



August 2021

Dear Parents and Families,

It's that time again to welcome our students back for another exciting year at Van Rensselaer Elementary School and to provide you with information regarding the start of the school year. In some ways, school will most likely look similar to how it was when we ended last school year. Last year, we implemented a plan that allowed us to successfully stay open for in-person learning all year during the pandemic. As a result, we will continue to use some of the same health and safety protocols as we start this year. One major change for this year will be that all students will be expected to be in school, Monday-Friday, for in-person learning.

The first day of school will be Tuesday, September 7th. Our school day will be 8:20-3:15 for students in grades K-5. The day will end at 2:30 for our pre-kindergarten students. You should be receiving information about electronically accessing bus assignments from the Transportation Department. If you have any questions regarding school bus transportation you should contact the Bus Garage at 518- 283-0671. While it is clear we are striving to communicate electronically, a parent packet will be sent home with your child on the first day of school. It will contain a number of important documents which need to be completed and returned to school as soon as possible. Please read all the material in this packet completely and return the signed papers to your child's teacher.

As you did last year, please use your child's SchoolTool account to access your child's teacher(s) for the upcoming school year. You should be able to access this information on Wednesday, August 25th. For parents of students in grades 3-5, you can also monitor your child's grades using this account. Please reach out to the school if you need assistance with this process.

Morning Drop-Off/Walkers

- For students walking to school, they may enter through the auditorium entrance doors no earlier than 8:15. School staff will be located outside at that time to help students transition.

Rensselaer Junior Senior High School
Dominick M. Pitaniello, Principal
P: (518) 436-8561
F: (518) 436-8563
dpitaniello@rcsd.k12.ny.us

Van Rensselaer Elementary School
Jeffrey M. Palmer, Principal
P: (518) 436-4618
F: (518) 436-4692
jpalmer@rcsd.k12.ny.us

- PK-1 children should be dropped off using the pull-off located near the elementary playground no earlier than 8:15. Please wait until you are one of the first few cars before letting your child out of your car. You should remain in your car. As a reminder, you may not accompany your child into the building. School staff will ensure that your child reaches their classroom.
- Grades 2-5 children should be dropped off at the auditorium entrance no earlier than 8:15. You should pull up to the curb (during this time you may disregard the fire lane signage) to let your child out. You should remain in your car. As a reminder, you may not accompany your child into the building. School staff will ensure that your child reaches their classroom. Please select the drop-off location that makes the most sense if you have children at various ages.
- Staff members will be in the designated locations until about 8:30. If you arrive after this time you will need to walk your child into the security vestibule. Please remember the official start to the day is 8:20 with transition time until about 8:30.

Dismissal

- If you need to pick up your child early from school for an appointment you will need to do so before 2:45. This should not be a frequent occurrence. The dismissal process will start at 2:45, so students will not be called out of class after this time. If you plan on picking your child up daily please see the process for doing that outlined below.
- If you plan on picking up your child daily you will need to send in a note. Students being picked up will be located in the hallway down by the auditorium entrance starting at 2:55. Many, if not all, of the parking spots in the first row will be reserved for dismissal. You will need to remain in your car and a staff member will help you with the process. As a reminder, you will need to be prepared to show ID when asked. Your child will be brought out to your car following this interaction. Please be patient with the process. Last year we found that parents arriving around 3:05/3:10 had almost no wait as many other parents seemed to arrive much earlier. Please be sure to pick up your child by 3:15.
- Students that are walkers will be dismissed at about 3:00.
- Students riding the buses will depart from school at about 3:15.

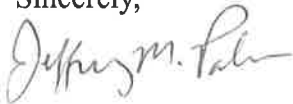
Other Reminders:

- Please label any lunches, coats, jackets, sweaters, and/or backpacks that your child may bring to school.
- Students should come to school dressed in the proper attire. Shoes or sneakers should be worn at all times. For safety reasons, open toe shoes, flip-flops, and platform shoes are not allowed.
- Please call Mr. Foust at 436-8561 (extension 8126) if your child will be absent from school. NYS law requires a written excuse for each absence.

- All parental requests for a bus change must be put in writing before they will be honored. Requests for bus changes may not be made over the phone and will not be honored. All requests must be in writing and submitted to the office no later than 9:00 am. Please understand that it is very difficult to make transportation changes during the school day which is why all changes should be made by 9:00. Due to the required social distancing, it is likely that the Transportation Department will need to be more restrictive in honoring changes. More information will be provided with regards to this as it is determined.
- As a reminder, all parents and visitors must sign in upon entering the building. Again, only parents and visitors with an appointment will be permitted into the building. This is increasingly important to maintain a healthy and safe environment under the present circumstances. We will again be using our Raptor Visitor Management System. If you did not register with your license or other identification last year, you will need to do so this year to have access to the building.
- Electronic devices are prohibited from school unless they are school issued or approved. That letter is the final page of this document.

As always, the final weeks of summer will pass quickly for all. In discussing the first day of school with your child, it will be increasingly important to reassure him/her that school is a very special place where wonderful things will be learned. For some of our students, it is understandable that the situation has led to them feeling anxious about school. Please emphasize that school is a safe place. Under any circumstances, transitioning back to school can be a difficult process for students. I encourage you to be supportive and patient with this process. Please give your child the first couple of weeks to get to know their teacher (s) and what is expected of them. Please contact your child's teacher if you have questions or concerns. We look forward to Tuesday, September 7th as the beginning of another terrific year here at VR! Should you have any questions, please feel free to phone school at 518-436-4618. Please look for additional information about the start of school from Mr. Kardash.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey M. Palmer
Principal

VR's Vision:

Our school is a safe and caring community where students learn to think critically, grow socially, and develop a love of learning that will last a lifetime. We will be polite, work hard, and have fun as we SHOW PRIDE at Van Rensselaer Elementary School.

August 2021

Dear Parents and Families,

The main purpose of this letter is to remind you that the use of electronic devices is prohibited for elementary students. These devices are a significant distraction and can obstruct the educational process. These devices include but are not limited to cell phones, electronic games, laser pointers, iPods, iPads, tablets, etc.. A student who is found in violation of this rule will have the offending device confiscated and returned only to their parent or guardian. The student may also face additional disciplinary consequences depending on the situation. In addition, please be aware that using electronic devices to record or photograph on school grounds (including the buses) is considered a serious offense and may result in the student being externally suspended from school. There may be special occasions when your child's teacher grants permission for the use of electronic devices (from home) in the classroom. You will be notified by the teacher if that is the case, and the devices should only be used under the direct supervision of the teacher in the classroom.

I realize that some of these devices are used as a way to communicate with your child. Please know that if a parent needs to speak to his or her child they should call the office at 436-4618. The student will be given the message or called out of class depending on the urgency of the message. Students will be able to use the phones in the office to communicate with a parent or guardian if necessary.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey M. Palmer
Principal