

**RENSSELAER**  
**JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL**  
**2020-2021**  
**STUDENT HANDBOOK**

**This Agenda Belongs To:**

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**Homeroom:** \_\_\_\_\_

**7th Grade Team**

Mr. Kunker - PLTW  
Mr. Toney - English  
Mr. Hillerman - Social Studies  
Mr. Hillerman - Keyboarding  
Ms. Sedlar - Art  
Mrs. Sousa - P.E. Girls  
Mrs. Brand - Music/Chorus  
Mr. Preston - P.E. Boys  
Mrs. Murphy - Math/Extra Math  
Ms. Todd - Home/Careers  
Mrs. Foley - Science  
Mr. McGough - Band  
Ms. Mouawad - Intergrated SE  
Mrs. DelCarmen - Spanish  
Mrs. Zobel - Special Class 7

**8th Grade Team**

Ms. Leonard - English  
Mr. Beiter - Science  
Mr. Bryden - PLTW  
Mrs. Charron - Math/Extra Math  
Mrs. Ryan - Intergrated SE  
Mrs. Brand - Music/Chorus  
Mrs. Sousa - P.E. Girls  
Ms. Todd - Home/Careers  
Ms. Murray - Social Studies  
Mr. Spath - P.E. Boys  
Mrs. Zimbal - Spanish  
Mr. McGough - Band  
Mr. Stranahan - Health  
Mrs. Jenner - Extra ELA  
Mrs. Zobel - Special Class 8

**PRINCIPAL'S WELCOME**

Welcome back! We hope 2020- 2021 will be a great year. At Rensselaer Junior High School we measure the success of our school by the success of our students. Our school's success depends on students, teachers, administrators, staff and parents working together.

The information in this agenda is presented to help you become familiar with Rensselaer Junior High School. The Agenda will help you organize your school year. The daily schedule, assessment dates and our promotion policy are included in the opening pages. Please take some time and review this important information. Our expectations for attendance and the Code of Conduct have been updated for the 2020 -21 school year. Rensselaer Junior High School offers many extra curricular activities. We invite you to participate in clubs, competitions and sports activities. Again a complete description of each program may be found in the Agenda.

As always, please see me or one of your teachers if you have any questions or concerns. I hope that the 2020 -21 school year will be a very successful year for all of our Junior High School students. Let us try to do the things that will make it outstanding.

*Mr. Dominick Pitaniello, Junior High School Principal*

**TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

District Superintendent:	Mr. Joseph Kardash .....465-7509.....x4001
Principal:	Mr. Dominick Pitaniello ...436-8561.....x2001
Dean of Students:	Mr. Will DeRuve.....436-8561.....x3101
Health Office:	Mrs. Tammy Slingerland....436-8561.....x4120
Director Pupil Personnel:	Mrs. Colleen Multer..... .465-6440.....x6307
School Psychologist:	Ms. Kimberly Manikas.....436-8561.....x6308
Guidance Office:	Mr. DiLello & Mrs. Cenci...436-8561.....x6312/x6313

**Junior – Senior High School Bell Schedule 2019-2020**

Breakfast begins at 7:15 AM.

Students can move to lockers at 7:30 AM.

- Period 1: 7:35 – 8:23 AM  
(with the last 3 minutes for announcements)
- Period 2: 8:26 – 9:12 AM
- Period 3: 9:15 – 10:01 AM
- Period 4: 10:04 – 10:50 AM
- Period 5: 10:53 AM – 12:03 PM
  
- Grade 7/Lunch A Lunch 10:53 – 11:15 AM  
Class 11:18 AM – 12:03 PM
- Grade 8/Lunch B Class 10:53 – 11:38 AM  
Lunch 11:41 AM – 12:03 PM
  
- Period 6: 12:06 – 12:52 PM
- Period 7: 12:55 – 1:41 PM
- Period 8: 1:44 – 2:30 PM

<b>NEWYORK STATE</b>	
<b>TEST SCHEDULE</b>	
<b>2020 - 2021</b>	
<b>7th &amp; 8th</b>	<b><u>English Language Arts</u></b>
	TBA
<b>7th &amp; 8th</b>	<b><u>Mathematics Tests</u></b>
	TBA
<b>8th</b>	<b><u>Intermediate- Level Science</u></b>
	<b><u>Performance Test</u></b>
	TBA
<b>8th Intermediate- Level Science Written Tests</b>	
	TBA

## **DAILY ATTENDANCE**

Each student is required to attend school each day unless excused for legitimate reasons by a parent or guardian. In case of absence, the student's parent or guardian must submit a written statement of reason for the absence and dates involved. This written statement should be brought by the student to the main office upon the day of their return to school. Parents who expect to be away for any length of time should notify the school authorities of the adult responsible for the student during that period of time. A parent/guardian should call the school by 8:30 am if a child is absent. A phone call home will be made anytime a school has not been notified of absence by a parent or guardian. Students may be banned from participating in any school-sponsored activity due to absences. A PINS (Persons In Need of Supervision) petition will be filed when a student is chronically absent. Students are required to make-up homework, tests, quizzes, and daily assignments following any absence.

**Any student arriving after 7:35am is tardy and must report to the main office.** After a student has entered the school grounds, he/she is not permitted to leave without special permission.

