

Rittman Academy



Parent/Student Handbook

2019-2020

Rittman Academy
Heritage Hall
100 Saurer St.
Rittman, OH 44270

Website: www.RittmanAcademy.org

Important Phone Numbers

330-927-7162
RA Computer Lab
Diane Shaum – Administrative Assistant

330-927-7162
RA Computer Lab
Calvin Baird – Head Teacher

330-927-7121
RA Director
Kent Smith

Introduction

Welcome to the Rittman Academy. Throughout this Parent/Student Handbook the school may be referred to as “RA”.

Choosing a school for your child or children is an important decision that each parent/guardian must choose. It is understood by the administration that RA is an alternative route of education for students who are not achieving a desired level of success within the traditional school setting. RA places a great deal of responsibility on the student and parent to make this community school work. To better understand this responsibility, parents and students who are enrolling or re-entering RA are required to read this Parent/Student Handbook and to sign the Agreement Form included with this handbook. This document states that the handbook has been reviewed and that the guidelines and policies set forth within it are agreeable to both the student and the parent/guardian.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to enhance and facilitate student learning by utilizing an educational model that combines state-of-the-art digital curriculum and instruction with access to local school resources to complement that instruction and prepare students to become life-long learners and productive citizens.

RA Rules and Guidelines

Cooperation, respect for others and civility are essential to learning. For this reason, the following regulations and guidelines have been set forth in this handbook to assist in maintaining a good learning environment. Note that any reference to “Parent” or “Guardian” in this handbook applies equally to any student that is 18 years or older.

RA Disclosure

Rittman Academy (RA) is a community school established under Chapter 3314 of the Ohio Revised Code. The school is a public school and students enrolled in and attending the school are required to take state-mandated tests and other examinations that are prescribed by school law. In addition, there may be other requirements for students at the school that are prescribed by law. Students are not excused from compulsory attendance laws upon enrollment into RA. For more information in this matter please contact the school administration or the Ohio Department of Education.

Non-Discrimination Policy

RA will accept students of any race, creed, gender, disability or ethnic origin. RA will not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, gender, disability or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational programs and activities.

Admission Policy

RA will not charge tuition to parents and students

RA will be in full compliance with enrollment regulations and withdrawal requirements set forth by the RA Charter and Ohio law.

RA will comply with all appropriate state and federal laws.

RA will not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, gender, disability or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational programs and activities.

- The RA has limited staff to service students on IEP's or 504 plans. Depending on the specific services required on these student plans and the number of students currently being serviced, a student may be denied admission due to the inability to meet those mandates.

RA is an open-enrollment school. Any student (grades 9-12) in the state of Ohio are eligible to apply for admission.

If the number of applicants exceeds the school's capacity restrictions, students shall be admitted by lot from all those submitting applications.

Preference shall be given to students attending the school the previous year and to students who reside in the district in which the school is located. Preference may also be given to siblings of students attending the school the previous year.

Preference also may be given to students who are the children of full-time staff members employed by the school, provided the total number of students receiving this preference is less than 5% of the school's total enrollment.

Application-Registration-Admission

The Application Form represents the first step in a two-step process. By completing, signing, and submitting the Application Form, along with the associated Admissions forms, the parent or guardian expresses a desire to have his or her child or children attend RA. The submission of the Application Form along with the associated Admissions forms begins the Admissions process. It

does not mean that the child will be enrolled in RA. As a part of the process, the parent or guardian will provide copies of the student's:

- Birth Certificate
- Current Immunization Record
- Proof of Custody
- School Transcripts

Your student will be considered fully enrolled at RA when all of the Admissions forms have been completed and processed. The student will then have an account created, enrolled in classes and have a password issued to both the student and the parent/guardian.

Health Certification and Immunization Requirements

Immunizations have proven to help prevent the spread of certain contagious diseases and in some cases, have eradicated disease. The Ohio Department of Health determines the schedule of childhood immunizations required for daycare and school attendance. RA is required to adhere to the current immunization schedule. To view the current list of required immunizations for school attendance visit the Ohio Department of Health web site. In special circumstances your physician may recommend additional immunizations. If the student has taken a TB test, a copy of the results should be submitted for RA health file.

