

Dear Students and Parents/Guardians:

One of the major goals of Vernon Center Middle School is to foster individual student responsibility. In order to accomplish this, we have put together this Student-Parent Handbook.

This handbook provides students and parents/guardians with important information necessary for a successful year at Vernon Center Middle School. The many programs, activities, rules, procedures, and expectations that everyone must understand for our school to function well are described in THE HANDBOOK.

The separate STUDENT PLANNER provides the student with a simple method for recording daily assignments, long-term projects or papers, and scheduled tests and quizzes. Regular use of this booklet will help manage student time more efficiently and will assist with overall organization.

We ask parents/guardians to review the STUDENT PLANNER on a regular basis throughout the year. With your support we believe we can strengthen the organizational skills which are so vitally important to your student's success. In addition, students and parents should understand expectations regarding homework and recognize the integral part it plays in the learning process.

Homework is given to reinforce a skill taught class. An assignment is intended to be completed the day of the lesson. The homework time is on task time with full concentration and energy focused on completing the assignments. Please read the homework section of the handbook for the complete information on all aspects of homework. Student responsibilities and suggestions for your assistance in the preparation of homework are given in detail in this handbook.

We feel strongly at VCMS that communication between home and school is an important responsibility that we all share. We welcome your input and encourage you to support us in this endeavor.

We are requesting your signature to assure us that you have received this information, and have reviewed the handbook with your son or daughter.

Sincerely,

David E. Caruso

David E. Caruso
Principal

My child _____ and I have reviewed the VCMS Handbook
for the 2022-2023 school year.

Parent/Guardian _____ Date _____

Student _____ Homeroom Section _____

PREFACE

The material covered within this student handbook is intended as a method of communicating to students and parents regarding general district information, rules and procedures and is not intended to either enlarge or diminish any Board policy, administrative regulation or negotiated agreement. Material contained herein may therefore be superseded by such Board policy, administrative regulation or negotiated agreement. Any information contained in this handbook is subject to unilateral revision or elimination from time-to-time without notice.

This booklet is written for our students and their parents. It contains required and useful information. Because it cannot be as personal a communication as we would like, we address students not directly as “you” but rather as “the student,” “students,” or “children.” Likewise, the term “the student’s parent” may refer to the parent, legal guardian, or other person who has agreed to assume responsibility for the student. Both students and parents need to be familiar with the District’s Student Code of Conduct which is intended to promote school safety and an atmosphere conducive for learning.

The Student Handbook is designed to be in harmony with Board policy. Please be aware that the handbook is updated yearly, while policy adoption and revision may occur throughout the year. Changes in policy that affect portions of this Handbook will be made available to students and parents through newsletters, web pages, and other communications.

VERNON CENTER MIDDLE SCHOOL

Vernon, Connecticut



Student-Parent Handbook

2022-2023

MISSION STATEMENT

The faculty, staff, and administration of Vernon Center Middle School are devoted to helping every student achieve his/her maximum individual potential in a supportive environment. We recognize that this goal requires the collective best efforts of school personnel, the student, the parents/guardians, and the community at large. Our staff and programs aid in the transition of students from middle school to high school. We offer programs and an environment that provides opportunities for students to participate in 21st century learning and for sound academic, social, artistic, physical, and emotional growth. We embrace the values of safety, organization, achievement, responsibility and respect.

PBIS - POSITIVE BEHAVIORAL SUPPORT

Vernon Center Middle School is also a Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support school. PBIS is designed to help school teams form behavioral and discipline systems that support student learning and social development. Nationally, PBIS is currently practiced in over 8,000 schools. PBIS is not an initiative, but a set of problem-solving strategies and processes. Building upon existing strengths, school teams create well defined systems, use effective practices along with data centered evaluation methods to reshape their communities and help students achieve academic and social competence. Introducing, modeling, and reinforcing positive social behavior is an important part of a student's educational experience. VCMS believes that teaching behavioral expectations through Core Values and rewarding students for following them creates a much more positive and successful approach.



Vernon Center Middle School
777 Hartford Turnpike
Vernon, Connecticut 06066

Vernon Public Schools – Telephone 860-870-6000

Dr. Joseph Macary	Superintendent of Schools
Robert Testa	Assistant Superintendent

School Administrators – Telephone 860-870-6070

David E. Caruso	Principal
Melissa J Luke	Assistant Principal
Michael Savignano	Assistant Principal

School Counseling Department – Telephone 860-870-6072

Kimberly Sass – Grade 6
Julie Bilyak – Grade 7
Hillary Berard – Grade 8

School Nurse – Telephone 860-870-6414

Michelle Harlow

School Social Workers 860-870-6074 or 860-896-4515

Gui Estes
Scott Green

School Psychologist – Telephone 860-896-4475

Christina Diaz

Director of Personnel – Telephone 860-870-6000 (ext.4667)

Melissa Iles

Section 504 – Telephone 860-870-6050


Fax Number – Telephone 860-870-6318 or 860-870-6357

Office for Civil Rights – U.S. Department of Education

Office for Civil Rights
33 Arch Street, Suite 900
Boston, MA 02110-1491


PBIS Matrix:

What our core values look like in school

	<i>In the Classroom</i>	<i>In the Hallway</i>	<i>In the Cafeteria</i>	<i>In the Bathroom</i>	<i>At the Bus Stop & On the Bus</i>
S afety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Follow individual classroom rules *Understand and follow fire drill and lockdown procedures *Keep hands, feet, and objects to self 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Walk at all times *Walk on the right hand side of the hallway and stairs *Keep locker closed and locked except when you are using it *Keep hands, feet, and objects to self 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Follow posted lunch room rules *Stay seated while you eat lunch *Keep hands, feet, and objects to self 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Wait your turn *Flush toilet completely *Be clean~ wash and dry hands *Keep hands, feet, and objects to self *Keep bathrooms clean, safe, and usable *Report any problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Follow all of the bus driver's instructions *Follow all bus safety and evacuation procedures *Stay seated until the bus stops moving *Keep hands, feet, and objects to self *Report any unsafe or inappropriate behavior
O rganization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Come prepared for class with necessary items *Have your plan book with you at all times *Separate out your recycling and put it in appropriate bin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Have your plan book with you at all times *Put all electronic devices away and on silent or off. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Patiently stay in a quiet, single file line and wait your turn *Be prepared and have your lunch money out and ready for the cashier *Separate out your recycling and put in appropriate bin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Have your pass with you *Be prepared with any personal items you may need 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Patiently stay in a single file line *Keep your belongings out of the aisle
A chievement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Always give your best effort in your homework, class work, and class participation *Be on time and ready to learn when the bell rings *Seek extra help when needed *Take pride in your work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Get all necessary items to be prepared for your next class *Arrive at your next class before the bell 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Make healthy food choices *Clean up your areas without being asked 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Use the facilities properly *Take care of business in a timely fashion and return to class promptly *Make good choices and avoid conflict 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Board and exit the bus in an orderly fashion without incident *Select your seat quickly, leaving room for others
R esponsibility & Respect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Follow all adult directions *Show consideration for the learning of others *Treat fellow students and all staff members in a positive and polite manner *Take care of school property *Follow school rules as outlined by the code of conduct 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Keep the area around and above your locker clean *Pick up any items *Take care of school property *Use your quiet voice during passing time *Treat fellow students, and all staff members in a positive and polite manner *Follow school rules as outlined by the code of conduct 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Sit only in designated locations, four to a table *When addressed on the microphone, stop your conversations *Respect personal space in the lunch line and at your table *Properly dispose of all food and drinks before leaving the cafeteria *Use your best manners *Take care of school property *Treat fellow students and all staff members in a positive and polite manner *Follow school rules as outlined by the code of conduct 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Give others their privacy *Use your best manners *Treat fellow students and all staff members in a positive and polite manner *Take care of school property *Use a quiet voice *Follow school rules as outlined by the code of conduct 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Use a quiet voice *Respect personal space and property of others *Take care of school bus property *Treat fellow students and all staff members in a positive and polite manner *Use your best manners *Follow school rules as outlined by the code of conduct

