

Student Handbook

Robert W. Zahara Public School – Handbook 2018-2019

Message from the Administrative Team

Welcome to Robert W. Zahara Public School (or RWZ, as we're known to friends!). Our school is an exciting place to be, and we look forward to each and every student in our school having an excellent year! We want to make sure every student has the opportunity to learn new things, get better at things already known, and explore new ideas and understandings. We work on academics, physical and emotional well-being, and social learning through a wide variety of opportunities that are challenging and innovative. We want our students to be engaged in their learning, to have the opportunity to explore new ideas and new technologies, and to demonstrate what they have learned in novel and creative ways. Students are expected to set goals for themselves (with support and guidance) and to strive to do their best. This requires a collaborative effort amongst students, parents, school staff, and the rest of the community. We focus on building and developing strong literacy and numeracy skills from ECS to Grade 3, and then on applying those skills in new ways and with new learning in Grades 4 - 6. Opportunities for exploration of the Arts, Science, Physical Education, Environmental Education, Leadership, and Service Learning are also important components of our school experience.

Parents are a critical part of every child's education. Through parents' interest and support, students learn that education is important and valued, that they need to attend every day, and that they need to give their best effort in each thing they do. You can help your children be more successful students by:

- Showing an interest in their work and asking questions about what they learned
- Reading with your child every night
- Helping with homework
- Checking and signing agendas each night
- Keeping in regular contact with your children's teachers
- Limiting screen time, especially before bed
- Being involved with the school community

Together, we can make sure that all our children have the opportunities to dream big dreams and to be anything they want to be! If you have any questions or concerns, please call or email either of us.

Ms. Lawrie McKeith, Principal

Mrs. Stacy Rorem, Assistant Principal

Telephone: 780-568-3823

E-mail: rwzoffice@pwpsd.ca

School Year Calendar 2018-19

August 29, 30, 31 PD and Organizational Days	February 18 Family Day – No Classes 28 Second Report Card
September 03 Labour Day 04 First Day of School 17 School Pictures 18 School Pictures 21 District PD Day - No Classes	March 01 PD Day – No School 06 Parent Teacher Interviews 07,08 Teachers' Convention 25-29 Spring Break
October 08 Thanksgiving Day – No Classes 19 School PD Day- No School	April 01 Classes Resume 19 Good Friday 22 Day in lieu of Parent Teacher Interviews
November 12 Day of in Lieu of Parent Teacher Interviews 23 First Report Card 28, 29 Parent Teacher Interviews	May 20 Victoria Day 24 School PD Day - No School
December 24-31 Christmas Break	June 27 Last Day for Students 28 Last Day for Staff
January 01-06 Christmas Break 07 Classes Resume	

Bell Schedule

8:35 a.m.	Entry Bell
8:45 a.m.	AM Homeroom
10:30 a.m. - 10:45 a.m.	Recess
12:15 p.m. - 12:35 p.m.	Outside Recess
12:35 p.m. - 12:50 p.m.	Lunch
12:50 p.m. - 1:55 p.m.	PM Homeroom
1:55 p.m. - 2:10 p.m.	Recess
3:10 p.m.	Dismissal

Staff Meetings and Early Dismissal

Staff meetings are held the first MONDAY of each month, and on these days students are dismissed 30 minutes early at 2:40 p.m.

Administrative Staff Members

Principal	Ms. Lawrie McKeith
Assistant Principal	Mrs. Stacy Rorem
Admin Assistant	Mrs. Lily Badger
Admin Assistant	Mrs. Julie Frenette
Librarian	Mrs. Katherine Campbell

Peace Wapiti Public School Division (780) 532-8133

Superintendent	Mr. Bob Stewart
Deputy Superintendent	Mr. Darren Young
Assistant Superintendent	Ms. Heather Putio
Assistant Superintendent	Mr. Kevin Elias
Director of Transportation	Mr. Ted Gobin
Director of Maintenance	Mr. Dave Michalko
PWPSD Trustee	Mr. Dale Crane

Registration Forms

When children are registered in school, home phone numbers, address, emergency contacts, parent work numbers etc. are all recorded. Through the year, should any of these details change, please provide the office with particulars so student information can be kept current.

School Fees

The only school fees we charge are \$25.00 for Grades 5 and 6 students to offset the costs of swimming lessons.