If you choose to have your child exempt from immunizations due to religious, good cause, or medical reasons then you must complete an Immunization Exemption Form to put on file with your child's health record.

If there are any questions about immunizations or where to get them, call your Public Health Nurse or the county or city Health Department. If the student has not received the minimum number of immunizations, unless otherwise exempt, he or she is to be excluded, by state directive, from school attendance no later than fifteen school days after admission.

Withdrawal

To initiate the withdrawal process from RA, the student's parent/guardian must sign a withdrawal form and submit it to the school. This signed form gives official notice of the child's withdrawal and permission for RA to send records to the new school. Except as prohibited by law, the student's grades and credits will not be released until all outstanding fees or obligations are met.

It is against the policy of the Ohio Department of Education for a student to be simultaneously enrolled in RA and another school district; therefore, the parent/guardian is responsible for contacting the RA administration before his or her student becomes enrolled in another public school. It is critical that parents/guardians send RA a written request for withdrawal as soon as the decision to withdraw a student has been made.



ATTENDANCE POLICY/AGREEMENT STATEMENT
(To be signed by both the student and the parent/guardian)

Dear Rittman Academy Student and Parent/Guardian,

Daily attendance at the Rittman Academy is essential for student success and academic achievement. All students and parents/guardians need to know that each day the Rittman Academy is in session our students are on a **six-hour school day**. The hours our classrooms are open are 7:45 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

These six hours of learning opportunities **MUST** be verified by the hours a student is physically in the classroom. Those hours are documented by signing in and out on a log sheet each day a student is in attendance.

All students are required to put in a 6 hour school day.

If a student does not complete the 6 hour school day as described, any hours short are then coded as unexcused time.

In December of 2016, the Ohio General Assembly passed House Bill 410 to encourage and support a preventative approach to excessive absences and truancy. This legislation emphasizes parent/guardian engagement and accountability as part of the student's Absence Intervention Plan.

House Bill 410 categorizes absences and truancy to be based on instructional hours missed that are unexcused. The designation of "**Habitual Truant**" is defined as any child of compulsory school age who has been absent without an "Excused Absence" for:

- Missing 30 consecutive hours of school unexcused.
- Missing 42 or more hours of school unexcused in a calendar month.
- Missing 72 or more hours of school in a school year unexcused.

If any of these "triggers" are reached, within 7 days the Absence Intervention Team will set up a time with the student and parent/guardian to develop an "Absence Intervention Plan". The purpose of this plan will be to reduce or eliminate future absences. The Absence Intervention Team will be comprised of the Rittman Academy Director, Head Teacher, and the EMIS Coordinator.

How To Call Off A Student And How Absences Are Classified

If a student is NOT going to be in attendance on a regularly scheduled school day, a parent/guardian is asked to call in the absence at 330-927-7162 no later than 10:00 a.m. This call is to let the school know that the child will not be in attendance that day and the reason for the absence.

If a student does not show up for school, AND a call off has not been received, a member of the Rittman Academy staff will make an attempt to contact the parent/guardian to inform them of non-attendance and find out the reason for the absence.

Absences are classified as either “Excused” or “Unexcused”. Reasons for “Excused Absences” are:

- Personal illness
- Medical appointment
- Illness of immediate family
- Death of a relative
- Quarantine for contagious disease
- Observance of religious holiday
- Acts of God such as floods, tornadoes, etc.
- Emergency deemed as sufficient cause by the administration (If possible, this should be approved in advance.)

A student may be called off for one of these “Excused Absences” by a parent/guardian 10 times in an academic school year. After 10 parent/guardian call offs, it will no longer be an excused absence, without a doctor’s note or some other form of verification.

