

Rivendell School

Learn to Grow

Parent Handbook | 2026–27 School Year

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Letter from the Head of School

Dear Rivendell Families,

We are so glad you have chosen Rivendell School, and we look forward to everything this year has in store. This handbook is your guide to Rivendell's policies, practices, and community expectations. We hope it answers your questions and helps you feel confident and connected from the very first day.

At Rivendell, we believe that learning is a partnership among child, teacher, and family. The more we understand one another, the better we can support every student. Please read through this handbook, keep it close at hand as a reference, and reach out anytime you have questions. We are always happy to help.

With warmth and excitement for the year ahead,

Holly Warren | Head of School

holly@rivendell-school.org | 970-493-9052

Rivendell School Staff

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About Rivendell School

Background and History

Rivendell School was founded in 1976 by Bob and Terry Wentsch. The seven founding families established Rivendell as a private, nonprofit school loosely modeled on the British Infant School philosophy, placing individualized instruction and multi-age community at the center of everything. Over four decades later, that founding vision continues to thrive.

Carol McLean joined as Rivendell's third teacher in 1977 and remained a beloved presence until her retirement in 2006. When the Wentsches departed in 1993, Kate Duncan became the school's second administrator, serving as principal through Spring 2013. Today, Head of School Holly Warren leads a dedicated team of classroom teachers, specials instructors, and office staff who carry on the tradition of individualized learning.

Throughout Rivendell's fifty-year history, generations of dedicated educators have helped shape the school into the special place it is today. Teachers, specialists, administrators, and staff have brought their talents, creativity, and deep commitment to individualized education to generations of Rivendell students. Many educators have spent significant portions of their careers at Rivendell, creating a strong sense of continuity, connection, and community. Perhaps one of the most meaningful reflections of Rivendell's lasting impact is that several alumni have returned to the school as educators themselves, carrying forward the traditions and values they experienced as students.

That same sense of continuity is reflected in Rivendell's current leadership. Head of School Holly Warren spent fifteen years as an educator at Rivendell before moving into school leadership and is now entering her eleventh year as Head of School. Her journey reflects the deep connection so many educators have had to Rivendell over the years. Today, she leads a dedicated team who continue to honor the school's history while helping Rivendell grow and evolve for future generations.

Rivendell's story is also one of growth, adaptability, and a strong sense of community. The school began in a rented Fort Collins house and later leased space from Trinity Lutheran Church from 1980 until 2000, when Rivendell found its permanent home at 1800 East Prospect Road. What was once a utilities warehouse was thoughtfully transformed into a vibrant and welcoming place for children to learn, explore, and grow. Today, Rivendell is proud to be the oldest secular independent elementary school in Northern Colorado, continuing a fifty-year tradition of doing school a little differently.

"Rivendell is the perfect house, whether you like food or storytelling, or just sitting and thinking best, or a pleasant mixture of them all. Merely to be there was a cure for weariness, fear, and sadness." — J.R.R. Tolkien

Accreditation

Rivendell School is committed to continuous improvement through regular self-evaluation and external review. After many years of accreditation through Cognia, formerly AdvancED, Rivendell is transitioning to accreditation through the Association of Colorado Independent Schools (ACIS).

ACIS serves independent schools throughout Colorado and provides standards, professional learning, peer collaboration, and accountability designed specifically for mission-driven schools. The accreditation process includes a schoolwide self-study, community feedback, and an on-site review of Rivendell's educational program, leadership, governance, operations, and long-term planning. This transition supports our continued growth while preserving Rivendell's mission and individualized approach to education.

Our Philosophy and Mission

Our mission: Helping children achieve academic and personal excellence through individualized learning.

Rivendell's individualized approach focuses on each child's unique progress rather than the class average. Every student is continually evaluated, challenged, and encouraged to reach their full potential. Our philosophy rests on a few core beliefs:

- Each child is unique.
- Academics are a function of ability, not age.
- Concepts must be mastered before moving on, because each new skill builds on what came before.
- Children become lifelong problem-solvers when they experience working through academic and social challenges in a safe environment.
- Learning is a cooperative effort among the child, teacher, and family, and respect for the individual is modeled and reinforced throughout.

Rivendell graduates are self-motivated, organized learners who are well equipped for the academic and social challenges of secondary school and beyond.

Nondiscrimination Policy

Rivendell School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, disability, genetic information, sexual orientation, or any other basis protected by federal, state, or local laws in any educational program or activity sponsored by the school.

How We Build Community

At Rivendell School, we believe a strong community is built by recognizing, respecting, and learning from the experiences and cultures each person brings. We encourage students to consider multiple perspectives, build connections across differences, and develop empathy, curiosity, and respect for others. Our approach supports the whole child by engaging students' heads, hearts, and hands as they learn how to participate thoughtfully in a diverse world.

Creating an inclusive and welcoming school community is a shared responsibility. Students, families, teachers, staff, and trustees all play a role in helping every person feel seen, heard, valued, and connected. These principles are woven into our daily practices and reflect our commitment to preparing students to become compassionate, responsible, and engaged members of their communities.

Our Educational Approach

Individualized Learning

From its founding, Rivendell has addressed each child’s academic needs based on skills and readiness rather than grade-level benchmarks. Key elements of our curriculum include individualized instruction, multi-age classrooms, small class sizes, interdisciplinary thematic units, creative and strength-based learning opportunities, and a whole-child focus.

Reading and math are taught one-on-one and in small groups. Other subjects may involve the whole class, with individual strengths and needs addressed through written work. Our goal is to help every child appreciate their own learning style while contributing meaningfully to their community.

Multi-Age Classrooms

Multi-age classrooms give students the freedom to be exactly who they are. This structure is ideal for individualized learning because it addresses both academic and social-emotional development at once. Students develop verbal, social, and emotional skills more rapidly when learning alongside peers of varied ages, and older students grow in confidence and empathy as they become role models and mentors.

Program	Ages / Grades
Preschool	Ages 3 to 4½
Younger Kids — Track 1	Pre-Kindergarten
Younger Kids — Track 2	Kindergarten and First Grade
Middle Kids	Second and Third Grades
Older Kids	Fourth and Fifth Grades

Focus on the Whole Child

At Rivendell, learning is about far more than mastering facts and skills; it is also an emotional experience. Students need space to explore their interests, pursue their passions, and receive the social-emotional support that helps them become lifelong learners. We challenge students at their appropriate level so they develop healthy learning habits that energize rather than discourage.

Our specials program supports the whole child through music, art, physical education, science, social-emotional learning, Spanish (Preschool through Older Kids), and technology (Younger Kids through Older Kids).

Assessment and Progress

Teaching the whole child cannot be captured by data and measurement alone. Teachers, parents, and students set academic and social goals together. Our ongoing assessment centers on mastery learning, which means working on a task until it is truly understood and error-free.

Written assessments replace traditional report cards, and we do not teach to any test. Student progress is communicated through semester conferences, end-of-year reports, and weekly newsletters. Rivendell administers the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment twice yearly to students in grades three through five, with results available within twenty-four hours. Parent conferences are held in October and January, and report cards are issued in May.

Curriculum Overview

Elementary School

Rivendell's elementary curriculum includes math, literacy, writing, and interdisciplinary topic studies that integrate science and social studies, with specials rounding out each student's experience.