VCMS | Effort and Conduct Rubrics



	E Excellent	G Good	S Satisfactory	N Needs Improvement	U Unsatisfactory
Effort	A. Hands in all work on time B. Quality of work exceeds expectations C. Asks relevant questions and/or requests help when needed D. Frequently makes positive contributions to class or group discussion E. Proposes advanced learning or personalized enrichment	A. 90% of assignments are completed and handed in on time B. Quality of work consistently matches expectations C. Asks relevant questions and/or requests help when needed D. Makes positive contributions to class or group discussion	A. 80% of assignments are completed and handed in on time B. Quality of work usually matches expectations C. Infrequently asks relevant questions and/or requests help when needed D. Infrequently makes positive contributions to class or group discussion	A. 70% of assignments are completed and handed in on time B. Quality of work needs improvement C. Asks questions that are unrelated to the lesson D. Occasionally makes negative contributions to class or group discussion	A. Less than 70% of assignments are completed and handed in on time B. Quality of work is poor C. Often asks questions that are unrelated to the lesson D. Often makes negative contributions to class or group discussion
	Conduct	A. Always follows the SOAR values and classroom expectations and encourages others to do so as well B. Always respects all students and staff, their property, and their personal space C. Puts others before themselves – always willing to help when possible	A. Always follows the SOAR values and classroom expectations B. Always respects all students and staff, their property, and their personal space	A. Almost always follows the SOAR values classroom expectations B. Almost Always respects all students and/or staff, their property, and their personal space	A. Sometimes follows SOAR values and classroom expectations B. Sometimes respects all students and/or staff, their property, and their personal space

VCMS – School-Parent Compact

What is a School – Parent Compact?

A *School-Parent Compact* is an agreement that parents and teachers develop together. It explains how parents and teachers will work together to make sure all our students reach or exceed grade-level standards.

The *School-Parent Compact* is reviewed annually by the VCMS Governance Council. The Governance Council meets periodically throughout the school year, and welcomes parents and community members to attend.

Building Partnerships and Communicating about Student Learning:

The attached *Teacher-Parent-Student Involvement Guidelines* provide ways that you can be part of the VCMS community. It includes resources to monitor student progress and resources which outline school expectations. If you have any questions about VCMS or would like to arrange a team meeting or home visit contact our School Guidance Department at (860) 870-6072. Visit the VCMS school website regularly at www.vernonpublicschools.org to keep up-to-date on current events.

Our Goals for Student Achievement

District Goals: Please check the Vernon Public School website for the district Improvement Plan.

VCMS Goals: Please check the Vernon Center Middle School website for the school improvement plan.

Teachers, Families/Parents, and Students-Together for Success

VCMS Engagement Guidelines

What are Engagement Guidelines?

Engagement Guidelines are a framework that parents and teachers develop as a team. They outline how parents and teachers work together to make sure all our students reach or exceed grade-level standards.

The Engagement Guidelines are reviewed annually by the VCMS Governance Council. The Governance Council meets periodically throughout the school year, and welcomes parents and community members to attend.

Families/Parents will support learning at home by:

- *Regularly check Aspen and plan books*
- Talking to your child about their daily school experience
- Providing a quiet place for your child to do their school work
- Making sure homework/school work is completed and turned in
- Helping your child learn from their mistakes
- Encouraging your child to become an independent and responsible learner (ex.-arranges for extra help, checks Aspen, uses planner)

Family/Parents will actively participate in their student's education by:

- Encouraging their child to always submit quality work
- Taking responsibility for their children's attendance and punctuality
- Monitoring their progress (review daily work/report cards/Aspen)
- Contacting VCMS if you have any questions regarding their progress
- Actively participating in VCMS functions (ex.- open house, family nights, and concerts)

Students will assume responsibility for their behavior and learning by following all SOAR core values including:

- Going to school daily, and being on time
- Taking pride in their work and completing all assignments to the best of their ability
- Actively participating in classroom lessons and asking questions when they don't understand something
- Keeping their binders and plan book neat and organized
- Being respectful and responsible at all times
- Becoming an active learner (ex.- use plan book, check Aspen, seek extra help)

VCMS staff and admin will demonstrate:

- A genuine interest in building relationships with students and families
- A commitment to student achievement and success
- A willingness to work in collaboration with colleagues and families to meet the diverse learning needs of all students
- A commitment to analyze their teaching and leading and grow professionally
- The implementation of an engaging and challenging curriculum aligned with the Common Core of Teaching
-

Vernon Center Middle School- Resources

Building Partnerships and Communicating about Student Learning:

Maximizing the individual potential in each student at Vernon Center Middle School (VCMS) requires the collective efforts of the student, school personnel, and parents/guardians with support from the community. Below you will find ways that you can be part of the VCMS community. It includes ways to monitor student progress and outlines school expectations. If you have any questions about VCMS or would like to arrange a team meeting or home visit, contact our School Guidance Department at (860)-870-6072. Visit the VCMS school website regularly at www.vernonpublicschools.org to keep up-to-date on current events.

Ways that you can be a part of the VCMS community:

VCMS website – regular postings at www.vernonpublicschools.org/vcms-homepage provide a glimpse into upcoming events at VCMS. It also includes curriculum resources, important forms, district notices, the school calendar, information about extracurricular clubs and activities, and a link to the VCMS Facebook page.

Vernon Center Middle School PTO – assists the staff in developing activities and events for parent involvement. This organization welcomes all families to join. Information on how to join and activities they promote can be found at www.vcmspto.org.

School Governance Council – established to enhance the learning experience of students, this committee is made up of VCMS staff members, parents/guardians, and the community. Meetings are open to parents/guardians of all VCMS students. Meeting times are posted on the VCMS website.

School Guidance Department - maintains a parent/guardian resource library located in the Guidance office. Individual meetings, Team meetings, or home visits can be arranged with the Guidance Department to assist parents/guardians with specific questions regarding their student's experiences at VCMS.

