

Parent Handbook



Dear Riverbank Charter School of Excellence Families,

It is my sincere pleasure to welcome every student and family member to *Riverbank Charter School of Excellence*. The administration and staff take great pride in providing our students with opportunities to achieve their highest level of academic achievement by focusing upon improving student achievement, development strong character and leadership qualities; while maintaining a positive and safe school environment.

At *Riverbank Charter School of Excellence*, we believe that each of us has a role in establishing and promoting academic excellence through innovative programs and community involvement; all of which nurture and encourage the child to learn and to succeed. *Riverbank Charter School of Excellence* is designed to meet the needs of Kindergarten through Third Grade students. Our staff has been selected to guide the academic as well as personal growth of your child. We are all committed to helping students have a meaningful learning and social experience. We encourage community involvement and realize that in order to be successful, the home and school must work together cooperatively. With your cooperation and support, we will be able to provide the very best educational opportunity for your child.

Riverbank Charter School of Excellence was chartered by the State of New Jersey, Department of Education in 2009 and was established for the following reasons:

- ☆ To provide students with an educational opportunity that is exciting in curriculum, innovative in teaching methods, and relevant to real life, and
- ☆ To provide parents/guardians with educational choices which reflect the belief that a parent/guardian has the right to be included and empowered in their child's educational experience.

We hope you will find this handbook helpful in providing you with information about many of the school's policies and procedures and about the school in general. The Handbook serves as a reference guide for parents and students. Although it may not address all questions and situations that arise, it clarifies many of our school expectations, procedures, and guidelines.

Riverbank Charter School of Excellence reserves the right to modify building policies and/or procedures contained in this handbook when the administration determines the changes are in the best interest of the school community. Any changes will be communicated to parents, students, and staff in a timely and appropriate manner. School years are exciting times for students. At the same time, they are extremely important years in terms of social, academic, and personal development. I am confident that together as partners in education, we can make the school year the most enjoyable and productive experience for all.

If you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to call (609) 499-4321.

We look forward to a successful year!

With warmest regards,

Beth K. Kelley
Lead Person / Principal

Riverbank Charter School of Excellence Mission Statement

The mission of *Riverbank Charter School of Excellence* is to provide students with opportunities to develop their intellectual, emotional, and social potential through the implementation of a dynamic curriculum that fosters learning through a cooperative effort involving home, school, and community. By all three working together, students can attain their maximum potential as critical thinkers, lifelong learners, and responsible, contributing citizens in a rapidly changing pluralistic society.

Riverbank Charter School of Excellence Philosophy

The educational philosophy of *Riverbank Charter School of Excellence* recognizes and values that in this ever-changing society the school's educational program must be flexible and responsive. Thus, it is necessary that the content and focus of the curriculum, the delivery of services, and the implementation of programs and strategies be constantly monitored, assessed, evaluated, refined and redefined as needed.

Realizing that students develop attitudes about school and learning at an early age, it is the responsibility of the school staff to ensure that each child experiences daily success in order to cultivate a desire and excitement for learning and to develop a positive self-image. It is also the responsibility of the teaching staff and administration to create an atmosphere that is conducive to learning and maximizes student potential. Parental and community support and involvement are integral components of the overall development of students' social, emotional, and academic skills. All are necessary to achieve and sustain a quality instructional program.

Riverbank Charter School of Excellence Website

<http://riverbank.charter.k12.nj.us>

View the school's website to stay informed of important information and news. All the information in this guide is available on our website along with updated school closings, program details, policies and essential information.

☆ Admission

Admission to *Riverbank Charter School of Excellence* is open to all students entering grades K-3 without discrimination to sex, race, color, creed, religion, or national origin.

Riverbank Charter School of Excellence offers a rigorous academic program for students in grades Kindergarten through Third. There are no tests or barriers to admission.

Students entering Kindergarten must be five years old on or before September 30th of the year they enter school. Students must be enrolled by their full legal name. All students entering Kindergarten must present a birth certificate, a physician's record of immunization and verification of residency.

Students within the Florence Township School District have admission priority. If spaces are available, students from other Districts will be eligible for enrollment.