Four-Year Thematic Unit Schedule

Year One (2026–27) Oceans Ancient Asia Asia Simple Machines Westward Expansion Colorado History Insects	Year Two (2027–28) Weather Egypt Economics Africa Industrial Revolution / Immigration The Senses Freshwater Habitats
Year Three (2028–29) Ancient Greece and Rome The Democratic Process Systems of the Body Europe Colonial America / American Revolution Plants Dinosaurs / Birds	Year Four (2029–30) The Solar System Maya / Inca / Aztec Central and South America Land Forms & Geology (Colorado Geography) First Nations Australia and Oceania Mammals

For age-group-specific curriculum details, please visit rivendell-school.org/academics or ask your child's teacher.

School-wide Thematic Units and Conceptual Lenses

Rivendell's science and social studies curriculum is organized around school-wide interdisciplinary thematic units that rotate on a four-year cycle, allowing students to experience a broad range of topics during their years at Rivendell. Within these units, students develop discipline-specific skills and knowledge in a meaningful context. For example, map-reading skills and geology are intentionally taught within our continent studies.

Each thematic unit is also explored through a broader conceptual lens, such as change, exploration, systems, conflict, or relationships. These universal concepts help students make connections across subjects and deepen their understanding of the topic. Themes and concepts are woven into reading, writing, mathematics, and classroom discussion, giving students opportunities to apply skills across disciplines and reflect on their learning in increasingly sophisticated ways.

Preschool Program

Our preschool supports the social-emotional growth of every child while introducing early academics, meeting each child right where they are. A typical week includes daily play activities; learning and play centers devoted to dramatic and creative play, blocks and construction, mathematics and science, and literacy and writing; individualized work sessions in literacy and math; and small group instruction in scissor skills, handwriting, and social-emotional learning.

Preschoolers also enjoy community-style eating, outdoor play and learning, classes in science, music, art, physical education, and Spanish, and school-wide special events such as Book Partners, Group Sing, and thematic days.

Rivendell's preschool follows the Colorado Early Learning and Development Guidelines across all developmental domains. Parent-teacher conferences are thirty minutes and held in fall and winter, and a "Where I Am" progress report is sent home at the end of the year.

Colorado Universal Preschool (UPK)

Rivendell School is a participating provider in Colorado Universal Preschool, a voluntary state-funded preschool program administered by the Colorado Department of Early Childhood. Eligible children may receive state-funded preschool hours during the year before kindergarten, and some children may qualify for additional funded hours based on eligibility criteria established by the state.

UPK funding applies only to the preschool hours and services funded through the Colorado Universal Preschool Program. Families enrolled in Rivendell's full preschool program are responsible for tuition and fees associated with any additional hours or services beyond those covered by UPK funding. Rivendell will clearly communicate the portion of tuition covered by UPK and any remaining family financial responsibility.

Family Partnership and Engagement for Preschool Families

Families are important partners in their child's preschool experience. Teachers seek family input regarding children's interests, strengths, routines, goals, cultural experiences, and individual needs, and use this information to support learning and development. Families are encouraged to participate in conferences, school activities, classroom opportunities, and conversations about their child's goals and progress. Rivendell also works with families to support successful transitions into preschool, between classrooms and programs, and eventually into kindergarten.

Families participating in UPK may periodically be invited by the Colorado Department of Early Childhood to complete surveys regarding their preschool experience, developmental screening and referral services, and family engagement.

General School Policies and Information

Admissions and Enrollment

Families interested in Rivendell are invited to contact our Admissions and Communications Specialist, Kate Johnson, to submit an application and schedule a tour. The enrollment process begins with a campus tour and conversation with Head of School Holly Warren, followed by a careful review of the student's application to determine fit. If Rivendell appears to be a strong match, the family will receive a formal invitation to enroll.

To complete enrollment, families submit an enrollment packet, a signed financial agreement, and a non-refundable registration fee. Any questions regarding admissions should be directed to the front office.

Attendance and Absences

School Hours

Regular school hours are Monday through Friday. The morning drop-off window is from 8:00 to 8:30 AM, with academic instruction beginning promptly at 8:30 AM. Dismissal is at 3:00 PM for Preschool and 3:20 PM for Younger Kids through Older Kids.

Early Arrival

Children arriving before 8:00 AM should be checked in to morning care, located in the Commons. A flat-rate Extended Care fee will apply.

Late Arrival

If possible, please notify the front office in advance when your child will arrive after 8:30 AM. All students arriving late must be signed in at the front office. Preschool parents should then walk their child to the classroom and complete the classroom sign-in process. Students in Younger Kids through Older Kids may be dropped off at the front office, and a staff member will escort them to class.

Absences

Consistent attendance supports continuity in learning and social development. Please notify your child's teacher by email for any absence, whether due to illness, an appointment, or a family vacation. For extended absences, please also contact administration and provide a doctor's note where applicable. When advance notice is given, teachers are glad to prepare homework packets.

Extended Planned Absences

Rivendell recognizes that some families may pursue unique learning opportunities for their children, such as a semester abroad, Semester at Sea, or other extended planned absences. An extended planned absence is defined as a planned absence longer than twenty consecutive school days.

Families considering an extended planned absence must notify the Head of School in writing as early as possible to allow for academic and transition planning. Rivendell's enrollment and tuition contracts are annual commitments, and extended absences do not automatically relieve families of their financial obligations for the school year.

Families who wish to request financial accommodation must submit a written request to the Head of School prior to the start of the new school year in order to be eligible for any adjustment; requests received after the school year has begun may not qualify. All accommodations, including tuition adjustments or reserved placement for a following term or year, are determined at the discretion of the Head of School in consultation with school leadership and are considered on a case-by-case basis.

Academic expectations, placement, and re-entry plans will be discussed with families prior to the absence to support a smooth transition back to school.

Preschool Attendance

The Colorado Department of Human Services requires that a parent or authorized adult sign preschoolers in and out every day, and children may only be signed in and out by persons listed in their permanent file. Preschool drop-off is from 8:00 to 8:30 AM, and pick-up is from 3:00 to 3:15 PM inside the classroom rather than curbside. Children who have not been picked up by 3:15 PM will be signed into aftercare, and the account will be charged accordingly.

We ask that families complete a health screening before arriving at school. If your child is feeling ill, please keep them home, even if they have received ibuprofen, as symptoms may appear mid-day and spread quickly within the classroom.

Preschool Schedule Change Policy

When families enroll in preschool, they select either a five-day or four-day schedule. That schedule is permanent for the remainder of the school year unless two families mutually agree to swap schedule positions, or an open spot becomes available and a family chooses to move into it. Any schedule change requires formal written notice and is irreversible once submitted.

Assessments, Conferences, and Report Cards

Assessment at Rivendell is ongoing and woven into daily classroom interactions. Teachers assess students through class activities, one-on-one conferences, and regular observation, and each child's progress is monitored and used to individualize their program.

Students in grades three through five take the MAP assessment twice each year, in fall and spring. Results are shared with families at conferences held in October and January, and report cards are issued in May.

Birthday Invitations and Treats

To keep our community inclusive, birthday party invitations may not be distributed at school. Please use the Rivendell Directory for family contact information.

If your child would like to bring treats to celebrate a birthday or special occasion, please let their teacher know in advance so they can advise on quantity and any allergy considerations. All treats must be pre-packaged or prepared by a licensed food provider. Please do not bring homemade treats or anything containing nuts, peanuts, peanut butter, or nut byproducts. Healthier or smaller-sized treats are always welcome.

