

Valley Elementary School



Student & Parent Handbook

2021 - 2022

We develop lifelong learners, encourage responsibility and promote achievement of individual potential.

Website: <http://ves.ccrce.ca>

Facebook Group: Valley Elementary School

Telephone: 902-896-5540

96 Salmon River Road
Valley, Nova Scotia B6L 2S5

Valley Elementary Staff 2020-2021

Mrs. Bronwyn Dodsworth, Grade Primary
Mrs. Natasha Weatherbee, Grade Primary
Mrs. Laura Jollymore, Grade 1
Mrs. Natalie Doroshenko, Grade 1
Ms. Sarah Carrigan, Grade 1/2
Mrs. Tiffany Cooke and Mrs. Lisa V. Smith, Grade 2
Ms. Jennifer Sutherland, Grade 2/3
Mr. Kurtis Porter, Grade 3
Mrs. Lisa J. Smith, Grade 3/4
Mrs. Tessa Faulkner and Ms. Colleen Taylor, Grade 4
Mrs. Angela McCarthy, Learning Center
Ms. Kimberly Aarts, Reading Recovery & Early Literacy Support
Mrs. Angela McCarthy and Mrs. Tiffany Cooke, Resource
Ms. Kasi Humber, French
Mrs. Judy Marquis, Physical Education
Mrs. Marianne Berry-Michaud, Music
Mrs. Janice Sutherland, Integrated English Language Arts
Mrs. Jackie Chambers - School Counsellor

Mrs. Tammy Reid, Child & Youth Practitioner
Mrs. Dawn Griffiths, Educational Assistant
Mrs. Cathy Weatherby, Educational Assistant
Mrs. Loretta Allen, Educational Assistant
Mrs. Tanya Hupalo, Educational Assistant
Mrs. Julie MacLean, Educational Assistant
Mrs. Julia Collins and Ms. Shannon Pearl, Custodians
Mrs. Tessa Davison, Administrative Assistant
Mrs. Lisa Smith, Vice-Principal
Mrs. Kimberly Wall, Principal

SCHOOL CALENDAR 2021 – 2022

September 2	Orientation Day for staff – No School for Students
September 2	Parent Orientation - 5:30-6:30
September 3	Site-Based Professional Development – No School for Students
September 7	First Day for Students
September 8	Picture Day
September 27	Site-Based Professional Development – No School for Students
September 30	Truth and Reconciliation Day - No School for Students
October 11	Thanksgiving – No School
October 22	Provincial Conference Day - No School for Students
November 11	Remembrance Day – No School
November 12	Assessment & Evaluation Day – No School for Students
November 24	Report Card Day
November 25	Parent-Teacher Meetings (5:30 – 7:30 PM)
November 26	Parent-Teacher Meetings (8:05 – 10:57 AM)– No School for Students Site-Based Professional Development (PM) – No School for Students
December 22	First day of Christmas break
January 5	School Reopens
February 21	Heritage Day – No School
March 14-18	March Break
March 25	Assessment & Evaluation Day – No School for Student
April 6	Report Card Day
April 7	Parent-Teacher Meetings (5:30 – 7:30 PM)
April 8	Parent-Teacher Meetings (8:05 – 10:57 AM) – No School for Student Site-Based Professional Development (PM) – No School for Student
April 15	Good Friday - No School
April 18	Easter Monday - No School
May 23	Victoria Day- No School
June 29	Administration Day – No Students Present
June 30	Report Card Day (1 hour)

WELCOME!

We are excited to welcome you to the Valley Elementary 2021/22 school year. We understand that this year will continue to look a bit different, so you will find lots of helpful information in this document. We have students in PrePrimary to Grade 4.

At Valley Elementary School, we believe that positive relationships between students, staff and the community create a positive and safe environment that is conducive to student learning. This includes an environment that allows students to strive for excellence in academic, social, and extracurricular endeavors. On behalf of VES staff we look forward to another fun and fulfilling school year. We invite you to collaborate with us so the educational programs at school will be enhanced and rewarding for all involved.