Resources to monitor student progress:

- ASPEN on-line monitoring system – provides information about assignments, homework, and assessments
- Midterm reports sent home
- Trimester Report Cards sent home
- SBAC
- NGSS in science for 8th grade
- I-Ready district assessments – administered two times a year to monitor student progress in Reading and Mathematics
- IXL

Resources outlining school expectations:

- VCMS Parent-Student Handbook, which includes VCMS course descriptions and conduct expectations.
- VCMS Engagement Guidelines, a document summarizing the responsibilities of students, families, and the school
- Course Expectation Letters – provided at the beginning of each course.
- VCMS Effort and Conduct Rubric (EG Club)
- PBIS Matrix – outlining the school core values

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Introducing the School

Vernon Center Middle School opened as a new building in the fall of 1966. It contains sixty-three regular classrooms plus art, computer science, communications lab, family consumer science, library technology center, music, physical education, language arts center, technology education, and keyboarding facilities.

School Colors	- Blue and White
Nickname	- "Eagles"
Motto	- Freedom with Responsibility
National Recognition	- Blue Ribbon Schools Program 1999-2000 A National School of Excellence
PBIS Values	- SOAR – (Safety, Organization, Achievement, Responsibility and Respect)

I Academics

A. Curriculum and Promotion Policy

1. Course of Study

All students at Vernon Center Middle School are required to take a program of studies that consists of core and unified arts subjects and physical education. The core subjects include language arts (English and reading), world language, math, science and social studies. The unified arts subjects include all of the non-core courses, band and chorus. Since promotion and/or retention are determined by individual performance, each student is encouraged to do his/her very best in all classes.

Grade 6 includes:

Subjects		
Language Arts	Mathematics	French/Spanish
Social Studies	Physical Education	Science
Health	Practical ELA	Practical Math
Learning Labs	Multi-sensory learning	
Unified Arts		
Art	Digital Learning Skills	Family & Consumer Sciences
Music	Technology Education	Social Emotional Learning

Grade 7 includes:

Subjects		
Language Arts	Mathematics	French/Spanish
Social Studies	Physical Education	Science
Health	Practical ELA	Practical Math
Learning Labs	Multi-sensory learning	
Unified Arts		
Art	Computer Science	Family & Consumer Sciences
Music	Keyboard (Typing/Computer Science)	
Technology Education	Social Emotional Learning	

Grade 8 includes:

Subjects		
Language Arts	Mathematics	French/Spanish
Social Studies	Physical Education	Science
Health	Practical ELA	Practical Math
Learning Labs	Multi-sensory learning	
Unified Arts		
Art	CAD	Family & Consumer Sciences
Music	Social Emotional Learning	Technology Education

2. Language Arts/Mathematics Boost

The Language Arts and Mathematics Boost are offered to students that need extra support in these areas. This program is individualized to meet a student's diagnosed needs, based on test results, teacher recommendation, and classroom performance.

3. Promotion Policy

Promotion requires a yearly passing average 6 of 7 classes/subjects. Failure to meet minimum requirements will result in consideration for retention.

NOTE: Physical Education requirement - All students must participate in physical education unless exempt for a medical reason.

- a. Students are required to wear shorts, tee shirt, and sneakers. They may not wear the same clothes for school and physical education. Students should be prepared, as weather can be cold or hot, and in the early morning the grass can be extremely wet. Sweatshirts are encouraged in the fall (September-October).
 - b. Students are strongly discouraged from bringing/wearing valuables to school on gym days, and they may not wear jewelry in class. **Valuables brought to class can be locked up in the PE office upon request. Students should not leave valuables with their clothes on the locker room benches.**
 - c. Students may be excused from class for colds, headaches, etc., by a note from home. These notes are given directly to the teacher. Three excuses are allowed each marking period. If the doctor excuses a student from gym for longer than a week, a written medical excuse is required.
 - d. Students are graded by participation, effort, and attitude. Some tests on skill, knowledge, and fitness will be given.
4. Curriculum Restrictions
- a. World Languages - Eighth grade students must have successfully completed the seventh and eighth grade program and be recommended by the department for year two in high school.
 - b. Mathematics - Seventh grade students must have advanced standing in grade six, must meet specific standardized testing criteria, and must be recommended by the department to take accelerated mathematics in grade seven. Eighth grade students must have advanced standing in grade seven, must meet specific standardized testing criteria and must be recommended by the department to take Algebra I.

B. Student Records

Upon completion of grade eight, the following information will be retained in each student's cumulative file:

1. All academic records.
2. All records of standardized tests.
3. Preschool screening results.
4. School registration forms.
5. A record of any disciplinary infraction resulting in suspension is maintained through high school.
6. Pertinent Special Education records in a separate confidential file.
7. Parents may review their child's records by contacting the guidance department

C. Homework/Planners

Homework is defined as an assignment that is to be prepared outside the formal class. This work may be completed at home or in flex.

The school provides one Planner to each student free of charge. Students are expected to carry their Planner from class to class and home with them each day. The student will replace a lost or damaged Planner at the cost of five (\$5) dollars. Extra planners are in the main office.

It is the students' responsibility:

1. To use their Planners on a daily basis in order to organize materials, budget time, and record homework assignments.
2. To complete homework assignments on time, to make up work after an absence, to prepare for a future class, and to reinforce material previously learned.
3. To have daily discussions with their parents/guardians about school using their homework and Planners as a guide, and to inform them when you are remaining after school for help.
4. To understand purpose, requirements, directions, and means of evaluation of assignments. Your Planner is issued by Vernon Center Middle School.

This Planner has been designed to help you manage your time and plan your day, so that you can take an active part in controlling your academic achievement.

Parents can assist in the preparation of homework by:

1. Insuring that a time, place, and appropriate atmosphere are provided for the completion of homework.
2. Recognizing that homework is the student's responsibility, parents sometimes may give momentary advice or help their child understand a process.

3. Fostering independent reading by providing in the home books or magazines of suitable reading level.
4. Discussing specific problems concerning their child's homework with the child's teacher or guidance counselor.

If a child fails to do the assigned work, a teacher may choose to give a homework detention for the following day. If the failure to turn in assignments continues, then the help of parents, child's school counselor and finally the administration will be enlisted.

If you are absent, it is your responsibility to check with your teachers when you return to find out the work missed.

If you are absent for two or more days, your parents may call the office between 7:30 AM and 8:15 AM and request your assignments which will be available at the close of school. Please do not request homework for less than a two-day absence.

If an extended absence is anticipated, please contact your school counselor well in advance of the date to arrange for assignments.

Students who have been suspended from school will automatically have their assignments requested for them. This work is to be completed and returned to the appropriate teacher at the conclusion of your suspension.

It will be the responsibility of the student's parent to pick up the assignments and/or books. The school office closes at 5:00 PM.

D. Special Help and Make-up Periods

Teachers are available for special help or make-up work. Normally this does not include Friday. If you are having difficulty or have been absent, it is wise to arrange a time with your teachers to remain for extra help. **This should take precedence over intramurals, interscholastic athletics, or any other school activity of an elective nature.**

A late bus will be available on days to be determined.