Student Relationships, Conflicts, and Bullying

Rivendell is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and inclusive learning environment for every student. Bullying is not tolerated at Rivendell or at any school-sponsored event or activity, whether on or off campus.

Bullying is generally defined as repeated or patterned behavior involving an imbalance of power that is intended to intimidate, exclude, coerce, or cause physical, social, or emotional harm. Bullying may be verbal, written, electronic, social, or physical.

When a concern is reported, Rivendell will gather information and assess the situation to determine whether the behavior meets the definition of bullying or reflects a peer conflict, social challenge, or other concern requiring support. Because children are still developing social and emotional skills, disagreements and conflict can occur. When appropriate, staff will help students work through conflict, understand the impact of their actions, practice problem-solving and communication skills, repair relationships, and develop strategies for moving forward.

When ongoing social concerns are identified, Rivendell may implement a Student Social Concern Plan to provide additional structure, support, monitoring, and communication between the school and family. These plans are individualized to the circumstances and are intended to support student safety, healthy relationships, and positive behavior.

All Rivendell employees and volunteers are responsible for reporting suspected bullying or significant social concerns to the Head of School or appropriate school administrator. The school will determine an appropriate response based on the nature, severity, frequency, and circumstances of the behavior. Responses may include increased supervision, restorative or educational interventions, parent communication, a Student Social Concern Plan, counseling support, disciplinary action, suspension, or, in serious circumstances, expulsion.

Cell Phones and Smart Watches

Students will be permitted to use a school telephone for important or emergency calls approved by their teacher and the office. Cell phone use for students within the building is prohibited. Students may have cell phones at school if they are kept out of sight at all times, with the understanding that we cannot be responsible for loss or damage (See Valuables at School).

Smartwatches are also permitted at school; however, students may not use them for texting, making calls, or any other form of communication during the school day. Smartwatches should be used only as a watch or for non-communicative features such as alarms or step tracking. Students who use their smartwatches in a way that disrupts learning will be asked to put them away.

Students are welcome to use their cell phones before or after school hours and off school grounds, except when on a Rivendell-sponsored field trip. If students need to make a phone call on school grounds, they should use a school phone. This includes students in Extended Care (before and after school hours).

If parents need to contact their child during the school day, we ask that they do so through the front office rather than calling or messaging their child's personal device.

Child Abuse Reporting

Rivendell complies with the Colorado Department of Human Services directive on child abuse reporting. Any staff member or caregiver with reasonable cause to know or suspect that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect is required by law to report it immediately to the county Department of Social Services or local law enforcement.

Division of Child Care, Colorado Department of Human Services | 1575 Sherman Street, Denver, CO 80203 | 303-866-5958

Child Custody and Parenting Time

Rivendell remains neutral in all custody and parenting time disputes. Unless there is a court order, protective order, or restraining order restricting access, Rivendell cannot deny a legal parent or guardian access to their child. Rivendell will not insert itself into custody disputes and requires that families resolve their differences through legal channels.

Because student safety is our first priority, Rivendell may not be used as a location for visitation, supervised or otherwise. If a parent or guardian designates Rivendell as a parenting time exchange location, they must notify the Head of School or a supervisor immediately, and Rivendell reserves the right to withdraw from that role at its discretion.

Communication

Rivendell takes pride in proactive communication. Families can expect to hear from us through the following channels:

- **Weekly School-wide Newsletter** — Published each Sunday with upcoming events, news, and reminders.
- **Weekly Teacher Emails** — A preview of the coming week in the classroom, including academic and event details.
- **Parent-Teacher Conferences** — Thirty-minute conferences held in fall and at the start of the second semester.
- **Back-to-School Night** — Teachers share curriculum plans and individualization strategies for the year.
- **New Family Orientation** — Required for all new families; returning families are welcome as well.
- **Front-Entry Sign** — Check each morning for day-of updates.
- **Email and Phone** — Teachers respond within twenty-four hours. For in-depth conversations, please email ahead to schedule time.
- **Rivendell Website** — Visit rivendell-school.org for calendars, forms, and schedules.
- **Social Media** — Follow us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

Rivendell staff and faculty want to be available to you. The best way to arrange a meeting with a teacher or any other staff member is by email or verbal request, as conversations before or after school are rarely as productive as those with time to plan. Hearing from parents helps us better understand your children, so please always feel welcome to share information or perspective.

Language Access and Communication Support

Rivendell is committed to ensuring that all families can fully participate in their child's education. If a parent, guardian, or authorized caregiver needs an interpreter, document translation, or other language support in order to communicate effectively in their home language, Rivendell will make reasonable efforts to provide or arrange those resources at no cost to the family. To request language support, please contact the front office, your child's teacher, or the Head of School.

Visitor Policy

All visitors must enter through the front doors on the east side of the building and sign in at the front office. The office is closely monitored during drop-off and pick-up, and parents must be buzzed in between 9:00 AM and 3:00 PM. Peripheral doors are locked at all times.

Cell phones may not be used while working with children or in classrooms. Visitors who will be volunteering regularly at Rivendell must complete a background check and abide by all volunteer policies.

Conduct Policies

Student Conduct

All Rivendell staff members are committed to helping each child develop the self-control and self-discipline that lead to maturity and responsible citizenship. Achieving this requires that every member of our community—students, parents/guardians, and teachers—understand and agree upon shared expectations.

To ensure that all students receive equal educational opportunities, students are expected to cooperate with the directions of staff members and comply with classroom and school rules, respect school and private property, refrain from fighting and other physical acts that may cause injury, and refrain from threats or verbal assaults including profanity, name-calling, slurs, obscene gestures, or acts of intimidation.

For our youngest students, we express these expectations simply: we keep ourselves safe, we keep each other safe, and we keep our things safe.

Conduct Process

When expectations are not met, the following steps are implemented:

1. The teacher and student work to resolve the problem directly.
2. If the issue remains unresolved, the teacher contacts the family to share information and seek resolution.
3. The teacher, family, and student, where appropriate, meet with the Head of School to develop a plan.
4. A follow-up meeting confirms whether the plan has been effective.
5. If the problem persists, the student may be suspended or expelled.

In serious situations, these steps may be accelerated at the discretion of the Head of School.

Parent and Guardian Conduct and Partnership Expectations

Rivendell depends on a positive, respectful, collaborative, and constructive partnership between home and school in order to fulfill its mission. By enrolling at Rivendell, parents and guardians agree to support this partnership in the following ways:

Respectful Conduct

Parents and guardians treat students, families, faculty, and staff with courtesy and respect in all interactions, whether in person, by phone or email, or online. Harassment, threats, profanity, slurs, disrespectful or intimidating behavior, and inappropriate communications are not acceptable.

Following School Procedures

Parents and guardians comply with reasonable directions of staff and follow established school procedures while on campus or attending school-sponsored events.

Constructive Communication

Parents and guardians use appropriate channels to raise concerns, beginning with the teacher or program lead and escalating to administration as needed. Communication should be handled in good faith and with the goal of working toward solutions.

Safe Environment

Parents and guardians help support a safe learning environment by following security, pick-up, and visitor protocols and by honoring student, family, and staff confidentiality, including on social media.

