



Dear CRES Families,

I hope your summer has been a blend of relaxation and joy! The occasional cool 70-degree weather was surprisingly welcome, especially considering the scorching temperatures seen in many parts of our country. As we move toward the end of August, I'm excited about the upcoming school year.

The strong partnership in place between our school, families, and the broader community fills me with gratitude, and I look forward to strengthening this connection even further this year. Our new [strategic plan](#) stands as a testament to our collaboration – it was developed with input from a wide array of stakeholders. We remain dedicated to a student-centered approach, encompassing everything from experiential learning to well-being and equity.

This year we continue our commitment to outdoor learning opportunities for every student. We're now in the third year of our RREV grant, which provides resources for outdoor education training for our staff in partnership with local community organizations. At CRES, your children will be out in nature – moving, exploring, and learning about the world around them.

Speaking of movement and outdoor time, we're introducing some schedule adjustments to support these aspects. If your child arrives between 7:30-7:45 AM, they can opt to play on the playground, enjoy breakfast, or go to the library during this period. Additionally, we're implementing a flex time within the school day instead of a second recess. Our teaching teams will offer an outdoor, movement-focused option during this time, which could involve woodland recesses, nature hikes, or extensions of outdoor learning experiences. I explain further in the pages that follow.

This week, we'll send a class placement email and mail home placement details along with introductory letters from the teachers. **If you have any questions about class assignments, please reach out to me directly.** As a reminder:

- We do not honor family requests for specific teachers
- We do not change class placement unless there's a safety issue for the child
- If there is a safety issue it needs to be reported to me - I will consider it and respond

Here's the reasoning behind us sharing class assignments in late August and not earlier.

- Our utmost priority is to create classes that cater to the needs of all students.
- Enrollments shift significantly during the summer, and we need time to thoughtfully organize classroom placements.
- Once families know about placements, making changes can become a bit challenging for everyone involved.

Finally, **for important information about the first week of school**, please review the following pages.

I can't wait to see you and share another wonderful year together!

Warm regards,

Chris Walker-Spencer  
chris.walker-spencer@fivetowns.net

## **New Families to CRES**

Each year we welcome a large cohort of new students, from those entering PreK and Kindergarten to students in Grades 1-4 that have moved to our community.

Getting started with PreK and Kindergarten is a new and exciting time filled with wonder and lots of questions, for both children and adults. Whether you are sending your oldest child, or you've been a part of our school community before, we all want this first school experience to be positive, welcoming, and safe. Sending your child to school for the first time is a big deal! We take that responsibility seriously and we're here to support your child, and you, during this transition. One way we provide that support is through our Orientation Day.

### **Pre-K and Kindergarten Orientation from 7:30-8:45 a.m.**

Pre-K and Kindergarten parents/guardians and students will meet your child's teacher, bus driver and classmates at the morning Orientation.

### **New Parent Orientation (ALL new parents/guardians) from 7:45-8:45 a.m.**

We hold a new parent orientation on the morning of September 5<sup>th</sup> in the cafeteria at CRES.

## **Multiage Families**

### **Multiage Visit, September 5th between 7:30-8:45 a.m.**

A chance for students and families to stop in and see the classroom, classmates and teachers. Multiage families should feel free to drop by anytime during that time. **Multiage Kindergarten students** will have their first day of school on Thursday, September 7<sup>th</sup>.

## **All CRES Families**

### **15-minute Introduction & Information meetings (all students/families)**

Teachers will hold these 1:1 meetings with all families throughout the day.

Look for a separate email this week with a link to schedule the 1:1 meeting with your child's teacher.

Please review the event-specific memos that follow to learn more about the orientation events.

## Pre-K Orientation

**Tuesday, September 5<sup>th</sup>** is Orientation Day.

PreK family 1:1 meetings will take place on September 5<sup>th</sup> AND 6<sup>th</sup>.

The first official day of school for **PreK** students is Thursday, September 7<sup>th</sup>.

An exciting part of the Orientation Day for all Pre-K students is the “practice” ride to school on the bus. CRES PreK students, older siblings and parents are welcome to ride the bus. **Unfortunately, only school-age children are allowed to ride the bus for safety reasons**, so younger siblings and other family members are welcome to meet you at the school.

Parents, your child’s bus driver will be contacting you before Orientation to verify that your child will be riding the bus to school and to inform you of the approximate pickup time on the 5<sup>th</sup> and on school days. This bus ride is a great way to experience your child’s bus route firsthand and practice bus safety.