USING THE HANDBOOK EFFECTIVELY

The contents of this handbook are for use by students and their parents. **Some of the information is subject to change throughout the year, so parents and students should be aware of this possibility and ensure they read notices and listen to announcements.** We wish you a happy, exciting, and successful year. Ultimately, this handbook is only as useful as you make it. Regard it as a reference tool to consult when wondering about school policies and guidelines.

REGISTRATION

We require ALL students to have a completed registration form. A copy of each new student's birth certificate or passport is required. New students should attach last year's report card to the registration form.

Each September we send home a copy of your registration to be updated. Please assist our Administrative Assistant by highlighting any new or changed information. **We must have an alternate contact telephone number for all students in case an emergency arises and we need to notify someone to take responsibility for your child.**

ALLERGY ALERT

Valley Elementary has students with anaphylactic allergies to peanuts and tree nuts. Our policy below outlines expectations for staff, parents, students, and the cafeteria.

Allergen Policy: Peanuts, tree nuts, peanut butter and tree nut butter are not to be brought to Valley Elementary. In addition, foods which cannot easily be distinguished from the above products are not appropriate to send to school.

SCHOOL HOURS/OFFICE HOURS

The school day for students is **8:25 am – 2:15 pm**. Supervision of students begins at 8:05 and ends at 2:15. Please make sure your children arrive early enough to be settled on the playground by 8:18. Students will enter by class at the side door.

The office hours are **8:00 am - 1:00 pm** and **1:30 pm - 3:30 pm**. If you arrive or call during **1:00 pm - 1:30 pm**, the office is closed for lunch and there may not be coverage. Voicemail will be checked at 1:30 pm when Mrs. Davison returns.

This year recess and lunch times will be staggered to allow space for classroom cohorts to properly distance on the playground. **Recess will be 9:55-10:10 and 10:10-10:25. Lunch is from 12:00-12:40. Grades Primary, 2 and 4 will eat from 12:00-12:20 and then head out to the playground. Grades 1 and 3 will be on the playground from 12:00-12:20 and then eat from 12:20-12:40.**

SAFE AND SECURE SCHOOL

The staff and administration support a safe and secure environment at Valley Elementary School. Exterior doors are locked during the instructional day. Access to the school is at the front door. Should you need to come to the school please ring the bell beside the door and the administrative assistant will make the necessary contact with the teacher or classroom.

PERMISSION TO LEAVE THE SCHOOL

Parents are required to advise the school office when taking students out of the school during the school day. Early departure of students should be avoided whenever possible. Elementary students, except those who normally go home for lunch at noon, are **NOT PERMITTED** to leave the school grounds. If you are picking your child up during recess or lunch please ring the bell to let the administrative assistant know you are there. The office is closed between 1 and 1:30. If you are picking someone up during this time please call 896-5540.

LATE ARRIVAL

It is reasonable to expect each student to be on time for school. Repeated lateness is a sign of disrespect and is discourteous to the rest of the students in the class. Daily announcements are made at **8:25 am.**, followed by an overview of the day in each classroom. It is important for students to be here to receive this information and missing it often results in confusion. In addition, being punctual is a habit to be encouraged, especially for the future world of work. Parents will be notified of habitual lateness.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Students are expected to attend every day that school is in operation, unless prevented from doing so by reason of illness or some other unavoidable circumstance. When students are absent they miss opportunities and learning experiences that cannot be recovered.

Children who are ill or are showing symptoms of COVID-19 should be kept at home (please refer to COVID - 19 daily checklist). This helps prevent the spread of infectious diseases and allows the student to recover in a comfortable environment. When students return to school they must be well enough to participate in a regular school day including outside recess and lunch play.

Parents are required to inform the school of the reason for any absence of their child or children. Valley Elementary has a **Safe Arrival** program and will contact parents at the beginning of the school day if students are absent and unexcused. If we are unable to contact parents we will call your alternate/emergency contacts. Messages to inform us of student absences may be left on our voice mail at any time.

