

**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR  
ROCK RIVER COOPERATIVE ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL  
RRCAS**

20965 EAST 900<sup>TH</sup> STREET  
GENESEO, IL 61254

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**PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS**

Orion	Alwood
Riverdale	Colona
Rockridge	Cambridge
Sherrard	Carbon Cliff/Barstow
Silvis	Geneseo
United Township	Glenview
	Erie

Geneseo Community Unit District #228 serves as the administrative district for the Cooperative. Rock River Cooperative Alternative School is located on U.S. Route #6 approximately six miles west of Geneseo, Illinois, and six miles east of Colona, Illinois.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

Rock River Cooperative Alternative School is committed to helping all students develop their full potential and to preparing them to be independent, productive, responsible citizens. It offers an academic and social program that meets the needs of all students and provides an environment conducive to learning.

## **HANDBOOK DISCLAIMER**

This handbook is intended to describe the school, its current practices, procedures, rules, and regulations in a general sense. It is a guideline, and administrators have the authority to make decisions outside of what is written.

Students who enroll at the RRCAS are considered to be entering into a contract with the policies and procedures as outlined in this handbook. Their signature and the signature (s) of their parent(s) or guardian must be included in the Assurances and Agreements section of this handbook, and those signatures serve as the guarantee of compliance with the contents of this handbook.

## **ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

The RRCAS is administered by Community Unit District #228, Geneseo, Illinois. This program is for students, age 12 to 21, who have completed 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Students may earn credits in order to receive a diploma from the home school. Admission to the alternative school will be granted upon referral from the home school. The student maintains his or her residence/enrollment at the home school.

### General admission requirements:

1. The student must be enrolled in at least the 7<sup>th</sup> grade and not be more than 21 years of age. The number of high school credits needed for graduation will be determined by the home school.
2. Admission requirements will be determined by policy and practice at the home school.
3. When Special Education students are admitted, special services provided prior to enrollment in the Safe Schools Program will follow those students.

## **BASIC TENETS OF RRCAS**

1. Each student is shown positive regard and treated with care and respect.
2. The student's program is individualized and based on his/her academic, social, or emotional needs.
3. Students are provided with a variety of experiences in which they can feel successful.
4. Rules are enforced with fairness and consistency.

## **NONDISCRIMINATION**

RRCAS shall treat all persons equally without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, sex, or handicaps unrelated to the function to be performed. This commitment relates to employment practices, the education of children, and relations with the community at large. RRCAS will be in compliance with Illinois Public Act 79-597 and Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments. Specifically, RRCAS shall:  
Employ and promote individuals solely on the basis of their qualifications and without regard to the characteristics outlined above provide for a continuous examination of all parts of the curriculum to make sure that it emphasizes positive human relationships; maintain an atmosphere in which all persons can develop attitudes and skills for effective cooperative living including:

- respect for the individual regardless of economic status, intellectual ability, race, creed, color, religion, sex, or age;
- respect for cultural differences;
- respect for the right of others to seek and maintain their own identities;
- respect for economic, political, and social rights of others

The superintendent shall serve as the district's coordinator of nondiscrimination. Inquiries regarding compliance with Illinois Public Act 79-597, Title IN, or Title 11(A) shall be directed to the superintendent at the Unit Office, 209 South College Avenue, Geneseo, IL telephone 944-2159, or to the Director of the Office of Civil Rights, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Washington, D.C. grievance or complaint of illegal discrimination should be directed to the superintendent who will provide the complaint with a copy of the district's written grievance procedure.

## **EQUAL EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES**

Equal educational opportunities shall be available for all students without regard to race, color, national origin, ancestry, gender, ethnicity, language barrier, religious beliefs, physical and mental handicap or disability, or economic and social conditions, or actual or potential marital or parental status.

Any student may file a discrimination grievance by using the Uniform Grievance Procedure.

### Sex Equity

No student shall, on the basis of sex, be denied equal access to programs, activities, services, or benefits or be limited in the exercise of any right, privilege, advantage, or denied access to educational and extracurricular programs and activities.

Any student may file a sex equity complaint by using the Uniform Grievance Procedure. A student may appeal the School Board's resolution of the complaint to the Regional Superintendent of Schools (pursuant to 105 ILCS 5/3-10 of The School Code) and, thereafter, to the State Superintendent of Education (pursuant to 105 ILCS 5/2-3.8 of The School Code.)