Unexcused absences include, but are not limited to:

- Over sleeping
- Shopping
- Babysitting
- Hunting/Fishing
- Haircut/beauty appointment
- Birthday
- Personal appointments (Non-medical)
- Attaining drivers permit/license

These attendance policies come into effect the first day of enrollment for a new student or the first day of physical attendance for returning students. I have read the following attendance policies related to the Rittman Academy and understand the need for regular attendance at school and consequences for excessive unexcused absences from school.

Student Name Printed & Signed

Parent/Guardian Name Printed & Signed

Credit Flexibility Plan

The RA realizes the increasing need to adapt its educational offerings to the needs of students. To accomplish this goal in part, the RA has established a Credit Flexibility Plan. The Credit Flexibility Plan allows students to learn through real world opportunities by embracing new teaching and learning strategies.

The Rittman Academy Credit Flexibility Plan shall be developed in accordance with the Ohio law and expands how students may earn credit. Students may earn credits through any combination of the following: completing coursework, “testing out”, or demonstrating mastery of the course content, or pursuing one or more individual educational options.

All data from the Credit Flexibility Plan is to be submitted to the Ohio Department of Education. The Rittman Academy shall share the methods used and the frequency of communication with students and parents.

Credit Flex

There is also the ability to earn hours of attendance and credits through a “Credit Flex”. This is verifying learning subject matter that matches up to course standards that is not “seat time” within the walls of the school.

These might include on-line learning, work based learning, and project learning. Credit Flex is set up on an individual basis between the school and the student.

Cell Phone Policy

All schools are dealing with the issues that social media and cell phones present. The Rittman Academy does not allow cell phone usage during academic time. Cell phones are a distraction to learning. We have purchased a lockable cabinet that cell phones are placed into upon arrival. Students can access their cell phones during their lunch time to respond to text or e-mails.

Cell phones may not be used during academic time for music.

As a parent/guardian, you can always get messages or contact your child in the case of an emergency by calling our lab phone at 330-927-7162.

After the 20 minute lunch period where the students can access their phones, they will be asked to lock them back up until leaving school for the day.

The vast majority of students do lock their phones up. If a student refuses to not lock up their phone, they will be sent home for the day and the missed time will result in unexcused absence hours. Repeated violators will be subject to removal from the Rittman Academy School.

Students That Are Age 18 Or Over

Students age 18 and over that attend the RA will have their attendance monitored in the same way a student under the age of 18 does. Chronic absenteeism will be addressed through letters of documentation of absences and personal meetings with the student. A student that is age 18 or over with chronic truancy is subject to being withdrawn from the RA.

Code of Conduct

As part of the Admission process, both the parent and student are required to sign the Agreement Form and submit it at the time of admission. The signed Agreement Form is kept in the student's cumulative file and, among other documents, expresses the acceptance of the Code of Conduct by both the parent and the student. Lack of cooperation in any matter concerning student and/or parent is cause for expulsion of the student from RA. If a student is expelled from RA, or leaves RA for any reason, he or she must return all RA property or educational materials to RA.

All suspensions and expulsions will be conducted in accordance with due process procedures. Only the Director may suspend or expel. The Director will provide the student and the parent/guardian written notice of the intent to suspend/expel. The written notice will include reasons for the intended suspension/expulsion. The notice will state the time and place to appear for a hearing on the matter, which will be not be less than three days or later than ten days after the notice of intent to suspend/expel was given to the student and parent. The student and parent will have an opportunity to appear, on request, before the Superintendent to challenge the suspension/expulsion, or to otherwise explain the actions of the student that lead to the disciplinary action. The Superintendent may grant an extension of time. If granted, the Superintendent will notify all parties in writing of the new time and place of the meeting.

Suspension and expulsion of students with disabilities will comply with all federal and state laws, policies, and procedures. The IEP Team will meet to review the IEP and consider the development of a Behavior Intervention Plan whenever the number of days of suspension exceeds five days in the academic year. Any student who is suspended for more than ten days during an academic year will continue to receive services via a change of placement as determined by the IEP Team. In the event that the student is being disciplined for an expellable action, the IEP Team will meet and conduct both a Manifest Determination and Functional Behavior Analysis. An Alternate Interim Placement will be identified for a period of time not to exceed 45 school days.