EXPECTATIONS and RESPONSIBILITIES

To create and maintain a positive and productive learning environment we need cooperation from school, students and parents. The guiding 'Fair Play' principles that we expect everyone to observe are:

Show RESPECT

Increase SELF DISCIPLINE

Improve COMMUNICATION

Promote SPORTSMANSHIP

Demonstrate POSITIVE ATTITUDE

We believe that children learn best in a safe, orderly environment. This type of environment can best be achieved when children demonstrate self-discipline and accept responsibility for their own behavior. When children meet the five expectations outlined below they are demonstrating good school citizenship. Children who have difficulty meeting these expectations will be invited to find ways to choose better behavior. If they are unable to find solutions on their own, parents will be requested to assist them to make choices appropriate to our school environment.

Student Expectations:

1. Use appropriate language and actions
2. Look after and care for our school.
3. Use your class time effectively.
4. Arrive on time with all of the materials required for class.
5. Respect yourself, others around you, and the learning environment within the school.

Zones Of Regulation

Teachers and support staff have been in-serviced on The Zones of Regulation. This is a program that teaches students to recognize and acknowledge emotions of themselves and others in a positive manner.

The Zones of Regulation™:

Blue-sad or tired

Green-ready to learn

Yellow-excited or agitated

Red-Angry, hurt or in distress

COMMUNICATION

We have found through experience that when all stakeholders involved in the education of your children are communicating with each other, problems or concerns are soon addressed or prevented. All of our teachers offer an open invitation for you to call us at the school to discuss your child or any concerns you may have. Please let us know if you have a question, concern, or problem by calling the school or communicating in the student agenda or Primary folder.

- Parents are encouraged to use the Communication notebook to communicate to their child's teacher by writing directly into the notebook. Teachers will respond in the notebook or by a means mutually agreed upon.
- The school will issue a newsletter once a month to keep parents and students informed of various activities and programs.
- Report Cards will be issued three times a year. Parent/Teacher Interviews are scheduled after the first and second reporting period.
- Newsletters, annual reports, school links and current information will be posted on the school website – ves.ccrce.ca.
- In order to facilitate timely communication with minimal impact on the environment, V.E.S. communicates electronically as much as possible. One of the ways this is done is by using a system called ALERT. This system will communicate a message via email, text or voice message. Parents will be asked to select the method(s) they prefer.

- Notices and / or memos will be sent home electronically or posted on the website as reminders of events / deadlines or information you should be aware of between newsletters.
- Valley Elementary has a Facebook group. This group can be accessed by searching for Valley Elementary School and requesting to become a member. This is a closed group and member requests are screened to ensure a legitimate connection to our school community. All parents are encouraged to join this group. It has proven to be a very efficient way to communicate pertinent information. Photos from school events are sometimes posted here as well.
- The Administrative Assistant is in the office 8:00 – 1:00 and 1:30– 3:30. This is the best time to contact us by phone. The office is closed 1:00-1:30. Messages may be left on our voice mail. **If you leave a message regarding dismissal arrangements for your child please do not assume it will be acted upon unless you have spoken directly with a staff member.** In the performance of her duties the Administrative Assistant is frequently out of the office and may not check voicemail until after the students depart.
- Please contact your child’s teacher with any concerns or questions you have about class related activities. If you have concerns of a more general nature or if you have contacted the teacher and wish to discuss the matter further please feel free to contact Mrs. Wall.
- PowerSchool is a secure website where you and your child will be able to see a current standing of academic achievement, marks on individual assignments and attendance. A letter will be sent home to new parents containing access directions and availability of information in September.

USE OF THE TELEPHONE

The school telephone is a business phone. Responsibility is acquired when children learn to remember for themselves things such as supplies, homework, lunches, permission slips, etc. When we allow children to call home for things they have forgotten we are not giving them the opportunity to develop this responsibility. Students will not be able to use the phone to make social arrangements for after school. Teachers generally will NOT be called out of class to answer telephone calls. Messages will be taken and forwarded to teachers at the end of instructional time.

