



Orchard Elementary  
Ridgewood Public Schools

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Good Morning Orchard School Families,

Welcome to February! February may be a short calendar month, but we have a lot going on here at Orchard School! We will be celebrating Black History Month, the 100th day of school, registering our new Kindergarten students, and hosting our science fair. We will also hold our first Orchard Media Night for parents, and participate in professional development as teachers. All in just 17 days of school - whew!

Please read below to stay updated on these exciting events.

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### Kindergarten and New 1st Grade Student Registration for 2019-2020

In-person registration for incoming Kindergarten and First Grade students will be held at Orchard School on Tuesday, February 5 and Thursday, February 7 from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. Please visit the [Registration](#) section of our website under the “For Parents” tab.

**New this year: online registration is mandatory in advance of February 5 and 7:** Pre-registration is available starting Friday, January 18. Links to the online pre-registration are available on the [Student Enrollment web page](#).

Please click [here](#) to read a letter from the superintendent regarding Kindergarten and new first grader registration for the 2019-2020 school year. Please share this information with friends and neighbors!

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### Choose to Be Nice - Family “No Homework” Nights!

Each month at Orchard School, we celebrate our [Choose to Be Nice](#) theme at a Community Building Assembly. This month, our theme of perseverance is Responsibility, and we are reading Margaret Mason’s book [These Hands](#). This supports our learning for Black History Month, and we will share out on this topic at our February 21st CBA.

Our “Choose to Be Nice Family Night” will be held on Thursday, 2/21. That night, our teachers will not assign any homework. Instead, we are encouraging families to get together and enjoy some quality time with one another.

Our suggestion for this month is to enjoy a cozy night on the couch. Pop some popcorn, get out the blankets and settle in. Pull out a favorite picture book or two and read it together, as a family. Bonus - use voices or different family members for the characters! Or, watch a movie or a show together. Really together - no devices allowed (even for Mom and Dad). If Thursday isn't ideal, maybe over that long weekend you can try setting some time aside to enjoy time together. Give it a shot! You'll be amazed at how special these moments can be.

Stay tuned for more “Choose to Be Nice No Homework Nights” in the future!

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Wellbeing Speaker Series: Ana Homayoun, January 16, 2019

On January 16, author Ana Homayoun visited Ridgewood to discuss her book, Social Media Wellness: Helping Teens & Tweens Thrive in an Unbalanced Digital World. Her talk was full of information and helpful tips for parents. Read on for my “top ten” takeaways...

10. The “new” social media:

- Everyone should assume that their social media profile is public, and that anything you post could be seen by all (if you have one follower, consider it public)
- Video/live feed feature: really how kids are using social media these days
- Almost every app has a location finder - be aware of that feature and turn it off on your child's phone

9. Social media distorts reality, which adults may recognize. But do kids? They have altered expectations because of these, and need reminders that posts aren't always what they seem. Do our children recognize this?

8. Similarly, did you know that tweens and teens spend an exorbitant amount of time over analyzing their posts? They consider what time of day to post, write and re-write hashtags for optimal likes, and obsess over followers and comments.

- And, for further consideration...the tween/teen age group naturally wants to know what others think of them. It's part of their developmental make up. But with

anonymous apps or fake social media profiles, it's really easy for kids to receive hurtful feedback regarding themselves online.

7. When we set limits for kids, our own modeling really matters. Kids share that they receive mixed messages from parents. My mom always wants me to text her immediately; I'm not allowed to text while \_\_\_\_ (in school, driving, etc.). I can't use my phone, but my parents do. My parents text while driving. What message are you sending with your actions?
6. If we didn't know it already, we are on information overload. Want a frightening statistic? 400 hours of video is uploaded to YouTube every minute. And, when YouTube tracks your videos and sends you links of content you'd probably enjoy, it's no wonder your 15 minute Ted Talk video turns into a 2 hour time lapse on YouTube.
5. We operate with an "on all the time" mentality - the 24-hour news cycle, the constant push notifications to phones, etc. Turn them off!
4. So, what to do? Use the "Three S's" to encourage better habits and decisions with your child:
  - **Healthy Socialization:** encourage multiple/different overlapping friend groups; identify what relationships feel healthy and which ones are draining; reflect on the "why" (why did I just reach for my phone? Why am I posting this?).
  - **Effective Self-Regulation:**
    - Identify: How long is my homework really taking? (Or am I toggling between tabs and screens.)
    - Reflect: What could I do with another 7-10 hours of free time a week?
    - Decide: I can use my time better to get work done faster and have more free time.
  - **Use Productivity Apps to Build Self-Awareness:** Almost all new phones/platforms offer some version of a productivity app/tracker, or you can download one to your device. Build in time for digital detoxing, daily and weekly. Make time for offline fun!
3. Make sure to have consistent, and constant conversations with your children once they are online. Identify what feels safe/appropriate online. What do you do if something feels unsafe? Is inappropriate? Reflect on who your child can turn to, without judgement, in those moments. Kids are bound to make mistakes - don't be surprised when your child or their friend makes one. Decide: does your family have a mission statement or digital contract?
2. Who is your child's supportive team? They should have at least 3 adults/supporters they can turn to. Share resources, such as the crisis text line: [crisis text line - text HOME to 741741](https://www.crisistextline.org/) - There are trained counselors on other end who will answer your inquiries.
1. Consider your child's well-being. Are they in a constant state of irritability if the device is taken away? How are their sleep patterns? Are they developing healthy ways of managing stress? Consider problematic overuse of devices.

And, one added point. So many parents I talk with will often question how frequently they should step in and review their child's phone or online use. Often parents feel they are worried about invading privacy, and cringe at the thought of yet another difficult conversation with their emotional teen. Ana answered this question, simply and matter of factly:

- Parents are responsible for their child's phone
- Middle school students - parents should have constant checking and overseeing of their phones
- High schooler students - parents should still have their passwords in a sealed envelope

As a parent of a preschooler and an infant, I drew many connections to my own family, although my children are a few years away from their own phones. Not only can I make an effort with my own modeling and behavior with my devices, but it makes sense to substitute the "phone" piece with any digital media (TV/tablet/computer). It's a constantly changing and fast-paced world that we are navigating as parents. I hope you will join me in considering these points!

For those of you who were at the event, [Ana sent a follow up email](#). You can view the email or [visit her website](#) to subscribe!

Want to try your hand at a [Social Media Apps Quiz](#)? Ana gave this out at her presentation. See what apps you know and are familiar with, and check out her tips on page 2.

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### Media Usage & Families: An Orchard Conversation

Many of you know that this is a topic that is of interest to us here at Orchard School. Over the last two years, we have participated in districtwide events to discuss technology and media consumption amongst students K-12. This year, we would like to tailor that conversation to our specific Orchard community, and address the topics that affect our students.

We will be hosting a night for Orchard parents to get together and discuss these questions and this pledge. Our goal is that this will be the first of many sessions where we meet collaboratively to share our concerns and help one another. Perhaps this will influence some of the work we do in school, as well!

If you are interested, please mark your calendars for **Wednesday, February 13, at 7:30 PM, at Orchard School**. And, please [take this brief survey](#) to shape our work together!

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### Demarest Street Pump

Please be advised that the village will be performing some work on the pump station at the corner of Orchard Place and Demarest Street. You may have already noticed trucks in the area. The work should not disrupt our daily traffic for arrival or dismissal, and should conclude within a few weeks. Please see Mrs. Ferreri with any questions!

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### Wellbeing Speaker Series: Dr. Cheryl Charles, March 11 @ 7:00 PM

Dr. Cheryl Charles, a colleague of [Richard Louv](#), will be speaking to us about nature rich environments for children. She will review the importance of nature and getting kids outside! This talk sounds like a unique and interesting topic to kick off spring. For more information, you can view the [flier here](#). I hope you can join us!

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As with every monthly update, we need reminders about our procedures and policies here at Orchard. Please take note of the following:

- Thank you to our visitors for following through on our new procedures this year. As a reminder, forgotten lunches can be dropped off to the cooler near the cafetorium doors. We also do not accept drop offs for after school activities (girl scouts, clubs, etc.). Please remember to pack those items with your child in the morning. Thank you!
- Yearbook Photos: All families are encouraged to upload photos for our 2018-19 school yearbook. The yearbook is a K-5 project, so all families are encouraged to participate! You can use [this link directly](#) or find the link on our [Orchard website](#).
- Drop Off/Pick Up: It has gotten cold and we are now relaxing a bit on our 3 PM pickups. Please follow these rules for the safety of everyone.
  - Please remember to pull all the way up if using the drop off lane in the morning. Also, please wait in that line and do not pull out of the line once

your child has exited.

- At pick up time, please do not double park and please remember that we do not have a pick up and go area - the red fire zone is just that! Please do not pull up or double park into the red zone for pickup.
- Link and follow our Google Calendar for HSA events! [Go to this link](#) and click on the +Google Calendar in the right bottom corner.
- Lunch Ordering: Just some reminders for ordering lunch through [Village Fresh](#). All orders are placed online. Orders must be in **by 8:00 AM**, otherwise, they will not be delivered on that day. Get your orders in! Thank you!

Please review the list of dates below for upcoming events at our school. Happy Holidays!

Warmly,



Mrs. Ferreri

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### Upcoming events:

*2/1: Talent Show, 6:30 PM*

*2/7: Grade 2 Play, 9:00 AM*

*2/13: Parent Media Discussion @ Orchard School, 7:30 PM*

*2/15, 18, 19: No School - February Recess*

*2/21: CBA, Black History Month Celebration, Spirit Day, HSA meeting 9:15 AM*

*2/28: Orchard Science Fair, 6-7:30 PM*

*3/2: Super Science Saturday, RHS*