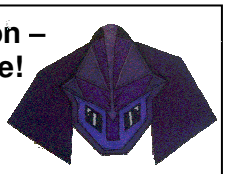
Robert L. Vale Middle School

Transforming Education – One Stingray at a time!



Erika Foerster - Principal

It is hard to believe we are about to begin our 6th year at Vale but that time of year is just around the corner. The administrative staff has been working hard all year to hire new faculty and staff members. Our teachers are slowly beginning to return to campus and will be ready when our Stingrays arrive in a few weeks.

The campus theme for the year is "Transforming Education – One Stingray at a Time!" with a focus on doing things differently in the classroom so that all our students reach their highest potential academically. Our STAAR scores last year improved and we were at or above NISD average in almost all areas. Our goal is to continue this uphill climb and be near the top of the scores in the coming year.

Personally, I can't wait for the students to get here and fill our classroom. Vale continues to be a great building where our Stingrays can thrive and grow. Our teaching staff is about to start putting their rooms together and the countdown to August 26th has begun.

We look forward to an exciting year at Vale and can't wait to meet all our new Stingrays and welcome back our returning ones on the 26th.

"All students are HONORED at Robert L. Vale MS"

PE and athletic UNIFORM SALES and Spirit Shirt PRE-SALES

PE/Athletics uniforms and Pre-sales for Spirit Shirts will be sold during the following times prior to school starting:

Wed. August 14th 5:30-7:30 p.m. and
Thurs. August 15th 5:30-7:30 p.m.

If unable to purchase on one of these days, they will be available during PE classes once school starts.

The TRANFORMATION BEGINS…

On August 22nd we will be hosting Orientation for our incoming 6th grade Stingrays from 6:00-7:45 p.m. This will be a very informal event and everyone can come and go as they wish.

To receive their temporary schedule at the open house, students should report to their 1st period classroom. **The number for this room can be found on the address label on the envelope for this letter.** From that point, students will be able to visit their classrooms, tour the school, and meet their teachers.

STINGRAY CAMP

Stingray camp for our 6th graders and their parents will be held on Saturday Aug. 17th. This is broken into two sessions (by alphabet) to provide enough room for everyone. Stingrays whose last names begin with A-L are asked to attend Session 1 8:00-11:30 a.m. and stingrays with last names beginning with M-Z are asked to attend Session 2 from 1:00 – 4:30 p.m. There will be separate but important sessions for both our new Stingrays and their parents. We do not have extra room for other family members, so only our new Stingrays and their parent(s) are asked to attend. More information can be found on the Vale website.

7th & 8th Graders – 1st PERIOD ROOM #s

Your 1st period class is on the label of this mail out and this is where you will report on August 26th (the First Day of School) to receive your schedule. We will also post 1st period room #s on the front doors of the school late in the afternoon on Friday the 23rd and have them in the grade level hallways the first day of school.

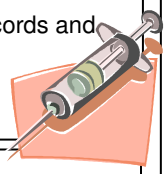
Open House for all 7th & 8th graders will be September 19th 6:00-7:45 p.m.

Please make sure to join our PTA and assist us with supporting all our Stingrays in various ways around campus this year. Information will be available at open houses and sent home with students early in the school year.

SHOTS / IMMUNIZATIONS

NO SHOTS -- NO SCHOOL -- NO KIDDING

Are your child's immunization records up to date? State law now requires that all children have current and accurate shot records to attend school. **If your child's shot records are not up to date – *they will not be permitted to attend classes.*** Please take time to check your child's records and get any required shots before August 26th, so they do not miss any instructional time.



Early Release Days

Staff development is a major focus on our campus for the purpose of building teacher quality. For this purpose, we will be dismissing classes at 12:30 p.m. on several occasions this school year. Students will eat lunch before they are dismissed and must leave campus at 12:30 p.m. Please plan ahead to ensure that your children will be picked up if they are not riding a bus.

Early dismissal days are scheduled on:

Friday, Sept. 20 **Friday, March 28**

Friday, Nov. 1 **Friday, May 9**

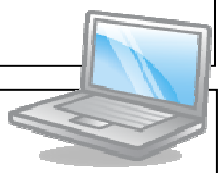
Friday, Feb. 7

NEW PHONE NUMBERS

Here is a brief list of important numbers for Vale:

Main Line:	397-5700
Vice and Assistant Principals:	397-5724
Academic Dean:	397-5795
Attendance:	397-5708
Band Hall:	397-5756
Boys' Coaches:	397-5776
Cafeteria:	397-5735
Campus Officer:	397-5745
Choir Room:	397-5754
Counselors:	397-5732
Girls' Coaches:	397-5772
Library:	397-5733
Nurse:	397-5709
Orchestra Room:	397-5755
Special Education Office:	397-5759

Voice mail can be left for all teachers by calling the main # and asking to be put through to their voice mail.



BYOD – Bring your own Device

All secondary students in NISD allow students to bring their own personal "Devices" Smartphones//laptops/iPads/Tablets to school for **INSTRUCTIONAL** purposes this year. The decision to allow a student to bring their device to school is completely up to you as their parent/guardian. **DEVICES - ARE NOT REQUIRED! But we do highly encourage students to have access to them if necessary because education is moving into the age of technology and they will be used in many classrooms throughout the year.** If a student does not have one, and a class is involved in an activity where they will be used, the school will have resources available to them so they are not left out of any activity. Keeping up with these items will be each student's responsibility, and the school will not be responsible for any that are lost or stolen. **Students also need to follow the school policies as to when a device may be out and used and when it must be put away. If a device is found in use at an unacceptable time, or being used inappropriately, it will be confiscated and only returned to a parent during normal business hour.** The main school lockers are not very big and a laptop over 15" will be a tight fit. The PE lockers are a different shape and there will be no problems with locking laptops in these during their PE classes.

BAGS – students will not be allowed to carry backpacks with them during the school day. All backpacks must be placed in their lockers during the day. If your child is going to bring a laptop/iPad/tablet, we ask that they have some type of "messenger" bag/laptop case or sleeve to carry these items in during the day. This bag will only be allowed to be carried for their laptops and the student will be asked to carry their binders etc. like all other students at Vale during the day.

Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) The district's AUP policy speaks to the use of devices on campus, how students will be required to use the district's secured wireless network and giving the school access to the device if there is believed to be inappropriate use during the school year. **Please read the this AUP prior to signing it when it comes home the first day of school. No students will be permitted to bring their devices on campus without a signed AUP.**

In an effort to get the year off and running and to ensure that all required paperwork is turned in prior to students bringing their own devices, we will not be allowing them on campus until September 9th, which is the beginning of the third week of school.

DRESS CODE

Vale will be following the NISD district dress code that can be found in the Student /Parent Handbook, as well as online at the NISD website under Schools and Students information.

1. "Shorts and skorts may be worn at the elementary school level. In grades three through five, they should be no more than four inches above the top of the kneecap. **Shorts and skorts are prohibited in grades six through twelve.**
2. In grades three through twelve, skirts, dresses, and culottes must be no more than four inches above the top of the kneecap. There should not be a cut or slit in the clothing that extends beyond the four inch limit. These requirements also applies to school uniforms.
3. Appropriate footwear must be worn; footwear which has toes reinforced with steel, hard plastics or similar materials is specifically prohibited.
4. Hair must be neat and clean. Unconventional colored, multi-colored or spiked or Mohawk hair styles are not permitted.
5. Headwear must not be worn in buildings.
6. Any clothes that are suggestive or indecent or which cause distraction are not acceptable. **Specifically, oversized clothing, tank tops, muscle shirts, halter tops, spaghetti straps, exposed backs or midriffs, and see-through garments are not permitted.**
7. Indecent/inappropriate patches, writings, or drawings on clothing are prohibited.
8. All pants are to be full length (Capri pants should be no less than four inches below the bottom of the kneecap) and worn at the waist (no "sagging" or "bagging"). **Tight fitting pants (e.g., tights, Spandex, bicycle pants) are also prohibited. Cut-offs and intentionally frayed pants are also prohibited.**
9. Body piercing jewelry is prohibited except for rings, studs or other traditional jewelry worn in the ear. Tongue rings and tongue studs are not permitted."

The NISD Dress Code policy also states:
"Final determination of acceptable dress and grooming rests with the principal or his/her designee and cannot be appealed. To aid students and their parents in making decisions about appropriate dress and grooming for schools, the following guidelines are established."

The school has had a lot of questions about Capri pants and we are discouraging them but the above policy does state that they can be worn as long as they go at least four inches below the knee cap. This does not apply to longer shorts on the boys since the policy under #1 states that they are prohibited in grades six through twelve.