Hallway Visitors

We strive to keep our school as safe as possible, even with our ever-increasing student population. However, with increased growth comes an increased risk of unauthorized visitors in our hallways. We need to limit this risk by asking all visitors, **parents included**, to please come in the front doors and report to the office prior to entering the hallways. This is true for all parts of the day, including both before and after bus dismissal time. Your cooperation will greatly increase the safety of all persons in our school.

Report Cards and Parent-Teacher Interviews

Formal written Progress Reports (report cards) are sent to parents in November, March, and June. Progress is reported based on the Learning Outcomes in the four core subject areas to give you an overview of your child's specific strengths as well as any challenges. Do take time to review this report card with your child to highlight and praise the many positives that are reported. As well, if areas of concerns are identified by either you or your child's teacher, please take time to develop strategies with your child and teacher to enable every chance of success. Finally, please sign the label on the report card envelope and return the envelope to your child's teacher as soon as possible. Parents are invited to come to the school to discuss the progress of their children during parent/teacher interviews which are held in November and March, or anytime there is a concern. Please watch calendars and newsletters for specific dates and times.

Curriculum Handbook for Parents

Do you want to see what students are expected to learn in each grade, including overviews of subjects and topics? *Curriculum Handbooks for Parents*, *Curriculum Summaries*, and *Curriculum Express* contain information for parents on subjects, programs and courses available in Alberta schools. They are updated every year as changes are made to the curriculum. The website is <http://www.learnalberta.ca/content/mychildslearning>. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact your child's teacher.

Our school also has a strong focus on ethical citizenship and social responsibility. We want to make our school, our community and our world a better place. We engage in many activities that help us make this goal a reality.

National Anthem Exemptions

We expect all our students to observe the national anthem in the morning. However some people have valid reasons to have their child exempted. If you wish to exempt your child, please be sure to have a written note on file with your child's teacher.

Student Behaviour Expectations

Our school strives to be a happy, safe, and enjoyable community for everyone. Students, staff, and parents are expected to conduct themselves with dignity and respect for themselves, for others, and for school property. We expect everyone to behave in ways that reinforce that we are all valuable and cared-for members of the school community. To behave in a way that diminishes the value of another is not consistent with our school philosophy. Likewise, to behave in a way that endangers one's own, or another's, safety is unacceptable. We are all expected to make positive choices, and to take responsibility for our own choices and actions. If someone makes a poor choice, through words or actions, and hurts someone else, then that person is expected to take ownership for that decision and to make things right

with the other person. There are a variety of ways for dealing with inappropriate behavior, and they may include:

- Discussing the issue with the teacher
- The direct teaching of acceptable behavior and social skills
- Mediation and restitution between the parties involved
- Loss of privileges
- Referral to administration (as part of the discipline process).

Discipline

Our school is committed to a holistic view of child development – academic, physical and emotional well-being, and social skills. We consider all aspects of student learning to be important. Most students learn school routines and expectations easily. Some require more direct teaching methods. Some choose to disregard school routines and expectations and then enter into our school's discipline cycle. Everyone at RWZ is expected to

- Be able to interact in a peaceful and positive way with others
- Respect the inherent dignity and rights of others
- Respond appropriately to instruction and redirection
- Make positive choices and take ownership for one's own decisions
- Develop self-discipline and self-control to be able to interact appropriately with others.

When anyone is unable to meet these expectations, first incidents are generally resolved within the classroom or playground setting. Parents may be notified, or students may be asked to inform their parents of what has happened and how they have resolved the issue. Should unacceptable behavior continue, students will be referred to the administration. Parents will be contacted, and a plan developed to support more positive choices and actions. This generally leads to a positive resolution; it may be that outside agencies can also be contacted to assist with assessments and behavior planning. We are focused on supporting students, staff, and parents in coming to mutually agreeable processes for dealing with inappropriate behavior. However, the Alberta School Act does provide specifics for students, school staff, and parents in terms of behavioral expectations. For further information, please visit http://www.qp.alberta.ca/1266.cfm?page=s03.cfm&leg_type=Acts&isbncln=9780779733941.

Illness at School

When a student becomes ill at school, the office will attempt to contact the parent and request that the student be picked up. If a parent or emergency contact cannot be reached, the student will be placed in the infirmary.

Medication Administration

There is a provision in PWSD #76 Policies whereby medication can be stored and administered at school, but it is the responsibility of the student and the parent to ensure that medication is taken. The school will try to remind students but it remains the responsibility of the student to come to the office to take the medication.