Non-Disruption

Parents and guardians refrain from conduct or communications, either on or off campus, that disrupt classrooms, activities, or school operations. This includes repeated or unreasonable demands that impede the school's ability to meet its educational objectives, or conduct that reflects a loss of confidence in, or disagreement with, Rivendell's policies, educational purpose, or programs.

Scope

This policy applies to all Rivendell programs and activities, including Summer Camps, and to all forms of communication with the school.

Responses to Violations

When concerns regarding parent or guardian conduct or communication arise, Rivendell may take steps that include reminders, written warnings, required meetings, limiting or conditioning campus access, assigning a single point of contact, or, when conduct impedes the school's ability to accomplish its mission or operations, requiring a student's withdrawal at the school's discretion as provided in the Enrollment and Financial Agreements. In egregious cases, steps may be accelerated. Any determination under this policy shall be made in the sole and absolute discretion of Rivendell.

Relationship to Other Policies

This policy should be read together with the Enrollment and Financial Agreements, the Parent Handbook, and other published policies, including non-discrimination and anti-harassment. Rivendell may update its policies from time to time.

Discipline Philosophy

Rivendell staff honor the Love and Logic philosophy of the Cline/Fay Institute, which seeks to maintain each child's dignity and self-worth while developing their problem-solving skills. Four principles guide our practice.

The student's self-concept is always the prime consideration. Discipline can and should enhance a student's self-concept, even in moments when firm expectations are being upheld.

The child is always left with a feeling of some control. Control is gained by investing control in the other person; students are offered meaningful choices, always on adult terms.

Consequences paired with empathy replace punishment. Life's most important lessons are learned through natural consequences experienced with adult understanding rather than anger.

The student does more thinking than the adult. Students are expected to own and solve their own problems, with teacher guidance and support.

Preschool and PreK Guidelines

Drop-Off and Morning Routine

Please park and walk your preschooler inside each morning. Grown-ups are required to sign in, and little ones appreciate the help with carrying their belongings. To ease the transition into the classroom, we ask that you help your child through this routine before saying goodbye:

- Hang up their backpack, lunchbox, and jacket on their hook outside the classroom.
- Use the restroom if needed.
- Find their cubby and put rest items away.
- Wash hands in the classroom.
- Check in at their table or find something to engage with.
- Say goodbye!

Drop-off ends at 8:30 AM, when the morning meeting begins promptly. We understand that some mornings are harder than others; if you are running late, simply email your child's teacher or call the front office. Our free play period from 8:00 to 8:30 AM is an important part of the day for socialization and for bonding between children and teachers, and we appreciate your respect for this time. Children who need to arrive before 8:00 AM must be signed into morning care in the Commons.

Pick-Up and After-Care

Preschoolers are picked up inside the classroom between 3:00 and 3:15 PM and never curbside with the rest of the school. If you need to pick up your child earlier, please communicate with their teacher in advance.

Children who have not been picked up by 3:15 PM will be signed into aftercare in Room 11, and your account will be charged accordingly. Aftercare is not an extension of the school day and should not be used as an enrichment activity.

What to Wear

Preschool is active and wonderfully messy, and paint, glue, water, sand, and clay are all part of the experience. Please dress your child in play clothes every day and send sturdy footwear appropriate for our playground surface, which is unforgiving of bare knees and toes.

Children go outside for one full hour each day whenever the temperature is above 18°F, so please send full winter gear when appropriate: snow pants or a snowsuit, a winter jacket, a hat, mittens, and snow boots. Gear may be stored at school, but everything left at school should go home each Friday to be washed and returned on Monday.

On warm days, please apply sunscreen before school. Teachers will reapply Coppertone Kids SPF 50 after nap time. If you prefer a different product, please send it labeled with your child's name along with a signed non-medical consent form.

What to Bring

Each day, please send your preschooler with smiles and a readiness to learn, a labeled lunch and water bottle, and their nap and rest items on the first day of each week.

Please keep at home: toys and other special objects. We have plenty of toys at school and rotate them regularly, and we worry that treasured items may be lost or broken.

Pacifiers are not permitted at school. They prevent children from communicating effectively with peers and teachers and pose a sanitation concern.

Extra Clothing

Please send a complete change of clothing—shirt, pants, underwear, and socks—in a labeled gallon zip-lock bag to be kept in the preschool bathroom. Unused clothing is sent home quarterly for seasonal updates. Please check sizes regularly, as preschoolers grow at a rapid pace.

Nap and Rest Time

Rest time runs from 12:30 to 1:30 PM daily and is a state requirement; opting out is not permitted. Your preschooler will have an assigned nap cubby with a provided storage cube. Please provide a fitted crib sheet and a small blanket approximately two feet by four feet, along with a small, soft, quiet comfort stuffed animal that should not be a distraction.

A small pillow is optional provided it fits inside the storage cube, as are slippers, though in accordance with fire department guidelines footwear must be worn at all times. All nap items must go home each weekend to be laundered and returned. Children who are not asleep after thirty minutes will be offered a quiet, developmentally appropriate alternative.

Lunch and Snacks

Morning snack is provided by parent volunteers on a monthly sign-up basis in accordance with USDA meal guidelines. All snack items must arrive unwashed, uncut, and unopened, and are prepared by teachers in the classroom to ensure proper food handling.

Children bring their own lunch from home or may purchase a hot lunch ticket through the front office. We do not have refrigeration for lunchboxes, so please pack with an ice pack, and we are unable to heat food. Please pack in easy-to-open containers your preschooler can manage independently.

We have food allergies in our preschool community and want to keep everyone healthy. An allergy-free table is designated each day, and teachers check lunches to ensure allergens are not placed there.

General Health Requirements for Preschool and PreK

State regulations require all preschool and prek students enrolled at Rivendell to have a current General Health Appraisal Form completed by a healthcare provider on file at the time of enrollment. The Colorado Department of Human Services monitors student documents to ensure all required paperwork is complete. These forms expire after one year and must be updated by your child's pediatrician annually.

Biting Policy

Biting can occur in early childhood for a variety of developmental reasons, including frustration, limited communication skills, sensory needs, difficulty with self-regulation, or challenges navigating peer interactions. Rivendell approaches biting with the dual responsibility of keeping all children safe while helping children develop the skills they need to communicate and interact successfully.

When a biting incident occurs, staff will immediately attend to the child who was bitten, provide appropriate first aid, and support both children in a calm and developmentally appropriate manner. The child who bit will be redirected and supported in identifying another way to communicate or respond. Families of both children will be notified, and an incident report will be completed and maintained according to school procedures. To protect student confidentiality, Rivendell will not identify another child involved in an incident.

When biting becomes repeated or presents an ongoing concern, teachers and school leadership will work with the family to better understand what may be contributing to the behavior. Staff may observe and document patterns, including when and where biting occurs, possible triggers, peer interactions, and strategies that are successful in preventing incidents.

An individualized Student Social Concern or Behavior Support Plan may be developed in partnership with the family. Depending on the child's needs, supports may include increased supervision, changes to the classroom environment or routine, teaching replacement communication and social-emotional skills, additional opportunities for regulation, consultation with school support staff, and referral to appropriate outside resources when indicated.

Rivendell will regularly review the effectiveness of these interventions and communicate with families regarding progress and next steps. Our goal is to support the child in remaining successfully engaged in the classroom while also maintaining a safe environment for all students.