## **ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLEMENTATION**

The Superintendent shall appoint a Nondiscrimination Coordinator. The Superintendent and Building Principal shall use reasonable measures to inform staff members and students of this policy and grievance procedure.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

Home schools will provide and arrange for transportation of students to and from the RRCAS. Rules, regulations, and their enforcement will be the responsibility of the home school. Students are not permitted to drive to the RRCAS campus.

Students who miss their bus may be brought to school by parents or parent designate and must be signed in at the office upon arrival.

Students suspended from the bus may also be considered suspended from school.

## **SCHEDULE OF CLASSES**

RRCAS has on-site academic programs beginning at 9:00 a.m. with the school day ending at 2:30 p.m. There are five blocks of class time with a lunch break of thirty minutes. A variety of schedule options will allow students aged 16-21 to include a career education component through a work-study program, volunteer community service, or the United Township Area Career Center. Individual schedules and assignments will be determined by the administration and staff at the RRCAS in cooperation with the home school.

### 16-21 Year-old students

1. Students can be scheduled for a.m. or p.m. sessions.
2. Student schedules will include one session plus a work-site or volunteer component to meet the 300 minute requirement.
3. Students may begin their day at the UTHS Area Career Center and ride the UT bus to and from the RRCAS.
4. Sixteen-year-old students may be on a work-site schedule or an all day schedule depending on their needs.
5. Students who do not attend the ACC will be placed in a schedule that generates a minimum of 300 minutes.

### **SCHOOL CALENDAR**

The official calendar for the school year will coincide with that of the administrative district. (i.e. – Geneseo Schools)

### **STUDENT RECORDS**

In compliance with state and federal law, RRCAS and the home District shall maintain student records. These shall be:

1. A permanent record which shall include:
  - basic identifying information
  - academic transcripts
  - attendance record
  - accident/health reports
  - information pertaining to release of this record
2. A temporary record which may include:
  - intelligence/aptitude scores
  - achievement test results
  - psychological reports
  - honors/awards
  - disciplinary information
  - teacher anecdotal records
  - information pertaining to release of this record
  - other relevant information not required to be in the permanent record

Information in this record shall reference authorship and date. A request for access to the records shall be made in writing, and access to the records shall be granted within fifteen (15) days of the school's receipt of such a request.

## **SCHOOL CANCELLATION**

If weather conditions force school to start late, be canceled, or dismiss early, announcements will be made on radio and TV. The administrative district will determine cancellations. This information will be given on: WKBF/WPZR (98.9), WHBF – Rock Island, WQUA – Moline, KRVR/WMRZ/WLLR – Davenport, KLJB-TV, Channel 18 – Davenport, KWQC Channel 6 – Davenport, Mix 96/WOC, KUUL – Davenport, KKZW/WXLP – Davenport, WKEI (92.1) – Kewanee, WGEN/WRSQ – Geneseo, WVIK (90.1FM) – Rock Island, KWQC-TV – Davenport, KQCS – Davenport, WDLM-Coal Valley. All home schools will be notified of any cancellations.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Regular attendance will be one of the “keys” to student success in the RRCAS program. Most, if not all, of the progress toward credit for graduation will take place when the student is in attendance for class sessions. Attendance will be reported to the home school one day each week. Students whose attendance consistently falls short of their contractual agreement may be dismissed from the program. ( 3 unexcused absences will be cause for dismissal.)

In case of a student’s absence due to illness, court or other valid cause, a parent or guardian is to report the student’s absence to Rock River Cooperative Alternative School at (309) 949-2937. There is an answering machine available at all times should no one be able to answer the call. Leave your name, your student’s first and last names, the reason for the absence, and the date the student will return to school.

## **INNUNIZATION-PHYSICAL EXAMS**

All health and immunization records, including required physical exams, will be kept at the home school. Referral to the RRCAS will include assurances that such records are in order.

## **ILLNESS-INJURY**

Illness or injury at school may make it necessary that a student return home. Parents will be contacted to explain the circumstances and make arrangements for getting the student home. In case parents cannot be reached, RRCAS will contact the person listed as an alternate contact. Students will remain at school until such contact is made unless medical attention is considered an emergency.

Students should report all injuries or accidents to the instructor immediately after they occur. Students attending the school must provide their own accident insurance. It is recommended that a student not covered under a family medical policy purchase student insurance provided by the home school.