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**Where:** Camden-Rockport Elementary School  
11 Children’s Way, Rockport, ME 04856

**When:** Tuesday, September 5<sup>th</sup> from 7:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.

**Who:** PreK students and their families

**Transportation:** School bus rides to and from CRES for your PreK student and parents. We collect bus information through the Transportation Form during the registration process. The information we collect will prompt a call from your bus driver to confirm the pick-up time and location.

**Parent Schedule:**        **7:30:** Parents/Guardians and students arrive on buses.

**7:45 – 8:15:** Parents to the **cafeteria** for an informational meeting.

- Presentation by administrators Chris Walker-Spencer and Katie Bauer
- Camden Rockport School Alliance, Food Service and Transportation director introductions

**8:15 – 8:45:** Parent Meet & Greet

- Explore PreK woods classroom and trails
- Socialize with other families
- Meet our Transportation and Food Service Directors
- Meet CRSA representatives
- Meet CRES building administrators

**8:45:** Parents to PreK playground to meet their child

**9:00:** Parents and children to the bus loop to board buses and ride home

**PreK Schedule:**

<b>7:30:</b>	Arrival at school – enter the PreK playground in the bus loop
<b>7:40 – 8:15:</b>	PreK teacher leads group activity on the PreK playground
<b>8:15 – 8:45:</b>	Intervention teachers lead group activities
<b>8:45:</b>	Parents to PreK playground to meet their child
<b>9:00:</b>	Parents and children to the bus loop to board buses and ride home

## Kindergarten Orientation

**Tuesday, September 5<sup>th</sup>** is Orientation Day, and the first day of school is Wednesday, September 6<sup>th</sup> for **single-grade Kindergarten** students.

Please note: **PreK** and **Multiage Kindergarten students have a different starting day** than single-grade Kindergarten classrooms: (Thursday, September 7<sup>th</sup>.)

An exciting part of this day for all Kindergarten students is the “practice” ride to school on the bus. CRES Kindergarten students, older siblings and parents are welcome to ride the bus. **Unfortunately, only school-age children are allowed to ride the bus for safety reasons**, so younger siblings and other family members are welcome to meet you at the school.

Parents, your child’s bus driver will be contacting you before Orientation to verify that your child will be riding the bus to school and to inform you of the approximate pickup time on the 5<sup>th</sup> and on school days. This bus ride is a great way to experience your child’s bus route firsthand and practice bus safety.

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**Where:** Camden-Rockport Elementary School  
11 Children’s Way, Rockport, ME 04856

**When:** Tuesday, September 5<sup>th</sup> from 7:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.

**Who:** PreK and Kindergarten students and their families

**Transportation:** School bus rides to and from CRES for your Kindergarten student and parents. We collect bus information through the Transportation Form during the registration process. The information we collect will prompt a call from your bus driver to confirm the pick-up time and location.

**Parent Schedule:**       **7:30:** Parents/Guardians and students arrive on buses.

**7:45 – 8:15:** Parents to the **cafeteria** for an informational meeting.

- Presentation by administrators Chris Walker-Spencer and Katie Bauer
- Camden Rockport School Alliance, Food Service and Transportation director introductions

**8:15 – 8:45:** Parent Meet & Greet

- Explore outdoor classrooms and trails
- Socialize with other families
- Meet our Transportation and Food Service Directors
- Meet CRSA representatives
- Meet CRES building administrators

**8:45:** Parents to playground to meet their child

**9:00:** Parents and children to the bus loop to board buses and ride home

**Kdg Schedule:**       **7:30:** Arrival at school – enter through the lobby and go to the playground

**7:40:** Homeroom teachers lead group activity on the playground

**8:15:** Specials Teachers lead group activities

**8:45:** Parents to playground to meet their child

**9:00:** Parents and children to the bus loop to board buses and ride home

## Grades 1-4 New Parent/Guardian Orientation

We're so glad you're joining us at CRES. We want this transition to be a smooth one and we have time devoted to answering your questions and introducing you to staff members at CRES. Your family will select a 15-minute block to meet the homeroom teacher for each of your children – we'll email a link to sign up through our conference scheduling website: PTC Fast. We also offer a meeting just for parents/guardians, detailed below. Students, and parents, often feel a lot better about the first day of school after attending these orientation activities. Additionally, tours of CRES will be offered at 9:30, 10:30, 11:30 and 12:30.

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**Where:** Camden-Rockport Elementary School  
11 Children's Way, Rockport, ME 04856

**When:** Tuesday, September 5<sup>th</sup>

**Who:** Parents/Guardians of new students in Grades 1-4 at CRES

### Parent Schedule:

#### 7:30 – 8:15:

Parents to the CRES **cafeteria** for an informational meeting

- Presentation by administrators Chris Walker-Spencer and Katie Bauer
- Camden Rockport School Alliance, Food Service and Transportation director introductions

#### 8:15 – 8:45:

Parents Meet & Greet

- Explore woods classrooms and trails
- Socialize with other families
- Meet our Transportation and Food Service Directors
- Meet CRSA representatives
- Meet CRES building administrators

## AT-A-GLANCE REFERENCE

<p><b>CRES OFFICE HOURS</b> 7:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.</p>	<p><b>SCHOOL STARTS AT 7:50</b> Bus riders are always on time!</p>	<p><b>SCHOOL ENDS AT 2:30</b> (1:15 on ER DAYS, 11:30 on ERH DAYS)</p>
<p><b>ABSENCES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call 236-7809 or email. (<a href="mailto:cres.attendance@fivetowns.net">cres.attendance@fivetowns.net</a>) before 7:50 a.m.</li> <li>• Share child's name and why absent.</li> <li>• The absence will be marked unexcused if there is no notification from a parent/guardian.</li> <li>• Students who are absent cannot participate in any after school extracurricular activities.</li> </ul>	<p><b>MORNING DROP OFF</b> between 7:30 - 7:45 a.m.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CRES staff members will greet cars that need to unload.</li> <li>• Please have your child on the passenger side of the car and remain in the car.</li> <li>• The drop off loop is closed at 7:45 am sharp.</li> </ul>	<p><b>AFTERNOON PICK UP</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please wait on the outside of the playground.</li> <li>• CRES staff will match parents and children at the gate.</li> <li>• Children in the same family are dismissed at the scheduled time of the youngest student</li> </ul>
<p><b>SCHOOL ATTENDANCE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Showing up to school matters!</li> <li>• Parents are urged to strongly support regular daily attendance for all children.</li> <li>• Please reach out to the Assistant Principal if you are struggling to get your child to school. Together we can problem solve and develop an attendance plan.</li> </ul>	<p><b>MORNING WALK-IN</b> between 7:30 - 7:45 a.m.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents will park and walk their child to the playground gates via the sidewalk to avoid crossing traffic.</li> <li>• Only CRES students and staff will be allowed on the playground.</li> </ul> <p><b>ARRIVAL AFTER 7:45 . . .</b></p> <p>Students arriving after 7:45 a.m. must enter the building through the Main Entrance doors and <u>be accompanied</u> by an adult.</p>	<p><b>PICK UP TIME/LOCATIONS</b></p> <p><b>Pre-K, Kindergarten, Multiage</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2:25 Dismissal</li> <li>• Students will exit classroom doors to the sidewalk or at playground gate</li> </ul> <p><b>First, Second, Third, Fourth</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2:30 Dismissal</li> <li>• Students will wait at the playground gate</li> </ul> <p><b>BUSES DEPART 2:30 -2:40 p.m.</b></p>
<p><b>MESSAGES</b></p> <p>Please communicate through the main office and not directly with your child during the school day.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call the Main Office at 236-7809, to leave a message for your student. Students can call you for school related needs by using the Main Office or a classroom phone.</li> </ul> <p>To leave a message for a teacher, call the Main Office, or email them. Staff will reply within 24 hours.</p>	<p><b>RECESS TEMPERATURE GUIDELINES</b></p> <p>We go outside in MOST types of weather!</p> <p>If the "feels like" temperature is 0°F or higher it is a full outside recess.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the "feels like" temperature is between 0° and -15°F, outdoor time is limited to 15 minutes.</li> <li>• Recess will be held indoors when the "feels like " temperature is below -15°F or wind, lightning or torrential rain make it dangerous.</li> </ul>	<p><b>BACKUP CLOTHES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>All CRES</u> students need a complete set of backup clothes in their locker or backpack at all times. (Socks, underwear, pants, shirt and shoes)</li> <li>• Please ensure these backup clothes are appropriate to the season and have your child's name on them.</li> </ul>

## Student/Parent Handbook

Please review our Student/Parent Handbook online at [https://cres.fivetowns.net/about\\_cres/student\\_handbook](https://cres.fivetowns.net/about_cres/student_handbook) before school begins to learn more about our philosophy, practices, and policies at CRES. It's important that all families know and understand our school rules, policies, and safety practices.