## **STAYING AFTER SCHOOL**

In order to make staying after school possible, students who remain after school must be supervised by an adult. There are a number of reasons why students may stay after school:

1. Students may stay to get extra help from a teacher. Teachers are available to work with students after school. Since teachers sometimes have other responsibilities, students need to check with teachers, beforehand.
2. Students may be told by a teacher to stay after school. Often, this is to make up a test, complete homework that was not done, or to speak with the teacher about misbehavior in class.
3. Students may be assigned to after school detention for not following rules or procedures. After school detention begins 2:35 pm and ends at 3:20 pm. .
4. Students may stay for various clubs, intramural, and sports teams.

## **SCHOOL CLOSING PROCEDURES**

School closings and emergency dismissal notification will be through the automated phone system.

Announcements are also on local television stations.

## **BLACKBOARD CONNECT NOTIFICATION**

Parents are asked to keep their phone numbers and emails current so that automated announcements may be made through the computer network.

## **TELEPHONE CALLS**

Students will not be allowed to use the office phone for unnecessary calls. Any calls pertaining to their health will be made from the Health Office. Telephone messages, except from adult members of your family, will not be taken.

**LOST AND FOUND** "Lost and Found" is located in the main office. It is advised that all articles of clothing and equipment be plainly marked with the owner's name. Items lost or stolen should be reported to the main office as soon as possible.

### **CAFETERIA**

Students may purchase a hot lunch, salad bar or individual foods, such as milk and other a la carte items. All students in the RCSD, receive a free breakfast and lunch. This is made possible by a federal grant. Students are not permitted to leave the building during the lunch period. Our cafeteria provides a balanced and nutritious meal; however, for students who may not care to partake in this, there is always the option of bringing lunch from home. Students are expected to return their trays in good condition. Milk cartons, paper cups, etc. are to be deposited in the waste receptacles provided for that purpose. Activities such as begging, throwing food, sitting on tables, cutting into the lunch line and general "horseplay" are not expected or tolerated from students. Purchased food is to be consumed in the cafeteria and not removed from the cafeteria.

### **LOCKERS**

Each student is assigned a locker for his/her belongings. The lockers have combination locks installed in them. The combinations are changed every summer, insuring security. Locker combinations are given to students, and should not be given to other students. Lockers should be locked when not in use. Students may go to their lockers only at designated times.

A locker is the property of the school district. It is loaned for student use. School officials retain the authority to inspect student lockers.

### **STUDENT ATTIRE**

1. No attire may be worn that distracts from the teaching and learning experience.
2. No clothes advocating weapons, drugs, alcohol or tobacco use. No inappropriate clothing including sexual connotations, hate crimes, or gang affiliated attire including but not limited to colors, bandanas, etc.
3. No shirts showing midribs will be allowed. All under clothes must not be shown or worn as attire. Full shirts must be worn at all times (no halter tops, spaghetti string straps, tube tops, plunging necklines, sheer/see-through garments, tank tops with straps less than 2" wide, or muscle tops with large armholes, etc.). Pajama/flannel pants, slippers, and other sleep attire are not permitted.
4. Shorts and skirts must fall 2 inches below fingertips when arms are extended down length of leg.
5. Spike/slave collars, bracelets and chains attached to or hanging off clothing or in view are not permitted.
6. Sunglasses may not be worn on the face as regular glasses during the school day.
7. No hats or headwear of any kind may be worn during the school day; these items must be secured in a locker until 2:30pm.
8. No coats or jackets (as defined as outerwear other than sweaters, sweatshirts, hooded sweatshirts with or without zippers, fleece or blazer) may be worn during the school day; these items must be secured in a locker.
9. Book bags may be limited by individual teachers and teams.
10. Repeated violations will result in disciplinary actions per the Code of Conduct Hierarchy of Offenses and Consequences.

### **HEALTH**

The school nurse is available to assist in case of accident, illness or any health related problem. However, students are expected to report to the health office with a pass or permission from their classroom teacher, except in case of emergency. If the nurse is not available, students should report to the main office. Permission to leave school on account of personal illness must be obtained from the nurse or the Principal after parent/guardian has been notified.

All students entering the 7th grade must have a meningococcal vaccine. Students entering 12th grade need a second meningococcal vaccine. Physical examinations are required for all students who wish to participate in interscholastic athletics. The family physician or the school physician may provide a physical examination. Medications, including aspirin, are not given to students. If a physician prescribes a medication to be taken during school hours, the student should see the school nurse. Students to be excused from physical education for an extended period of time because of medical problems must have a note from a physician stating the reason and length of time.

## ACCIDENTS

Accidents occurring in school, on the school grounds, or on the bus should be reported as soon as possible to the teacher responsible for the class or activity or to the bus driver. An accident report should be filed with the school nurse.

## MARKING PERIODS

(Official dates will be released in September 2020)

Please check the school website for updates.

School Opens	September 2020
1st Qtr Interims	October 2020 (Interims distributed)
1st Qtr Ends	November 2020
1st Qtr Report Cards	November 2020 (distributed in HR @ the end of the day)
2nd Qtr Begins	November 2020
2nd Qtr Interims	December 2020 (Interims distributed)
2nd Qtr Ends	January 2021
2nd Qtr Reports Cards	January 2021 (distributed in HR @ end of the day)
3rd Qtr Begins	January 2021
3rd Qtr Interims	February 2021 (Interims distributed)
3rd Qtr Ends	April 2021
3rd Qtr Report Cards	<b>Mailed during the April break</b>
4th Qtr Begins	April 2021
4th Qtr Interims	May 2021 (Interims distributed)
4th Qtr Ends	June 2021
Regents & Final Exams	June 2021
Final Report Cards	June 2021 (mailed home, JRHS ONLY)

Teachers send home student progress reports during the middle of each marking period. Interim reports often warn parents of poor marks, but are also used to recognize good work or improvement.