There may be circumstances in which a child must be temporarily separated from an activity or classroom following an incident in order to restore safety and provide an opportunity for regulation. Whenever possible, this support will occur at school and will not constitute an automatic suspension or dismissal for the day.

Suspension, shortened school days, or termination of enrollment are not automatic consequences for biting. Such measures will be considered only when a child's behavior presents an ongoing or serious safety concern and appropriate supports and interventions have been considered or implemented. Any suspension or termination involving a preschool student

participating in Colorado Universal Preschool will be handled in accordance with applicable Colorado law and Colorado Department of Early Childhood requirements.

Rivendell will work collaboratively with families throughout this process with the goals of protecting the safety of the school community, supporting the developmental needs of the child, and reducing the need for exclusionary discipline.

Toileting and Accidents

Rivendell's program requires children to be potty-trained; however, we understand that occasional accidents can happen. In these situations, staff will support children in changing clothes and cleaning up, encouraging independence as much as possible. When needed to protect a child's health, hygiene, or dignity, staff may provide limited physical assistance with wiping and cleaning, following appropriate health and safety procedures and informing families.

Health, Safety, and Wellness

Illness Policy

Keeping our students healthy is a top priority at Rivendell. We ask that families complete a health screening before driving, biking, or walking to school and keep children home when any of the following are present:

- Fever of 100.4°F or higher
- Runny nose with yellow or green mucus
- Constant cough
- Earache or sore throat
- Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, or stomach pain
- Open skin lesions or undiagnosed rashes
- Excessive drowsiness, lethargy, or dizziness
- Painful or frequent urination
- Mattery discharge from the eyes

Should your child become ill while at Rivendell, they will be made comfortable in the office, away from other children and within hearing of an adult. We will take a temperature reading and allow for rest, then contact you or your emergency contacts if there is no improvement within fifteen to twenty minutes, or sooner if the fever is high or the child is vomiting. For the safety of your child and others, we ask that you pick up your child as soon as possible.

Rivendell follows the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment guidance titled “How Sick Is Too Sick?” when making return-to-school decisions. Children may return twenty-four hours after a fever resolves without fever-reducing medication, and twenty-four hours after the last episode of vomiting or diarrhea. Students with strep throat may return twelve hours after beginning antibiotics. For respiratory illnesses including COVID-19, influenza, and RSV, students may return once they have been fever-free for twenty-four hours and other symptoms have been improving for twenty-four hours, with additional precautions recommended for at least five days following their return.

We also ask families to reinforce at home how important it is for students to wash their hands frequently throughout the day.

Immunization Policy

Colorado law, under Board of Health rule 6 CCR 1009-2, requires all students attending Colorado schools and licensed child care facilities to be vaccinated against certain diseases unless a valid exemption is on file. Immunization requirements are posted on the CDPHE Immunization Branch website at cdphe.colorado.gov/child-care-resources, and exemption information is available at cdphe.colorado.gov/vaccine-exemptions.

Families should review the guidance regarding both the Certificate of Medical Exemption and the Certificate of Nonmedical Exemption. Nonmedical exemptions require an immunizing healthcare provider's signature at each submission, or completion of the Online Immunization Education Module, after which the exempting parent may download a certificate of completion to submit to the school.

Medication at School

If your child requires medication during the school day, please speak with front office staff and have your child's pediatrician complete a Medical Authorization Form. There are very specific procedures for medications that must be followed.

All medications require both a doctor's and a parent's written permission. This includes prescription medications, asthma inhalers, Epi-pens, over-the-counter drugs, cough medicines, homeopathic remedies, and pain medications. Every medication must be in its original container with the pharmacy name, prescribing doctor's name, child's name, and prescription number clearly visible. Medications with expired dates are not permitted, and Rivendell cannot administer pain medication or fever reducers.

Injuries and Accidents

On-site medical care is limited to washing the affected area with water, covering it with an adhesive bandage, or providing a cold pack for minor bumps. No ointments may be applied, and we cannot give any pain medication or fever reducers.

If a child receives an injury beyond minor scrapes and bumps, we will make every attempt to contact a parent and explain the injury and its cause. If no contact is made, a phone message or note will be sent home. Should an injury result in medical treatment by a physician or hospitalization, a report will be submitted to the Colorado Department of Human Services and other appropriate authorities. Rivendell maintains an illness and injury log in the front office.

Food and Food Allergies

Rivendell is not a peanut-free zone, but we take all allergies seriously. Along with noting food allergies on your student's health form, please alert your child's teacher directly. We make seating accommodations for children with peanut allergies, and as a school we do not offer foods containing peanuts or peanut byproducts. We also ask that any treats brought to school for birthdays or other celebrations be peanut- and nut-free.

School Safety

It is important for our families and community to understand how we operate our school to keep children and adults safe. Please observe the following practices:

- Always enter the building through the front (east) doors before and during school hours; use the south (dock) doors after 4:00 PM.
- All doors are locked at all times except the front door during drop-off and pick-up. Please ring the bell for assistance if the door is locked.
- All visitors must check in and sign in at the front office.
- Document early pick-ups and late drop-offs in writing at the front office.
- Volunteers who work with individual children or small groups must complete a background check.
- Report any suspicious behavior to a staff member immediately. In an emergency, call 9-1-1.

Release of Children and Safe Release

To protect student safety, children will only be released to a parent, guardian, or other adult who is listed as an authorized pick-up person in the school's records and who can provide appropriate supervision and safe transportation.

If a staff member has a reasonable safety concern that an adult attempting to pick up a child may be impaired by alcohol, cannabis, or other drugs, Rivendell may delay or deny release at that time and will take steps to ensure the child is released safely. In such situations, the school may request that the adult arrange for an alternate authorized pick-up person to come to school, request that the adult arrange a safe ride home with a family member, friend, taxi, or rideshare, or contact an administrator and, when appropriate, contact law enforcement or child protection services if the situation presents an immediate safety risk.

Rivendell does not conduct sobriety tests and will not diagnose impairment; decisions are based on observed behavior and student safety. A parent or guardian's disagreement or denial does not change the school's responsibility to make a safety-based release decision. The child will remain supervised by school staff until a safe release plan is confirmed, and Rivendell will document the situation and the steps taken to support a safe release.

Thank you for partnering with us to keep all children safe.

Emergency Procedures

Rivendell School maintains comprehensive emergency response plans, which are posted throughout the school and regularly reviewed and practiced by staff and students. Rivendell follows the I Love U Guys Foundation's Standard Response Protocol, an all-hazards approach that uses five clear actions: Hold, Secure, Lockdown, Evacuate, and Shelter. This shared language helps students, staff, families, and first responders understand the appropriate response during an emergency.

During a schoolwide emergency, families will receive information and instructions through email and text alerts. Updates may also be posted on the school website at rivendell-school.org. In an individual student emergency, school staff will contact the student's emergency contacts. For a serious or life-threatening medical emergency, staff will call 911 before contacting the family.

Emergency responses may include evacuation, sheltering in place, fire response, hazardous-material response, or procedures for a lost or missing child. If students and staff must relocate off campus, the reunification site will be determined in coordination with law enforcement based on the type of emergency, its location, and current safety conditions. Families should not report to the school or any potential reunification site until they receive official instructions from Rivendell.

Rivendell staff members maintain current CPR and First Aid certification. Additional information about the Standard Response Protocol and family expectations during an emergency is included at the end of this handbook.