A lottery process will be used to determine admission if there are more applicants for admission than spaces available. Those not selected for enrollment will be placed on a waiting list. The purpose of the waiting list is to further make equitable the opportunity for admission to the *Riverbank Charter School of Excellence*. In the event that a student chosen from the lottery is unable to attend, available spaces will be filled from names on the waiting list in the order of their placement.

☆ Before and After Care Program

Riverbank Charter School of Excellence offers a **Before and After Care Program**. The goal of this program is to provide a safe, enriching environment for school-aged children before and after school hours to meet the needs of our working parents/guardians. This supervised care is available to all *Riverbank* students at an additional expense.

The **Before Care Program** begins on the 1st day of the first full week of school. Children should report to the Multi-Purpose Room no earlier than 7:15 a.m. The **Before Care Program** is open each day scheduled on the *Riverbank Charter School of Excellence* calendar. If there is a delayed opening, there will not be any Before Care services.

The **After Care Program** is available to those students attending *Riverbank Charter School of Excellence* in grades K-3 and is held from school dismissal until 6:00 p.m. The program starts the first full week of school and continues until the last full week of school. The **After Care Program** is open each day scheduled on the *Riverbank Charter School of Excellence* calendar and *will not be open when school is closed for inclement weather or emergency closings or on days before major school holidays*.

☆ **Arrival at School**

Students will be admitted into the building from 8:00 a.m. to 8:15 a.m. Students should not be left before 8:00 a.m. as there will be no supervision at that time.

Families are encouraged to use the car line on the side of the school. When you pull up in front of a staff member, please put your car in PARK before your door is opened for your child to exit the vehicle. The car line begins each morning at 8:00 a.m. Students should exit a vehicle on the right side.

The front doors close promptly at 8:15 a.m. Parents arriving after 8:15 a.m. will need to report to the main office to sign in their child.

☆ **Student Dismissal**

Riverbank Charter School of Excellence **WILL NOT** release a student to anyone other than the parent/guardian or someone listed on the Emergency Contact, unless there is a note of permission signed by the parent.

Dismissal for students on half days is 12:15 p.m.

Dismissal for students on a full day is 3:15 p.m.

At 12:25 p.m. on half days or 3:25 p.m. on full days, students who have not been picked up will be placed in the Aftercare Program where they will be supervised. Once the student is placed in Aftercare, the parent/guardian will be charged the drop-in fee for the time they are in the program.

For bus riders, please note that if the school bus returns with a student because no parent/guardian was at the bus stop, students will be placed in Aftercare until he/she is picked up. Once the student is placed in Aftercare, the parent/guardian will be charged the drop-in fee for the time they are in the program.

The *Riverbank Charter School of Excellence Aftercare Program* ends promptly at 6:00 p.m. If you are delayed, or there is an emergency situation, please contact the school. (609) 499-4321.

Parents are responsible for all charges incurred and need to make payment in cash or money order to *Riverbank Charter School of Excellence Aftercare Program* within 7 school days.

☆ **Early Dismissals**

We ask that you make every effort to schedule appointments when they will not interfere with the school day. If you must schedule a daytime appointment, please inform the office in advance.

On the day of the early dismissal we request that you send a note to the office informing us of the approximate time that you will be arriving and the reason for the early dismissal.

Upon arrival to the school, please report to the office and sign your child out on the "Early Dismissal" log sheet. If someone other than a parent/guardian will be picking up your child, please identify him/her in a note by name.

☆ **Arrival- Late**

If arriving late to school, after 8:15 a.m., please report to the office to sign your child in.

We ask that you make every effort to see that your child arrives on time each school day. Be advised that chronic lateness is not acceptable. If your child has excessive lateness, early dismissals, or absences, the Florence Township Police Department and New Jersey's Division of Child Protection and Permanency (CP&P) will be notified.

☆ Attendance and Absence

Please notify the school at (609) 499-4321 no later than 8:30 a.m. if your child is going to be late or absent. If the office has not received a call, the school nurse or other designee will call to verify the absenteeism.

Regular attendance is essential to a good education and vital to making consistent progress. Regular attendance fosters positive work habits and responsibility.

For cumulative unexcused absences of 10 or more, the student between the ages of 6-16, is truant, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A: 38-27, and *Riverbank Charter School of Excellence* shall make a mandatory referral to the court program required by the New Jersey Administrative office of the Courts.

All absences shall be presumed to be unexcused, unless determined to be for one of the following reasons:

1. Specified by Doctor's note
2. Required court appearance
3. Death in the family
4. Religious observance

It is school policy that students must bring a written note explaining the absence the day s/he returns to school. The note is to be submitted to the student's teacher and will then be forwarded to the school nurse.

A student who is absent from school is required to make-up any missed work upon his/her return to school.

☆ Visitor Security/ School Visitation

Parent classroom visitations to observe a child at school are welcomed, but must be pre-arranged through the classroom teacher and the Principal. All parents and visitors must enter the school through the main doors and report to the Office.

Office personnel will forward forgotten books, assignments, lunches, etc.... to the students. Please note that unauthorized personnel may not have access to the school after hours. Therefore, no one will be permitted to enter classrooms after school to retrieve forgotten homework, books, etc....

No one is permitted beyond the Office area unless they are properly registered by office personnel. Violators of this policy may be subject to criminal prosecution.

☆ **Volunteers**

Parents are encouraged to participate in the education of their child at all times. The school provides numerous opportunities to become involved. If you are interested in being a volunteer, please contact your child's teacher.

☆ **Transfers**

If it is necessary to transfer your child out of the school during the school year, please notify the office at least one week in advance to allow time for the necessary forms to be completed and sent to the new school. Transfers are provided only when all books and school issued materials have been returned. Charges may accrue for any lost or damaged school materials. All fines and unpaid bills must be paid before records will be released. School records will be forwarded only with parental permission.

☆ **Alcohol/Drugs**

It is unlawful for any person to manufacture, possess, have under his/her control, self, purchase, prescribe, administer, or dispense any narcotic drug on *Riverbank Charter School of Excellence* property.

☆ **Assault**

A student who commits a physical assault upon a student, teacher, administrator, or other employee shall be immediately suspended from school consistent with procedural due process.

☆ **Bus Transportation**

Students are assigned to a bus by the district transportation department, not by *Riverbank Charter School of Excellence*. The transportation department will make every effort to provide a pick up and drop off spot that is in close proximity to your home.

Each school year, parents will need to complete the bus transportation form to receive transportation for the following school year, this will not occur automatically.

Students are not permitted to ride any bus other than the one they have been assigned to, unless approval has been granted by the Transportation Department.

If you are Florence Township resident and you have questions concerning bus stops or service, please contact:

**Florence Township Transportation
(609) 499-4600**

Cooperation between the students and the bus driver is essential to promote safety and the general welfare of all persons who ride a bus. Whenever a student is reported by the driver for a safety violation or multiple violations the student's riding privileges may be revoked for a period of time depending on the severity of the infraction. Should it become necessary to rescind bus privileges during the school year, the parents will receive written notification.

☆ **Care of Personal Property**

Riverbank Charter School of Excellence does not assume responsibility for lost or damaged items. The care of personal property (money, clothing, lunch boxes, folders, etc.) is the student's responsibility. Labeling of all personal items that your child brings to school will enable us to return any lost or misplaced items to the rightful owner. Any money brought to school should be in an envelope marked with the student's name and classroom teacher. No items from home such as toys, jewelry, and other valuables should be brought to school without special permission.

☆ **Lost and Found**

Any belongings that are misplaced at school should be reported to the office. A lost and found box will be located in the front vestibule.

All articles that have been found will be kept until the end of each marking period. At the conclusion of each marking period, items still remaining in the Lost and Found will be donated.

☆ **Student Information Card**

Parents/guardians are required to complete student information cards annually and return them to the school office. These cards will be used to contact you in an emergency; therefore, it is imperative that the information be kept up-to-date. Please inform the office immediately if there are changes in home or work addresses or phone numbers.

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to notify the school office of any information changes in a student address, phone number or guardianship throughout the year.

☆ **Communication**

Communication is an essential part of an effective educational program. If ever you should find that you have concerns regarding your child's academic progress or social interactions in the classroom you should first contact the classroom teacher. Through open and effective communication, parents/guardians and teachers can work together to provide the best educational experience for each child. If for some reason, you do not feel that your problem has been resolved after meeting with your child's teacher, then you should schedule a meeting with the Principal.

☆ **Chain of Command Regarding Concerns**

1. Please contact the teacher with any concerns or problems
2. After contacting the teacher and there is no resolution, please contact the Principal/Lead Person
3. If there is still not a resolution to the problem, then contact the Board of Trustees in writing

☆ **Parent Information Envelopes (P.I.E.)**

School communications and other important information will be sent home every Wednesday in a **Parent Information Envelope (PIE)**. The envelope should be returned promptly to school.

Notes and money being sent to school should be sent in an envelope with the student's name, class and purpose of money indicated.

☆ **Discipline Policy**

The *Riverbank Charter School of Excellence's* Board of Trustees supports a discipline policy, which emanates from Administrative, Parental, Teacher, and Student involvement. The Board of Trustees stresses that good behavior is expected from each of its students. It is necessary that students learn to develop self-discipline in order to further their learning and not to interfere with the education of others.

Ultimately, *Riverbank Charter School of Excellence's* high expectations revolve around a system which utilizes and encourages parental involvement as well as student accountability and responsibility.

The goal of *Riverbank Charter School of Excellence* is to improve instruction and provide the best possible education for each of its students. This can ultimately be accomplished through the utilization of a school-wide discipline code. A copy of *Riverbank Charter School of Excellence's* Discipline Code is issued to each student at the beginning of the school year.

☆ **Bullying**

Riverbank Charter School of Excellence prohibits acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying. A safe and civil environment in school is necessary for students to earn and achieve high academic standards. Harassment, intimidation, or bullying, like other disruptive or violent behaviors, is conduct that disrupts both a student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate its students in a safe environment.

☆ **Inappropriate Items in School:**

Students are prohibited from bringing inappropriate items to school. Inappropriate items can disrupt the school program, be dangerous to the student or other, or might even be used as a weapon. Teachers and administrators may confiscate inappropriate items at any time. If an item is taken from a student, a parent will be called to pick the item up from the office.

☆ **Emergency Closings**

Changes in the school's hours or closings due to inclement weather or other emergencies (i.e., no water, heating failure, lack of electricity, etc.) are announced on Facebook, PTO emails, the Riverbank website, and through the Riverbank all-call phone system.

Riverbank Charter School of Excellence will follow all delays or closings for Florence Township Public Schools.

The information below is provided to help you prepare for late openings or early closings.

One Hour Delay

... Buses will run one hour late
... School doors open at 9:00 a.m.

Two Hour Delay

... Buses will run two hours late
... School doors open at 10:00 a.m.

90 Minute Delay

... Buses will run one hour and 30 minutes late
... School doors open at 9:33 a.m.

Early Dismissal

...School will dismiss at 12:15 p.m.

In the event that an emergency situation arises that will necessitate an early school dismissal, the school will notify parents by telephone, emails, and social media.

☆ **Emergency/Security/Fire Drills**

Emergency/security/fire drills are necessary for the safety of the students, and staff. All students must know the specific directions for reaching a point of safety from those areas of the school building in which s/he may be. Fire, emergency, and safety drills are held at least once a month throughout the school year.

☆ **Field Trips**

Teachers schedule field trips for the purpose of supplementing and enriching classroom instruction. The PTO will make every effort to subsidize the cost of these trips with minimal fees to be paid by the parent/guardian.

Students will be given a Field Trip Information/Permission Slip by their teachers prior to the scheduled field trip. Students must return the signed Parent Permission Slip on the bottom of the form or they will not be allowed to participate in the trip.

When students go on field trips they represent our school. Should a child's behavior prior to the field trip and/or the previous field trip be considered unacceptable in terms of student conduct, that child will not be allowed to participate in the field trip unless accompanied by a parent or guardian. If a parent/guardian is unable to accompany the child on the field trip, an instructional day will be planned for the student at the school. Parents/guardians can request a meeting with the classroom teacher and Principal to discuss the above issue prior to the field trip.

Parents/guardians are welcome to chaperone the trips however, for insurance reasons, we cannot allow younger or older siblings to accompany our classes on the trips.

☆ **Lunch**

Our school provides nutritious and appealing lunches for students. Menus are sent home on a monthly basis.

A Free/Reduced Meal program is available for eligible students. Applications to determine eligibility are sent home each year and are available in the Office. To remain eligible to participate in the Free/Reduced Meals Program, parents must file an application each year by September 30th. Students who are eligible for free/reduced meals during the previous school year will continue to receive lunches until their new application is processed.

Students may choose to bring a nutritious lunch to school. The lunches should not require refrigeration or heating. Please refrain from sending carbonated beverages in with your child.

☆ **Cafeteria Rules**

Lunch should be eaten in a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere. To insure this, the following rules must be followed:

1. Students will sit at the table with their classmates
2. Students are asked to use low, indoor voices when talking with their classmates
3. Students are not permitted to share or exchange food. This is VERY important for many children have food allergies
4. Students are not permitted to chew gum or bring carbonated beverages
5. Throwing of food or other objects is not permitted.
6. Students must treat staff and supervisors with respect

☆ **Playground**

A 30-minute period of time for outside supervised play is provided during the lunch period for which appropriate seasonal dress is required.

Students with health problems may be excused from participation in recess when the school has been provided with a written doctor's excuse.

The following are basic playground rules:

1. Rough play is not permitted.
2. Games of tag, tackle football, wrestling, or "pretend" fighting are not permitted.
3. Students may not leave the play area or cafeteria without permission from a staff member.

☆ **The Educational Program**

Riverbank Charter School of Excellence's educational program is designed to provide students with a solid foundation for future learning. The program focuses on the child as an active learner with the curriculum designed and implemented to emphasize the processes of learning. The ultimate objective of the instructional program is to prepare students for a responsible, productive existence in a rapidly changing world through an emphasis on basic skills and concepts, learning processes, responsible behavior, and effective interpersonal relationships.

The objectives for Kindergarten through Third grades are identified for all areas of the curriculum and aligned with the New Jersey Student Learning Standards.

Each teacher will provide a planned and balanced instructional program commensurate with the abilities and educational needs of students in the following areas: Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Art, Music, Health, Physical Education, Spanish, Character Education, and Technology

Critical and creative thinking skills are emphasized in all disciplines.

Riverbank Charter School of Excellence has a shared vision that creates a school culture which values social and emotional well-being while promoting academic success.

Emotional awareness and the ability to handle feelings will have an influential impact on student success and happiness. Being aware of students' feelings, and being able to empathize, calm, and guide them are essential qualities for teachers and administrators at *Riverbank Charter School of Excellence* to possess.

The primary purpose of the instructional program at *Riverbank Charter School of Excellence* is to provide students with a learning environment that is enriched, supportive, and responsive to their academic and social needs.

☆ **Student Expectations**

Students at *Riverbank Charter School of Excellence* are expected to:

- Follow school rules
- Follow the directions of teachers and school authorities
- Show respect for the teacher and for other students in the classroom
- Come to school prepared to work
- Comply with the classroom rules as described by each teacher

☆ **Classroom Parties**

In order to keep all students at *Riverbank Charter School of Excellence*, especially those with food allergies, it is our policy that no food be sent into school for any birthday or holiday celebration, unless specifically request by the teacher. Teachers will make sure each child will celebrate and feel extra special on each child's birthday. The PTO will provide a safe and nutritious snack during the last week of every month to celebrate all monthly birthdays with the entire school.

Concerning invitations to private parties, we ask that you not pass them out at school unless the entire class will be receiving one (everyone, or all boys, or all girls).

☆ **Parent/Teacher Conferences**

There are four marking periods in the school year for all students. Meetings between parent/guardians and teachers will be held after each marking period. The conference allows parents/guardians and teachers to discuss the student's progress in school on a one-to-one basis. Be prepared to discuss your areas of concern, and inform your child's teacher of any problems or changes at home that may affect your child's performance in school. On-going communication with your child's teacher is critical to your child's success.

The school calendar includes dates for parent/teacher conferences. Conferences with teachers and administrators may also be scheduled throughout the year by calling the teacher or office. Please feel free to call the school and make an appointment whenever you feel a conference is needed. If a consultation with your child's teacher does not satisfy your concerns, then make an appointment with the Principal. Conferences will not be held during class time.

☆ **Report Cards**

Report cards will be distributed four (4) times a year in November, February, April, and June. A student's progress will be evaluated on an individual basis, consistent with our belief that each student progresses at his/her own rate and that their efforts are unique.

For any students who are struggling to maintain a passing grade in a subject level, a letter will be sent home indicating areas needing improvement in order to afford the parent/guardian the opportunity to provide for extra help.

☆ **Promotion/Retention**

Promotions from one grade level to the next depend upon a student's academic, social, and emotional progress. Students must demonstrate that they mastered the required proficiencies in order to be promoted to the next grade. Attendance will be considered when determining promotion. Parents/guardians will receive written notice of any difficulties their child may be experiencing before the end of each marking period. If, in the teacher's judgment retention is necessary, the parent/guardian may appeal the decision to retain or promote the student by contacting the Principal.

☆ **Homework**

Homework assignments are a natural outgrowth of the curriculum and serve as a way to help students take responsibility for their education and develop lifelong strategies and attitudes for success. Homework assignments are also an opportunity for parents/guardians to get involved in their child's educational experience.

The quality and timely completion of homework assignments are factors considered in assessing a student's learning, so please avoid the temptation to do your child's homework and produce an error free product. Not only does this hinder the learning process, it often gives the teacher an inaccurate assessment of the child's learning. If your child experiences difficulty with a homework assignment it is best to inform the teacher so that additional instruction can be provided if needed.

A student absent from school is expected to make up any missed assignments. If an emergency arises and your child cannot complete an assignment, send a note to the classroom teacher.

☆ **School Dress Code**

This dress code outlines the acceptable form of attire approved to be worn by students at *Riverbank Charter School of Excellence*.

As a general rule shorts or skorts may not exceed four (4) inches above the top of the kneecap.

Pants/Capri, Shorts: Khaki in color

Skorts/Skirts: Khaki- Shall be hemmed and long enough to touch the fingertips when hands are placed by their sides

Shirts: Evergreen - Polo style **with** *Riverbank Charter School of Excellence* logo embroidered on it, long or short sleeve. Shirts should be tucked in.

Sweater: Evergreen – with embroidered *Riverbank Charter School of Excellence* logo.

Undershirts/T-Shirts: T-shirts may be worn as an undergarment but shall be white or neutral and shall not show through outer shirt. T-shirts or other undergarments with emblems, graphics, or logos which show through outer clothing are prohibited.

Shoes: Black or brown sneakers or black or brown shoes (with rubber soles).

Socks/Tights: Any color or style

Accessories: Earrings may be worn by boys and girls in the ears only

Uniform for Physical Education

Crew Neck Sweatshirts: Gray with *Riverbank Charter School of Excellence* logo embroidered

Sweatpants/Shorts: Gray in color **Shoes:** Sneakers of any color

T-Shirt: Evergreen with *Riverbank Charter School of Excellence* logo embroidered

Unless extremely cold, raining or poor playground conditions exist, all students will go outside for recess and physical education. We ask that you dress your child for the daily weather conditions. School dress should be safe, healthful, and not interfere with the educational process.

☆ **School Spirit Days:**

The Principal may designate certain days during the year as “school spirit” days and students will not have to wear uniforms on these days only. Students will be allowed to wear special apparel.

☆ **Hardship Status:**

Parents who find it difficult to comply with the requirements of the uniform dress code due to financial hardship may request assistance from office personnel at the school. Staff may be able to offer suggestions to the parents regarding assistance from various organizations or from other school options.

☆ **Textbooks - Library Books**

Students are required to treat textbooks with care and will be accountable for the condition of their books at the end of the year. Losing textbooks, writing in textbooks or damaging them in any way may result in a fine. The cost to replace a lost or damaged textbook/library book will be the current replacement price.

☆ **Testing**

Achievement testing is a very important and integral part of the elementary school academic program. Students are evaluated using a variety of assessments including standardized tests. In grades 1, 2, and 3 the M.A.P. Test is administered three times a year. Third Graders also take the PARCC. Other benchmark assessments are also administered several times throughout the school year in all grades.