**CLASS PROMOTION** Students need to earn at least 5.0 points, each year, to be promoted to the next grade level:

	<b>Gr. 7</b>	<b>Gr. 8</b>
Math	1.00	1.00
Science	1.00	1.00
English	1.00	1.00
Soc. St.	1.00	1.00
Spanish	1.00	1.00
Music	.25	.25
Art	.25	.25
Technology	.50	.50
Home/Careers	.50	.25
Health		.25
Phys. Ed.	<u>.50</u>	<u>.50</u>
<b>Sub Total</b>	7.00pts.	7.00 pts. .
<b>Possible Extra Credits</b>		
Band	.50	.50
Chorus	.50	.50
<b>Total</b>	<b>8.00pts.</b>	<b>8.00pts.</b>



## BUS CONDUCT

All students are required to observe all rules, regulations, and safety requirements when riding a R.C.S.D. bus. Inappropriate behavior will result in removal from the bus.

## **PUPIL SERVICES**

Guidance and social services are available to students and parents. These services include assistance with educational planning, interpretation of test scores, occupational information, career planning, study skills, assistance with personal, school or social concerns, or any question the student or parent would like to discuss. Students wishing to visit a counselor, social worker, or psychologist should make arrangements through their teacher or administrator to arrange for an appointment.

## **LIBRARY MEDIA CENTER**

The Rensselaer Junior High School Library Media Center is located on the second floor. It is open throughout the day. The library media center is an extension of the classroom. As such, it is a learning center and students are expected to be involved in one or more of the following activities.

1. selecting resources for class projects or personal use
2. reading books, magazines, newspapers, viewing media
3. doing research
4. doing homework
5. writing reports



Students must have a pass or permission from a teacher to use the library during the school day or

after school. Books may be requested from other libraries in the school district, as well as local public and university libraries. Reference books may be used in the library only. Books must be returned to the circulation desk. Students will be expected to pay for a book that has been lost or damaged.

### **BYOD - Bring Your Own Device - According to the Internet Policy - 4526**

What is BYOD? “Bring your own device” (BYOD) refers to students bringing a personal-owned device to school for the purpose of learning. A personally owned device is any technology device brought into the school and is owned by the student or the student’s family. The school recognizes the need to prepare our students for the rapidly changing world, where technology plays a large role in our personal, social and professional lives. Many students already bring their own devices to school and are already using them in class to enhance their learning.

Parents must sign a permission slip for their child to participate in the District’s BYOD program.

## COMPUTER USE POLICY

Computer use means that a student uses the Internet and other resources in an appropriate manner, abiding by the rules and regulations as described in the Rensselaer City School District Computer Policy: Student Agreement for Computer Usage. This agreement is provided to each student at the beginning of each school year and to new students when they register for school. The agreement contains a form that must be signed by both the student and their parent and returned to the main office before a student will be allowed internet access. The agreement includes the following rules and code of ethics:

- Computers are for academic work only.
- Students will not steal, deface, or in any way vandalize school equipment.
- Students will not load or run personal software or discs on district computers.
- Students will not view, send, or display offensive messages or pictures.
- Students will not make unauthorized copies of software found on school computers.
- Students will not establish unauthorized web sites or web pages.
- Students will not use or post profane, vulgar, rude, disrespectful, or threatening language in any correspondence.
- Students will not use school computers to engage in activities for commercial purposes or political lobbying.
- Students will not attempt to gain unauthorized access to system programs.
- Students will not save information on the hard drives of school computers.
- Students who violate the rules and code of ethics for computer users will have their use of computers restricted or terminated.
- Students will make restitution (including financial) if they damage equipment or alter Software.
- Students do not have the right to send or receive any form of e-mail or electronic messaging.
- Students do not have the right to enter chat rooms or discussion groups unless monitored by a teacher or administrator of the district.
- Students will not engage in any illegal activity using school computers.



A violation of this policy will be treated as a violation of the student discipline code and specifically as a violation of that section of the code that subjects a student to disciplinary action for failure to comply with the directions of a teacher, administrator, or other school employee. A violation of this policy may also result in disciplinary actions based upon other sections of the student discipline code.

## CLUBS & ACTIVITIES

### Builders Club

This Kiwanis sponsored club is the Middle School component to Key Club. They meet every Wednesday after school. Members provide service to the school and community as well as the greater region. They may work with food pantries, homeless shelters, and/or other needy causes while Developing character and leadership skills.

### **Junior High School Band and Chorus**

You can participate in our music program and earn class credit at the same time. Junior High School students gain an appreciation of music through the playing of an instrument or by singing in the chorus. Students attend lessons and perform at concerts throughout the school year.



### **National Junior Honor Society**

The National Junior Honor Society is a national program designed to recognize and celebrate the students in the Junior High School who have demonstrated high academic achievement. Students in grades 7 and 8 with a cumulative average of 90% since 6th grade may be eligible. In addition, those students must complete a rigorous application process where a committee of teachers review the individual's character (students may be disqualified due to disciplinary referrals), citizenship, service to school and community, and leadership potential. Students are inducted into the organization through a candle lighting ceremony. The N.J.H.S. then participates throughout the year as volunteers to assist the school and community in a wide range of activities.