Before any medication may be administered to a student, a consent form must be completed, signed and filed in the office.

Accidents at School

In case of a serious accident, parents will be contacted and a decision will be made whether the situation warrants an ambulance. One will be called if it is deemed necessary, and parents should be aware that they are responsible for any ambulance charges.

Buses

Bus students are reminded that the driver is in charge of the school bus at all times. The driver may report any misconduct to the Principal. Parents will be notified by the bus driver of the misconduct. Students are expected to sit in their assigned seats, be respectful, and to not engage in behavior that distracts the bus driver. Misbehavior on the bus results in consequences at school, as well as the possibility of suspension of bus riding privileges. Students must wear proper clothing for the season on the bus.

In an effort to prevent accidents, town students are instructed not to walk through the parked buses when they are loading or unloading.

If students happen to miss the bus, emphasize to your child that they are to go to the SCHOOL OFFICE where they will be taken care of. Stress that they will NOT be in trouble and that they MUST NOT LEAVE THE SCHOOL and go to a friend, relative or babysitter until arrangements for this have been made by the office.

If your child comes to school on the bus in the morning, but is not going on the bus in the afternoon, you must inform the teacher and the bus driver. If you cannot contact your bus driver, you can call the bus shop at (780) 532-7734 and they will relay the message to the driver by radio.

Buses and Inclement Weather

Decisions to cancel bus runs are made jointly by the Director of Transportation, and contacts in various areas of the division. Radio stations are contacted so that the cancellation message can reach parents as well as bus drivers. Bus cancellations are updated on a regular basis at pwsd76.ab.ca

Should a winter storm blow in after students have been transported to school, the practice of our transportation department is to keep the students at the school and send them home at the end of the day.

Please be aware that the RWZ School remains OPEN TO STUDENTS regardless of whether the buses run or not. If you require further information regarding buses, please call (780) 532-7734.

To respond to an emergency, we may have to send students home at an earlier time. In such a situation, the parents of students who are in ECS to Grade 6 will be contacted prior to their child being sent home.

Dropping Off and Picking Up Students

If you are dropping off your children before school or picking them up after school, we ask that you follow the instructions for the drop-off lane. If you are planning to park and accompany your child into the school, please use either the centre parking area (if there is available space) or park in the arena lot.

If you should pick your child up from the school during or at the end of the day, please be sure to inform either the bus driver or the Transportation Department, (780) 532-7734. If you are picking up a student early, please remember to sign them out at the office.

Telephone Calls and Messages

If there is a matter of urgent concern that you wish to contact your child about, you may call the school at 780 568-3823. These calls should be kept to a minimum as interruptions during class time are disruptive to both teachers and students. Students may also use the classroom phone when they have permission from their teacher. If it is necessary to get a message to your child, please let us know as early in the day as possible. If we get a message after 2:00 p.m., we cannot guarantee that your child will get your message.

If your child is away and you would like homework for them, please make this request prior to 10:30 a.m. This gives the teacher an opportunity to get the homework put together for the end of the day.

Student Attendance

The Alberta School Act and Peace Wapiti School District policy require that all school-aged children attend school on a regular basis unless excused for illness or other extenuating circumstances. **If your child misses one day of school a week, that adds up to 38 days in a year, or two months of school instruction. A child who regularly misses a day or two a week will not make adequate academic progress.**

If your child is going to be absent, please notify the school. Otherwise, you will automatically receive a phone call advising you that your child is absent, and asking that you call the school to confirm this. While illness and extenuating circumstances happen, we encourage parents to not choose to absent their children from school without good cause.

Students Arrive Late/Leaving Early

The safety of our students is our highest priority. Late arrivals must report to the office before they go to class, so their entry can be recorded in the computer. This is critical in the case of a fire or other emergencies. Students who do not check in with the office are not recorded as being present, and parents will be notified by telephone that the child is absent. This can cause considerable confusion and worry. Please make sure that your child knows to come in the front door and check in at the office if he or she is arriving after 8:40, when our second bell rings.

Any student leaving early needs to be signed out of school at the office, by the person who is collecting the child. Students are not permitted to leave with anyone other than a parent or regular caregiver, unless prior notification (a note or a telephone call) is received.

Damage to School Property

We do not experience a great deal of damage to our facilities, and we like to see the students have pride in their school and help take care of it. However, there are occasions where damage to the school or equipment is caused by gross carelessness or is done intentionally. In cases such as this, parents should be aware that they are responsible for the cost of repairs.