No suspension shall exceed ten school days. No expulsion shall exceed eighty days, except as otherwise allowed or required by law. A written notice of the suspension/expulsion will be sent or given one school day to the parent/guardian of the student. The notice will contain the reasons for the action and the rights of the student to appeal the suspension/expulsion to the

Superintendent or the Board of Directors, or its designee. The following are the infractions in the Code of Conduct that may subject the student to discipline up to and including suspension or expulsion, if the same occur during the presentation of any learning opportunity or at any school event, activity or function.

- Cheating- To act dishonestly; copying or using someone else's work
- Insubordination- Not accepting directions; refusing to cooperate with RA employees, agents, and/or other representatives
- Theft- To take the property of another without right or permission
- Fighting- To participate in physical contact with one or more students, faculty, or staff of RA or any other person with intent to harm.
- Possession or Intake of Alcohol or Tobacco
- Vandalism- Purposeful destruction, misuse, or defacing of RA or other's personal property.
- Profane/Obscene Language or Gestures towards Students/Staff/Teacher/Others- use of unacceptable, disrespectful words, terms or gestures intended to embarrass or insult.
- Inappropriate use of Internet access, as detailed in the Technology & Internet Acceptable Usage Policy
- Wrongful Conduct- Any action or inaction not specifically referenced in the listing above that impedes, obstructs, interferes, or violates the mission, philosophy, policies, procedures, rules, and/or reflections of RA and/or is disrespectful, harmful, or offensive to others or property

Personal Responsibility

Each student is expected to take personal responsibility for his/her education and behavior. This includes:

Academic Honesty:

Students are expected to complete their own work and take their own tests.

RA families agree not to copy or permit copying of any RA material, including but not limited to the RA Parent/Student Handbook, curriculum, tests, software, hardware or online materials.

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is defined as taking ideas or writings knowingly from another and presenting them as one's own. Plagiarism is a form of cheating and/or stealing and it will not be tolerated at RA.

Each student will be held to the standards and consequences that are listed in the RA Plagiarism Policy.

The consequence for plagiarism is up to expulsion from RA.

Testing

RA students are required to participate in district- and state-mandated testing.

A student must participate in district-mandated testing.

Required state-mandated tests will include but are not limited to the “State of Ohio End of Course State Tests”. Students must earn at least 18 points on seven end-of-course state tests.

A student who does not participate in any and all mandatory tests, and has not been officially been exempted from testing by a school official in writing, will face possible dismissal from RA.

GRADES AND GRADING SCALES

RA teachers maintain a grade book within the Pearson Connexus websites that displays the student’s progress.

Students must achieve 60% mastery of material on each lesson to progress to the next lesson in the course currently in progress.

COURSE COMPLETION (HIGH SCHOOL)

High School advancement is based on credits. In order to earn credits the student must complete all work in a course with at least a D average.

In order to advance to 10th grade status the student must have a total of 5 credits

In order to advance to 11th grade status the student must have a total of 10 credits

In order to advance to 12th grade status the student must have a total of 15 credits

OTHER ACADEMEY POLICIES

Age Requirements

Students may not be more than 21 years of age at the time of admission, but may be permitted to complete the school year in which their 22nd birthday falls, subject to change based on rules and regulations established by the Ohio Department of Education.

Drug-Free School

In accordance with Federal Law, RA prohibits the use, possession, concealment or distribution of drugs by students on RA grounds, in any school building, activity or function. Drugs include any alcoholic beverage, anabolic steroid, and dangerous controlled substance as defined by State or Federal statute, or any substance that could be considered a “look alike” controlled substance. **This includes e-cigarettes, vaping, and the use of a jewel devices.** Compliance with this RA policy is mandatory for all students. Any student who violates this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, in accordance with due process and as specified in the Code of Conduct as listed in this Parent/Student Handbook, up to and including expulsion from RA. When required by the state law, RA will also notify law enforcement officials.