### **Drama Club**

Junior High School students have the opportunity to participate in a fall drama production. Students will receive instruction in the theatre arts (both onstage acting, and behind the scenes tech and lighting crew) Rehearsals are held after school ending with a "dessert theatre" production.



### **Peer Dispute Mediation Program**

The Peer Mediation Program teaches students how to resolve conflicts in a nonviolent way. Students and faculty members are selected based on their moral character and their ability to act as a positive role model for the student body of Rensselaer Junior High School . The selected students go through a three-hour training session before they are placed in an actual mediation situation. Other students and faculty refer students to the program. Mediation sessions are scheduled through one of our counselors or administrators.

### **Career Exploration Program**

All Junior High School students are required to participate in the Career Awareness Programs. Our program consists of career education, exploration, guest speakers and field trips to local businesses. Students are able to experience firsthand the challenges of future careers. 8th grade students participate in National Groundhog Job Shadow Day each February.



### **Home & Careers Club**

The "Home and Careers Club" is an after school opportunity for students to enhance their classroom experiences. The students meet regularly to complete projects and explore issues revolving around their home and future careers. The students do additional work on cooking, creating a scrapbook, assorted craft projects, and community service projects with the Ronald McDonald House. In the spring, the students will go on field trips to explore future career options and interests.



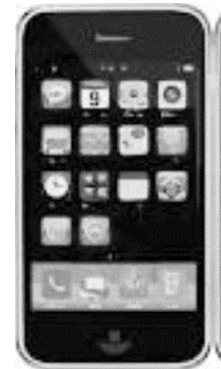
### **After School Assistance**

After school assistance is open to all students in need of extra support. Teachers are available to work with students after school. Since teachers sometimes have other responsibilities, students need to check with teachers, beforehand.

### **Student Personal Electric Devices**

#### **Electronic Device Usage is as follows:**

Rensselaer JSHS – At the Jr. High School, students may use portable listening devices in the cafeteria during the lunch period. These devices include iPods, MP3 players, CD Players and other equipment subject to administrative approval. Volume levels should be such that it is inaudible to other people. These devices should be stored, powered off, in lockers or in backpacks and remain there during the remainder of the school day. The district is not responsible for securing students' personal technology devices and cannot be held accountable for the loss of or damage to such devices. Mobile communication devices may not be used at any time without prior authorization from the building principal.



**Parent/guardians wishing to contact their student should call the office and refrain from calling, texting or emailing them during school hours.**

## **SPORTS PROGRAMS**

For the sport's minded student, there are several athletic teams for student's grade 7 - 8. All teams are open to students who have achieved a quarterly grade of 70% or higher. All practices occur after school and are supervised by certified coaches. Students participating in a modified sport must have a physical before they are allowed to participate on any team. Students must maintain a minimum of a grade point average of 70.00 to be eligible for any extra-curricular activity.

<b>Fall Sports</b>	Modified Soccer (girls) Volleyball
<b>Winter Sports</b>	Modified Football Modified Basketball - boys Modified Basketball - girls Modified Wrestling - boys and girls
<b>Spring Sports</b>	Modified Baseball Modified Softball Track & Field

## **GENERAL COMMON AREA RULES**

- For the health, safety and welfare of everyone, no running, or throwing of objects, and keep your hands and feet to yourself at all times.
- Students must be at an assigned location at all times.
- Show respect for personal and school property.
- Passes are required for all hall travel during class time.
- Obey all directions of school staff at all times.
- No obscene or inappropriate language or gestures.
- No cheating or plagiarism.
- Destroying or defacing of school or personal property will not be tolerated.
- Violent acts including threats, fights and/or abusive language will not be tolerated.
- Truancy will result in assignment to the off-site alternative to suspension program.
- No beepers, pagers, cell phones, mp3 players, ipods, cd players, dvd players, two-way radios, side kicks, headphones, earpieces, laser pointers, or other electronic devices are permitted. These items must be secured in a locker and turned off during school hours; 7:40am-2:40pm. \*During mid-term, final, state assessments and Regents exams electronics and any communications device are not permitted. A communications device during test administration will invalidate the test.
- Students may use personal laptops to work on papers and projects at the discretion of the teacher providing active supervision. The school computer use/internet policy must be followed.
- Students should not ride their skateboards or bikes on school grounds. Skateboards must be secured in a locker during the school day. Sneakers with wheels are not permitted.
- Student drivers must register their cars. Traffic violations will not be tolerated. Repeated violations may result in the removal of driving privileges.
- Students will be given a warning for the first 2 lates of each marking period. A third late in the same marking period will result in a detention assignment. Doctor appointments and court dates will be excused.

## **CAFETERIA RULES**

1. Pass required if it is not your scheduled lunch.
2. Please clean up and return tray.
3. No food is to be taken out of the cafeteria.
4. Throwing of food or other objects 10 will not be tolerated.

## **SEVERE BEHAVIORS**

(These behaviors will result in no less than one-day assignment to the tutoring program and a parent conference).

1. Using, selling, possessing alcohol, drugs or drug paraphernalia or tobacco products.
2. Possession of a weapon or other dangerous object.
3. Theft or accessory to theft.
4. Violent acts (fights, threats, bigotry and abusive language).
5. Bomb threats or false alarms.
6. Intimidating school staff or students.
7. Violations of any criminal laws at school or at school functions will result in a referral to the Rensselaer Police Department.
8. Selling items to other students that are not part of an approved school function.

