE	MUS	LIB
Grade 4	Faloon	LIB	PE	LIB	MUS	PE	ART
	Funk	MUS	LIB	PE	LIB	ART	PE
Grade 5	Hoey	ART	PE	MUS	LIB	PE	LIB
	Pasquarella	PE	ART	LIB	PE	LIB	MUS

Cell Phones/Smartwatches/Personal Devices

Students with cell phones at the elementary level are not permitted to use them during the school day. If a parent makes the decision to permit their child to have a cell phone, smartwatch, or similar device at school, it is expected that the cell phone or smartwatch be turned off and in the child's backpack at all times. **This includes the duration of the bus ride.**

Please note, we treat smartwatches (e.g. the Apple Watch, the Gizmo Watch, the Android Smart Watch) or other similar devices that provide a student with the ability to text, take photos, or make calls in the same way we treat a cell phone and they are subject to the same practice.

If a staff member sees a student with any of the above mentioned devices, the student will be asked to remove the device and store it in their backpack and their teacher will likely contact you about the concern.

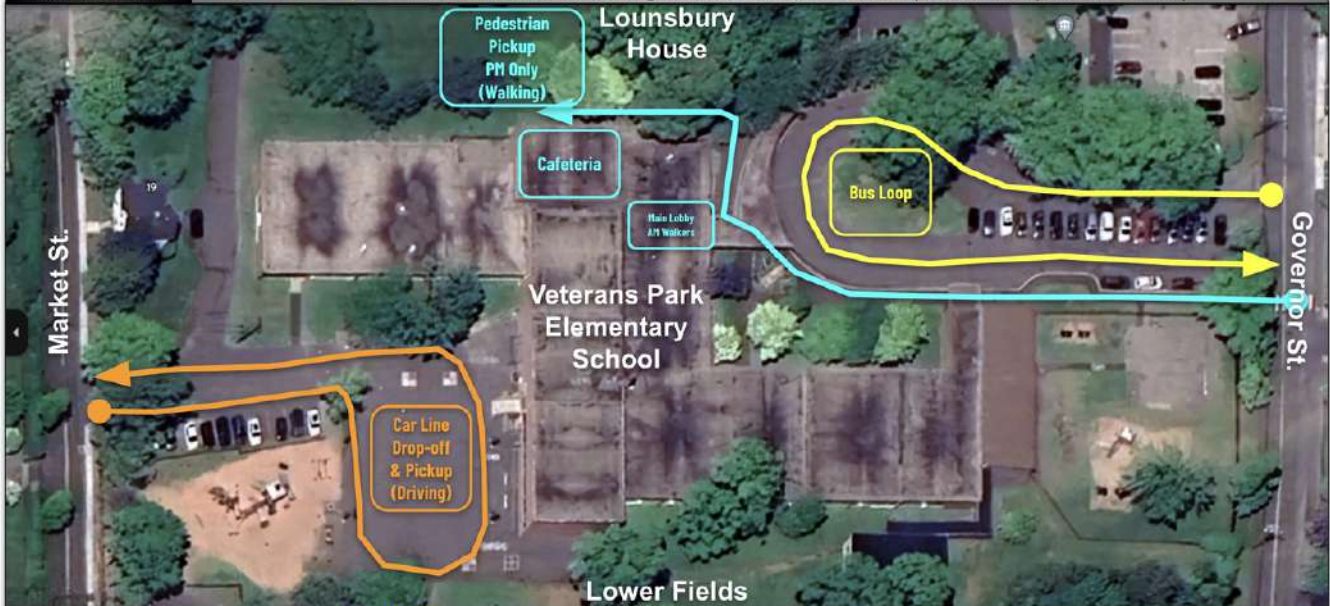
VP Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

K - 5 Arrival and Dismissal

Arrival

8:55 AM - 9:10 AM

- **Bus Riders** will be dropped off at the bus loop at 9:10 AM (No Car Drop-off allowed)
- **Walkers** will enter through the main entrance between 8:55 AM - 9:10 AM
- **Car Drop-off** students will enter through the Market St. entrance (doors will open at 8:55 AM)