## **MEDICATION**

1. Written orders from a licensed health care provider must be obtained and must include the name of the drug, method of administering the medicine, and when it should be taken.
2. The parent/guardian of the student must request in writing that the school comply with the medication order. If supplies (such as spoons, etc.) are required to administer the medicine, it is the parent's responsibility to supply the school with such.
3. Medication must be brought to school in a container appropriately labeled by pharmacy or licensed health care provider. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian that an adequate amount of medication continues to be furnished to the school in a timely manner.
4. The initial dose of medication should be given at home.
5. All medications will be stored in a secure location.
6. Written directions for self-administered medications (such as asthma inhalers, insulin, etc.) must be provided from the health care provider and parents.
7. The use of "over the counter" medication is not permitted at school. Exceptions will be considered on an individual basis.
8. The parent/guardian will be responsible at the end of treatment for removing from the school any unused medication.

## **VISITORS**

The school encourages visits by the parents/guardians. They have special rights and responsibilities to keep themselves informed as to the student's progress and operation of the school. All visitors will be screened by the building administrator. No arrangements shall be made without prior approval.

Student visitors such as relatives or friends from other districts are not allowed. Any exception to this policy will be arranged by parents and school administration.

## **CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

The building administrator shall be responsible for coordinating the necessary course work for each student with the home school. The primary focus of that planning is the advancement toward the graduation requirements of the home school. Behind-the-Wheel Driver's Education will be the responsibility of the home school. Classroom Driver's Education will be offered at the RRCAS campus once each year.

The RRCAS administrator is responsible for determining the number of required and elective semester credits each student needs to satisfy the graduation requirements of the home districts. Member districts reciprocally agree to accept credits earned at RRCAS as satisfying their individual credit policies.

Students entering RRCAS during the school year will transfer in whatever grades they are earning in their home school at that time.

A student of senior status who has satisfied the graduation requirement of the home district may stop attending RRCAS after administration has confirmed that all such requirements are met.

Instruction will include a variety of techniques that will contribute to individual and group goals. These techniques will include, but not be limited to, individualized instruction, group sessions for lecture and demonstration, guided and independent practice, as well as opportunities for application of knowledge, skills, and abilities to a variety of life activities. Instructional and technological aids will be utilized to enhance learning opportunities. In addition to academic instruction, learning activities will include social and emotional development, peer relations, social responsibilities, and post-secondary planning.

Illinois Goal assessment Program outcomes may be used as part of the guidelines for curriculum and instruction. IGAP tests will be administered at the RRCAS campus if necessary.

### **PROGRESS REPORTS AND CREDITS**

High school students may begin and complete semester credits at any time during the year. Incomplete credits may be completed in the next semester.

Progress reports will be issued to parents and the sending school at approximate four-week intervals. Parent conferences are encouraged and welcomed.

All students are capable of academic growth and are expected to make progress and earn semester credits. Students who show little or no progress after a twelve-week period are subject to review. This may result in eventual removal from the program.

### **RULES OF CONDUCT**

The general rule of behavior for RRCAS students is that they are not to engage in any behavior, which disturbs or disrupts the learning of any other student. Students who persist in disruptive behavior will be subject to disciplinary action and may be terminated from the program. Behavior, which threatens, frightens, or promotes unsuitable conduct, will not be tolerated.

Public displays of affection are in appropriate for a school setting and will not be allowed.

The disciplinary actions that will be used by staff members are verbal warnings, conferences with students and/or parents, “time-out” for part of a session, loss of indoor

or outdoor break privileges, ISS (In-school suspension), and expulsion from school. Staff members will make every effort to fit the discipline with the offense.

Certain circumstances and behaviors may require that severe disciplinary action be taken on their first occurrence. Such offenses include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Using, possessing distributing, or attending school or being on school properties under the influence of alcohol or a controlled substance;  
Note: Students who emit the odor of alcohol, marijuana, or any other drug may be judged by administration to be under the influence or having been in possession;
2. Possession of drug paraphernalia such as pipes, roach clips, rolling papers, syringes, etc.;
3. Having or possessing a dangerous weapon on school properties;
4. Committing acts of vandalism to school property;
5. Using vulgar or abusive language;
6. Engaging in the harassment of other students or faculty based on race, religion, disability, gender, or any other real or contrived conditions;
7. Showing insubordination or insolence to school personnel;
8. Demonstrating any other behavior which endangers the life, safety, and/or property of students or personnel of the RRCAS;
9. Refusal to do assigned work;
10. Leaving school grounds without permission;
11. Open flames (lighters, matches, etc.);
12. Fire alarm/false fire report, bomb threat;
13. Theft and/or knowingly possessing stolen property;
14. Chronic disruption of school or class activities; failure to assume responsibility for, or control of one's behavior;
15. Being in an unauthorized area of the building, campus, or property;

Administrative discretion applies in all cases.