## **HIERARCHY OF OFFENSES AND CONSEQUENCES**

<b>Offense</b>	<b>Consequences</b>
1st	1 detention and parent notification by the office
2nd	2 detentions and parent notification by the office
3rd	3 detentions and parent notification by the office
4th	1 day assigned to tutoring program with parent notification by the office
5th	2 days assigned to tutoring program with parent notification by the office
6th	3 days assigned to tutoring program with parent notification by the office
7th	Tutoring program* determined by the School Principal with parent notification conference, Principal's Hearing at the discretion of the Principal. Superintendent's hearing at the recommendation of the Principal. *The number of external suspension days will be determined by the Principal and will reflect the severity of the offenses.

Students assigned to the tutoring program are not permitted to participate in regular school programs or extra curricular activities

## **SUSPENSION**

Suspension from school will occur when the School Principal considers a student's behavior detrimental to himself/herself, or to the operation of this school. The following are examples warranting suspension:

1. Continued willful disobedience (insubordination)
2. Open, persistent defiance of staff member, e.g. failure to report for after school detention, refusal to comply with a reasonable request, failure to at least make an effort to learn, preventing others from doing so.
3. Habitual use of profanity or vulgarity
4. The use, sale, or possession of drugs.
5. Use of any form of tobacco products.
6. Willful destruction of school property.
7. Stealing or cheating.

Any infraction and subsequent penalty not focused upon within this policy shall be dealt with in a manner deemed appropriate by the administration.

## **SUSPENSION continued:**

When a student is placed on external suspension they must not enter the school buildings, school buses or school grounds, until the School Principal has granted them permission to do so. The student's parents are responsible for them during external suspension. Suspended students will not be permitted to attend or participate in any extra-curricular activities. When a student is suspended from school for five days or less he/she will be given oral or written notice of the charges against him/her and be provided with an opportunity to give his/her side of the story.

In the case of a student whose presence poses a danger to persons or property, he/she may be immediately removed from school. Students will not be suspended for more than five consecutive days from a class without a Superintendent's hearing. In those situations where a Superintendent's hearing cannot be held within five days of a suspension from school, alternative education will be provided pending such a hearing. Students who are under 16 and are suspended from school will be provided alternative home instruction in accordance with Education Law and Commissioner's Regulations.

## **TEACHER DETENTION**

A teacher may keep students after school for tardiness to class, behavior, or to complete homework assignments, and for make-up tests or for extra help.

## **SCHOOL DETENTION**

School detention will be held on Tuesday & Wednesday afternoons from 2:45pm - 3:30pm with the person assigned to this duty, for students who violate any regulations of this school. Teacher detention will have preference over school detention. Therefore, if a student has been assigned detention by a teacher, and by the Junior High School Principal (s) he will report to the teacher first. After he has satisfied the teacher's detention time, he will report to the school detention room.

Students will have the opportunity to provide explanations to the teacher and/or building administration for their assignment to detentions. Students are expected to go to either teacher or school detention, regardless of participation in a club or activity, or employment after school.

## **STUDENTS' RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Section I**

As a reflection of a democratic society, a school system has many responsibilities to the community which provides its support. Not the least of these should be the development of an understanding and appreciation for our representative form of government, the rights and responsibilities of the individual in the procedures whereby necessary changes are brought about.

A public school system derives its special civil authority from the people through their government. In the United States, government has always been based upon rule law which, in turn, is founded upon respect for the dignity of the individual. In order to promote better understanding between all members of the school community, which comprises students, faculty, administrators and parents, it is appropriate that this statement of educational responsibilities and rights be set forth.

Equity and balance should always be present in our school, and this can be accomplished only when the rights of students are equitable and balanced by the responsibilities on which those rights are based. A student is responsible for the way he exercises his/her rights and he must accept the consequences of his/her actions and recognize the boundaries of his/her individual liberties. Each exercise of an individual's rights must demonstrate respect for the rights of others. To achieve the goals of a democratic society, the staff, students and parents must work cooperatively to avoid the extremes of regimentation on the one hand and anarchy on the other. Students in the Rensselaer City School District have the right to an education, but this is not an absolute right. It is qualified first by requirements. The school must be concerned with the individual and his/her welfare, but in working with the individual the school must also be concerned with the welfare of the entire student body.

The rules and standards set forth apply to conduct on school premises, on school buses, or involving school property, to conduct off school premises which directly affects other students, or the Rensselaer City School District, or to conduct at all functions of any kind. They do not define all types and aspects of student behavior. However, they do serve as an attempt by the school administration to set forth policies, rules and regulations to help each student conduct himself in a proper manner as a good and active citizen in our school community.

### **Students Rights & Responsibilities continued:**

All teachers, administrators, and other employees are responsible for the discipline in the district's schools. Their responsibility is commensurate with their position of responsibility in the district. The teacher is responsible for the discipline in the classroom and is responsible for his/her interactions with students generally, whether in the halls, school grounds, etc. The department supervisor is responsible for the level of discipline on the part of students and staff in his/her department. The Middle School Principal, or Assistant. Principal, is responsible for the level of discipline in the school. The superintendent is responsible for the level of discipline throughout the district. All will be held accountable for maintaining proper levels of discipline with the authority vested in their positions and in strictly enforcing Board Policy and Administrative Regulations. Furthermore, in all cases parents may rest assured that their child's right to due process (a fair hearing) will be protected.