Dismissal

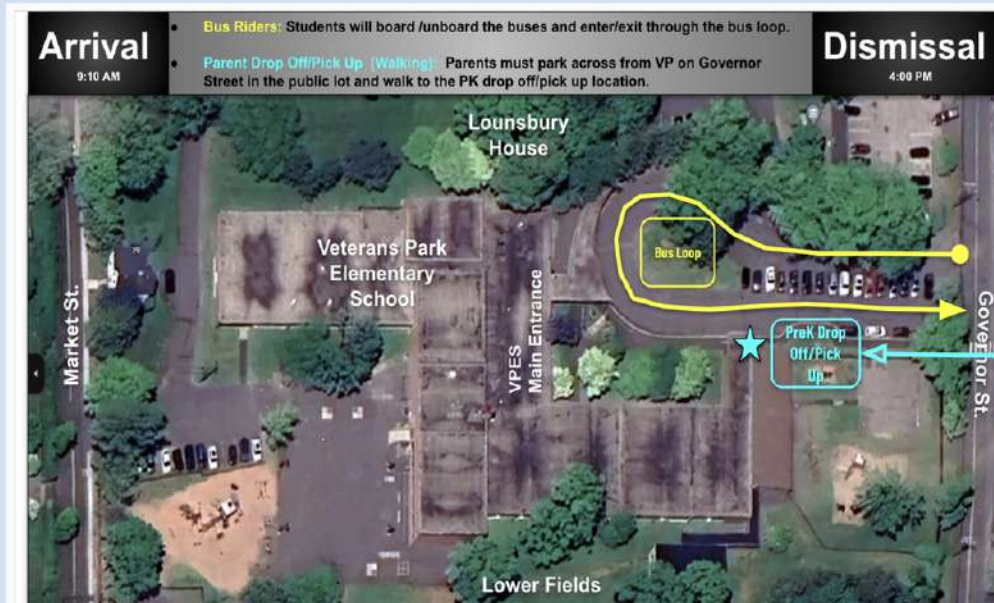
3:50 PM - 4:00 PM

- **Bus Riders** will board the buses and exit through the bus loop.
- **Pedestrian Pickup (Walking)** will wait at the doors of the cafeteria by the Lounsbury House. Parents must park across Governor Street in the public lot. **NO PARKING AT LOUNSBURY HOUSE.**
- **Car Line Pickup** will be dismissed from the gymnasium through the Market St. entrance

Preschool Arrival and Dismissal

VPES Parent Drop-off and Pick-up

For parent drop-off and pick-up at VPES, please park your vehicle at the public lot off Governors Street (see the map below). You may then walk your child across the street to meet our Preschool staff at the PK/K exterior doors. They will be waiting to escort students to their classroom.



School Dismissal Manager

We will continue to use School Dismissal Manager this year at Veterans Park. Please click below for information regarding this system. This system will be available to families in late August. If you have any additional questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to us!



SDM Parent Presentation 24-25

School Dismissal Manager Parent Information Veterans Park Elementary School 2024-2025 School Year

docs.google.com



Veterans Park SDM Letter to Families 2024-2025

Veterans Park Elementary School Dr. Sheri Prendergast, Principal
Ms. Erica Ippoliti, Assistant Principal August 2024 Dear Veterans Park Parents and Guardians, Welcome to School Dismissal Manager for the 2024-2025 year! School Dismissal Manager (SDM) is an organized and efficient tracking...

docs.google.com

School Lunch 🍞

School lunch will be available from the first day of school. Aramark is the District-wide food service provider. The school lunch menu is available online on the RPS website; click Departments and click on [Food Service](#). For all students, utilize MySchoolBucks for families to fund student lunches.

MySchoolBucks is available via the PowerSchool Parent Portal, and communication was sent to families in early August regarding adding funds for lunch. Any balances have been rolled over from LunchTime to MySchoolBucks. Additionally, the district sent a communication in early August regarding Reduced Lunch for eligible students.

Snacks for Purchase in the Cafeteria:

Students in grades 2-5 are permitted to purchase snacks during lunch (last 10 minutes). Please be sure you have set up MySchoolBucks if you would like your student to be able to purchase a snack.

- In short, students eligible for reduced lunch will be provided free lunches in grades K-8 for the 2024-25 school year.
- Should you have any questions or concerns regarding the Free School Meals for Children grant, please do not hesitate to contact us or the District Business Office.
- Questions in regard to school MySchoolBucks can be directed to Andrea McCurry, RPS Food Service Director at 203-894-5550 x2143 or amccurry@ridgefieldps.net

Website to set up an account.

[MySchoolBucks](#)

Some Support Links for Troubleshooting:

[Updating Your Payment Method | MySchoolBucks](#)

[Setting up Automatic Payments | MySchoolBucks](#)

[Adding a New Student | MySchoolBucks](#)

[Setting Up Low Balance Alerts | MySchoolBucks](#)

[Reset Your Password Using Your Mobile Phone Number](#)

[Reset Your Password Using Your Email Address/Username](#)

Reminders

Playdates and Riding the Bus:

We know how fun it is for our students to get together after school and enjoy time together! Due to safety and limited space on the buses, we are asking that students have no more than 2 guest riders with them at a time. Anytime there is a need for more than 2 additional students to ride, families will need to make arrangements for parent pick up that day. Thank you for understanding!

Hats & Hoodies:

Over the last several years there was no standard hat/hood procedure in the elementary schools, likely related to Covid, when classroom windows were kept open for air circulation and there was the potential for it to be cold in classrooms.

As we have started the 24-25 school year with a typical school opening, we will return to only permitting hats to be worn outside the school building. Students may choose to wear a hat, but will be reminded to remove it upon entering the school building. Students will be permitted to wear hats for outdoor recess. Teachers have discussed this with students and I will remind our school community during the morning announcements on Tuesday.

On special occasions/spirit days, hats may be permitted and this will be communicated to students and families.

Ridgefield Public Schools Digital Backpack

RPS distribution flyers for outside groups via a [Digital Backpack](#).

Organizations that meet the RPS policy may submit their request for inclusion in the digital backpack. Please help us in our effort to go green by checking students' [Digital Backpacks](#)

Organizations that meet the RPS policy may submit their request for inclusion to cmelagrano@ridgefieldps.net. Thank you!



About Us

For more information, please use the following information.

Email: sprendergast@ridgefieldps.net

Website: <https://vpes.ridgefield.org/Home>

Location: Veterans Park Elementary School

Phone: [203-894-5525](tel:203-894-5525)

Facebook: [facebook.com/TBD](https://www.facebook.com/TBD)



Sheri Prendergast

Sheri is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters