

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Cooks Corners Elementary School

**20 TOGETHER - What is "20 Together?"** The "20 Together" initiative was established to promote students reading for 20 minutes at home 5 days a week. To do this "together," please read to your child, listen to them read, or read your own material alongside your child. Modeling reading is equally important to reading practice! Have your child turn in their monthly "20 Together" calendars for some special rewards.

**A.R. - What is A.R.?** A.R. stands for Accelerated Reader. Accelerated Reader is a reading program used by many teachers at Cooks Corners to promote reading at each child's individualized level. To learn more about how Accelerated Reader is used in your child's class, please contact your child's teacher.

**ARRIVAL - How does arrival to school work?** Our arrival to school each day is happy and action-packed. If you choose to drive your child to school, you can help make this a smooth and safe process by bringing him or her after most of our buses have arrived each day. On Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, please plan to drop-off your child at 8:35. On Wednesday, (late start), please plan to drop off your child at 9:05. If your child will be eating breakfast, they are welcome to arrive 10 minutes earlier.

**ASSESSMENTS - What standardized assessments will my students take this year?** We have several standardized tests that are taken by students during the school year. Several are required by the state of Indiana and others are part of the Valparaiso Community Schools assessment program. These tools give us great ongoing data so that we can develop a powerful educational plan for each child. Here is a list of the standardized assessments that students will take:

**STAR Reading** - This is given to 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> grade monthly. At times 1<sup>st</sup> grade also participates.

**STAR Math** - This is given to 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> grade monthly. At times 1<sup>st</sup> grade also participates.

**mCLASS Reading and Math** - This is given to Kindergarten, 1<sup>st</sup> grade, and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade 3 times/year.

**Acuity English/Language Arts** - This is given to 3rd grade, 4th grade and 5<sup>th</sup> grade 3 times/year.

**Acuity Math** - This is given to 3rd grade, 4th grade and 5<sup>th</sup> grade 3 times/year.

**Acuity Science** - This is given to 4th grade 2 times/year.

**Acuity Social Studies** - This is given to 4th grade 2 times/year.

**IREAD3** - This state reading assessment is given to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade once per year.

**ISTEP+** - This state assessment is given to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, 4<sup>th</sup> grade and 5<sup>th</sup> grade once per year.

**BIRTHDAY BOOK CLUB - What is the Birthday Book Club?** The Birthday Book Club is run by our school librarian and is a way to donate a book to our school media center in honor of your child's birthday. Information about the Birthday Book Club is sent home each year in the fall, but if you have any questions about this program, please call the school and ask to speak with our librarian.

**BREAKFAST – Is breakfast served at school?** Yes! Breakfast is served at school every morning, and all students are invited to eat with us. The cost of a student breakfast is \$1.40 and is debited from a student's account when he or she eats. If you do not choose to have your child eat breakfast at school,

don't forget to leave time for them to eat at home. This will help your child avoid tummy aches and be energized to start learning!

**BUS INFORMATION - Where can I find my child's bus information** Bus numbers, bus stops, pick-up times and drop off times are available on RDS Parent Access. If you need to contact the transportation department, please call 219-531-3121

**DISMISSAL - How does dismissal from school work?** Our students leave school via numerous routes at the end of each day. Therefore we ask that you please consider planning a consistent dismissal routine and procedure for your child. This helps your student feel comfort and confidence in knowing what they are to do at 3:15. That being said, we know that changes in plans may occur. Therefore, we ask that you please send a note to school in the morning if your child will be following alternate plans. If you have an unexpected emergency, please call the school. Anyone picking up your child from school should be listed on the emergency card and should be prepared to provide a photo I.D.

**FORGOTTEN RDS PASSWORD - What should I do if I've forgotten my RDS password?** If you ever forget your RDS username or password, please call the school and we will reset it.

**GRADES - How can I review and understand my student's grades?** At Cooks Corners, we promote a rigorous curriculum. A student's grades should be a true reflection of how that child is performing relative to that rigorous curriculum. As a parent, you can regularly check your students grades on RDS Parent Access. Grade postings in RDS begin in 1<sup>st</sup> grade.

**KINDERGARTEN PLAY DATES - What are kindergarten play dates?** Kindergarten play dates take place prior to the start of school on our Cooks Corners playground. This is a chance for kindergartners to become acclimated to Cooks Corners, our play equipment and their new peer group. Information about kindergarten play dates is shared at Kindergarten Round Up and via phone messages.

