

# CODE OF CONDUCT



Volume 17 Issue 1

September 2024

## PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Dear RKA Students,  
As educators, some of our main objectives include providing a safe environment in which students can learn and thrive, parents can feel comfortable, and staff can share their knowledge and experience. In order to accomplish these objectives all of the members of our community must behave in a positive and mutually supportive manner. RKA is a safe and successful school, and just as it is a privilege for me to work here, it is also a privilege for you to attend RKA.

It should be treated as such.

We are prepared to offer you fun incentives, such as trips, dances, activities, and assemblies, as well as opportunities for academic success, and we expect positive behavior in return. In the text that follows you will read about some of the expectations that your teachers, administrators, and staff members have for your behavior. You will also read about some of the consequences students can expect for disregarding these guidelines.

All of the rules that follow are intended to make RKA a better place to work and learn and prepare students for the world beyond RKA. The rules coincide with the Citywide Behavioral Expectations, and everyone can expect that consequences will be given fairly and consistently.

I thank you in advance for your attention to these very important items, and I look forward to a great year at RKA.

Sincerely,  
Lori O'Mara

## ID CARDS AND PROGRAMS

Each RKA student will receive a school ID card and program. These items must be carried at all times while in the building or at school functions. ID cards and programs must be shown to any staff member upon request. These items

may be needed to use the restrooms, library and to get lunch in the cafeteria.

Failure to display and produce ID cards and programs will result in loss of privileges (i.e. the library) detention, or being sent to the end of the lunch line.

Replacement cards may be purchased through the attendance office, Room 141. Replacement card costs \$2 each time you need a replacement.



### What's Inside:

ID Cards and Programs	1
Lateness	2
Absences	2
Cutting	2
Banned Items	3
Pass Use	3
Dress Code	4
Hallways	4
Common Areas	4
Community ownership	5
Plagiarism	5
Miscellaneous	6
Contact Information	6

**Do you know what people see when they see you?**

- They see your potential.
- They make judgments about what is important to you and what kind of person you are.
- They see your parents.
- They see your future.
- They see RKA.

**Let your actions allow them to see the best you possible.**

## LATENESS

Students are expected to be punctual to school and to every class throughout the day.

Students are late to school in the morning if they are not present in class at 8:20 am. Doors open at 8:13 am. After 8:27 students must use the Arcade Entrance of the school. They must receive a late pass to show to their classroom teacher. Students with three latenesses must serve an after school detention to make up for time missed. Repetitious behavior including lateness to classes throughout the day may result in additional consequences, such as

additional detentions, exclusion from dances, trips, or other privileges. Students should remember the importance of being on time to school and all classes.

Students are late to class when they are not in their designated seats when the bell rings. This means that students should not be lingering in the halls and stairwells or hanging out in doorways at the start of the period. Students must sign the late log maintained by each teacher.



## ABSENCES

Students are expected to be present every day for school. This is the one sure-fire way to ensure that you are making the most academic progress possible. It is also an excellent habit to get into as most employers look for prospective employees with a strong work ethic and impeccable attendance record.

The only explained absences from school are those due to a doctor's appointment, school visit, family business or illness. These absences **must** be documented with an official note from the doctor, school or a parent. Notes must be shown to each individual teacher and turned into the first period teacher so it can be sent to the school's Attendance Office. All

work missed by an explained absence should be made up, and it is the students' responsibility to arrange this with each teacher.

Absences not excused in this way will be treated as cutting (see below) and any missed work cannot be made up. Students who have excellent attendance will be rewarded with special events and are likely to receive better grades.

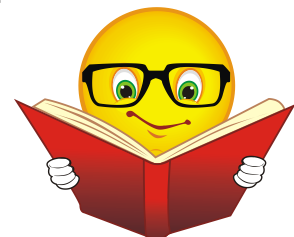
## CUTTING

Cutting is defined as being absent from one or more classes without an acceptable excuse. This includes instances when a student is in the building but not in their scheduled class, being one or more periods late to school without an acceptable excuse, or leaving the school building early. Acceptable

excuses include doctor's appointments, family business or illness. In order for the absence to be excused, a legitimate note from the doctor or parent is required and must be shown to each teacher whose class was missed.

Students who cut can expect to serve after school detention or

be suspended according to the Citywide Behavioral Expectations. Repeat offenders can also expect to be excluded from school activities such as trips and dances. School work missed while cutting cannot be made up.



## BANNED ITEMS

Because school is a place of learning, distractions must be kept to a minimum. In order to create an environment where students can concentrate and in accordance with the Citywide Behavioral Expectations, all students must follow the R.K.A. policy. Electronic devices include cell phones, iPods, cameras, portable gaming devices, headphones and electronic accessories, etc.

Electronic devices are not permitted and need to be turned off and placed in the cell phone pouch affixed to the student desk at the beginning of class. No exceptions. If students need to use the hall pass, they will trade in their cell phone for the pass.