RA Emergency Closing

On rare occasion, due to extreme weather conditions, power outages or other unforeseen emergencies, RA may be closed. If the Rittman Exempted Village School District is off school for weather related conditions or other emergencies, then the Rittman Academy will also be closed for that day.

Medication, Inhaler and Epi-Pen Policy

On school sponsored on-site testing, activities and trips, medication may need to be administered to a student. When possible, parents should provide medication outside of school hours and encourage their physician’s cooperation in this regard. However, there may be occasions when medication needs to be administered during the school day when the parent/guardian is not present. When requesting the assistance of school personnel to give medication, the following must be followed:

1. An authorization form must be filled out completely and must include the name of the medication, dosage, time and duration of the medication and possible side effects.
2. The authorization form must be signed by both the physician to authorize the medication and the parent to authorize school personnel to administer the medication.
3. The physician’s address and phone number must be listed on the authorization form.
4. The student should bring a daily dose of medication enclosed in the original container that is labeled with the student’s name, name of medication, the dosage, the time to be given and the physician’s name.

The Asthma Inhaler Bill passed in Ohio in August of 1999 states that a student may carry and self-administer an inhaler in school. Authorization for Student Possession of Asthma Inhaler Form must be signed by the physician and parent/guardian and on file with the school's main office if a student will be carrying an Inhaler. It will contain student information, name and dose of inhaled medication, side effects, and actions the school needs to take in the event that the inhaled medication does not provide relief, and physician contact information.

A student that is required to carry and self-administer an Epinephrine Auto injector must have an Authorization for Student Possession of Epi Auto Injector Form, signed by the physician and parent/guardian on file at the school's main office. It will contain student information, name, dose, and route of medication, reason for medication, administration instructions, and action the school needs to take in the event the medication does not relieve symptoms, as well as physician contact information. This form is available from the nurse's office and online.

Student Directory Information

It is the policy of the Academy not to release any personal information such as names, home address, and phone numbers or any Directory Information as that term is defined by Ohio and Federal law to outside agencies or requesting parties without the direct written consent of the parent or guardian or as otherwise required by law, such as military recruiters, etc., as referenced in ORC 3319.321 2(a) and (b). Unless a parent/guardian - or adult student (18 years of age or older) - notifies the school in writing that the parent/guardian or adult student permits the distribution of any personal information, the School will not release the information.

Sealed/ Expunged Records Policy

Records whose release is prohibited or exempted by either state or federal law shall NOT be subject to public inspection, and may be destroyed by all persons and governmental bodies except the courts. The following represents a partial list of records that may be maintained by RA, that may not be inspected or copied. In the event that a record is ordered sealed or expunged, it will be destroyed by RA.

- Confidential Law Enforcement Records
- Information pertaining to medical treatment
- Trial Preparation Records
- Records ordered sealed by a court of law
- Expunged Records

TECHNOLOGY & INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USAGE POLICY

Introduction

The use of technology is a privilege and an important part of RA's overall curriculum. RA does not warrant that technology resources will meet any specific requirements that the student, or other users may have, or that it will be error free or uninterrupted. RA will, from time to time, make determinations on whether specific uses of technology are consistent with RA policies for students and employees of the school. RA always reserves the right to monitor and log technology use, to monitor file server space utilization by users, and examine specific network usage (as may be deemed necessary) for maintenance, safety or security of the technology resources or the safety of the user. It is the policy of RA to:

- Prevent user access over its computer network to, or transmission of, inappropriate material via Internet, electronic mail, or other forms of direct electronic communications; Prevent unauthorized access and other unlawful online activity and damage to school resources;
- Prevent unauthorized online disclosure, use, or dissemination of personal identification information of minors; and
- Comply with the Children's Internet Protection Act [Publ. L. No. 106-554 and 47 USC 254(h)].

Access to Inappropriate Material

To the extent practicable, technology protection measures are used to block or filter Internet access to, or other forms of electronic communications containing, inappropriate information. Filtering and maintenance or blocking, is applied to visual depictions of material deemed obscene, child pornography, or to any material deemed harmful to minors, as defined by the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA). The filter serves to block minors from accessing inappropriate matter on the Internet and the World Wide Web.