E. School Counseling Department

During your years at the middle school, you will have counselors assigned to you who are interested in your progress. Your counselor is someone with whom you may discuss any matter which is of concern to you. You may arrange a conference whenever you find it necessary.

Your counselor may decide from time to time that it is necessary to discuss your progress with you. Sometimes your parents will be asked to come in for a conference. You will also be helped to choose a course of study at the high school when the time comes.

In order for you to visit the guidance office you must have a pass. This can be obtained from your counselor or from your teacher. To arrange an appointment, students are asked to sign up on the list posted outside each counselor's door. Your counselor will call you.

F. Grades and Honor Roll

Midterm reports are issued to all students at the midpoint of every trimester. These indicate the current grade of each core subject. Midterm reports require a parent/guardian signature and a copy must be returned. In addition, all unified arts teachers issue progress reports to those students in danger of failing. If your parents have any questions, they are encouraged to make an appointment for a conference with the teacher or team.

Report cards will be issued electronically.

The middle school uses numerical grades in all subject areas. In addition to academic numerical grades, behavior and effort grades are awarded in each subject. Behavior grades are based on, but are not limited to, student deportment, respectfulness to students and teachers, and adherence to school and class rules. Effort grades are based on, but are not limited to, completing homework and classwork, participating in class, and seeking extra help as needed. Behavior and effort grades are not contingent upon academic averages.

****Please see the EG Rubric in the beginning of the handbook for specific criteria for behavior and effort grades.**

The grading system is as follows:

Grade Key	Behavior and Effort
A = 90-100	E = Excellent
B = 80-89	G = Good
C = 70-79	S = Satisfactory
F = 69 and below (failing)	N = Needs Improvement
INC = Incomplete	U = Unsatisfactory

The honor roll for grades six, seven and eight is published three times a year at the close of each trimester.

General Honors: No grade below 80 in any subject and an average of an 85 in all subjects.

High Honors: No grade below 85 in any subject and an average of a 90 in all subjects.

Note: Incomplete report card grades must be made up by midterm of the following trimester. Not doing so will result in a failing grade in that subject. Students have the responsibility to complete all missing assignments.

G. EG/SOAR Club (See EG Rubric in the beginning of the Handbook)

The EG/SOAR Club is considered to be a group of students who should exhibit exemplary behavior at all times. This includes homeroom, flex/SOAR, cafeteria, and hallway behavior. Students attendance and tardiness will also be considered when assigning an EG grade.

1. Students must receive grades of E or G in behavior and effort to qualify for the EG/SOAR Club.

H. Awards

The following academic awards are given in June:

1. Florence R. Whitlock Memorial Awards are given for the highest overall average in the major academic subjects.
2. First Year Algebra Prize is given to a boy and girl with the highest numerical average in Algebra I.
3. Athletic and Activity Awards are given for participation and excellence in extracurricular activities during the academic year.
4. Academic Honors Awards
5. Scholar Leader Award for excellence in scholarship and leadership
6. President's Education Award
7. VCMS Scholar Awards recognizing three-year High Honor Roll achievement
8. VCMS Honor Roll achievement
9. More awards to be determined.

II General Information

A. Arrival at School

WHEN DROPPING OFF STUDENTS, PLEASE DO SO BY THE GYM ENTRANCE

Students are requested not to arrive any earlier than fifteen minutes before the start of school. Those students who do so must go directly to the cafe and wait for the passing bell before proceeding to their Eagle Time classroom. Once students enter the building they must remain inside. Eagle Time is held from 7:38 AM to 8:08 AM. In the event of a two-hour delayed opening Eagle Time is held from 9:38 AM to 9:48 AM. During Eagle Time period, attendance will be taken and announcements will be made. The school day ends at 2:15 PM.

B. Attendance (Refer to BOE Policy 5113)

The attendance procedure at Vernon Center Middle School is designed to accomplish the following:

1. Maintain accurate attendance records of students.
2. Provide a structure that encourages consistent attendance to school for the betterment of each student's education progress.

The structure of VCMS' attendance procedure is based upon nationally recognized best practices that are aimed at improving student attendance and the State Department of Education's adopted definitions for excused and unexcused absences. The interventions of these procedures are designed to increase the

communication between the child, the parent/guardian, and the school with the hope of providing a structure that places a high priority on attendance and in turn, student achievement.

1. **Absence Procedures**

If you are absent from school, your parent /guardian is required to call the school at 860-870-6070, between 7:30 AM and 8:15 AM, stating the reason for your absence. In addition, you are required to bring written documentation that is signed and dated by your parent/guardian on the day that you return. The note should be given to the main office and have the date(s) of absence and the reason for missing school specified.

Excused Absences

A student's absence from school shall be considered excused if written documentation of the reason for the absence has been submitted within ten (10) days of the student's return to school in accordance with Section 10-210 of the Connecticut General Statutes and meets the following criteria:

- a. For absences one through nine, a student's absence(s) from school are considered excused when the student's parent/guardian approves such absence(s) and submits appropriate documentation; and
- b. For the tenth absence and all absences thereafter, a student's absence(s) from school are considered excused for the following reasons:
 - (1) Student illness (**Note: all student illness absences must be verified by an appropriately licensed medical professional to be deemed excused, regardless of the length of absence**);
 - (2) Student observance of a religious holiday;
 - (3) Death in the student's family or other emergency beyond the control of the student's family;
 - (4) Mandated court appearances (additional documentation required);
 - (5) The lack of transportation that is normally provided by a district other than the one the student attends (no parental documentation is required for this reason); or
 - (6) Extraordinary education opportunities pre-approved by district administrators and in accordance with Connecticut State Department of Education guidance.

Note: Family vacation during the school year does not qualify as extraordinary education opportunities.

Unexcused Absences

A student's absence from school shall be considered unexcused unless they meet one of the following criteria::

- a. The absence meets the definition for an excused absence (including documentation requirements); or
- b. The absence meets the definition of a disciplinary absence.

Disciplinary Absences

Absences that are the result of school or district disciplinary action are excluded from these definitions and are considered as "**Absent Excused**".

In attendance

The Connecticut State Board of Education policy states that, "a student is considered to be "in attendance" if present at his/her assigned school, or an activity sponsored by the school (e.g., a field trip), for at least half of the regular school day. The cut-off time at VCMS is 11:00 AM on a full day and 10:00 AM on a half-day of school. A student who is serving an out-of-school suspension or expulsion will be considered absent." A student not meeting the definition of "In attendance" is considered absent.