Devices which are visible anywhere in the building (including hallways, classrooms, library, cafeteria, gymnasium, locker rooms, auditorium, bathrooms, stairwells) will be confiscated by a teacher, dean, administrator, aide or any other employee.

You must have Dean's permission to use in the cafeteria.

Listed below are the consequences for confiscated items:

1st offense: Confiscation of item until the end of the class period.

2<sup>nd</sup> offense: Confiscation of item until end of school day.

3<sup>rd</sup> offense: Confiscation of item until parent conference.

Food, drink, and chewing gum are not allowed in classrooms.. Specifically, this ban includes caffeinated beverages such as sodas and energy drinks (ex. Red Bull or Rock Star).

Sale of candy or any other item is also permitted only in the cafeteria before or after school or during lunch by authorized students. Only those students with permission from the administration will be allowed to sell candy or any other item on school grounds.

Any unauthorized student selling candy/ other items or ANY student selling candy in class or in the school hallways will have their products confiscated and not be permitted to sell any items at all.

No drugs, alcohol, or vapes are permitted on the school grounds or at any school function.

And most important of all, no weapons of any sort are permitted on campus. This includes, but is not limited to, knives, pocket knives, switchblades, swords, guns, explosives, pepper spray, gel blasters, toy weapons, and brass knuckles. Please consult the Behavioral Expectations for details. Students can expect severe consequences and NYPD will be notified.



## USE OF THE HALL PASS

Use of the hall pass is a privilege provided for students by the teacher. Use of the pass is at the teacher's discretion. Students must ask teachers for the use of the pass.

Only one student at a time may leave the classroom. Students may not leave the classroom during the first and last 5

minutes of any period.

The plastic pass is for restroom use only. This pass is color coded by floor # and students should stay on the designated floor when using the pass.

Green one-way passes must be filled in completely and are used when sending students to

various offices on campus. No student will be sent out of the classroom without verification that there is an adult in the office to receive him or her. Students may not be given a pass to the library to complete homework assignments.

## DRESS CODE

Every institution or business has an accepted standard of dress. RKA maintains a dress code that is conducive to safety, learning, and modesty. Students should arrive at school in proper dress every day. Students who do not abide by the dress code will be asked to adjust what they are wearing. If they are unable to do so, parents will be contacted to provide appropriate dress, or the student will be placed in the SAVE room and provided with alternate instruction. Repetitious behavior will result in detention or other consequences.

The dress code is listed below:

**Tops:** No tank tops, tube tops, halter tops, strapless tops, or

tops that expose the midriff. All undergarments must be covered by the top or blouse worn. Basketball jerseys and sleeveless shirts are allowed, provided a shirt with sleeves is worn underneath. Clothing with offensive images or language are not permitted in NYC Schools. This includes but is not limited to bias, violence, gangs, drugs and/or alcohol.

**Shorts:** Shorts that fall within 4 inches of the knee are okay. Short-shorts are not acceptable.

**Skirts:** Skirts that fall within 4 inches of the knee are okay.

**Jeans and pants:** Jeans and pants must be free of tears and holes especially in the thigh or hip area. Pants must be worn at

waist level and cover the midriff and undergarments.

**Shoes:** Sandals that stay on the entire foot are okay, but flip flops are not. They present a safety hazard when walking around the school.

**Headgear:** Headwear worn for religious observance or disability-related attire; or head scarves, do-rags, beads and other hair accessories, short or long hair, locs, braids, and twists are all allowed. Baseball hats and knit hats are not permitted.

**Ski masks** are not permitted in the building.

## HALLWAYS AND STAIRCASES

Students are expected to use the hallways and staircases in a quick and courteous manner. Students should walk to their right in the hallway and move directly from one place to another without lingering, touching, running, horse play or blocking traffic. For travel in between

most classes, middle schools students should use the stairs in the main corridor. High school students may use the stairs in both the new and old wings. All students should follow their deans' instructions for staircase use upon entering and exiting the cafeteria.

Students creating disruptions in the hallways and staircases will serve detention or another consequence as outlined in the Chancellor's Behavioral Expectations.

## LIBRARY AND COMMON AREA USE

No student may use the library without his or her ID card and program displayed. All students must exit the library at the end of the period. The library computers are available for printing reports during Open Access or after school. Students may not go to the library to finish or print assignments for other classes during instructional time because the librarian is

usually busy with whole class visits. Please plan in advance to avoid last minute printing "emergencies." Hours of operation for the library will be posted shortly. No food or drink is allowed in the library.

Common areas such as the cafeteria, gymnasium, locker room, and auditorium are off-limits to students except at such times as they are assigned there

(for example: your lunch or gym period). Students should never be unsupervised in these areas. Students found in these areas shall be deemed to be cutting and those consequences shall follow.



## COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP

RKA was founded as a community school. Local parents, community members and politicians sought to make this place a safe haven for students who live in the Riverdale Kingsbridge community. They felt that the young people of this area deserved a good local school to attend and they fought very hard to make it a reality. It is important for the future of our school that we maintain a good relationship with all community members.

While RKA students are entering and exiting the school, when they are out in the community, and when they are at after school functions such as sporting events or trips, you are representing our school, yourself and your family. If we want to maintain RKA as a special school,

it is vital that students maintain their high behavior standards when they are in these situations. Students should use courtesy in leaving the school area quickly and calmly at dismissal. Students using public transportation should behave in a mature and respectful fashion while waiting for and riding the bus. Students walking on the footbridge and in our local community should be respectful of local community members, shop owners, and their buildings.

In order to help build a relationship with our community and instill a sense of responsibility in our student body, RKA requires all high school students to complete 40 hours of community service to meet graduation requirements.

It is recommended that students complete this at a rate of 10 hours per year. Students can select to work with an organization that suits their own interests and passions or they can select from one of the partnerships established by the school. Ms. Payne in room 306 can provide access to volunteer opportunities and will collect proof of your service and tally your hours. Remember, all of your community service hours must be documented by a representative of the organization which you served. Honor Society members have additional requirements. Please see Ms. Payne for more information.



**Earn Tiger Tokens for displaying  
Tiger PRIDE:  
Punctuality, Respect, Independence,  
Determination and Enthusiasm.**

## PLAGIARISM

Finally, a note about plagiarism. Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of someone else's ideas or words. This includes information that is copied directly from books or the internet as well as other students. Students must remember that copying another student's work (homework, class work, reports, essays, tests, projects— ANY-

THING!) or using ChatBots and other AI tools is a dishonest practice. Students who do so can expect not to receive any credit for the copied work, and students who allow others to copy can expect the same. Students found to be plagiarizing will not be allowed to join the National Honor Society or participate in Student Council for at least one year.

Your teachers would much rather read what you have to say in your own words than to read someone else's. Truthfully, you are only cheating yourself when you copy someone else's work.

# MISCELLANEOUS

There are many infractions listed in the Citywide Behavioral Expectations (Discipline Code). Each is listed with a corresponding consequence. Some are quite serious such as Principal's or Superintendent's suspensions or, if necessary, police action. We would like to highlight some of the key rules which we feel contribute to a safe, healthy atmosphere. It is our expectation that students abide by these rules for the good of our students and school community.

Students should not engage in the following behaviors:

- Using, selling, or distributing drugs or alcohol.
- Possession or use of weapons
- Fighting or physical contact with students, staff or community members.

- Vandalism or defacement of any school, public, or personal property.
- Theft of another's or school property.
- Use of foul language with students, staff or community members.
- Harassment of other students or faculty.

Students who use the internet should do so in a positive and respectful manner. Websites and apps such as Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, TikTok, Discord give students the opportunity to post and share information and images. Students should be kind and use discretion when posting information about themselves or others. Remember, if you don't have something nice to say, don't say anything at all.

Bullying is defined as repetitious harassment of others. This can

be through the use of words, writing (internet, texts, notes), physical intimidation, name calling, or inciting others to participate in harassment of others. Incidents of bullying will be handled by the deans on a case by case basis. If you feel bullied you should speak with your dean or another trusted adult.

Although it seems there are many rules to be followed, together we can have an RKA and a community that we are all proud to call home.

Students that wish to participate in extra curricular activities such as Student Government or Varsity Athletics are expected to surpass these minimum standards of behavior. Policies specific to these groups are posted on our website.

## IMPORTANT CONTACTS AT RKA

Name	Title	Office
Lori O'Mara	Principal	Main
Sheilagh Lustig	AP Organization HS	308
Stacy Miller	AP Organization MS	214
Eric Scholz	AP Science, Mathematics, Technology, Physical Education	239
Ruth Orozco	Humanities Coach	339
Deana Ferreira	Dean 7th ( A-L) and 8th Grades	208
Kim Lewis	Dean 9th and 12th Grades	411
Robert DiCanio	Dean 10th and 11th Grades	316
Jon Reingold	Dean 6th and 7th ( M-Z) Grades	102
Jennifer Aponte-Acosta	School Counselor, 7th ( A-L) and 8th Grades	230
Joslie Byrd	School Counselor, Grades 9-12, A-Gn	303
Johanna Cuello-Gutierrez	School Counselor, 6th and 7th ( M-Z) Grades	112
Soremi Lockhart-Lee	School Counselor, Grades 9-12, Pb-Z	303
Melissa Payne	School Counselor, Grades 9-12 Last names Go-Pa	303
Lesly Edmond	Senior Advisor, Athletics Director	B24
Miledys Prado-Romero	Coordinator of Student Activities	B24
Julie Prince	Parent Coordinator	Main