Inclement Weather

Rivendell children love to be outside, and we love being outside with them. Please plan on your child playing outside every day unless there is an extreme weather condition, and dress them accordingly. We follow Colorado human services guidelines in determining the safety of outdoor play.

In the case of a snowstorm or other extreme weather that makes travel unsafe, Rivendell generally follows Poudre School District cancellations, though there may be exceptions. We notify families through our website, by text, and by school-wide email. If Poudre School District announces a late start, Rivendell will evaluate local road and weather advisories independently before determining whether we will also delay.

Programs and Daily Life

Extended Care

The Rivendell Extended Care Program, offering before- and after-school care, is available on an as-needed basis to all enrolled students. Children who have not been picked up by 3:30 PM are automatically signed into after-school care.

A light snack is provided, and students are welcome to bring their own. Activities include free and organized playtime, simple crafts, study time, silent reading, storytelling, games, and outdoor time as weather permits. Preschool and elementary students begin in separate rooms and join together after approximately forty-five minutes. Electronic devices are not permitted, though in an urgent situation staff will allow students to use a Rivendell phone line to contact their parents. Extended Care is available only when school is in session and only to students currently enrolled at Rivendell.

Extended Care Charges

Extended Care is billed at \$10.00 per child, per hour. Morning care from 7:00 to 8:00 AM is a flat \$10.00, and afternoon care from 3:30 to 6:00 PM is billed in quarter-hour increments. Totals are tallied at the end of each month and added to the following month's tuition statement. There is no charge if your child is brought to school after 8:00 AM or picked up before 3:15 PM for preschoolers or 3:30 PM for Younger Kids through Older Kids.

Staff are scheduled until 6:00 PM each day. Families whose children are not picked up by 6:00 PM will be charged an additional \$25.00 beyond the hourly rate, plus the cost of dinner if one is provided. Staff will call families who have not arrived by 6:00 PM, and if neither a parent nor an emergency contact can be reached, Rivendell is required to contact the police.

Field Trips

Field trips are an exciting part of school, and each age group takes at least one field trip a year. A permission slip will be sent home before each trip; please review and sign it and confirm that emergency contact information is current. All students are required to wear Rivendell T-shirts on field trips. Students receive a Rivendell T-shirt for the Fun Run at the beginning of the year, so there is no need to purchase a separate shirt. If your child needs one, please let the front office know.

The majority of field trip costs are covered by fundraising, though families may occasionally be asked to contribute a small amount toward an entrance fee or charter bus. When parent volunteers drive students to activities in town, this will be noted on the permission form.

Recess and Breaks

Recess is an important time for children to develop social skills, release energy, and exercise, and it is also one of the moments when Rivendell students interact across mixed age groups. Each day students enjoy a half hour of recess on the playground in the morning and another hour during lunch. The school provides balls and other equipment for outdoor play.

Homework

Homework is the responsibility of the student and a component of their academic development. Each teacher determines the amount and scope of homework appropriate for their classroom and student, and regular homework is not assigned until students reach the Middle Kids age group. Younger Kids and preschoolers may have a few special assignments during the year, always with plenty of notice before the due date.

We warmly encourage families of all our students to spend time reading together every evening.

Lunch Program

Rivendell offers a daily lunch option for students. A student-sized lunch is purchased from a local restaurant and supplemented with milk, fruit, and a cookie or small dessert at a cost of \$7.00 per meal. Tickets are purchased at the front office, where menus are also available, and should be deposited in the collection buckets when your child arrives. If your child will arrive late and needs a hot lunch, you may call in an order until 8:45 AM.

Students are welcome to bring lunch from home and are expected to eat most of what is packed. Please pack a reasonable amount of food considering your child's age, appetite, and tastes, choosing foods that travel well and do not require refrigeration. A thermal lunch box with an ice pack helps keep food fresh, and easy-to-open containers help students eat independently. Please include a beverage and utensils, as the school cannot supply forks or spoons, and note that students may not use microwaves or electric kettles.

Enrichment Camps

Each summer, Rivendell offers a wide array of enrichment classes for children ages three to thirteen, covering topics such as biking, pottery, photography, history, writing, hiking, and nature. Please see rivendell-school.org for details and registration.

Library

Rivendell is proud to offer an extensive library of over 10,000 books, organized in a child-friendly manner across nonfiction, picture books, chapter books, and series, along with a collection of parent resource books. All students are issued a library card. Younger students select books from a book cart twice a week, while older students may search the entire collection on our computer kiosk. The library is run by volunteers, and the majority of our collection is purchased through book fairs or donated.

Lost and Found

Our lost and found box is located by the double doors leading out to the playground, and any items left out at the end of the school day are placed there. Unclaimed items are donated to Goodwill at the end of each semester. Small or valuable items may be held at the front desk.

Additional Policies

Dress Code

Students should not wear clothing that displays advertising or logos for tobacco, liquor, or drugs, or that displays material of a sexual or violent nature. Clothing that prohibits normal school activity or does not cover the body appropriately for a school setting should not be worn to school.

Clogs, mules, and flip-flops are not the best choice for footwear, as children have difficulty wearing these styles safely given our playground surface and active physical education classes. Because students go outside on most days, children must dress for the weather; staying inside is not an option, and Colorado weather can change quickly. Winter weather calls for boots, warm outerwear, gloves or mittens, and hats, along with street shoes or slippers for indoor use on wet or snowy days. We strongly suggest keeping an extra pair of socks in your child's backpack. On hot days, a hat and sunscreen are useful, and a water bottle is encouraged. All items should be labeled with the student's name.

Drugs, Tobacco, and Alcohol

For the purposes of this policy, the substances at issue include all beverages containing alcohol, tobacco products, marijuana, and harder drugs including but not limited to heroin, methamphetamines, and cocaine, as well as any other illegal or illicit substances.

Parents play the most critical role in student substance use issues, and efforts to control, mitigate, and prohibit drug use are most effective when parents and school work in harmony. Students may not bring prohibited substances to any Rivendell activity, including regular classrooms, field trips, school events, and any other school-sponsored activity, and may not make such substances available to other students. Students may not attend any school activity while under the influence of a prohibited substance. There is no smoking on school grounds or in school buildings.

Technology Policies

Rivendell School provides computer and Internet access to support the educational mission of the school and to enhance curriculum and learning opportunities for students and staff. The school employs a number of strategies to maximize learning opportunities and reduce risks associated with the Internet, and students are taught about Internet safety, copyright law and fair use, and netiquette.

Student accounts are the property of Rivendell, and the school has access to all email, documents, and web history. Students should assume that anything they share or send may be seen by others, and Rivendell provides filters to safeguard browsing. Students may not share passwords; send or create bullying, threatening, or obscene messages; access inappropriate websites or apps; attempt to access unauthorized accounts, files, or resources or work around security restrictions; sign up for non-approved online services with a Rivendell account; post personal information online; deface or modify hardware; install or change software or settings; or use Rivendell accounts for non-school purposes.

Students are expected to sign out conscientiously, to contact staff immediately about inappropriate material while preserving the evidence rather than closing or deleting it, and to use printers mindfully. Consequences for violating this policy may include restrictions on school computer use, loss of email access, or loss of full account access.

Laptop Care

Because laptops are fragile and require additional care, students who use school laptops are expected to charge the device immediately after daily use, protect the screen from scratches, keep food and beverages away from the device, avoid marking or writing on the laptop, charger, or cabinet, and never take a photo, video, or audio recording of anyone without permission. Students should request teacher permission before using headphones, playing educational games, playing music, or registering for class-related online accounts.