It shall be the responsibility of all members of RA staff to supervise and monitor usage of the online computer network and access to the Internet and ensure that the same is in accordance with this policy, including any e-mails and chat room discussions.

By using the filter program, as well as staff monitoring student use, RA is attempting to provide a safe and secure medium by which students can use the Internet, World Wide Web, electronic mail, chat rooms and other forms of direct electronic communications. To the extent practicable, steps are taken to promote the safety and security of users of the RA private network. Other inappropriate network usage RA intends to eliminate includes:

- Unauthorized access, including so-called 'hacking', and other unlawful activities; and
- Unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal identification information regarding minors.

By signing the Parent/Student Handbook Agreement Form, the parent and student agree:

- To abide by all RA policies relating to the use of technology;
- To release all RA employees from any and all claims of any nature arising from the use or inability to use the technology;
- That the use of technology is a privilege; and
- That use of the technology will be monitored and there is no expectation of privacy whatsoever in any use of the technology.

The parent/student further agrees and understands that the user may have his/her privileges revoked or other disciplinary actions taken against them for actions and/or misuse such as, but not limited to, the following:

- Altering system technology, including but not limited to, software or hardware;
- Placing unauthorized information, computer viruses or harmful programs on or through the computer system in either public or private files or messages;
- Obtaining, viewing, downloading, transmitting, disseminating or otherwise gaining access to or disclosing materials RA believes may be unlawful, obscene, pornographic, abusive, or otherwise objectionable.
- Using technology resources for commercial, political, or other unauthorized purposes since RA technology resources are intended only for educational use;
- Intentionally seeking information on, obtaining copies of, or modifying files, other data, or passwords belonging to other users;
- Disrupting technology through abuse of the technology, including but not limited to, hardware or software;
- Malicious uses of technology through hate mail, harassment, profanity, vulgar statements, or discriminating remarks;
- Interfering with others' use of technology;
- Installation of software without consent of RA;
- Allowing anyone else to use an account other than the account holder;
- Sending unsolicited mail messages, including the sending of "junk mail" or other advertising material to individuals who did not specifically request such material ("e-mail spam");
- Creating or forwarding "chain letters" or other "pyramid schemes" of any type, whether or not the recipient wishes to receive such mailings;
- Malicious e-mail, including, but not limited to, "mail bombing" (flooding a user or site with very large or numerous pieces of email);
- Unauthorized use, or forging, or mail header information;
- Using an RA or a client account to collect replies to messages sent from another RA account; and
- Other unlawful or inappropriate behavior.

The user also acknowledges and agrees that he/she is solely responsible for the use of his/her accounts, passwords, and/or access privileges, and that misuse of such may result in appropriate disciplinary actions (including but not limited to suspension or

expulsion), loss of access privileges, and/or appropriate legal action. The user must also know and further agrees that:

- Should the user transfer a file, shareware, or software that infects the technology resources with a virus and causes damage, the user will be liable for any and all repair costs;
- The user will be liable to pay the cost or fee of any file, shareware, or software transferred or downloaded, whether intentional or accidental;
- Should the user intentionally destroy information or equipment that causes damage to technology resources, the user(s) will be liable for any and all costs; and
- Violation of this Internet Safety Policy is also a violation of the RA Code of Conduct and may result in any in other scholastic disciplinary action, other than those specifically set forth above, including but not limited to suspension or expulsion.

Definitions

CIPA defines the above referenced terms as follows:

- A minor is anyone under the age of 18.
- “Technology Protection Measure” means a specific technology that blocks or filters Internet access to visual depictions that are:
 - Obscene, as that term is defined in section 1460 of Title 18, United States Code;
 - Child Pornography, as that term is defined in section 1226 of Title 18, United States Code; or
 - Harmful to minors. “Harmful to minors” means any picture, image, graphic image file or other visual depiction that
 - Taken as a whole and with respect to minors, appeals to a prurient interest in nudity, sex or excretion;
 - Depicts, describes, or represents, in a patently offensive way with respect to what is suitable for minors, an actual or simulated sexual act or sexual contact, actual or simulated normal or perverted sexual acts, or a lewd exhibition of the genitals; and
 - Taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or Scientific value as to minors.