Note: Acts of physical violence (fighting and battery) as well as possession of controlled substances or paraphernalia are subject to automatic ten-day suspension and involvement of the Henry County Sheriffs Department.

#### Public Conduct on School Property

The school, in order to maintain public order on real property owned, leased, or otherwise used by the school, shall require that no person on school property:

1. Injure or threaten to injure the person of another;
2. Damage the property of another or of the school;
3. Violate any provision of the penal law of the State of Illinois or local ordinances;
4. Consume, possess, or distribute alcoholic beverages or illicit drugs or possess dangerous weapons;

5. Conduct themselves in such a manner as to impede, delay, or interfere with the orderly conduct of the educational program of the school;
6. Violate other rules and regulations adopted by the school which are designed to maintain public order on school property.

As circumstances warrant, appropriate action will be taken by the school staff.

Possession or use of electronic pagers, cellular telephones, or any other electronic devices is prohibited at school. They will be confiscated and held in the office until parents/guardians come to get them.

In order to ensure a safe and drug-free environment, it may be necessary for administration to search the pockets of students, student property or lockers. Students who refuse cooperation will be deemed insubordinate and are subject to suspension.

### **SMOKING**

In accordance with Illinois State Law, possessing, smoking, or using tobacco products is not permitted on the Rock River Alternative School property.

### **CAMPUS AREA**

Students are restricted to the yard area on the east side of the school, only in those areas designated by school staff. Students who are on the north, west or south side of the school without staff permission are in an unauthorized area and subject to disciplinary action.

### **LOCKERS**

Student lockers are the property of RRCAS and are provided for student use. Student lockers are subject to inspection at any time and are not to be defaced or damaged. Only locks provided by RRCAS may be used on student lockers. Students are responsible for the contents of their lockers.

### **GANG/OCCULT POLICY**

The presence of or student involvement in gangs/occults or gang/occult-related activities on school grounds or at school-related events, on school buses, or within 1,000 feet of school boundaries, including the display of gang/occult symbols or paraphernalia, is strictly prohibited. The RRCAS has adopted a zero tolerance of gang/occult activity. Any student who violates this policy shall be subject to suspension or expulsion in accordance with the student discipline policy.

As used herein, the term “gang or occult” shall mean any organization, club, secret society, or group composed wholly or in part of students, which seeks to perpetuate itself by accepting additional members from the students enrolled in the RRCAS, and which is assembled for the common purpose or design of (1) committing or conspiring to commit

criminal offenses, (2) engaging in conduct that is against the public good, or (3) engaging in conduct that interferes with or disrupts the school's educational process or programs. As used herein, the phrase "gang/occult-related" shall mean any conduct engaged in by a student (1) on behalf of any gang/occult, (2) to perpetuate the existence of any gang/occult, or (3) to effect the common purpose and design of any gang/occult, including without limitation recruiting students for membership in any gang/occult, threatening or intimidating other students or employees to commit acts or omissions against his will in furtherance of the common purpose and design of any gang/occult.

Inappropriate activities include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Soliciting and/or recruiting others for membership;
2. Participating in and/or inciting physical violence;
3. Extorting or soliciting money and/or services, requesting any person to pay for protection, insurance, or the payment of dues;
4. Coercing, harassing, and/or otherwise intimidating, threatening, or causing harm to any person or living creature;
5. Wearing, possessing, using, displaying in any manner, distributing, or selling any clothing, jewelry, emblem, badge, symbol, sign, signal, or other item commonly associated with membership in or affiliation with a gang/occult or secret society;
6. Using any communication, verbal or nonverbal (gestures, handshakes, etc.), suggesting or showing membership in, or affiliation with, a gang/occult or secret society;
7. Engaging in any activity or omission of activity intended to promote or further the interest of any gang/occult or any gang/occult activity or society including, but not limited to, distributing literature, drawing or displaying unauthorized symbols on any surface, or teaching others to represent or act like a member of a gang/occult or secret society;
8. Any act or activity which violates any law or any policy of the RRCAS when such act or activity is taken to further the interests of a gang/occult or secret society.

By joining a gang/occult or associating with gang/occult members, a student forfeits his or her expectation of privacy and allows for additional scrutiny.

Disciplinary action may include, depending on the nature of the conduct, any of the following; warning, parent conference, suspension at administrator discretion, or expulsion.