Money and Personal Property

There are occasions when students bring money or personal property to school. The school cannot be responsible for the security of these items. If money is brought to school, under no circumstances should it be left in desks or in a jacket or lunch box, but rather turned in to the homeroom teacher for safekeeping.

Personal Electronic Devices

As a 21st century school, we are committed to developing strong and ethical digital citizenship in our students. Students are permitted to bring personal electronic devices to school. They may use them on the bus (riding to and from school) and in the classroom, when directed by the classroom teacher. Students may use devices for reading, research, calculation, recording, and other school-related tasks. Students may not use the electronic devices to send or receive texts, emails, tweets, or phone calls during the school day. Students are not permitted to take pictures or videos of others without express and informed consent of both the participants and the supervising staff member. No photos or videos taken at school are to be posted to outside social media outlets. The school is not responsible for loss of, or damage to, any personal electronic devices.

The use of the internet and technology is a critical part of all student learning, beginning in ECS. SmartBoards, iPads, Chromebooks, and laptops, are all an integral part of school and learning. Students will develop skills in many digital formats, sharing their ideas and new understandings in multiple ways. If you have any questions about the use of technology in the classroom, please contact your child's teacher.

Library

Students are allowed to take out between 1 and 5 books at a time (depending on the grade) and they may keep them for one week. Books may be exchanged or renewed during library class periods, and also in the mornings before classes begin, 8:45 - 8:55 a.m. Monday – Friday.

The library provides a variety of positive incentives to encourage students to return their books. For books that are lost, the cost of the book plus processing fees will be charged. There are usually 3 book fairs held during the school year, where parents and students can purchase books at nominal costs. Please watch school newsletters for those dates.

Grades 5 and 6 Band Option

Students have the opportunity to take Band in Grades 5 and 6. Students who register in Band are expected to remain in the course for the entire year. Students who do not take Band participate in a Fine Arts Option.

Leadership and We Club

RWZ believes firmly in the concept of service learning – helping others and helping ourselves. We are involved in a number of projects within the school and the community of Sexsmith, as well as those with more far-reaching impacts. Classrooms help support causes they identify as being important to them. Our school supports a Foster Child, we participate in food drives for those in need in our community, as well as Christmas hampers. In the younger grades individual students have the opportunities to work for, and help support others, through in-class activities. Grade 3 students can join the Jr WE Club, and in Grades 4 - 6, students can join the WE Club (formed in partnership with “Free the Children”, Mark and Craig Kielburger's Foundation, and Mighty Peace Day), and We Go Green, which are social action groups that promote positive environmental and social change in our school, our community, and around the world. Grade 6 students are also invited to be part of the school's Leadership Team.

This involves taking on certain jobs in the school (morning announcements, being a reading buddy, selling healthy snacks at noon, being a team leader or part of the school spirit team, helping with Running Club, etc.) and being involved in the daily operations of the school. Students have many opportunities through WE Club and Leadership to develop skills such as planning, teamwork, cooperation, organization, and empathy. Please encourage your child to take advantage of these opportunities.

Text Books

Although we rely less on textbooks now than we did in the past, we do still use them at multiple times throughout the year. Students may need to sometimes bring a textbook home to complete homework. Please try to ensure that students return all books to the school, otherwise we have to replace them at a significant cost. Lost or damaged books are the responsibility of the student and parents.

School Council

The School Council is an organization of parents and school personnel who meet regularly to discuss school matters and provide feedback to the school on items that the parents feel should be addressed or considered.

We invite all interested parents to attend the organizational meeting which will be held near the end of September.

Notices for the monthly meetings (which parents are encouraged to attend) will be sent home in newsletters and on the monthly calendar. If you would like an item placed on the agenda, please contact either the Chairperson or the School. Meetings are normally held on the last Monday of each school month.

Fire Drills and School Lockdown Drills

We are required to run a number of fire drills and school lockdown drills each year. Students are aware of their designated exits and are expected to use the exits in a quiet orderly manner during fire drills. Students are also prepared in advance of any lockdown drills so as not to create any anxiety amongst children.

Peanut Safe Environment

Some students and staff at our school have a life-threatening allergy to peanuts and peanut products. Thus, we request that parents not send food to school that contains peanuts, peanut butter, or peanut oil.