We understand there are some discrepancies in how these rules are followed from campus to campus in NISD, but at Vale we will follow them very closely. We will contact you if we feel your student's clothing is inappropriate and try to come to an easy solution to best resolve the issue.

BACK PACKS

There are no requirements on backpacks for students at Vale since they will be using their lockers and asked to keep them in their lockers during the day. Students may carry any type of backpack to and from school each day but it must be left in their lockers. Students can only carry appropriate materials during the day to class. All classrooms at Vale will have a class set of textbooks so students only need to carry their binders and other supplies during the school day.

BACKPACKS ARE NOT NEEDED UNTIL STUDENTS GET LOCKERS – USUALLY AROUND SEPT. 3rd

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION FROM VALE MS

Follow us on Twitter:
@NISDVale

You can also sign up for the campus **Remind 101** account by texting "@stingray" to 267-281-6019

Individual teachers will also have **Remind 101** accounts that they will send home information on the first day of school and they will have "Edmodo" accounts –sort of a "facebook" for teachers, students and parents to use that is a secure sight in which students/parents must be invited and accepted to be part of.

VALE WEBSITE

Our Campus Instructional Technologist (C.I.T.) and the administrative staff are doing their best to keep the Vale Website up-to-date and as informative as possible. Once the teachers return to campus they will also be putting together web-pages that will be accessible through Parent Connection. We will be working with the teachers in an effort to keep these current. Please understand that under the every day pressures of keeping up with their curriculum and working with your students, as well as grading papers and entering them into the grade book, at times these websites may get behind. If you notice one that is consistently behind, please contact one of the administrators on campus and we will do everything we can to remedy the situation in a timely fashion. Again, we ask that you be a little patient at the start of the year, as the teachers settle in, just as your students will be, to their new surroundings. We will get these up and running as quickly as possible.

BUSSES and PARENT DROP OFF

At this time, all students (except for Parent Request Transfers and those falling into the "Special Option" category or Parental Choice students) will be provided bus transportation to Vale for the 13-14 school year. There are no sidewalks to Vale and it is UNSAFE for students to walk to or home from school. Please check the "Boundaries and Busses" page of the NISD website for more specific information on your student's transportation to and from Vale for this coming year.
All of the busses will be entering and exiting off of 151; **please do NOT use this entrance**. If you will be dropping off or picking up your child(ren), we recommend that you use the entrance at the top of the hill. Once you enter the school, the traffic flow is one way to the right, down the hill along the front of the building and back up the hill exiting this same exit. We understand that this exit is only a right hand turn on to Ellison Drive, but feel this is the safest and fastest route to drop off and pick up students.
Again – we ask for your patience as we all learn this process at the beginning of the year. Please be courteous to other drivers around you.

SCHOOL HOURS

School begins at **8:30 a.m.** and dismisses at **3:40 p.m.** each day.
If you are dropping off students, we ask that you please do so by 8:15 each morning so they have time to get to their lockers and to their classes by 8:30. If they are dropped off much later than that, they are missing important instructional time. If you are picking up your students, we ask that you please do so by 4:00 p.m. because there will be no one on duty to monitor them after this time. If you must pick up your students after 4:00 p.m., please try to notify the office so we can make arrangements for them to wait inside the building if necessary.
Please note that teachers are only officially on duty 20 minutes before and after the school day.

CELL PHONES

Students are allowed to bring their cell phones to school but they must remain off and in their pocket or locker during the school day. If a student has their phone out during the day and is caught using it while on campus, it will be confiscated and held in the front office for a parent/guardian to pick up. On-going violations of this rule may also result in disciplinary consequences on campus which could include: loss of privileges to carry at school, detention hall or In-School Suspension. The school will not be responsible for lost or stolen cell phones and has the right to search them if we believe there is inappropriate information stored on the cell phone.
Parents – **PLEASE DO NOT call or text your students during the school day or require them to contact you during the day using their cell phone.** Since their cell phones should be off, you will not be able to contact them and if they are caught using it, it will be taken away.

DELIVERING ITEMS TO STUDENTS

If a student leaves school supplies, homework, PE/Athletic clothes, lunch money, band instruments at home, we will get these to students if they are dropped off in the main office during the day. **We will not deliver balloons, flowers, birthday presents etc. to students during the school day.** We will hold these items in the office and send a note to the student to pick them up at the end of the day.