### **DRESS CODE**

Students are expected to present an appearance that does not disrupt the educational process or interfere with the maintenance of a positive teaching or learning climate. Dress and/or grooming which is not in accord with reasonable standards of health, safety, modesty and decency will be considered inappropriate. The following forms of dress are

not permitted:

1. Hats, caps, bandanas or other head coverings are not to be worn in the building during class, lunch, or breaks. They may be worn outside during breaks;
2. Coats, jackets, windbreakers, and other outerwear should not be worn in the building. These garments should be kept in student lockers. Outerwear may be considered any clothing beyond a shirt.
3. Bare feet;
4. Halter tops, bare midriff tops, see-through tops, spaghetti straps;
5. Wallet chains;
6. Clothing with profane or suggestive slogans or advertisements or pictures of alcohol or drugs;
7. Any clothing or method of wearing clothing that is determined to be gang/occult-related. EXAMPLES: Suspenders or bib overall straps are to be worn over the shoulders or tucked in on both sides. Belts are to be tucked in and not dangling from the waist.
8. Sagging pants will not be allowed.
9. Shorts that are too short or revealing will not be allowed. General rule would be three inches above the knees
10. Clothing that offends a person based on race, creed or color.

Students dressed in an inappropriate manner will be asked to change to appropriate Clothing. The building administrator is the final authority in determining proper student appearance.

## **DISCIPLINE**

The following discipline policies include examples of behavior only; it is not possible to identify every action which might result in discipline consequences. School action will be independent, and arrest, indictment, trial, conviction, or acquittal in criminal or juvenile court shall not be determinative of the action necessary for the school to maintain a safe, orderly, and disciplined educational environment. When it comes to the attention of the RRCAS that action has occurred which may invoke school discipline, the officials and employees of the RRCAS will cooperate with the police and other investigative agencies in providing and sharing information about the student to the degree that the official or the employee deems necessary and/or is governed by law.

Teachers will be responsible for establishing and maintaining uniform rules of conduct and developing procedures for classroom order so as to provide an appropriate educational atmosphere. All teachers have the right to remove disruptive students by sending them to the building administrator or his/her designee.

Violations of the guidelines for student discipline may result in detention, suspension, or expulsion.

Parents/guardians will be notified in writing, and by phone if possible, of the reason for the suspension and will be given a hearing on the suspension before school authorities if they so desire. For further information on the hearing process contact the home school administration.

## **SUSPENSION**

The building administrator is authorized to suspend students guilty of gross disobedience or misconduct from school for a period not to exceed ten (10) school days. The student and/or parents are due the following procedural projections.

1. Prior to the suspension, the student shall be provided oral or written notice of the charges. If the charges are denied, students shall be given an explanation of the evidence against them and an opportunity to present their version of the incident.
2. Prior notice and hearing as stated above may not be required and the student immediately suspended, when the student's presence poses a continuing danger to persons or property or an ongoing threat of disruption to the educational process. In such cases, the necessary notice and hearing shall follow as soon as practicable.
3. Any suspension shall be reported as immediately as possible to the parents or guardian of the student. Such report shall contain a full statement of the reasons for the suspension and a notice to the parent(s) or guardian of their right to review. Also, a copy of the notice shall be sent to the home school.
4. Upon request of the parent(s) or guardian, a hearing shall be conducted by a hearing officer appointed to review the suspension. At the hearing, the parent(s) or guardian of the student may appear and discuss the suspension with the hearing officer. If a hearing officer is appointed by the home school Board of Education, the hearing officer shall report to the Board a written summary of the evidence heard at the meeting. After its hearing or upon receipt of the report to the hearing officer, the Board of Education may take action as it finds appropriate. This hearing is to be arranged and conducted by the home school.

Gross disobedience or misconduct of students shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Disobedience of directives from staff members or school officials and/or rules and regulations governing student conduct;
2. Possession, use, distribution, purchase, sale or if found to be under the influence of controlled substances and look-alike substances and/or alcoholic beverages;

3. Injury, threat of injury, or verbal abuse, to any school employee, official, or student;
4. Destruction and/or defacement of any school property;
5. Possession, use or distribution of a dangerous weapon;
6. Other such conduct that poses a danger to persons or property or disrupts the educational process

### **EXPULSION**

The home school Board of Education is authorized to expel students guilty of gross disobedience or misconduct for the remainder of the school term or for a shorter or longer period as determined by that Board of Education.

## ASSURANCES AND AGREEMENTS

Compliance with the policies and procedures outlined in this handbook is considered essential for participation at the RRCAS. Non-compliance with the stated contents of this handbook will result in the removal of the student from the RRCAS. An individual contract, outlining individual student needs and parameters for participation will be implemented prior to assignment at the RRCAS.

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Student

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Parent

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Home School Administer

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RRCAS Representative

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Regional Office of Education

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Date