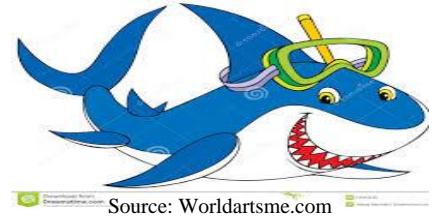


# Roger Sherman Elementary School

250 Fern Street

Fairfield, CT 06824

Phone (203) 255-8330



Dr. Ian M. Banner, Principal

“Goodness is about character - integrity, honesty, kindness, generosity, moral courage, and the like. More than anything else, it is about how we treat other people.”

– Dennis Prager (American journalist)

**For:** September 2019

Dear Parents and Families:

I have included a number of items this month for your quick reference to some critical information.

### *Field update*

As of Friday (9/6), the field and playscape remain closed and off limits. However, the playscape *was* tested on Friday, so fingers crossed we hear something about both areas, soon. As such, we will continue with recess on the blacktop area, and we’re utilizing a variety of appropriate play equipment during that time, such as chalk, numerous balls, jump ropes, etc.

### *Breathing and Mindfulness*

As an added element to expand our social-emotional learning efforts, we are going to include breathing/mindfulness practice three mornings per week (Monday, Wednesday and Friday, although it can be done at any time, also). We will officially begin on Wednesday and Friday of this week before implementing this on the three days the following week. Everyone (students *and* staff, and parents if they’re in the building immediately following morning announcements) will embrace a minute of silence and stillness, focusing only on correct breathing. This is a way to proactively practice calming our bodies and minds and to prepare them for moving and thinking, rigorously. The goal in this practice will be to equip all of us (students and adults) with a simple tool to help us to develop more effective and efficient breathing, as well as to help us regulate our emotions when upset, stressed or afraid, and to increase our capacity to feel more in control of finding calmness and patience throughout our day.

We will be further magnifying our social-emotional efforts from last year by following the mantra of: *Be Strong, Be Nice, Be Smart*. Our work last year in grit and perseverance and kindness and compassion will fall fittingly into the first two categories, and the obvious emphasis in academics will align with the latter. More to follow on this.

### **Most Relevant Policies for Parents**

Please see this link (<https://fairfieldschools.org/parent-resources/family-guide/>) to our district’s family Guide for the most relevant policies.

On a related note, please remember that our classrooms in the school and district are peanut and tree-nut free, and so no food items containing these ingredients should be sent for children’s snacks.

Also, mean-spirited behavior is not acceptable and permissible at any time, and I urge you not to minimize such acts by overlooking them. I truly believe that these issues have and likely will occur as a natural product of how children develop, but it is what the adults do immediately following that counts and dictates whether we accept it or reject it.

Please email your child's teacher primarily, or myself if you feel this is most necessary course of action, so that we can immediately look into the issue. If you feel strongly that anonymity is necessary in the reporting of an incident, you can access a link on both our school webpage or the district's page called TIPS (report incident). However, the more we know and the sooner we know, the quicker we can attend to a situation.

Below, are also expected behaviors we communicated to the entire school last Friday in our whole-school town meeting. I informed the students that these expectations are not restricted only to lunch and recess times in school, but should be practiced everywhere and at all times, especially looking at the person who is speaking to us.

Lunch-room expectations:

1. Stay in seat
2. Eat
3. Talk quietly
4. Eat, and be silent and look at the adult when they are talking to you.

Recess expectations:

1. Be safe
2. Be nice
3. Be silent and look at the adult when they are talking to you.

### **Personal Devices in School Rules**

I am a huge supporter of technology for because of its potential for making life and work more efficient and effective. Youngsters today have been raised in a world that they know of no time that smartphones, tablets, laptops and smart-watches, didn't exist, and it is incumbent upon us as adults and their guides to monitor and lead them to use it safely, respectfully and courteously, especially when interacting and communicating with others. Simply preventing them from using it does little to achieve this aim. Therefore, I want our students to see the school and I as a supporter and guide for safe and considerate technology use.

I will again this year be speaking to 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students primarily regarding the use of technology in general, as well as my position on its use in school as I think it's essential that this uncharted territory is addressed and not left to chance. While we, the adults, are digital immigrants, we always need to keep firmly in mind that our general life experience is still a necessary guide for our children despite them being often more tech-familiar than us. While I believe that technology is important for helping us communicate and work more efficiently, there are times and a place for using smartphones and smart-watches, and that school is not it. Thus, I will inform them (and you here) that if they do bring a smartphone to school, it is to be (1) switched off before entering school, (2) placed in their backpacks and (3) not brought out until they are out of school.

If these rules are defied, the phone will be confiscated and you, the parent, will be called to come and collect it. Your child will then not be permitted to bring his/her phone to school unless I authorize it. Personal tablets are also subject to the same rules.

I will also inform the students that the school bus is also considered being in school. However, they can choose to use their device, but they must be extremely cautious and mindful of not misusing them. Misuse includes, but is not limited to, taking pictures, sending and posting inappropriate or mean-spirited messages, etc. Such issues are subject to the same rules as outlined above.

Similarly, many students are wearing smart-watches, which are somewhat trickier, yet subject to the same general conditions. I don't have an issue with smart-watches being worn (just like I don't have an issue with smartphones being brought to school), but the moment that they become in any way shape or form a distraction to the one wearing it or to others, it will be confiscated. Following this, you will be called to come and collect it and it won't be permitted in again until I authorize it.

Please discuss these rules and expectations with your child and decide if it is necessary for them to have such devices in school. Regardless, if they become a distraction to the educational environment, even minimally so, they will not be permitted in.