The Rules of Conduct in each building unit shall be consistent with the district's "Rules and Regulations for the Maintenance of Public Order on School Property" as required by Section 2001 of the Education Law, and other statutes of the State of New York.

It is the policy of the school district that student discipline is the responsibility of all school personnel, and that all shall see that proper standards of school behavior are maintained. Furthermore, all personnel shall help maintain proper levels of supervision at all times - whether on formal assignment or simply by virtue of their being in the presence of the parents. Therefore, the district must establish effective communication with the parents so that efforts to improve discipline may be of a cooperative nature.

The school administrators will work through, and support, all staff members in their building in maintaining proper levels of behavior and maintain consistent, firm handling of disciplinary problems throughout the school building and grounds. All employees have a responsibility to report all facts relating to disciplinary problems of sufficient import so that the responsible administrator may take appropriate disciplinary action for which he is held accountable. No person shall set standards for reporting and disciplinary procedure which will undermine the basic intent of maintaining classroom discipline.

## **Section II Rights, Responsibilities and Limitations**

### **1. Freedom of Expression**

- a) Students are entitled to express their opinions verbally. The expression of such opinions, however, shall not interfere with the freedom of others to express themselves. The use of obscenities and personal attacks is prohibited.
- b) All student meetings in the school buildings or on school grounds may function only as part of the formal education process or as authorized by the principal.
- c) Students are entitled to express in writing their personal opinions. Such written expression must be signed by the authors. Libel, obscenity, and personal attacks are prohibited in all publications.
- d) A student may not produce and/or distribute petitions or other printed documents of any kind that are disruptive to the conducting of school.

**Note:**

Students participation in the publication of student newspapers, yearbooks, literary magazines and similar publications is encouraged by the Rensselaer City School District as a learning and educational experience. These publications have qualified faculty advisors and strive to meet the high standards of journalism. Opportunities for a broad spectrum of opinions is provided.

**2. Rights to an Education**

Each student has the right to an education and he also has the responsibility not to interfere with or threaten the education of others by his/her actions. Each student has the responsibility to attend school regularly and to abide by the policies and regulations of the school. Students have the right to seek changes in school policies and regulations in an orderly manner by utilizing those channels provided for this purpose.

**3. Student Activities**

Students have the right to participate in school activities regardless of race, religion, ethnic origin, handicap or economic status.

Students may not be denied participation in any activity for any reason other than those established by state, county or school eligibility requirements and those requirements legitimately related to the purpose of the activity.

**4. Right to Privacy**

It is the responsibility of the school to protect the student's privacy. The school will not disclose any information from the student's permanent records except when such disclosures will serve a legitimate educational need or when so directed by legal authorities. Access to permanent student records is available to authorized school personnel, to the parent or legal guardian of the student, or if the student is eighteen years of age or older, directly to the student (should persons wish to review the school records, a request should be made through the guidance office).

Further information concerning the disclosure of student information and limitations of such disclosures is governed by the *Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974*.

## **POLICY REGULATIONS**     *Protection of Privacy of Parents and Students*

### **I. Introduction:**

The following set of guidelines shall constitute the basis for the City School District of the City of Rensselaer rules and regulations suitable for compliance with the Federal "Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974" commonly known as the "Buckley Amendment."

### **II. Purpose:**

The purpose of the act is to ensure the availability of student records to the parents of students less than 18 years of age, and to students and former students over 18 years of age, and to ensure the confidentiality of such records with respect to third parties.

### **III. Definitions:**

1. "An educational agency or institution" is defined as "any public or private agency or institution" receiving funds covered by the Act.
2. "Educational records" are defined as those records, files, documents, and other materials maintained by the educational agency or institution, or by a person acting for it, which contains information directly related to the student.
3. "Student" includes any person with respect to whom an educational agency or institution maintains educational records or personally identifiable information, but does not include a person who has not been in attendance at such agency or institution." This includes former students as to whom records are still kept.

**NOTE:** The Act specifically excludes from the definition several categories of records, including records personally kept by teachers, administrators or ancillary personnel, which are not accessible or revealed to any other person except a substitute.

### **IV. Designation of Records Access Officer:**

The Records Access Officer shall be the Principal of each school building where the student is enrolled, and in the case of former student, the Principal of the Rensselaer Jr. Sr. High School.

### **V. Requests to Inspect Records:**

Requests for forms to inspect records must be made, in writing, by addressing requests to the appropriate school building principal, who shall forward such forms to the person making the request. Upon receipt of the proper form, the School Principal shall afford access to these records within thirty days. Inspection of these agency records may be made at the appropriate school building on any day between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. and the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m.

### **VI. Review of Records:**

1. Parents, students, and former students 18 or older, shall be provided an opportunity for a hearing to challenge the content of such records.
2. Hearing Procedures: There shall be an opportunity for the parents of a student under 18, or a student or a former student 18 or over, to identify, in writing, the record or records which they believe to be inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of the privacy or other rights of the student, together with a statement of the reasons for their challenge to the record. There shall be a written response by an appropriate school official designated to handle such matters, indicating either that he finds the challenged record to be inaccurate, misleading or otherwise inappropriate and that it will be corrected or deleted or that he finds no basis for correcting or deleting the records



- in question but that the parent or student will be given an opportunity for a hearing upon request.
3. There shall be a hearing, if requested, before the Superintendent of Schools or an impartial person designated by him. The parent or student shall be given the right to present evidence in support of his belief that the record is erroneous and to rebut any evidence submitted in support of the record, and a written decision shall be rendered stating the disposition of the challenge to the record and the reasons for the determination. The hearing may be informal in nature. The parents or students shall have the right to insert into the records a written explanation concerning the content of such records.