☆ **Flag Salute**

Each morning, the school will salute the American Flag, as required by New Jersey State Law. Students with beliefs prohibiting such patriotic exercises are not required to salute the flag; however, they are asked to remain standing and be respectful to those who are participating in the ceremony.

Health and Wellness

☆ Health Office

Riverbank Charter School of Excellence has a certified school nurse who is a health specialist. The school nurse assists students, families, and staff in maintaining and attaining optimum health and health attitudes. The nurse is responsible for health assessment, health counseling, health education, and health care. In addition, she is also available for consultation with parents/guardians to foster and maintain mutual interest in the health status of the students. Health services extend into the community, use the resources of the community, and encompass all supportive health resources and agencies.

Emergency care in school is limited to first aid for accidents/illnesses occurring in school and on the way to school. In case of an accident or sudden illness, parents/guardians are notified of the health emergency so that the student may be taken home or to a physician, or 911 is called.

☆ Emergency Form

The main purpose of this form is to help us locate you in the event of illness or emergency involving your child. Hospitals and private doctors will not give emergency medication or treatment or perform any kind of surgery except when the parent/guardian is present. It is very important that we are able to locate you at any time! Please list working phone numbers of neighbors and/or family members who will know where you are for emergency calls and who may pick up your child when s/he feels ill and you are not home. In special cases, you may wish to call the school and give a number where you can be reached during the day. If any information listed on the Emergency Form (addresses, phone numbers, emergency contacts) should change during the school year, please inform the office and your child's teacher immediately.

☆ Illness Policy

The illness policy of *Riverbank Charter School of Excellence* must be adhered to for the health and well-being of all students.

Students having a contagious disease shall be excluded from school until all signs of the disease have disappeared. *Riverbank Charter School of Excellence* may exclude a student who appears ill in school, and may require a note from a physician before the student is readmitted to school.

We adhere to the following rules:

- A student must be fever free for 24 hours;
- If a student is being treated for an infection, s/he should be on antibiotics for 24 hours before returning to school;
- A student should have not vomited or had diarrhea for 24 hours before returning to school.

Also, your child will not be permitted to attend school if s/he is suffering from Pink Eye, Head or Body Lice, Impetigo, Ringworm, Scabies, Unusual Skin Rash, Sore Throat and Fever, and is not being treated by a physician.

If a student contracts chicken pox, or any infectious disease, please notify the school immediately.

☆ Immunization Requirements

All students entering Kindergarten or transferring from another school outside of the State are required to present a copy of current immunizations as a condition of attendance at school in New Jersey. Each student must be examined by a doctor upon entry into the school district. This examination must be done no more than 365 days prior to entry and must state what, if any, modifications are required for full participation in the school program.

☆ **Medication Policy**

All prescribed medication to be taken at school must be accompanied by a ***Consent Form for Prescription Medication***, signed by the parent or guardian, and stating the name of the medication and dosage to be administered. Medication must be in the original prescription container. Additional forms may be secured from the office as needed.

The school nurse will administer all medications. The nurse is available for treatment of minor injuries or illnesses and for discussion of any health concerns. If a student becomes ill in class someone will accompany the student to the nurse's office.

The sole responsibility of the school shall be limited to the provision of the adequate and proper supervision in administration of said medication.

Medication **will NOT** be administered unless proper procedures are followed.

Student Services

☆ Parent/Teacher Organization (PTO)

The Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) at *Riverbank Charter School of Excellence* believes students learn best when the significant adults in their lives—parents, teachers and community members—work together to encourage and support their development. As such, the PTO believes that parental involvement in a child's education is paramount.

The PTO is an active group of parents/guardians and teachers whose objectives are to promote the welfare of children in the home, school and community and to provide support to the school in the way of special events, programs, equipment, etc. Together they work to bring the home and community into a closer relationship and to provide a higher quality education for the students.

The PTO membership drive begins the first week of school. Individual memberships are \$5.00 per family. Our goal is 100% participation of all parents/guardians and teachers each school year!

General meetings are held at the school on dates established by the PTO Executive Board. All parents/guardians are encouraged to attend the monthly meetings.