Normal wear and tear is expected, but the student and parent will be responsible for the repair or replacement of a damaged or lost system. Violations of these guidelines will result in disciplinary action.

Photos, Videos, and Recordings

To maintain the security of our premises and systems, to respect the privacy of community members, and to promote the freedom to share ideas openly, Rivendell has established the following recording policy.

Families

In keeping with privacy expectations and family preferences regarding photo and media releases, families should be thoughtful when taking photos or videos at school, at school events, or on field trips. Parents and guardians may photograph or record their own child but should avoid capturing or sharing photos, videos, or recordings of other students without permission.

Parents and guardians may not make audio, video, or photographic recordings of Rivendell employees, students, meetings, classroom activities, or school-related conversations without prior permission from the individual being recorded and from the school. This applies to recordings made at school, during school events, on field trips, and during meetings with school personnel.

Students

Students may not photograph, film, or record anyone in the school community without the explicit permission of that individual and of the school. An exception exists for students with a documented disability accommodation that has been approved by the school in advance. Such approved recordings are subject to conditions set by the school, may not be shared with others, and must be used solely for their intended educational purpose.

Approved Recordings

Any recording approved by the school in advance may not be shared with others or posted publicly unless specifically authorized in writing by Rivendell.

School-Produced Media

Occasionally Rivendell photographs or records students to share on our website, in newsletters, or on social media. Families complete a Parent Release Form for Media Recording at enrollment indicating their preferences for how their child's image may be used. Please contact the admissions specialist with any questions regarding pictures or media usage.

Supplies

A required, non-refundable supply fee is paid each semester in August and January. This fee covers the cost of all supplies students need day to day for classroom learning. There may be occasions, such as Science Fair or culminating projects, when a family must pay for additional supplies. Students are expected to provide their own lunch box, water bottle, and book bag.

Valuables at School

Students are encouraged to leave valuables such as cash, expensive jewelry, and electronics at home. Rivendell is not responsible for items that may be lost, broken, or stolen on our premises.

Parking and Traffic

Due to the unique nature of Rivendell School, our parking lot becomes very busy during drop-off from 8:00 to 8:30 AM and during pick-up at 3:00 PM for preschoolers and 3:20 PM for all other students. Please be cautious when parking and walking your child into school, and note that children may not walk to or from their car unattended. Any child dropped off or picked up outside of regular school hours will be directed to Extended Care.

If you are using our curbside pick-up option, please stay in your car and follow the line of traffic that circles the parking lot and lines up in front of the building by the pick-up benches. As students gather their belongings and come outside, they are seated on the benches, and two designated staff members escort them to cars.

Right to Search

Should a child be suspected of inappropriate conduct, such as taking another student's belongings, Rivendell reserves the right to search backpacks and lunch boxes. This is to ensure safety and to uphold our shared commitment to keeping ourselves, each other, and our belongings safe.

Inclusivity

At Rivendell School, we actively promote inclusive practices to best meet the needs of our children, families, and staff. Children are welcome to attend our school regardless of background, culture, religion, or gender, and our curriculum, activities, books, and materials reflect the diversity of children and families throughout the world.

Through Rivendell's approach to individualized education, we provide modifications and adaptations to help all children achieve academic and personal excellence. We work with families who have learners on 504 plans to make appropriate accommodations, and we assist parents and guardians in securing additional help and resources when there are concerns about a child's development. If Rivendell is unable to meet the needs of a student, our staff will assist the family in finding a program where those services are provided.

Directory

At the beginning of each school year, a directory is printed and made available to Rivendell families through the front office, with digital copies also available. The directory includes current staff and student information as well as class lists. Families are welcome to withhold their information; the opportunity to indicate your preference appears as written consent on your enrollment form.

The directory is published for the convenience of Rivendell families. Please notify the office of any corrections or changes, and please do not use directory information for commercial, political, religious, or other public purposes.

Recycling

Rivendell is a proud member of ClimateWise, an international group dedicated to using our natural resources wisely and protecting the environment. Recycling bins are available in each classroom, and we strive to teach children to be responsible stewards of our earth.

School Activities

Through the years, Rivendell has created many fun traditions and annual activities, among them Book Partners, Field Day, Fun Fest, the Fun Run, Group Sing, Musicals, the Science Fair, and the Spring Program. In addition to these, Rivendell hosts a variety of activities throughout the school year, all of which are announced in our weekly newsletter and posted at school.

Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act

In compliance with AHERA, Rivendell School of Northern Colorado is required to notify parents, teachers, employees, and contractors that an Asbestos Management Plan is available in the office. The plan details the location of asbestos in our building and provides a record of inspections, re-inspections, periodic surveillance, and the removal or management of asbestos as necessary.

Periodic surveillance of asbestos-containing building material is conducted by staff every six months, and a re-inspection is conducted once every three years by a qualified and licensed environmental consultant. Our most recent inspection was conducted in January 2022 by RLH Engineering, Inc. We have minimal asbestos-containing material in our building, and at the time of our latest inspection all asbestos was found to be non-friable and undisturbed.

Making our building a safe place where students can learn is our top priority. For more detailed information about our Asbestos Management Plan, please call the Rivendell office at 970-493-9052 or email Facilities Manager Bryce Warren at bryce@rivendell-school.org.

Financial Policies

Tuition and Fees: 2026–27 School Year

Preschool Program

Schedule	Total Tuition	Monthly Payment
5 Days per Week (8:00 AM–3:00 PM)	\$17,600	\$1,760
4 Days per Week (8:00 AM–3:00 PM)	\$17,100	\$1,710

Elementary Program: Younger Kids, Middle Kids, and Older Kids

Student	Total Tuition	Monthly Payment
1st Student — Full Tuition	\$14,600	\$1,460
2nd Student — 10% Discount*	\$13,140	\$1,314
3rd Student — 15% Discount*	\$12,410	\$1,241

**Multiple child discounts apply to the oldest child's tuition rate. Full-time staff members receive a 50% tuition discount, and part-time staff receive a 25% discount.*

Required Fees

Fee	Amount	When Due
Registration Fee <i>Non-refundable</i>	\$150 <i>\$75 for each additional child</i>	Due upon registration
Semester Supply Fee <i>Non-refundable</i>	Preschool 5 days: \$150 Preschool 4 days: \$130 Younger Kids: \$150 Middle Kids: \$175 Older Kids: \$200	Paid twice each year in August and January

Extended Care (Optional)

Service	Rate	Billing
Morning Care (7:00–8:00 AM)	\$10.00/hour	Billed monthly
Afternoon Care (3:30–6:00 PM)	\$10.00/hour	Billed monthly
Late pick-up after 6:00 PM	+\$25.00	Added to monthly bill

The yearly tuition rate is paid in ten installments. The first payment is due by June 1 for returning families, or upon enrollment for new families. The remaining nine payments are due on the first of each month from September through May.

Field trip and Sky Ranch fees are shared between the school and families and billed separately as incurred.

Payment Policies

Monthly Payments

The total account balance, due as of the first of each month, is processed through automatic electronic payments (ACH), by check, or by credit card. An ACH form must be signed to authorize Rivendell to automate your monthly statement payment. Credit card or check payment requires you to take action each month. A processing fee is charged by the third-party credit card company.

