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RCA

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Student Handbook

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*Revised 8/15/2016*

*An addition to the KPBSD Parent/Student Handbook*

River City  
ACADEMY



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# WELCOME TO RCA

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River City Academy is an academic environment formed from the actions and suggestions of its students. Our assignments are evaluated through the use of a standards-based system allowing students to work at their own pace. Here at RCA we strive to complete this proficient work in a responsible and efficient manner through the use of varied subject matter including math, various introductions to science, language arts, social environments, and those that help you with obtaining a career. These coupled with student chosen interims help create a well-rounded knowledge base for students to draw from. While the assignments have no due dates on them, it is considered unacceptable by our school's community to simply do nothing to further your own education. Both the students and teachers of River City do their best to provide help to others any way they can, and provide the best learning environment they can possibly create. Through their vast knowledge in various areas of expertise, the teachers of RCA guide the students through their material. These are only a few examples of what makes River City Academy a unique and wonderful school.

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## RIVER CITY ACADEMY – KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

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RCA is a public, non-charter, school of choice offered by the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District. RCA follows all policies, regulations and provisions in place through the district. For additional information about these policies please refer to the KPBSD Student Handbook, which can be found on the district website under the Students/Parents section. Additionally, copies are available at our office. In addition to KPBSD policies, the following policies are also in place at RCA.

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## CONTACTING THE SCHOOL

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Office hours are from 7:30 AM to 2:30 PM.

Main Office..... 714-8945

Dawn Edwards-Smith, principal ..... [dedwardsmith@kpbsd.org](mailto:dedwardsmith@kpbsd.org)

Mary Blossom, secretary ..... [mblossom@kpbsd.org](mailto:mblossom@kpbsd.org)

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## STUDENT CENTERED AND STUDENT LED

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The central core of RCA is being a student centered and student led school. If there is something that you'd like to improve in this handbook and within our school, you can fix it!

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# SCHOOL CLIMATE & CULTURE

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## **CULTURE OF RESPECT FOR EVERYONE (CORE) VALUES**

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Respect in RCA is one of the most important significances in our building. RCA maintains a Culture of Respect for Everyone. Our CORE Values are:

- We show respect for each other.
- We use appropriate language and topics at school.
- We keep the school and classrooms clean.
- We do not steal. We return lost items.
- We behave legally and ethically.
- We avoid drama.
- We treat others as we want to be treated.
- We change our behavior the first time we are asked.
- We stay on RCA's campus and at our end of the building.
- We respect the speaker and use good listening manners when someone is speaking.
- We show respect during the Pledge of Allegiance.
- We do not bully or intimidate, nor do we tolerate these behaviors.

## **STUDENT LISTENING STANDARDS**

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RCA has very specific listening standards that need to be followed when someone is addressing the class.

- Close any laptops which are open.
- Put away any cell phones or other devices you may have out.
- Remove your headphones.
- Focus your attention on the speaker and make friendly eye contact.
- Clap in a sincere manner when the speaker finishes with "Thank you".

## **LAPTOP, TABLET, AND OTHER TECH RULES**

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Students may use their own laptop, iPad, tablet or other device for completing their standards. Students should exercise caution with bringing electronics from home. Personal devices may use the district WiFi but may not connect via an Ethernet cable. Students who bring their own electronics accept full responsibility for their care. RCA and KPBSD are not liable for damage, theft or vandalism of personal property which occurs at school. In addition, students who do not use their personal devices appropriately will forfeit the ability to bring the devices to school.

## **CELL PHONE AND ELECTRONICS USE IN SCHOOL**

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Cell phones are a reality in our current society, but phones should not distract from working on your standards. RCA expects students to adhere to an appropriate “business etiquette” when having phones or other electronic devices on school property. Failure to follow this etiquette may result in your phone or other device being kept in the office until the end of the school day. Repeat offenses may require parents to pick up the device or may be considered insubordination and appropriate consequences, as per KPBSD policy, may be warranted.

- You may listen to music using headphones, as allowed by your teacher.
- Music is not to be played aloud at any time – including lunch and passing times.
- If you expect an important text or a call in school (emergency situations, work related calls, etc...), tell the teacher and politely step out of class when the call arrives. Finish your call quickly and quietly return to class. This should not happen often and only in exceptional situations.
- You may text or make short calls during breaks and lunch, in addition to before and after school.
- Mind your phone manners in these situations – appropriate language, vocal levels, etc...
- Keep all phones on silent or turned off.
- Teachers may require the placement of phones and other devices in an “electronics corral” during some class activities. Devices will be returned to the student when the activity is completed or at the end of the class period.



## **PRINCIPAL’S CABINET & SITE COUNCIL**

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RCA assembles a Principal’s Cabinet to explore, study and enact changes at RCA. In addition, they also serve as the primary Site Council, along with parents. If you are interested in being part of this group, please send Dawn an email. Members are selected at the beginning of each cycle.

Issues in which the Principal’s Cabinet may be involved include school rankings, attendance, progress, school activities, staff appreciation, interim choices, and general policy considerations. Students as a whole may also be included in the information gathering of these issues.

## **SCHOOL MAP & BOUNDARIES**

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RCA's campus extends from the office to the portable and from the ELA room to the doors outside the lunchroom. With permission from a staff member, it may be necessary and appropriate to be outside this area given a specific reason. During those times, you are expected to go directly there and return. Appropriate noise levels, language and interactions are a must. Examples of times when you may be outside this area include being in the large gym during lunch time, seeing the nurse, walking a lap during lunch only (you must keep moving), going to the art room for an elective class, or heading outside to the turf for a class. Students who cannot abide by these considerations will be required to remain in RCA's room at all times.

Students also may not loiter in the parking area. If you need to go to your vehicle during the school day, you must get permission from a staff member. If you are leaving campus for lunch (with off campus privileges of course), an appointment, a class at the college or a class at another school, you must first sign out in the office.

## **BUSES AND BUS CONDUCT**

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As per district policy, busing is a privilege for students. Students must follow all district busing regulations. Failure to follow bus rules will result in suspension from bus transportation. Students must wait in the designated area for the bus and not wander into the other schools while waiting for the buses. Kenai students may take transfer buses from KCHS to attend RCA. Bus schedules and additional information can be found online.

## **SPECIAL EVENTS**

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Interim classes are offered throughout the year with the month of January being devoted almost entirely to Interims. Interim classes are RCA's way to address standards in Careers, PECC and Technology, as well as get caught up or ahead in the core classes. Past Interim classes have included welding, woodshop, digital photo, batik, art, soccer, skiing, basketball, home ec, reading room and many others. Students who are not making progress in their core levels may be placed in an INL class to get caught up and not be allowed to participate in non-academic Interim classes. Some classes will require an additional fee, which are posted when the student selects the class.

RCA will also periodically have Fed Ex days. This 24 hour period gives students an opportunity to develop a creative & innovative project which meets standards and serves the school.

Other events to look for are our Annual Poetry Slam, Model United Nations, Debate Week, Activity Nights, Waffle Wednesdays,

## **DRESS CODE**

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RCA is first and foremost an academic environment. The students have worked very hard to find a dress code which meets the needs of all students and staff. Standard district dress code is followed. Any clothing which advertises drugs, alcohol, tobacco, illegal or offensive material, or interferes with the learning environment is not permitted. Additionally, RCA also requires that all shirts must have straps that are wider than 3-fingers width and are not cut lower than the arm-pits on the sides. The waist area must be covered at all times. Shorts, pants, skirts and dresses must be longer than the fingertips when arms are extended at the sides. Transparent or see-through clothing is not allowed unless covering other appropriate clothing. Please note that this dress code does include requirements that are different from other local area schools. Questions about clothing can be directed to the principal. Repeat offenses will result in disciplinary action.



## **LUNCH & OPEN/CLOSED CAMPUS**

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Students may purchase lunch through the cafeteria or bring lunch from home. RCA students may receive free or reduced lunch, exactly the same as other KPBSD schools. The building does also offer a breakfast program. For forms, times, and costs please see the office.

RCA has a closed campus. With a closed campus, students may not leave the campus of RCA without permission from a parent/guardian.

Open campus is a privilege which students may earn by being a 10<sup>th</sup> grader or higher and completing the Level 10 of PECC and receiving signed parent and principal permission. If a student credit transfers Level 10 of PECC, they must complete one PECC with RCA before obtaining open campus. When open campus is obtained, the student may leave the campus for lunch to go eat somewhere else, but must be back before lunch is over. Students must sign out in the office prior to leaving and sign back in when they return. Since it is a privilege, it may be revoked for any reason, including but not limited to returning late, going with a student who does not have Open Campus, or not being in good standing. Parents may also revoke this privilege at any time by contacting the office.

## **PDA (PUBLIC DISPLAYS OF AFFECTION) RULES**

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RCA is a learning environment, not a romantic one. Public displays of affection can make other students and staff uncomfortable and can isolate the couple from their peers. Students at RCA have worked tirelessly to find appropriate guidelines which meet the needs of all students, staff and visitors. Repeated infractions will result in RCA setting more strict PDA rules.

The PDA rules for River City Academy are as follows:

- Hugging, kissing, hand-holding or other forms of PDA are not acceptable in classrooms.
- Appropriate hugging and hand-holding are acceptable in the hallways and lunchroom.
- A quick single kiss in the hallway is also acceptable as long as you don't take it farther.

- Inappropriate contact with another such as grasping or groping is unacceptable in all circumstances.

## **STUDENT FEES**

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At the beginning of the school year students will be required to pay a student fee of \$15 per student or \$25 per family. The fees will be used throughout the school year for the benefit of the students mostly in the form of various reward programs and student activities.

## **STUDENT DRIVERS AND PARKING**

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Licensed student drivers with a vehicle may park at school. Students must first complete the Parking Permit paperwork in the office to be issued a parking permit. Parking permits should be displayed in the lower driver's side of the windshield at all times. Students may only park in the RCA student lot and overflow parking (Tad's lot). Students should drive safely, especially on school grounds. Failure to do so may result in a loss of parking privileges. Remember that all vehicles on school property are subject to search, as per KPBSD district policy.

## **LATE START/LATE RELEASE**

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Students may elect a 30 minute late start/late release. Currently this is available for a limited number of students. Transportation is not provided. Classes missed at the Late Start are held during the Late Release.

## **HOME RELEASE**

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Students who have off campus classes, work, or other related situations may be eligible for a Home Release block. During this time the students would not be required to remain on campus, but may choose to do so. Parent and principal permission is required.

## **FRAGRANCE RESTRICTED ENVIRONMENT**

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RCA has found that strong fragrances and odors can negatively impact the environment at RCA. Given this, we require that students limit fragrances. This includes not spraying ANY fragrance in the building and limiting the amount of perfume, cologne, etc.. which is worn. Students may apply additional fragrance, deodorant, etc... outside the building, with staff permission.

## **DRUGS, ALCOHOL, AND WEAPONS**

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Our school has an absolute no tolerance alcohol, drugs and weapons policy. Meaning that you, as a student, are not allowed under any circumstance to bring any form of alcohol, drugs, or weapons to school. This includes "look alike" items or substances. For more information, please see the district parent/student handbook.

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# ACADEMIC POLICIES

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## **EMPOWER & PROGRESS TRACKING**

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RCA uses the Empower system to track student progress on standards. All students and parents are assigned an account so that they may check progress and complete their work. It is crucial that parents log in and track their student's progress in Empower. Progress reports may be mailed home at the end of each quarter. Empower training opportunities will be available during the school year. Students may access Empower throughout the entire year including holidays and summers. If you have any questions regarding the progress reports, please ask your student or teacher.

## **PACING, PROGRESS & LEVEL COMPLETION**

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Teachers are responsible for pacing core classes to complete all standards in the school year. Students may work faster or slower than this pace. Students who fall behind the class pace or do not make adequate progress may be placed on an intervention plan or an altered schedule. This plan will be developed in conjunction with the staff, student and parents. If a student does not make progress under this plan, it is in his/her best interest to transfer to a traditional school.

As students progress through their levels, it is required that they may not have standards entered for the next level until 80% of the previous level is complete. Additionally, students may not progress beyond 20% in the upper level until the lower level is complete. Levels affected by this policy may be placed "ON HOLD" until the requirements are met. This is known as the 80/20 rule.

Students who complete levels may be eligible for recognition of their level completion during morning meeting. The Level Completion Committee is responsible for certificates and may provide incentives for levels completed. Levels completed via Distance Education are also eligible for Level Completion Certificates.



## **PROFICIENT & ADVANCED WORK**

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RCA is a performance based school. Time is not a limiting factor in earning credits or making progress. Students must demonstrate proficiency in all KPBSD performance standards at a proficient level or higher. Proficient is defined by the 80% mark or the descriptive scoring guide. All standards, scoring guides and level break downs are available in Empower. Students who score lower than proficient continue working on those standards until they are proficient.

Some levels at RCA build upon the skills of the previous levels. For this reason, students who complete the higher level at the advanced mark, may be eligible to transfer that advanced score to the lower levels. Content levels which are eligible for this policy include all ELA, PECC, Careers and Technology. Algebra I & II may also count under this policy. Excluded are all levels of Social Environments and Science.

## **ATTENDANCE**

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Student attendance is crucial to progress at RCA. If a student is ill or cannot attend school, please call the office. You may leave a message to excuse a student from classes. Students who need to leave during the day must have parent or guardian permission and sign out in the main office. Students who arrive late in the day must also sign in when they arrive and state the reason for being late. Students who are under 18 may not leave campus during the school day without a call or written note to the office.

All students are expected to attend school at a minimum of 90% of the time. Students who fall below this attendance rate and are not making progress in their levels will be required to make a plan to improve their

attendance and/or progress, which may include a reduced schedule, placement in an additional independent study section of the same class, or distance courses. Students who do not make progress on such plans may be asked to find a more suitable setting for their schooling.

## **PLACEMENT TESTING & CREDIT TRANSFERS**

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New students are placement tested in English/Language Arts (ELA) and Math. Students are placed at their instructional level, not grade level in these areas. Students may place above, below or on grade level. Students who test out of a class will receive credit for that course once they complete the next level up. For instance, a student who tests out of ELA 9 will receive credit for ELA 9 once he/she has successfully completed ELA 10. Students are awarded a grade of B for the tested out level, unless they scored advanced on the placement test. Students may test out of entire math levels or subsections of each level. Students may only placement test when they are new to RCA.

Students may transfer credits from traditional schools in the areas of science, social environments, technology, PECC and careers. Since placement testing is used for ELA and math, RCA does not accept credit transfers in these areas. The principal or counselor will evaluate the transcript of incoming students and award credit transfers based on credits earned. RCA will accept as a credit transfer courses which were awarded credit, regardless of grade.

Students who enter RCA during the school year with transfer grades will be placed in their levels based on the percent of the year which remains. Students will be expected to complete the remaining portion of the class at RCA. For instance, if a student transfers to RCA at the beginning of the second quarter with a transfer grade of B in Biology, the student will be expected to complete the remaining 75% of Level 9 Biology in order to receive credit.

## **CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

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RCA students may participate in sports through their neighborhood school. Students must remain in good academic standing and be progressing at an appropriate pace through their standards in order to remain eligible. KPSAA and ASAA policies and provisions all apply. Additional information, including policies with specifically address performance-based schools can be found in the KPSAA policy manual. Students who participate in sports at another school are responsible for obtaining an eligibility form during each eligibility period. Students are solely responsible for maintaining their eligibility and parents are responsible for communicating with teachers about concerns with eligibility and for remaining apprised of their student's eligibility status for all classes.

## **GRADUATION LEVEL**

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Minimum graduation levels for each content area are set and approved by the KPBSD School Board. Students who complete these levels may graduate at any time of the year. Students must complete the graduation level for each content area in order to graduate from RCA. Graduation levels are shown in the chart below. Students may also complete levels above graduation in order to improve college applications or qualify for scholarships.

## **SCHOOL TRANSFER**

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The optimal time to transfer in or out of RCA is at the beginning or end of the school year. If a student needs to transfer out during the school year, the student will receive credit for any courses which are 100% complete. For year-long courses (1 credit courses), students may earn 50% credit IF they have completed the first half of the course, as defined in Empower. If you have questions about this, please see the principal or counselor.

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES**

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As a KPBSD optional school, RCA offers limited services to students with individual education plans (IEP). These services include support in mainstreamed classes. For students with IEPs, a transition team will meet after the student has applied to RCA to determine the level of need and if/how RCA can meet the needs of the student. The Kenai Peninsula Borough School District does offer a continuum of special education services for all students.

## **ACADEMIC HONESTY**

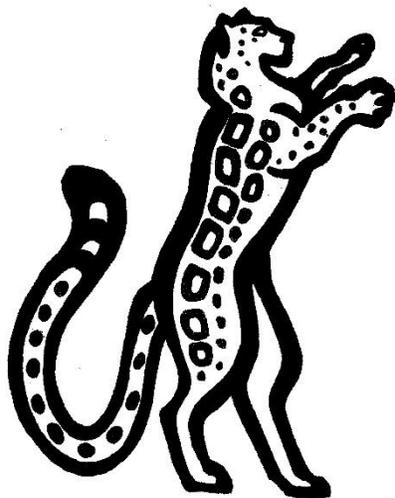
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Students at RCA must retain a standard of academic honesty. Students who are found cheating, copying or plagiarizing work, regardless of the source, will be disciplined appropriately per KPBSD BP5131.9. Possible consequences include loss of credit or failing test grade, an alternate activity to demonstrate the standard proficiency, community service hours, and in or out of school suspension, depending on the severity. The purpose of all activities is to demonstrate individual proficiency.

## ADDITIONAL COURSES

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High school students may take additional courses available through KPBSD. These are not performance based courses and students may earn traditional grades, including an F. Grade level restrictions apply. Most situations are limited to two courses outside of RCA.



**Distance Courses:** Biology, Earth Science, Computer Apps 1 & 2 , and Spanish are popular choices for students at RCA. Free through KPBSD. Delivered online. Some courses count for college credit.

**KPC Jumpstart Courses:** Junior and Seniors only. Students must complete all requirements including Accuplacer testing and registration through Kenai Peninsula College. A plethora of classes are available. Students are limited to 6 credits per semester.

**Workforce Development Center:** Courses are offered both online and in person at the WDC in Kenai. Medical terminology, Pharmacy Tech, Principles of Engineering, and many others. Free through KPBSD. Transportation may not be provided.

**Foreign Language at RCA:** Students may elect to replace a technology level with a blended foreign language class taught at RCA. Middle school students can take World Languages, which exposes them to Spanish, Latin, German and French. High school students may take German I. Additional foreign language classes are available through Distance Education.

**Local School:** Some students may elect to take a course at their traditional school. These are schedule dependent and transportation is not provided.

**GradPoint:** Only for courses which the student has previously failed. Courses receive a Pass (P) grade – not a letter grade. Thereby they are not eligible for most colleges nor any of the University of Alaska Scholarships or Alaska Performance Scholarships.

## KPBSD DISTRICT OPT-OUT FORMS

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Per KPBSD policy, parents may opt their student out of various activities or programs. Opt-Out forms for Health Curriculum, Student Growth Screening, and Directory Information, which includes withholding directory information to the military and other institutions, withholding eligibility for University of Alaska Scholarship programs, withholding info from the Alaska Military Youth Academy, place of birth withholding, and withholding student photograph or video from district publications. These forms can be located under the “forms” section of the KPBSD website and should be completed and returned to RCA’s office in a timely manner.



**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT**

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**RIVER CITY ACADEMY**

**PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK**

Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_

This is to acknowledge that a copy of River City Academy's Parent/Student Handbook has been issued to our family, containing the policies, procedures, expectations and Culture of Respect for all student at RCA. We have read and understand the information contained in this handbook.

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Return this page to River City Academy's Office

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