Halloween Costumes

Classroom activities for Halloween will vary according to the age appropriateness of each classroom. We also ask that parents help choose appropriate costumes for school. Please choose costumes that are positive, festive, humorous and gentle. Please avoid costumes with:

- Fake blood
- Violent characters or associations
- Extreme or disfiguring injuries
- Fake plastic or wooden weapons
- Gory or repugnant themes

School Pictures

Individual and class pictures for ECS through Grade 6 are taken early in the school year. All students are required to have their picture taken, however parents are under no obligation to purchase the picture packages.

Student Internet Access

Students have access to the Internet with teacher permission and supervision. The school district uses a firewall that blocks sites with inappropriate content. Parents must sign a school district network access form giving permission for students to use the internet.

Clothing

A standard of dress, cleanliness and grooming appropriate for being in public is expected of all students. Students are requested to avoid wearing t-shirts with design or word motifs that are suggestive, indecent, or contain profanity. We ask for parental cooperation in this regard.

Occasionally accidents happen at school and clothing gets torn, muddy, or wet. Thus all students are encouraged to have a second set of dry clothes available to them at school. Teachers of primary students will help them store their extra clothes, while upper elementary students can simply put the spare clothing in a labelled bag and store in their cubby-holes, or classrooms.

Extracurricular Activities

We have lots of opportunities for students to join music groups, athletics, and clubs like chess and crib. Some groups (Early Bird Choir, FBO, Flute Circle, Karate) meet all year. Sports activities (cross-country running, basketball, handball, atomic volleyball) are offered at specific times of the year and for specific grades. Some sports activities are in the early evening or on Saturdays. We are always interested in hearing about new ideas for extracurricular activities!

Supplies and Indoor Shoes

Families of our school are extremely fortunate to have most, if not all, school supplies provided to the students. All students need indoor shoes, a backpack, a lunch kit, and whatever other small items their teachers may deem necessary. We do not ask for much, other than to have all children attend school with **indoor and outdoor footwear**. Your cooperation will help keep our school clean. All students need clean indoor shoes for gym class.

Winter Wear

All children are expected to participate in outdoor recesses and outdoor gym throughout the school year. Please check to be sure your child is dressed appropriately for the weather outside. This applies to both town students and bus students. Bus drivers may restrict busing privileges for those who are not dressed appropriately. In the event of an unexpected bus delay in the winter, students' safety could be jeopardized if they are not fully prepared for the weather. Students need snow pants and gloves or mittens to go skating during the winter.

Noon-Hour Eating Period

Students eating their lunch at school are required to stay in their homerooms and eat their lunch from 12:35 to 12:55; recess comes first from 12:15 to 12:35. Healthy snacks are sold from the servery every noon hour and items cost between 50 cents and 1 dollar. **Hot dog sales take place on the last Friday of the month** that is a school day and they are priced at \$1.50.

Proceeds from these sales are used to provide various benefits for the students, including keeping our fruit bowl stocked and helping to pay for performing arts groups. A variety of items are also purchased with these funds, including iPad apps, playground equipment, and funding for the year end picnic

All students are required to stay on the school grounds during noon and recess breaks. Students who normally go home for lunch daily must also have a note on hand with the teacher. If there is a change in your child's regular routine, please send a note to the school.

Individual classrooms will occasionally have a food sale or pizza lunch to raise money for class projects. These sales are publicized well in advance and are usually noted on the calendar sent home every month.

Swim Program

Every school year, the Sexsmith and District Recreation Board and Peace Wapiti School Board helps fund swimming lessons for students in Grade 5 and 6. Swimming is a component of the Physical Education curriculum, and by the time students have gone through the two grades, they should have basic water skills.

Speech and Language Pathology Services

Peace Collaborative Services provides speech-language assessment and treatment services within all Peace Wapiti schools. A Speech-Language Pathologist provides these services to our school. This consists of pull-out individual and group therapy, classroom therapy and consultation and collaboration with teachers. The program takes students on a referral basis. If you feel your child could benefit from this program, please contact your child's teacher, principal, or the Peace Country Health Unit at 568-5387.

Bikes, Scooters, Skateboards

Many students come to school using this equipment and for their own safety, we ask that they follow the guidelines outlined below.

- All students should be wearing helmets
- Take bikes to the bike racks and leave them there until you go home.
- Bikes should be locked in the bike rack.
- Bikes, scooters, and skateboards are not allowed to be used during the school day on the school grounds.
- Scooters and skateboards cannot be taken on the bus.