Throughout the year, the PTO will sponsor several *optional* fund-raisers. All monies collected will directly benefit the school and the students.

☆ Academic Express Program (Basic Skills)

The purpose of this program is to provide a vehicle to continually improve the English Language Arts and Mathematics instructional programs at *Riverbank Charter School of Excellence*. The Academic Express teachers will use assessments to screen the needs of students and implement appropriate programs for them. Classroom teachers refer students who are experiencing difficulties. Students of varying abilities participate in the Academic Express program for small group, short-term instruction in specific skills.

☆ Child Study Team

Our Child Study Team is composed of a learning consultant, social worker, and psychologist who work cooperatively to evaluate students and develop educational programs. They receive referrals from teachers, principals, and parents who have identified students needing additional educational services. Their major task is to diagnose the problem, meet with the teachers and parents to develop an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), and implement and monitor the recommended program. Students with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) already in place will have their plans reviewed as mandated.

☆ New Jersey Tiered System of Supports (NJTSS)

(Response to Intervention (RTI) and Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS))

Riverbank Charter School of Excellence adopted and uses the New Jersey Tiered System of Supports as a research-based model of intervention and support for our students. The New Jersey Tiered Systems of Support (NJTSS) (Response to Intervention (RTI)) is an approach to providing Support and Challenge

Interventions for students. NJTSS is a multi-tiered approach to identify and provide intervention support for students with learning, behavioral and social emotional needs.

The purpose of the NJTSS Team is to assist general education students experiencing learning, behavior, or health difficulties. The members of the team may include a teacher from each grade level, the school nurse, the special education teacher, a school administrator, and the student's parents. Following a referral by a parent or staff member, the team will meet to discuss concerns and formulate solutions. An accommodation plan may be developed in an effort to support the student in the school environment. These plans are monitored to ensure that accommodations and modifications meet the student's needs.

It is the goal of the NJTSS Committee that if the problem is identified early enough and addressed with appropriate support and instruction, a student will learn the skills necessary to continue in general education without further intervention.

☆ **Affirmation Action Policy**

The affirmative action policy of *Riverbank Charter School of Excellence* is to promote an educational environment that meets the needs and encourages the development of each individual student's abilities to the extent of his/her potential. This shall be achieved within a system that provides equal educational opportunity for all, without regard to race, color, age, creed, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, handicap, social or economic status.

The Board of Trustees affirms its responsibility to ensure that all students enrolled in the school are afforded equal educational opportunities. No student shall be denied access to or benefit from any educational program or activity on the basis of the student's race, color, age, creed, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, handicap, social or economic status.

Additionally, the Board of Trustees declares it to be the policy of the school to guarantee to all persons equal access to all categories of employment in this school regardless of race, color, age, creed, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, handicap, social or economic status.

In order to achieve these goals, the Board directs the School Lead Person to assume the responsibility of coordinating and implementing activities, and delegating said responsibility to an Affirmative Action Officer as appointed by the Board of Trustees.

Furthermore, the Board of Trustees gives notice that in compliance with the requirement of Section 504 of the Federally-Assisted Programs on the Basis of Handicap, the Affirmative Action Officer will serve as the Representative of the Handicapped.

☆ **Sexual Harassment**

The Board of Trustees explicitly forbids any conduct or expression that may be considered as sexual harassment of a student, by an employee of the school, or by another student.

The sexual harassment of students includes all unwelcome sexual advances or suggestions, requests for sexual favors, and verbal or physical contacts of a sexual nature whenever such conduct has the purpose or effect of intimidation or tends to create an intimidating hostile, or offensive educational environment.

The Principal shall direct the instruction of all students to be free of sexual harassment and innuendo and shall encourage students to report any incident of sexual harassment to a teaching staff member.

Any employee who receives such a report or has cause to suspect that a student has been subjected to sexual harassment shall promptly notify the Principal, who shall immediately initiate an investigation of the matter and report his/her findings to the Board of Trustees. An act of sexual harassment that appears to constitute child abuse shall be immediately reported to the Division of Youth and Family Services for an investigation by that agency.

Any employee who engages in the sexual harassment of a student will be subjected to stringent discipline and may be terminated. A student who engages in the sexual harassment of another student will be subject to discipline.