*“Sexual act” and “sexual contact” have the meanings given such terms in section 2246 of Title 18, United States Code.

ANTI-HARASSMENT, ANTI-INTIMIDATION, AND ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

It is the Policy of the Board of Directors that any form of Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying behavior whether in a live learning session, via email or message boards, using any other school communication tools, on school property, to and from school, or at school-sponsored events, is expressly forbidden.

For purposes of this Policy, “School-Sponsored Activity” shall mean any activity conducted by the school such as field trips, organized activities, or event that is sponsored, recognized or authorized by the Board of Directors.

Harassing, Intimidation, or Bullying behavior is strictly prohibited, and students who are determined to have engaged in such behavior are subject to disciplinary action, which may include suspension or expulsion from school. The school’s commitment to addressing Harassing, Intimidating, and Bullying behavior, however, involves a multi-faceted approach, which includes education and the promotion of a school atmosphere in which this behavior will not be tolerated by students, faculty or school personnel.

It is imperative that Harassing, Intimidating, and Bullying be identified only when the specific elements of the definition are met, because the designation of conduct as such behavior carries with it special statutory obligations. Any misconduct by one student against another student, whether or not appropriately defined as Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying will result in appropriate disciplinary consequences for the perpetrator.

I. Definition of Terms:

- **Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying:** In accordance with the Board Policy and with HB 276, “Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying” means any overt acts by a student or group of students directed against another student/school personnel with the intent to harass, intimidate, injure, threaten, ridicule or humiliate. Such behavior means any written, electronically-transmitted, verbal, or physical act taking place in the electronic learning environment, on or immediately adjacent to school grounds, at any school-sponsored activity, or on school-provided transportation that a reasonable person under the circumstances should know will have the effect of:
 - A. Placing a student in reasonable fear of physical harm or damage to the student’s property;
 - B. Physically harming a student or damaging a student’s property; and/or

- C. Insulting or demeaning any student or group of students in such a way as to disrupt or interfere with the school's educational mission or the education of any student.

In accordance with this definition, the following factors should be considered before identifying conduct by a student or group of students as Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying in violation of Board Policy. The determination that conduct does not constitute Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying under Board Policy, however, does not restrict the right of the School Leader and of the Board of Directors to impose appropriate disciplinary consequences for student misconduct.

- **Location.** Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying behavior in violation of Board Policy must occur in the electronic learning environment, on school grounds or at a school-sponsored activity. Conduct that occurs outside the electronic learning environment or off-campus (e.g. physical intimidation in the community) is not Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying under this Policy and Regulation.

While not considered Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying under Board Policy, conduct that would otherwise be considered Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying occurring outside the electronic learning environment or off-campus (and outside of any school-sponsored activity) should trigger disciplinary action if such conduct markedly interrupts or interferes with the school's educational mission or the education of any student.

- **Ridicule, Humiliation, and/or Intimidation.** Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying behavior is marked by the intent to ridicule, humiliate or intimidate the victim. In evaluating whether conduct constitutes this behavior, special attention should be paid to the words chosen or actions taken, whether such conduct occurred in front of others or was communicated to others, how the perpetrator interacted with the victim, and the motivation, either admitted or appropriately inferred, of the perpetrator.