**LUNCH VISITS - May I eat lunch with my child at school?** Yes! We would love to have you join us for lunch at school! If you wish to do so, plan to eat a school lunch or a packed lunch from home. If you would like to eat a school lunch, call the office by 9:00 a.m. to place your order. An adult school lunch costs \$3.30. (Please bring exact change if possible.) Once you arrive for lunch, please check in at the school office to sign in and get a visitor's pass.

**MEDICATIONS - What should I do if my child needs to take medications at school?** If your child needs to take prescription medications OR over-the-counter medications at school, a doctor order is needed along with a parent signature. Medications must also be in their original container and/or a prescription box. This includes pain relievers, topical creams, cough drops and more. All medications must be stored in the nurse's office.

**PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES - When will parent/teacher conferences be held?** Parent teacher conferences are available upon request and can be done via phone or in person. Please call the school at any time with questions about your child's progress or to schedule a conference with your child's teacher.

**PICK-UP - What are the procedures for picking up my child from school?** If you wish to pick up your child from school, this should be your normal dismissal plan. Please arrive at Cooks Corners by 3:15 and go to the media center. From there, you should be prepared to show a photo I.D. and sign your child out of school. If someone other than a parent is picking up your child, please be sure that individual is on your child's emergency card. That individual should also be ready to provide a photo I.D. If you need to unexpectedly pick up your child from school, please send a note to the school in morning. If an emergency arises and a dismissal change is needed, please call the school.

**PRECAUTIONARY DRILLS** – We regularly practice precautionary drills for your child's safety. This includes a fire drill, a storm drill and a red alert (lock-down) drill. Feel free to take the time to discuss these with your child. Also, if you have any questions about these drills, do not hesitate to call the school.

**PTO - What is the PTO?** The PTO is the Parent Teacher Organization. Being a part of this group is a great way to become involved in our school. For more information about our PTO visit our website and choose the "Parents" tab.

**RDS - What is RDS?** At registration, you created an RDS Parent Access account. That account should be accessed to look at your child's bus information, class assignments, grades, report cards and more.

**REPORT CARDS - How will I review my child's report card?** Valparaíso Community Schools no longer issue paper copies of report cards. When report cards are ready at the end of each quarter, you can view your child's card through your RDS Parent Access account.

**SCHOOL MESSENGER - What is School Messenger?** School Messenger is the vehicle I use to send you e-mail, phone and text messages. I reserve this message system for important reminders. If you ever fail to receive clear messages or are having difficulty receiving messages, please contact the school.

**SCHOOL PLEDGE - What is the school pledge?** Every day we start our school day with the Pledge of Allegiance, a moment of silence, a special quote and a school pledge. Here is our school pledge:

"Today I will treat each person with a kind heart.  
I will approach learning with determination.  
I will do what is right. I will confront what is wrong.  
I will make this day great for those around me.  
I will make this day great for myself."

**SNACKS AND SPECIAL TREATS - What are the guidelines for sending snacks for my child or special treats for the class?** In support of our Valparaíso Community Schools Wellness Committee and in compliance with our Elementary Student Handbook, all food items brought into our school must be a healthy choice. Fast food meals and soft drinks are not permitted in our lunchroom. Snacks should only be provided at the teacher's request. If you would like to celebrate special days (such as a birthday) for your child, non-food items are recommended and in some cases required. If you choose to send a food treat, it must be a healthy, store prepackaged food with an ingredient label. In order to determine

whether your snack donation is a healthy option, please visit our Cooks Corners website and utilize the link to a Smart Snacks Calculator. If your snack choice meets the requirements of the Smart Snacks Calculator, it is approved!

**TEACHER ASSIGNMENTS - How can I find out my child's teacher assignment?** Teacher assignments are finalized the week after registration. Once class assignments are made, you will receive a phone message that assignments have been posted on RDS and on the front windows of the school.

**TEACHER CONTACT - What is the best way to contact my child's teacher?** The best way to contact your child's teacher is via e-mail. Please check our school website for a list of staff e-mail addresses. Also, feel free to call the school at any time.

**VALPARAISO COMMUNITY SCHOOLS FOUNDATION** – Our VCS Foundation is another strong supporter of Valparaíso Schools and another great way to become involved. If you are interested in learning more about the Foundation or its events, please call the administration building at 219-531-3000.