Total balances owed include tuition, extended care charges, semester supply fees, lunch ticket purchases, enrichment camps during the school year, and all other incidental expenses. Donations may also be made via ACH. Should an ACH payment be returned for any reason, the amount is due immediately along with a \$25 processing fee.

Late Payments

Tuition is due by the first of each month. A late fee of \$50 is added on the tenth of the month. If tuition has not been paid by the fifteenth, the Business Manager will contact the family to establish a payment plan.

Returned Checks

Checks returned for non-sufficient funds will result in a \$25 charge. Rivendell reserves the right to require cash, money orders, cashier's checks, or other forms of payment for tuition after a check has been returned.

Withdrawal and Enrollment Terms

Right of Rescission

Families who enroll have a period of three calendar days from the date the Financial Agreement is executed to terminate the agreement without further obligation or penalty. The rescission period ends at 12:00 AM on the fourth day after execution. Notice of termination must be in writing, signed, and delivered to the Rivendell office or emailed to office@rivendell-school.org with receipt acknowledgment required. If the rescission period includes a weekend or state holiday, it extends to the end of the next business day.

Withdrawal

If a student withdraws for any other reason, the family remains jointly and severally liable for tuition payments due for the remainder of the semester in which the withdrawal occurs, regardless of whether the withdrawal occurs during the first or second semester. Upon enrollment, execution of the Financial Agreement, and payment of the registration fee, the family is responsible for the entire semester's tuition regardless of whether the student actually attends Rivendell.

Terms for Waiver of Tuition

In the event Rivendell decides it is in the best interest of the educational environment to dismiss a student, the family remains jointly and severally liable for the tuition payment due for the month of dismissal; all future monthly tuition installments are waived.

Financial Hardship

The intent of this policy is to provide a payment plan structure for families experiencing financial hardship. Rivendell will identify any family whose tuition payment is delinquent as of the fifteenth of the month, and the Business Manager will contact the family to discuss payment options. Families are also welcome to come forward on their own to discuss circumstances likely to lead to late payments. The goal is to support both the family and the school by agreeing to a structured arrangement that spreads past-due and upcoming tuition payments across more periods.

The following guidelines apply. If a family fails to communicate with the Business Manager before the end of the first month that tuition is unpaid, the student may not be allowed to continue enrollment. Payment plans apply to tuition only and cannot be used to pay extended care or other fees. Tuition cannot be waived under this policy, and no interest is charged. If a payment plan check is returned for non-payment, all future payments must be made by cashier's check or direct bank transfer. Extended care remains available only when the payment plan is current and all non-tuition charges have been paid in full by the seventh of the month.

Extended Absences and Financial Obligations

Rivendell's enrollment and tuition contracts are annual commitments, and extended absences do not automatically relieve families of their financial obligations for the school year. Families with a planned extended absence should meet with the Head of School and Business Manager as early as possible to discuss academic planning, re-entry, and whether the student's place can be held. Requests for financial accommodation must be submitted in writing before the school year begins; requests made after the year has started may not qualify. All accommodations are determined at the discretion of the Head of School in consultation with school leadership and are considered case by case.

Parental Involvement

Volunteer Opportunities

Rivendell School values the time and energy our families and friends give to make our school a great place, and we love having volunteers in the building because the benefit to students is so significant. Whether your interest lies in library support, classroom help, event planning, or fundraising, we would welcome your involvement in a way that aligns with your talents, passions, or profession.

Rivendell's Admissions and Communications Specialist coordinates parent volunteers, and a Volunteer Handbook with current information and expectations is available in the school office. Volunteers who work directly with individual children or small groups must complete a background check.

Rivendell Parent Association

The purpose of the Rivendell Parent Association is to formally organize parent volunteers to promote, organize, and carry out events and activities as determined by Rivendell School. This group is led by the Admissions and Communications Specialist together with the Head of School, and it meets regularly throughout the year to discuss upcoming school-wide and community events. All families are welcome to participate.

Board of Directors

The leadership of the Rivendell Board of Directors is extremely important to the life of the school. Board members commit to keeping the school financially sound, advise the Head of School on sound practices of financial management, determine the availability of funds for raises and other compensation, oversee facility management, address legal and insurance matters, and listen to the Head of School regarding facility enhancements, playground development, and fundraising opportunities.

Members of the Board serve three-year terms. Perhaps the most significant aspect of Board service is that these individuals volunteer their time and expertise in service of the school, a testimony to their commitment to Rivendell's vision and a meaningful contribution to our culture of participation, ownership, and responsibility. A list of current board members is available at rivendell-school.org/about-us/board-of-directors, and board meeting minutes are available upon request. If you are interested in volunteering on the Board, please contact the Board Chair.

Ways to Support Rivendell

Families support Rivendell in many ways beyond volunteering. Throughout the year we host a few fundraising events and Scholastic book fairs, and gifts of any size are always appreciated.

Our library welcomes new or used books to refresh and expand the collection, and classrooms are glad to receive craft and school materials. We simply ask that you not donate anything you may want returned later.

However you choose to take part, thank you for supporting our school.

Standard Response Protocol

Rivendell follows the I Love U Guys Foundation's Standard Response Protocol, an all-hazards approach that provides a shared language for emergency response across schools, families, and first responders. The protocol uses five clear actions.

Hold — “In Your Room or Area. Clear the Halls.”

Hold is called when there is a situation in the hallway or common area that needs to be resolved without students moving through the building, such as a medical situation or a disruption. Students remain in their classroom or current area and continue learning as usual until the all-clear is given. Hold is not an indication of danger to the school community.

Secure — “Get Inside. Lock Outside Doors.”

Secure is called when there is a threat or hazard outside the building. Students and staff are brought indoors and exterior doors are locked, while inside it remains business as usual. Every effort is made to conduct classes normally during a Secure event, and parents may be asked to stay outside. Parents should not come to the school during a Secure event.

Lockdown — “Locks, Lights, Out of Sight.”

Lockdown is called when there is a danger inside the building or very close to it. Students and staff are trained to enter or remain in a room that can be locked, turn out the lights, move away from sight, and maintain silence. A Lockdown is initiated only when there is an active threat. Parents should not come to the school during a Lockdown; law enforcement will be responding, and it is unlikely that parents will be granted access to the building or campus.

Evacuate

During an evacuation, students and staff exit the building and relocate to a safe location. If students and staff must relocate off campus, the reunification site will be determined in coordination with law enforcement based on the type of emergency, its location, and current safety conditions. Attendance is taken and families are notified. Families should not report to the school or to any potential reunification site until they receive official instructions from Rivendell.

Shelter

Shelter directs students and staff to the safest location within the building based on the type of hazard. During a tornado warning, for example, students move to an inner, windowless room where teachers keep them calm and occupied until the warning is lifted.

Rivendell conducts drills throughout the year. It is important to distinguish between a drill, which builds the muscle memory associated with a practiced action, and an exercise, which simulates an actual event to test the capacity of personnel and equipment. The school will always inform students when a drill is in progress during the initial announcement, and parents who wish to observe or participate in drills are welcome to do so. For more information about the Standard Response Protocol, please visit iloveguys.org.

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Document Information

Rivendell School Parent Handbook

2026–27 School Year

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Questions? We are always happy to help.

office@rivendell-school.org | 970-493-9052 | rivendell-school.org