Documentation

Such documentation should include a signed note from the student's parent/guardian, a signed

note from a school official that spoke in person with the parent/guardian regarding the absence, or a note confirming the absence by the school nurse or by a licensed medical professional, as appropriate. Documentation should explain the nature of and the reason for the absence as well as the length of absence. Separate documentation must be submitted for each incidence of absenteeism. For example, if a student is out sick two consecutive days, that student must submit appropriate documentation covering both sick days. If a student is out two non-consecutive days, that student must submit the appropriate documentation following each absence. Note: E-mailing or text messaging support staff at school would not qualify as acceptable documentation based on security/confidentiality reasons. **Documentation not received within ten (10) days of the absence will not be accepted. The absence(s) will then be considered unexcused.**

2. **Absentee Interventions**

The Vernon Public Schools, believing that every day in school counts, has developed a systematic response to school absence to assist and support families so that their students are in school on time every day:

- a. Three (3) absences (**excused or unexcused**) – a letter will be sent home expressing concern.
- b. Six (6) absences (**excused or unexcused**) – a letter will be sent home and a phone call placed to the family by a staff member to discuss the impact the absences may be having on the child and to remind the parent/guardian of the middle school attendance policy.
- c. Nine (9) absences (**excused or unexcused**) – a letter will be sent home and the family will be asked to meet with school personnel.
- d. Two (2) **unexcused absences** in a thirty (30) day period – a letter will be sent home and a phone call will be made home to address the unexcused absences. If appropriate, the student will be referred to the school's truancy counselor at which time additional parent contact will be made.
- e. Five (5) unexcused absences in the school year – a letter will be sent home and a phone call will be made home to address the unexcused absences. If appropriate, the student will be referred to the school's truancy counselor at which time additional parent contact will be made.

3. **Truancy and Chronic Absenteeism (Refer to BOE Policy 5113.2)**

According to State law, parents/guardians are responsible for their child's attendance at school and must provide an excuse for any day the child is absent for legitimate reasons. The law defines a child as truant if he/she has four (4) unexcused absences in a month or ten (10) accumulated unexcused absences for the year. Truancy will result in an attendance meeting with the student's parent or guardian and an administrator/support staff to review and evaluate the reason(s) for the student's truancy. This meeting shall be held no later than ten (10) days after the student becomes truant. Failure to attend this meeting or follow through with recommendations made from the meeting could lead to a possible referral to the Vernon Youth Services Bureau/Juvenile Review Board or the Department of Children and Family for education neglect. Truancy and/or excessive absences, whether excused or unexcused, could also lead to the student not being able to attend school-related social events at the discretion of the administration. *Connecticut State Law defines **Chronic Absenteeism** as a child whose total number of absences at any time during a school year is equal to or greater than 10 percent of the total numbers of school days a student is enrolled during such school year. A child that reaches 18 absences at any time during the year is also considered to be chronically absent. Research has shown that chronically absent children are at high risk of academic failure and future drop-out.

4. **Tardiness (Refer to BOE Policy 5113)**

Punctuality is an important value in the work place and at school. We expect that our students will arrive to school on time. Students who are late to school cause a disruption to lessons and to the continuity of instruction. Any student who arrives late to school (after the 7:38 AM bell) will report to the main office with their parent/guardian to sign in and indicate on the Tardy to School Log Sheet, the date, time of arrival, and the reason for the tardy. Students that walk to school and who are tardy will only be excused if a note or call is received from the parent/guardian on the day the student is tardy. Tardiness will not be excused if the note or phone call is not received on the day of the tardy. On the 5th unexcused tardy, the school will address the tardiness with the student and/or parent/guardian and a consequence may occur. For every additional (3) three unexcused tardies, the school will continue to address with the student and/or parent/guardian and additional consequences may occur. Note that excuses for "waking up late and/or missing the bus" will be considered an unexcused tardy. If a student is late to class, he/she

may receive an admission pass to class at the discretion of the previous teacher. The office will not issue a late pass when a student is tardy for a class. Tardiness to class may result in a detention.

****All attendance interventions will be contingent upon the student's educational progress and the discretion of the administration in consultation with the staff. When appropriate, the administration may provide additional disciplinary consequences to students in violation of the attendance & tardy procedures. This may include exclusion from EG Club, after school and extra curricular activities including sports.**

5. **Appointments and Early Dismissals**

Every attempt should be made to schedule doctor or dental appointments after school hours. If it is necessary to be dismissed early, a written request indicating the day and time and reason for the early dismissal must be presented to the office in the morning. Parents must report to the office to pick up their children, present identification and sign them out before leaving the building. Parents are encouraged to bring their child back to school after appointments to avoid an absence. The student must be in school at least half the day to be in attendance.

No student may be released from school to anyone other than the parent, guardian, or child protective services personnel and law enforcement officers, pursuant to law, unless the name of the individual seeking release of the student appears on a list provided by the parent or guardian. Proper identification must be presented at all times.

A student may be released to either parent unless a custodial parent supplies the building Principal with a certified copy of a court order or divorce decree to the contrary.

6. **Illness and Dismissals**

If you feel ill in school, please ask your teacher for permission to see the nurse. It is the nurse's responsibility to arrange dismissal with parents if necessary. **Students are not allowed to leave school for any reason unless given permission to do so by the nurse or an administrator.**

C. **Passes**

Whenever you are in the hallway during class time you need your appropriate colored pass. Students must also sign out electronically when they leave a classroom. The school is responsible for you and needs to know where you are at all times.

Rest Rooms - Do not use the restrooms between classes or without a pass.

Under all circumstances students must sign out and back in on the electronic sign-out sheet indicating time and destination.

D. **Care of Books/Chromebooks**

You are responsible for all chromebooks issued to you. An insurance program for the chromebook is an available option for all students/parents. A record is made of them and their condition in the beginning of school. You will be expected to pay for any lost or damaged chromebooks. Please put your name and homeroom number in each book in the place designated. In this way, it will be returned to you if it is lost. Your books **must be covered**, kept orderly and neat, and treated with respect. Excessive amounts of papers should not be kept in your chromebooks. Chromebooks must be in their covers at all times.

E. **Damage to School Property**

This is your school. It can be a very pleasant place to be if we all cooperate. Please be careful not to damage the building or the equipment that has been made available to us. We all have a responsibility to use the facilities properly.

If you should accidentally damage anything, please report it promptly to the office so that it can be repaired.

If you should deliberately inflict damage to the building, school equipment, or books you will be expected to pay for the damages and will be subject to disciplinary action including suspension and/or police involvement. All student bills must be paid before report cards will be issued or school records are transferred. Loss of privileges may also take effect (dances, field trips, outings, etc).

We are proud of our school! Let us keep it looking attractive so that visitors know we are responsible school citizens!

F. Lost and Found

In a school of our size, objects are apt to be misplaced. If you find any item, please turn it in to the office immediately. Students who have lost an item should check lost and found located in the main office & the cafeteria. Periodically, all unclaimed items will be donated to charity or discarded.

G. Use of the Telephone

The school office telephone may be used in cases of emergency only. We will not accept personal calls in the office unless they are of an emergency nature.

H. Closing of the Building

The school day ends at 2:15 PM. **Students not participating in an after-school activity that is under the supervision of a teacher must leave the building and school grounds as soon as school is dismissed.** Students must go to their lockers before after-school activities.

I. School Announcements

When school is canceled or there is a late opening, radio station WTIC 1080 AM and FM will make "No School" announcements between 5:30 AM and 7:00 AM in the morning. Television stations WFSB (Channel 3), WVIT (Channel 30), and Fox 61 News will list school cancellations or late openings on their screens. PLEASE DO NOT CALL THE SCHOOL OFFICE.

J. Unplanned Early Dismissal

There are occasions when we will need to dismiss students early without previous notification due to inclement weather or building emergencies (e.g. no electricity). All students need to know their family plan for unscheduled early dismissals. Discuss your plan with your child in advance so that he/she is prepared.

K. The Health Unit

1. School Nurse.

The Health Room is located in the administrative section of the building. If you become ill during the day, you may get a pass from your teacher to go to the nurse. Her services are important to you. Report any injury or illness promptly. The nurse will decide whether or not you should be sent home and will make the necessary call.

The nurse checks vision in sixth grade, hearing in eighth grade, and postural screening every year. If a referral is sent home, it should be returned as soon as you have seen a doctor.

2. Medications in School.

The State of Connecticut Department of Public Health has set firm guidelines regarding this area. If you are unable to schedule the medication around school hours and your child has to receive it here, the school must receive a written order from your doctor. The properly labeled medication must be brought in by a responsible adult - not by the child. Students may not be in possession of any medications, prescription or over-the-counter. Students may be subject to disciplinary actions for possession and/or distribution of any type of medication.

3. Student may receive Tylenol (Acetaminophen) with written authorization from a parent or guardian. A renewal is required for each school year. Tylenol can be administered by the school nurse for the following conditions: headache without fever, menstrual cramps, or dental pain under treatment. Tylenol permission forms can be obtained from the nurse's office. If the student requires any other form of pain medication, a medical authorization form is required. A parent will need to provide and bring the medication in to the nurse's office.

4. **Sports Physicals:** Prior to trying out for a school sport, the student will need to have a current sports physical form filled out by their physician and on file in the nurse's office. The physical form can be dated no earlier the May 1 prior to the start of the school year.

L. School Social Worker/Psychologist

Trained caseworkers are available to students and their families at Vernon Center Middle School to help with any problem, either personal or school related, as it affects a student's adjustment in school. Social workers are also available to offer consultative help to teachers who are concerned about a student, to make referrals and to act as liaison to the various community agencies. Appointments may be arranged by inquiring for the social worker in the guidance office or by calling the school Social Work office at 860-870-6070.

M. Bicycles/Skateboards/Scooters

With parental permission, students may ride their bicycles, skateboards, or scooters to school. They are to be ridden in a safe and orderly manner. During school hours they are to be locked in the bike rack located in the courtyard. State law requires children under the age of twelve to wear helmets while riding their bicycles.

N. Standardized Testing Program

Grade six, seven, and eight students will be given the SBAC in language arts and mathematics. Eighth grade students will be given the NGSS State Science Test. Grade eight students will also complete career awareness inventories. Further information about any of these tests is available through the School Counseling Department.

O. Visitors

Visitors to Vernon Center Middle School will be allowed only if prior arrangements have been made with an administrator. Friends or relatives from neighboring school systems, whose schools are in session with vacations or days off different from ours, will not be allowed to visit. No visitors will be allowed on the last day of school, before a vacation or during the last three weeks of school.

III Standards of Conduct

A. Code of Behavior

1. **IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY . . . to be on time for all classes . . . to have your books and materials and be ready to work . . . to respect others and their property . . . to do what you are asked to do by those in authority when you are asked to do it. Do What is Right.**
2. Be polite, courteous, respectful, and considerate. Expect your fellow students to be the same. Take care, therefore, in the opening and closing of room and locker doors, for the quick opening of these could injure another. Loud talking and laughter and boisterous conduct disturb others and are unreasonable in school. Public displays of affection, e.g., kissing, holding hands, hugging, is not appropriate in the school environment. There should be no reason to put your hands on anyone at any time. Fooling around is not tolerated and often leads to bigger issues.
- 3.. Grooming must be done in the restroom. Beauty aids, if used, should be applied in private. Combing hair, especially at lunch, is extremely impolite. No aerosol grooming aids, including hair coloring, of any type are allowed in school.
4. Students are expected to wear to school clothing, which is neat, clean, and in good repair, with a sense of good taste. Reasonable dress which is appropriate for the activity will be permitted unless it proves to be:
 - a. a safety hazard;
 - b. a health problem;
 - c. a disruption to the educational process;
 - d. a maintenance problem for custodians.
5. On the basis of the above criteria, the following are forbidden:
 - a. Footwear that may endanger the health or safety of a student or may create unnecessary maintenance problems shall not be worn in school. High platform shoes are not recommended and strongly discouraged. "Black-soled" shoes which mark the floors are inappropriate footwear for school. Footwear with wheels/rollers nor slippers will be allowed.
 - b. Wallet chains and clothing fastened together with metal rivets present a problem by scratching furniture and should not be worn. Heavy chain or spiked necklaces and bracelets are not appropriate.
 - c. Bare midriff, Tank Tops or crop tops are not to be worn in school. Students are expected to wear attire that covers the midriff area and shorts and skirts/dresses of appropriate length (fingertip length when arms are at one's side). No hats, hoods, bandanas, do-rags, sunglasses, cut-offs, open shirts, halter-tops, or shirts with obscene, suggestive, or questionable printing or pictures will be allowed! Clothing shall have straps measuring at least one and one-half inch (1 ½") in width. **No undergarments are to be visible.** Clothing that is excessively tight, short, and/or revealing is not appropriate for school and shall not be worn. All clothing will be worn as designed. Any clear representation of gang-like involvement such as beads, bandanas, jewelry, shirts, or any other form of clothing and/or accessories will not be allowed. **The administrators may exclude from school any student not adhering to these rules. Total support from students and parents is necessary for this arrangement to work.**
 - e. Clothing or any other attire disruptive to the educational process, or displaying inappropriate language or advertising tobacco, sex, drugs or alcohol will not be allowed. Maintaining a proper school atmosphere is the responsibility of everyone. Therefore, your cooperation is needed.

- f. **Sagging pants or shorts may not be worn. Pants and shorts will be worn at the waist. No undergarments are to be visible. Tights, leotards, pajamas, or other sleepwear are not to be worn as outerwear. No hoods may be worn inside the building due to security issues.**
 - g. Clothing fads may develop during the school year which are inappropriate for school or disruptive to the educational process. Students will be notified if certain attire will not be allowed at school. **Students found to be out of compliance with appropriate standards of dress may be required to change clothing and may be subject to disciplinary action.**
6. Changing classes
When changing classes keep these rules in mind:
- a. You are dismissed from class by the teacher.
 - b. Pass in a single or double line, keeping to the right in hallways and on stairs at all times.
 - c. Go **directly** to your next class.
 - d. **Walk in the hallways or stairwells.**
 - e. Talk quietly while moving between classes.

B. School Jurisdiction

Students are under school jurisdiction from the time they depart home for school to the time they return home from school. Schools may discipline students for off-campus behavior which has a detrimental effect on the on-campus educational environment or which threatens the safety of school property or the welfare of the persons who work or study there.

C. Buses

Student Responsibility

1. While waiting for the school bus and boarding it:
 - a. On the way to school students should:
 - 1) Be at the designated bus stop five minutes before the scheduled time.
 - 2) Wait until the bus comes to a full stop before trying to get aboard.
 - 3) Students waiting across the road from the designated bus stop should continue to wait until the bus comes to a full stop and displays its flashing lights before attempting to cross the street.
 - b. When leaving school students should:
 - 1) Follow directions of the teacher.
 - 2) Obey the directions of the bus driver.
2. While riding on the bus students should:
 - a. Remain in their seats while the bus is in motion.
 - b. Not jeopardize the safety of others. The usual rules of good conduct should be observed:
 - 1) Talk quietly. No swearing
 - 2) No pictures or recordings are to be taken due to privacy laws
 - 3) No loud music or music with inappropriate language is to be played out loud
 - 4) Do not throw objects on the bus or out the bus window.
 - 5) Do not destroy or deface seats in the bus.
 - 6) Secure permission of driver before opening windows of the bus.
 - 7) Eating and drinking are not permitted on the bus.
 - 8) Smoking is not permitted on the bus per Vernon Board of Education "no smoking policy."
 - 8) Use/possession of controlled substances is not permitted.
3. When leaving the school bus students should:
 - a. Watch their step getting off the bus.
 - b. Take their turn and not crowd.
 - c. Not loiter at the bus stop.
 - d. If the stop is across the road from home, stand on the shoulder of the road at the front of the bus until the driver signals that it is safe to cross, and then cross in front of the bus.
 - e. If it is not necessary to cross the highway, stand aside on the shoulder of the road until the bus has moved on, then, when they can see traffic in both directions, walk on the shoulder of the road (or the sidewalk) to their destination.

- f. Walk on the left facing traffic if there is no sidewalk and it is necessary to walk on the roadway.
 - g. At the destination of a trip away from school, students shall obey the instruction of the adult in charge.
- 4. Students are under school jurisdiction from the time they depart home for school until they return home from school. Students who jeopardize the safety of others are subject to school disciplinary actions and police involvement.
 - 5. **Students who fail to observe rules and regulations may be denied transportation in accordance with the rules and regulations for bus conduct as adopted by the Board of Education. Students suspended from their bus may not ride any bus for the duration of their suspension period. A second bus referral may lead to automatic bus suspension.**
 - 6. **Bus Departure**
At the close of school, buses will depart from the back of the school.
 - 7. **Emergency Bus Pass**
Students must ride on their assigned bus. However, in the case of an emergency, a student may be given a one-day pass to ride on another bus if space is available. Such requests must be made in writing by the student's parent/guardian and turned in to the main office by noon of the day requested. You must include the student's name, the parent/guardian's name, the reason, the destination and emergency contact information. Such passes will be given for **baby-sitting purposes only**, not for visiting a friend.

A complete copy of the Vernon Board of Education Transportation Policy has been included with your handbook. It is strongly recommended that both students and parents read the policy carefully and keep it for future reference.

D. Eagle Time

Come to your team Eagle Time prepared to study. Bring with you your books, chromebook, notebook and paper, pen, pencil, and any other necessary equipment. If you report to Eagle Time without appropriate school work, the Eagle Time teacher may give you an assignment to be completed during that Eagle Time block.

The Eagle Time provides you with an opportunity to practice your math and LA skills, prepare your homework, get assistance from your team teachers, study for tests or quizzes, or to go to the library to get books or use the computers. Make the most of this opportunity and, by your behavior, let the others around you make the most of theirs.

E. Library

Since there are a large number of students at Vernon Center Middle School, it is necessary for everyone to follow certain rules and procedures. Complying with these will be in the best interest of all.

- 1. The library will be open fifteen minutes before the start of school and twenty minutes after the close of school. To stay after school, students need a note from their parent/guardian.
- 2. Students must get their planner signed by a teacher to go to the library.
 - a. Students are limited to 10 minutes for picking out a book
 - b. If a teacher wants the student to complete research in the library, that should be noted in the students' planner
- 3. The library will often have classes in it as well as students doing research. Be courteous while in the library; *quiet* is expected at all times.
- 4. Students who lose or damage books will be billed for them and will lose their library privileges until the bill is paid. A student with an overdue book or outstanding fine may also lose his/her privileges including using the school store, dances, field trips, outings, etc.
- 5. Report cards and records will not be issued to students who have outstanding library bills.
- 6. Remember that the librarian is there to help you and is happy to answer any questions that you may have.
- 7. Students may lose their library privileges for violation of the above rules.
- 8. Students are encouraged not to bring unnecessary items to the library.

F. Cafeteria

- 1. Cafeteria Rules
 - a. Remain quiet (no talking, shuffling around) on directive from the staff member on duty.
 - b. Lunch lines should be orderly and quiet.
 - c.. There is to be no cutting in line or saving places in line.

- d. You may only go through the line once and not after it closes.
 - e. Borrowing money from other students or staff is not allowed. Students are not allowed to charge meals or snacks at the cafeteria.
 - f. Students should see the cafeteria staff if they do not have a lunch or lunch money.
 - g. Select your seat and remain at that table. If you are assigned a seat, you must report to that table.
 - h. Talk only to students at the same table with you.
 - i. No wandering around!
 - j. There is to be no saving of places at tables.
 - k. Food may not be taken out of the cafeteria.
 - l. Failure to follow cafeteria rules may result in lunch detention(s) to be served the following day(s)
- 2. Miscellaneous
 - a. Ten minutes into the lunch block the lunch line will close.
 - b. Three minutes before dismissal time all talking is to stop - this time is for quietly finishing lunch and for throwing away trash, recycling, wiping tables and sweeping the floor around your table.
 - c. Books/chromebooks should be left in your class.
- 3. Dismissal
 - a. Papers are to be picked up off the floor and all materials are to be placed in the proper containers. No food should be removed from the cafeteria. Floors need to be swept and tables wiped down.
 - b. You will be dismissed one row at a time after tabletops and the floor are clean and cleared.
 - c. Students are to walk in an orderly manner to their next class

G. Fire Drills/Emergency Drills

- 1. The purpose of fire drills is to evacuate the building in a safe, orderly manner as quickly as possible. The primary concern is for the safety of all individuals and secondly, the building and its contents.
- 2. Silence is necessary to safely evacuate the building. Talking during a fire drill will result in a detention.
- 3. Follow the directions of your teacher.
 - a. Walk, do not run.
 - b. Keep calm, do not crowd.
 - c. Do not carry books or clothing.
(Students in physical education class may get minimum clothing.)
- 4. The fire alarm or public address system will signal the evacuation of the building.
- 5. A series of short rings is the signal to return to the building in lines in numerical order.
- 6. Be familiar with the exit posted in each room in which you find yourself during the day.
- 7. In addition to fire drills it is necessary to practice emergency procedures such as "lock-downs." If the school is in "lock-down", no one is allowed to enter or leave the building, nor have access to the students until the emergency situation is declared safe.