Also, such devices will also not be permitted on field trips, as they provide a risky potential for misuse with limited monitoring capacity. Adult chaperones and school personnel would be held liable for issues related to misuse of devices on field trips under their supervision, which would immediately tar the experience for all.

### **Stop-Kiss-n-Go**

As I communicated recently, please remember that students are considered late and are marked in IC as such when they arrive in the building after 8:55 AM. This is the case regardless of whether or not a staff member is at the Fern Street door. We will also be closing the doors on Fern right at 8:55 AM from hereon forward, so please ensure that when you drop off in the morning that a staff member is present at the Fern Street door to allow your child to enter the building. If no staff member is present at the Fern Street door, you will need to bring your child to the main office in order for him or her to enter the building and acquire his or her late pass.

Please remember that...

1. Stop, Kiss and Go (SKG) is strictly for students who are being picked up in a vehicle in the SKG line on Fern street. No pick-up is permitted on the other side of the street (the houses side of the road). Please relay this to others you may have designated to pick up your child.
2. Students will NOT be dismissed from the SKG to be a walker. Students who will be walking home must be dismissed as a walker. Students in the main building exit from their classrooms doors, and students in the annex will exit through the Fern Street door.
3. There is NO parking permitted on Fern Street during arrival and dismissal on either side of the road. Please inform other friends or family of this who may be less familiar with the SKG process and/or have not directly received my emails.
4. Students should *only* be let off in the SKG line. Students should not be let out of cars on Birch Road and Beach Road to walk to school. These are not SKG areas and this can create issues with safety and an unnecessary back-up.

Also, please note that staff do not contractually begin their day until 8:45 AM and so there is no supervision until that time. Thus, please be aware of this when dropping off your child in the morning. This is especially important to note during inclement weather.

### **No Parking in Front of The Main Office**

When picking up or dropping off before and after SKG, as well as during the school day, please remember that there will be:

1. No parking or temporary stopping permitted on the yellow lines marked on the ground. Instead, please park in a parking spot or in the bus lane (only outside of SKG times). And this can only be temporary.
2. No leaving a car idling in front of the building, even if only stopping for a short while.

Again, this will pertain to all times before, during and after school, which will include drop-off and pick-up for Kids' Time, as well as students arriving late or leaving early.

### **No Food Zones**

Please be aware that the following locations are NOT permitted any food at any time within or outside of school hours: (1) Art room, (2) gymnasium, (3) music room, (4) library media center, (5) on the stage in the APR, and (6) the STEAM room in the annex.

### **School Safety**

Per section 11-7.1.2.1 of the CT Fire Safety Code, we are required to conduct a fire or emergency drill each month. On the weeks specified below, which may be subject to change, we will conduct either a fire or lockdown drill. During these exercises, students will practice responding to such events under trained faculty direction and in a calm and orderly manner.

These drills are also an excellent opportunity for the staff to further review and refine our procedures. Additionally, the goal of these drills/exercises is to enable everyone to know what to do in the event that an emergency situation does occur and to be able to act with speed and efficiency.

Month	Week of	Safety Drill
September	30 9-13	Fire drill Lockdown drill 1
October	14-18	Fire drill
November	4-8	Fire drill
December	9-13	Lockdown drill 2
January	6-10	Fire drill
February	17-21	Lockdown drill 3
March	2-6	Fire drill
April	20-24	Fire drill
May	25-29	Lockdown drill 4
June	1-5	Fire drill

### **Important Events and Dates**

To follow in a separate email

*Note.* Please also see *SharkBytes* for additional PTA information and events.

### **A Few FYIs**

#### *Recycling and Environmental Consciousness*

We will again remind our students this year to employ environmentally friendly practices that include placing their plastic and metal recyclables on the metal cart in the cafeteria instead of throwing them in the garbage bins.

We will also be emphasizing the *sharing table* in an effort to reduce waste where students can place unwanted and unopened food items (only those purchased from school) so that other students can take them free of charge.

Please encourage your child to support these efforts in school and to recognize opportunities out of school to support environmentally conscious practices. Also, consider having them join the Earth Rangers club. For more information, contact: Alexis Donovan or AC Cochran at [RSSGreenTeam@gmail.com](mailto:RSSGreenTeam@gmail.com).

#### *Roger Sherman Building Committee (RSBC)*

##### *Update on lockers*

The committee (and I am not a member) have worked diligently throughout last year and the summer to acquire some critical upgrades to our Phase III renovation project, which is still underway. As part of that work, the new lockers were installed and some additional items still need to be added, such as sloped tops and bases for some of them, as well as fill-in areas. We are awaiting information as to when these will be completed, but the lockers are fully functional and look great.

Similarly, I have also asked our maintenance department to upgrade the basketball hoops and nets and will be discussing fixing the broken "mushroom" stools on the playscape once it reopens.

This year, we will also be furthering the conversation regarding the acquisition of a continuous marked crosswalk and adding a crossing guard at the corner of Birch and Fern, which is currently under review by FPS and the Police.

**Reminders**

We encourage you to remain or become familiar with our school's website

(<http://fairfieldschools.org/schools/sherm/>), from which you can also access our PTA information, and the district website (<http://fairfieldschools.org>). A great deal of pertinent information can be found at these online locations.

**Your Feedback**

Let me know what questions you have on these and any other topics, as well as how we're doing. While the staff and I are very busy in the educating of our youngsters (your children), an important and essential element of doing that effectively is having an open and on-going dialogue with you.

Yours truly,

Dr. Ian M. Banner

[lbanner@fairfieldschools.org](mailto:lbanner@fairfieldschools.org)

Follow us on Twitter: @rogershermanllc