HOMEWORK

All schools in Nova Scotia follow the **Provincial Homework Policy**. It is expected that developmentally appropriate homework will be given at all grade levels.

Homework will have one or more of the following purposes:

- Prepare information or materials for future learning opportunities.
- Practice new knowledge or new skills.
- Enrich students’ understanding of a topic and apply it in new ways.

ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION

If your child is to receive oral medication of any kind, both prescription or over the counter, the school requires a medical form of instruction from the parent regarding the illness, medication, and dispensing instructions. Medications will be kept in the office for dispensing. School Staff are not able to distribute aspirin, cough drops, etc. to students.

MEDICAL CONCERNS

If your child has a condition which conceivably might require emergency treatment at school such as diabetes, epilepsy or severe allergies, please be sure the school has current information. For students such as these, a **Plan of Care** will be developed by the school and parents to be posted in key areas of the school.

MASKS

While we are in phase 4 of our Provincial Re-opening plan all students and staff are required to wear masks at all times, except when they are eating or drinking or are able to physically distance themselves. It will be communicated to all parents when (if) we are able to go without masks.

HOT LUNCH PROGRAM

Our cafeteria is part of the **Cobequid School Catering Society**. We have a board of directors, a food services manager, and a business manager. They collectively oversee the operation of the cafeteria. We try to offer a balanced menu of meals which are healthy and popular choices. The cost of a meal is **\$4.25** without milk, **\$4.75** which includes the main meal and milk, and **\$5.50** for the main meal with chocolate milk. Snacks may be purchased separately. The menu is sent monthly. This is also available on our website ves.ccrce.ca. Please direct any questions to our cook. These will be delivered to your child in their class at the appropriate times (Recess & Lunch).

WATER BOTTLES

Each student is asked to bring a full water bottle with them to school each day. Fountains will only be accessible to refill water bottles, not for a direct drink.

SCHOOL DRESS

Weather conditions vary and it is important that students are dressed to suit these conditions. Students need to have a change of footwear for indoor use. They are expected to wear their gym sneakers each day in school. This will assist us in keeping our school as clean as possible. Indoor shoes must be worn at all times. Hats may be worn in the hallway only.

Extreme styles or obscene styles are unacceptable in our school. Students not conforming to these standards may be asked to change their attire before being admitted to class. More specifically, this includes offensive or inappropriate words, phrases and pictures on clothing. In addition, students are not to wear tops that are strapless, have spaghetti straps, are low-cut or backless; expose undergarments or the midriff; and shorts that are above mid-thigh in length.

CLOSURE OF SCHOOLS AND CANCELLATION OF BUS SERVICE

Ultimately, parents have the daily responsibility of determining whether or not it is safe for their children to go to school.

When school is cancelled for any reason it is posted on the CCRCE website. You can also sign up for text alerts from the CCRCE website. Closures are also announced on the Truro radio stations. If school is in session and weather conditions threaten school cancellation please listen for radio announcements. It is important that you have a plan for your children before a midday cancellation occurs. Our procedure in the event of an early dismissal is to confirm arrangements with parents / caregivers. The first emails and calls for this confirmation will be made for bus students. Bus students will be dismissed after these calls are made. Parents who pick up their children will be asked to sign them out. Students who walk home will be dismissed after the busses leave.

BIRTHDAY PARTY INVITATIONS

Please distribute invitations to parties outside of the school if at all possible. If unavoidable, party invitations will be distributed at school if everyone in the class is invited. Not being invited to a party can ruin the day for a student and disrupt learning for all.

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

The cost of basic school supplies are the responsibility of the parent. The school will purchase these supplies for the year. Payment of \$30 for these supplies is **due by Wednesday, October 20th**. Art Supplies such as construction paper, water-colors, pastels etc. are not part of this program but are covered by the school budget. Please provide your child with inside footwear that is suitable for Physical Education class, (ie. pair of running shoes) backpacks, and lunch bags.