\* If you need a print version, please call the Main Office at 236-7809 and we will send a copy home.

## School Year Calendar

The 2023-2024 CRES School Calendar is easy to find on our website right at the bottom of the home page at <https://cres.fivetowns.net/home>. Please make note of:

- monthly Early Release Days
- Workshop Days when there is no school for students
- Parent-Teacher Conference Days (no school for students)
- both half-day Early Release Half Days on the Fridays before February and April vacation.

## Communication / Open House Shift

I believe that when we work together, and communicate clearly, we can achieve great things. In that spirit, please strive to participate in our many family events in September. We offer these events instead of a traditional open house.

- 1:1 student/family meetings with homeroom teachers – on September 5<sup>th</sup>
- Guided building tours – available on Sept. 5<sup>th</sup> at 9:30, 10:30, 11:30, 12:30
- Family math/literacy night in late September – details forthcoming!

Also, look for our monthly CRES Dory News updates in your email inbox, and please “like” our [Facebook page](#).

## Flex Time at CRES

As we expanded our outdoor educational opportunities for students, our staff took a hard look at our schedule. We realized a few things:

- We are one of the few public schools in the state that featured two recesses per day.
- Two recesses per day helped meet our goals around outdoor time and movement for students but five grade levels trying to access our playground twice per day led to overcrowding and limited our scheduling flexibility elsewhere.
- Holding a single recess per grade on the playground provides students more space and reduces the number of playground incidents.
- Designating a flex time provides more time for teachers to engage students in deeper learning outdoors while still providing the opportunities for movement and exploration that students need.
- Flex time allows teacher teams to work with the small percentage of students who engage in work refusal during the school day. One teacher per team will support any of those students during flex time so they can complete their work. This is a different issue than students who **can't** do the work.

CRES students will still have time outdoors to play and explore – it will just look a bit different as we move forward. Please note: we will still follow our outdoor weather guidelines as outlined in the Handbook. Finally, teachers may also provide the choice of an indoor activity for students.

## **YMCA After-Care at CRES**

The Penobscot Bay YMCA provides after care services for Kdg-4<sup>th</sup> grade students at CRES. If you have any interest in this program for your child, please contact the YMCA at 236-3375 ext. 250 or [www.penbayymca.org](http://www.penbayymca.org).

### **Before-Care:**

With an early morning start time at CRES, the YMCA does **not** offer before-care at CRES due to limited demand.

### **After-Care:**

The after-care program, at CRES, is run by the YMCA until 5:30 PM. Students can participate in afterschool programming as part of this program if they want, such as CRES After School Enrichment. Parents do not have to be members of the YMCA to take advantage of this program at CRES. The YMCA does charge a fee and financial support is available for those who qualify. Space is limited and dependent on YMCA staffing levels.

## **New Staff**

We have amazing new staff members joining our fabulous crew at CRES this year. Please help us give them a warm welcome. I'm thrilled that they will be joining us! We also have several returning staff taking on new roles.

Sarah Sawitsky	1 <sup>st</sup> Grade Teacher
Emily Spindler	3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade Teacher
Kirsten Silden	Explorers Teacher
Jenn Gomez	Administrative Assistant
Emily Long	Special Education Ed Tech
Dawn Fowler	Special Education Ed Tech
Mary Weiss	Special Education Ed Tech
Sarah McMillan	Kitchen Manager
Joseph Alberti	Building and Grounds

### **New Roles:**

Jenny Gold	Math Intervention
Amber Kennedy	K-2 Multiage Teacher



## Preparing for School Each Day

Parents should send students to school with the following items each day:

1. **Water Bottle with a screw top.** We no longer have any drinking fountains at CRES. Instead, we have water bottle rapid-fill stations in each grade level. The water bottle should be washed/sanitized at home each night.
2. **Optional**
  - **Sunscreen/Bug Spray**
    - **The school does not supply them, and staff may not apply these products.**
      - **Apply sunscreen** to your child each morning as you deem necessary. We will be outdoors more than ever.
      - **Apply bug spray/tick repellent** each morning as you see fit. We are spending more time outside, including in the woods.
  - **A sun hat**