## **VII. Confidentiality of Records**

A student's education records, and any material contained therein which is personally identifiable shall be confidential and may not be released or made available to persons other than parents or students without written consent of such parents or students. There are a number of exceptions to this rule. These are:

1. Other school officials, including teachers within the educational agency who have legitimate educational interests.
2. Officials of another school in which the student seeks or intends to enroll, if the parents or student are notified of the transfer or records, are given a copy if they desire one, and "have an opportunity for a hearing to challenge the content of a record".
3. Authorized representatives of certain designated Federal and State agencies, including State educational authorities, for the purpose of the audit and evaluation of Federally supported programs, or in connection with the enforcement of Federal legal requirements; "in connection with a student's application for or receipt of financial aid".
4. State and local authorities to which such information is specifically required to be reported or disclosed pursuant to state statute adopted prior to November 19, 1974.
5. Organizations conducting certain educational studies, where such studies are conducted in such a manner that students whose records are used cannot be identified by other persons, and where such records will be destroyed when no longer needed.
6. Accrediting organizations, in carrying out their functions.
7. Parents of a dependent student.
8. In an emergency, to appropriate persons, where the knowledge is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other persons.
9. Pursuant to court order or subpoena, after notification to the parents or student. The School District may, in addition, release "directory information" including the following: the student's name, address, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, degrees and awards. This notice will be given to each parent, student, or former student, and the school shall allow a reasonable time for the parent or student to notify it that may or all such information should not be released to such student without prior consent.

Whenever a record or personally identifiable information is to be released to other third parties, a written consent is required specifying the record to be released, the reasons for its release, and the person or persons to whom they are to be released. Such records or information may be released to a third party only on conditions that they will not further release them without consent.

All persons desiring access to such records, except other employees of the school or school district with legitimate educational interests in such records, shall be required to sign a written form to be kept with the student's file. The form shall indicate the legitimate educational or other interest that each person has in inspecting the records. The form itself shall be treated as an educational record subject to the provisions of the Act, accessible to parents, students and former students, and privileged as to third parties.

## **VII. Notice of Rights**

The Rensselaer City School District shall within thirty days of the approval of this policy and procedures, distribute copies to all students and parents. Copies of this policy and procedure shall be included in student handbooks to be distributed annually.

### **NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION**

The Rensselaer City School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex or handicap in any of the educational or vocational programs it offers as it is required to do by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. This District wide non-discrimination policy includes, but is not limited to, the following areas: recruitment and appointment of employees, employment salary and benefits; student access to and enrollment in District programs and courses; and counseling services for students and student activities. The district also ensures that it does not discriminate in providing its students the opportunity to participate in the Rensselaer Vo-Tec programs.

The District official responsible for coordination of activities in relating to compliance with Title VI, Title IX, and Section 504 is Mr. Peter Rehonis. He may be contacted at Rensselaer Middle High School, 555 Broadway, Rensselaer, N. Y. 12144, telephone 465-6440. This Official will provide information, including complaint procedures, to any student or employee who feels that his or her rights under Title VI, Title IX, or Section 504 may have been violated by the District or its representatives. Student Activities: The district also ensures that it does not discriminate in providing its students the opportunity to participate in the Rensselaer Vo-Tec programs.

### **COMPLAINT PROCEDURE**

#### **A. Definitions**

1. A "complaint" is a claim by an employee or employees, student or students, that they have been adversely affected because of discrimination in the Rensselaer City School District.
2. The "complainant" is the employee or employees, student or students, making such complaint.
3. A "party in interest" is the employee or employees, student or students, making the claim and any person against whom action might be taken in order to resolve the complaint.
4. "Superintendent" means the person acting as Superintendent of Schools of the Rensselaer City School District, or his/her designee.
5. The "Board" means the Board of Education of the Rensselaer City School District or its 18 committee.

## **B. Informal Procedures**

Prior to starting formal procedures, the complainant shall first discuss the matter informally with the building principal involved, if any, or with any central office administrator, with the objective of having the complaint adjusted informally.

## **C. Formal Procedures**

To expedite the complaint process, the number of days indicated at each level shall be considered as maximum. At any stage of the proceeding, either party may introduce or add new information or evidence that may be relative to a decision in such proceeding.

- 1. Level One** - The complainant will first present the complaint in writing, and no later than ten school days after the action occurs upon which the complaint is based, to the principal or immediate superior with whom it will be discussed directly or at the complainant's request with the objective of resolving the matter. The principal or immediate superior shall render his/her decision with five school days after the complaint was discussed.
  
- 2. Level Two** - If the complainant is not satisfied with the disposition of the complaint at Level One, or if no decision has been rendered with ten school days after presentation thereof, the complaint shall be filed in writing within five school days with the Superintendent indicating the complainant's desire to continue the complaint procedure. The Superintendent shall meet the complainant in an effort to resolve the complaint. The Superintendent will inform the complainant of his/her decision within five school days after the meeting.
  