LOST AND FOUND

The school is not responsible for lost articles, but does attempt to help in their recovery by providing a Lost & Found in the nook between the Primary area and the gym. Found clothing is often hung on the extra hooks upstairs where all students pass on their way to music. To help us return items to their rightful owners, please make sure that:

- All student belongings are clearly labeled.
- Do not bring valuables to school. We will not be responsible for their care or loss. Students should check with their teachers before bringing items from home to school.

BUSSING

Students who qualify for transportation are bussed to and from their residence. **All students who travel on a bus are required to wear a mask.** Driving students to other places, including babysitters, is courtesy bussing. Whenever possible the transportation department allows courtesy bussing.

Students will be dismissed at **2:15** for the busses, daycares and walkers will be dismissed after the busses have left the school yard. We ask that if you are waiting for a student after school to be dismissed with the walkers to please be aware of social distancing.

All inquiries for bus transportation must be directed to the CCRCE Transportation Department. Students are not permitted to travel on any bus other than their own unless permission has been granted from the Transportation Department. Many CCRCE busses are filled to capacity and therefore cannot accommodate courtesy passengers. The contact number for the Transportation Department is 902-896-5561.

PRIVATE TRANSPORTATION

When bringing children to school or picking them up please note the following safety guidelines:

- Use the appropriate, marked driveway to enter and exit the school year.
- The longest loop leading to the front doorstep is reserved for busses, vehicles transporting students with special needs and vehicles transporting students to daycare.
- Students being picked up are dismissed at the side door facing the church after busses have departed.
- The shorter loop is for parent drop off and pick up. In the morning this loop is only to be used for dropping students off quickly. If your drop off routine involves getting out of

your vehicle to assist your child or walk them into the school please use a regular parking stop.

- Turn right when turning out of the school driveway in the morning to help with traffic congestion.

ELECTRONICS AND TOYS

Students are asked to leave electronics and toys at home. If they are brought to school they cannot interfere with the learning in the classroom. The school is not responsible for any lost, broken or stolen electronics and toys brought from home. Recess and lunch breaks are intended to encourage an active, healthy lifestyle therefore use of electronics at this time is strongly discouraged.

CUSTODY

If you and the other parent of your child(ren) are separated/divorced and you have legal/primary residential custody of your child(ren), we need to have a copy of your custody papers on file. Without this we are obligated to assume that both parents have equal access to your child(ren) and their records.

SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL

The School Advisory Council at Valley Elementary is composed of elected parents, teachers, and community members who strive to improve the educational programs and school climate of our school. Please contact the school if you would like to become a member. There is a vacant parent seat filled each September. An election is held if necessary. Parents serve on council for a three year term.

HOME & SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

The Valley Elementary Home & School Association provides an excellent opportunity for establishing better communication between parents/teachers and to help in understanding the activities, opportunities and programs for learning. This is one of the best ways for parents to learn about school life. Our Home & School plays a very important role in our school, providing extra support to both students and staff. We invite you to join our Home & School Association.

EMERGENCY DRILLS

The purpose of emergency drills is to teach students the proper procedures to follow in the unlikely event of an emergency situation. Fire drills are practiced 6 times during the school year. **Code Blue (Lock Down)** is practiced twice a year. **Code Blue (Hold and Secure)** is practiced once a year. A relocation drill is practiced once during the year. During these drills students are expected to follow the directions of staff. Members of the local RCMP are usually involved in our **Code Blue** and relocation drills.

Valley Elementary School has a Crisis Team that has developed a plan for emergencies which may occur. This team updates and trains staff to care for students during an emergency at school. It is *critical* that you provide the school with correct home and work telephone numbers as well as cell phone numbers. Providing accurate numbers increases the chances of our being able to contact you in the event of an emergency.

COMMUNITY NOTICES

We are often asked to distribute information on behalf of community groups. This will be done electronically via our website under community. Posting a notice on behalf of a community group does not constitute a recommendation of that activity by us.

Have a wonderful year at Valley Elementary!