II. Types of Conduct

Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying can take many forms and can include many different behaviors having overt intent to ridicule, humiliate or intimidate another student. Examples of conduct that could constitute this include:

1. Physical violence and/or attacks;
2. Verbal taunts, name-calling and put-downs, including taunts based on ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or other protected and/or individual characteristics;
3. Threats and intimidation (through words and/or gestures);
4. Extortion or stealing of money and/or possessions;
5. Exclusion from the peer group or spreading rumors; and,

6. Repetitive and hostile behavior with the intent to harm others through the use of information and communication technologies and other Web-based/online sites (also known as “cyber bullying”), such as the following;
 - Posting slurs on Web sites where students congregate or on Web logs (personal online journals or diaries);
 - Sending abusive or threatening instant messages;
 - Using camera phones to take embarrassing photographs of students and posting them online;
 - Using Web Sites or discussion boards to circulate gossip and rumors to other students;
 - Posting intimidating words, slurs, threats, or other inflammatory remarks in a live learning session and,
 - Excluding others from an online group by falsely reporting them for inappropriate language to Internet service providers.

III. Complaint Processes

Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying behavior by any student in the School is strictly prohibited, and such conduct may result in disciplinary action, including suspension and/or expulsion from school. “Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying” shall mean any overt acts by a student or group of students directed against another student or school personnel with the intent to harass, intimidate, injure, threaten, ridicule or humiliate. Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying means any written, electronically transmitted, verbal or physical act taking place on or immediately adjacent to school grounds, at any school-sponsored activity, on school-provided transportation or at any official school bus stop that a reasonable person under the circumstances should know will have the effect of:

- Placing a student in reasonable fear of physical harm or damage to the student’s property;
- Physically harming a student or damaging a student’s property; and/or
- Insulting or demeaning any student or group of students in such a way as to disrupt or interfere with the school’s educational mission or the education of any student.

Students and parents may file verbal or written complaints concerning suspected behavior, and students shall be permitted to anonymously report acts of such behavior to school personnel and School Leader. Any report of suspected Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying behavior will be promptly reviewed. If acts of misconduct are verified, prompt disciplinary action may be taken against the perpetrator, consistent with his/her rights of due process.

A. Formal Complaints

Students and/or their parents or guardians may file reports of conduct that they consider to be Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying. Such written reports shall be reasonably specific as to the actions giving rise to the

suspicion of such behavior, including person(s) involved, time and place of the conduct alleged, the number of such incidents, the target of such suspected Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying, and the names of any potential student or staff witnesses. Such reports may be filed with any school staff member or School Leader, and they shall be promptly forwarded to the School Leader for review and action in accordance with Section VI.

B. Informal Complaints

Students may make informal complaints of conduct that they consider to be Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying by verbal report to a teacher or School Leader. Such informal complaints shall be reasonably specific as to the actions giving rise to the suspicion of misconduct, including person(s) involved, time and place of the conduct alleged, the number of such incidents, the target of such suspected misconduct, and the names of any potential student or staff witness. A school staff member or School Leader who receives an informal complaint shall promptly reduce the complaint to writing, including the information provided. Such written report by the school staff member and/or School Leader shall be promptly forwarded to the School Leader for review and action in accordance with Section VI.

C. Anonymous Complaints

Students who make informal complaints as set forth above may request that their name be maintained in confidence by the school staff member(s) and School Leader(s) who receive the complaint. The anonymous complaints shall be reviewed and reasonable action will be taken to address the situation, to the extent such action may be taken that (1) does not disclose the source of the complaint, and (2) is consistent with the due process rights of the student(s) alleged to have committed acts of Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying.

This Policy shall not be interpreted to prohibit a reasonable and civil exchange of opinions, or debate that is protected by state or federal law.

Parent/Student Handbook Agreement

SIGNATURE PAGE

(Printed) Name of Student _____

I have read and reviewed the contents of this Student/Parent Handbook and understand that the policies and procedures set forth were created for the benefit of my child's health and safety, social and emotional growth, and educational success.

By signing this form, you hereby acknowledge having received or read a copy of the Rittman Academy handbook. Parent and student are responsible for knowing and following procedures and regulations outlined in the handbook.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the computer lab or Director's office for clarifications.

Parent(s)/Guardian: _____
Date _____

Student: _____
Date _____

Student's Contact Information:

_____ Cell Number _____ E-mail

_____ Alternate Number (Home or Other)

Primary Parent's Contact Information:

_____ Cell Number _____ E-mail

_____ Name(s) _____
(Relationship to Student)