- 3. Level Three-**
  - A. If the complainant is not satisfied with the decision of Level Two or if no written decision has been rendered within five school days after the meeting, the complainant may within ten school days after the meeting on Level Two, request a meeting of the Board, or a duly appointed committee thereof, to take place within ten school days after receiving the request.
  - B. The Board, or its committee, shall meet with the complainant for the purpose of reaching a mutually satisfactory solution. The Board shall within ten school days of said meeting, inform the complainant of its decision.

**HARASSMENT, HAZING & BULLYING - REGULATION**

This regulation sets forth detailed guidelines for reporting, investigating and remedying allegations of harassment, hazing and bullying.

**Definitions**

“Harassment” means any intentional written, verbal, or electronic communication or physical act including but not limited to one shown to be motivated by race, color, national origin, creed, religion, marital status, sex, age, sexual orientation, disability or other distinguishing characteristic when the intentional conduct or communication:

- Interferes with a student's academic performance or participation in school-sponsored activities or an employee's work performance;
- Creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational or work environment;
- Harms a student or employee or damages the property of a student or employee;
- Places a student or employee in reasonable fear of physical harm or damage to his/her property; or
- Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

“Bullying” is a form of harassment that consists of inappropriate persistent behavior including threats or intimidation of others, treating others cruelly, terrorizing, coercing, or habitual put downs and/or badgering others.

“Hazing” is a form of harassment which involves committing an act against a student or coercing a Student into committing an act that creates a risk of emotional, physical or psychological harm to a person, in order for the student to be initiated into or affiliated with a student organization, or for any other purpose. The fact that the victim may consent to the act does not excuse the behavior or lessen the offense.

**Unacceptable Conduct**

School-related conduct that the district considers unacceptable and which may constitute harassment, hazing and bullying includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Someone is taking something of yours without your permission.
2. Someone is spreading rumors about you or your family. (whether it is true or not)
3. Someone is embarrassing you in front of others by either calling you names or doing something to you (like hiding your book, pulling your seat out from underneath you, etc.)

4. Someone is telling other kids not to talk to you or be friends with you.
5. Someone continues to shove into you in the halls and says it is always an accident.
6. Someone is sexually harassing you (always following you around, whistling at you when you walk by, making comments about your body, etc.
7. Someone who videos and/or takes pictures of a person or incident and disseminates to others via paper, electronically or on-line.

## **Reporting Complaints**

Any victim or person with knowledge of harassment, hazing, and/or bullying by a student, district employee or third party related to the school should report the complaint to a School Official as soon as possible after the incident so that it may be effectively investigated and resolved.

In order to assist investigators, individuals should document the harassment, hazing, bullying as soon as it occurs and with as much detail as possible including: the nature of the incident(s); dates, times, places it has occurred; name of perpetrator(s); witnesses to the incident(s); and the victim's response to the incident. (Ref. Harassment/Bullying Incident Report Form – RCSD Policy #0115-E.)

## **Confidentiality**

It is district policy to respect the privacy of all parties and witnesses to complaints of harassment, hazing, and/or bullying. To the extent possible, the district will not release the details of a complaint or the identity of the complainant or the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed to any third parties who do not need to know such information. However, because an individual's need for confidentiality must be balanced with the district's legal obligation to provide due process to the accused, to conduct a thorough investigation, or to take necessary action to resolve the complaint, the district retains the right to disclose the identity of parties and witnesses to complaints in appropriate circumstances to individuals with a need to know. The staff member responsible for investigating complaints will discuss Confidentiality standards and concerns with all complainants.

If a complainant requests that his/her name not be revealed to the individual(s) against whom a complaint is filed, the staff member responsible for conducting the investigation shall inform the complainant that:

1. the request may limit the district's ability to respond to his/her complaint;
2. district policy and federal law prohibit retaliation against complainants and witnesses;
3. the district will attempt to prevent any retaliation; and
4. the district will take strong responsive action if retaliation occurs.

If the complainant still requests confidentiality after being given the notice above, the investigator will take all reasonable steps to investigate and respond to the complaint consistent with the request as long as doing so does not preclude the district from responding effectively to the harassment and preventing the harassment of other students or employees.

### **Investigation and Resolution Procedure**

Whenever a complaint of harassment, hazing, and/or bullying is received whether verbal or written, it will be subject to a preliminary review and investigation. Except in the case of severe or criminal conduct, the Principal or Assistant Principal should make all reasonable efforts to resolve complaints informally at the school level. The goal of informal procedures is to end the harassment, hazing, and/or bullying and obtain a prompt and equitable resolution to a complaint.

As soon as possible following receipt of a complaint, a School Official will begin an investigation of the complaint. Parents of student victims and accused students will be notified of allegations that are serious or involve repeated conduct.

Appropriate disciplinary action shall be recommended and imposed in accordance with district policy, the applicable collective bargaining agreement or state law.

### **Discipline/Penalties**

Any individual who violates this policy by engaging in prohibited harassment, hazing, or bullying will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action. Disciplinary measures available to School Officials shall be based upon the District Code of Conduct.

### **Educational Purpose**

The District remains committed to educating all students, faculty, staff and parents about the dangers of harassment, hazing and bullying. Whenever possible, the District will offer educational awareness programs to the school community that promotes respect, dignity and equality.

Adopted by the Board of Education: April 13, 2011