IV Disciplinary Actions

A. Teacher Detentions

Detention is held after school with the teacher who has assigned it. If you have a detention with more than one teacher, report to the teacher who gave you the first detention. The following day you will report to the second teacher. A student who consistently receives detention or who receives it with more than one teacher or does not report for detention will be referred to an administrator. You will receive a twenty-four hour notice to arrange transportation (including utilizing the late bus).

B. Lunch Detentions

Administration and/or teachers may assign students lunch time detentions. Students then eat lunch in an alternative setting to the cafeteria, including a teacher's classroom.

C. Office Discipline

There are many reasons why you may be referred to the office to see an administrator. Some of the possibilities regarding school and/or bus behavior are:

1. Disrespectful or inappropriate language or behavior to teachers, substitute teachers, other members of the staff, community, bus employees, or fellow students.
2. Skipping detentions.
3. Serious misbehavior or violation of school or bus rules.
4. Possession of smoking/electronic cigarette/vaping materials (that may or may not contain nicotine).
5. Smoking/vaping
6. Tardiness to school.
7. Fighting.
8. Truancy.
9. Vandalism.
10. Leaving school grounds.
11. Threats, verbal or physical.
12. Possession/use of contraband materials.
13. Skipping class/ wandering the halls/leaving classroom without permission
14. Refusing to follow a staff member's or bus driver's directive.
15. Sexual harassment
16. Possession of dangerous items.
17. Possession of illegal materials.
18. Serious disruption to the educational process.
19. Involvement in gang-like activity.
20. Riding the wrong bus.
21. Endangering your own safety or the safety of others.
22. Student gambling/betting in school.
23. Dress code Violations
24. **Cellular phone, digital media player, electronic devices and computer games must be turned off and left in backpacks (not on the person of the student) at the beginning of the school day. Any visible electronic device turned on or off is subject to confiscating by staff after multiple infractions. Confiscated phones will be stored in the administrative suite.**
25. **Students are to refrain from intruding on one another's personal space (no poking, pushing, tripping). This behavior is not "just fooling around" and will be handled accordingly.**

Any gang-like behavior or tactics of an intimidating or physically or verbally abusive nature will be grounds for immediate serious disciplinary action. This action may include but not be limited to suspension or expulsion from school.

Extortion of any kind will be grounds for immediate serious disciplinary action and will result in suspension or expulsion from school.

A false emergency call to 911 is a serious offense that may result in suspension, expulsion, and/or arrest.

Photo images and video recordings of school/class events including off ground events may not be electronically posted or shared. To do so violates privacy standards. Any picture or voice recording without written consent is a violation of privacy standards. Failure to comply with this regulation may result in suspension, referral to the Board of Education for expulsion, and/or police involvement. Any posts made outside of school that cause disruption to the learning environment may also result in suspension and/or police involvement.

If you are referred to the office, following a discussion with you and all involved parties, one of the following actions may be taken:

1. You will be assigned a school and/or teacher detention.
2. Your parents will be asked to meet with the appropriate teacher(s) and/or administrator(s).
3. You will be suspended in school or out of school for a specified time. You will be expected to do all of your schoolwork while on suspension and return it to the appropriate teachers when you return to school.
4. You may be referred to the Superintendent of Schools for expulsion from school.

Discipline issues may result in the following:

- **Lunch Detention**
- **Teacher Detention**
- **Administrator Detention**
- **In School Suspension**
- **Out of School Suspension**

D. Administrative Disciplinary Action – Repeated Level II or Level III Behaviors

For any student who is suspended outside of school, a re-entry meeting with the student, parent and administration will be required. This may also occur for students who receive more than 1 ISS.

The following is a partial list of infractions and possible consequences:

- | | | |
|-----|--|---|
| 1. | Fighting(physical altercation) | Suspension – in or out – depending on circumstances – three to ten days – may involve police action and possible referral for expulsion |
| 2. | Smoking/Vaping | Suspension – in or out – depending on circumstances |
| 3. | Substance abuse | Suspension out of school – referred to treatment agency, may result in expulsion |
| 4. | Possession, Selling or Distribution of controlled substance (drugs or alcohol) | Suspension out of school up to ten days – may result in expulsion from school and police involvement |
| 5. | Truancy | Family meeting, PPT process, could lead to a JRB referral |
| 6. | Pushing/Verbal Threat to Student | Not actual fight – discussion, detention, subject to suspension notice – may include in-school/out of school suspension |
| 7. | Disrespect/insubordination to staff | Teacher detention, school detention, in-school/out-of-school suspension – one to five days – dialogue with teacher/staff |
| 8. | Vandalism | In-school – one to five days – parent billed for cost of repair, may involve police involvement |
| 9. | Corridor/Cafeteria misbehavior | Dialogue with teacher, discussion with student, detention, loss of cafeteria privilege – possible suspension |
| 10. | Skip class/wander halls/leave without permission | In-school suspension for skipping class, detention or ISS for wandering/leaving |
| 11. | Leave school | In-school suspension or out-of-school suspension |
| 12. | Use or possession of “contraband” materials | Detention, subject to suspension notice, or actual suspension (in or out) –one to ten days – possible expulsion per Vernon Board of Education policy |
| 13. | Skip teacher detention | Must serve teacher/office detention, 2 nd skipped detention may lead to in- school suspension |
| 14. | Threat, verbal or physical to teacher | Follow procedure dictated by law – dialogue with teacher and physical, appropriate action taken, e.g., suspension – three to ten days, police involvement |
| 15. | Possession of weapons | Suspension out of school – ten days – referral to superintendent for consideration of expulsion from school, police involvement. |
| 16. | Dress code violations | Dialogue with teacher and/or related services staff – possible referral to office for disciplinary action |
| 17. | Refusal to leave a class | In -school suspension if administration or climate specialist are involved |

E. Confidential List

Student names are placed on the confidential list for thirty days as the result of suspension in or out of school. Students on the confidential list for the first time will not be allowed to attend after school or evening dances or sporting events for thirty days. This includes the 8th grade dance.

Students on the confidential list for the second or more times and/or as a result of a suspension of more than five school days will not be allowed to participate in or attend after or in school functions, intramurals, club activities, athletics, dances, field trips etc. for thirty days. Students may also be excluded from co-curricular and extra-curricular activities per administrative discretion* (see page 46) and Board of Education Policy 5114c (see page 21:C).

F. Forbidden Materials

In the best interests of the whole student body, certain materials are forbidden in school at the bus stop and on the bus. Some of these are: smoking/vaping materials (including e-cigarettes), box cutters, cameras, chains, spiked collars/bracelets, chewing tobacco, water pistols, firecrackers, candy, gum, aerosol spray cans, knives, scissors, multi-purpose utility tools, matches, laser pointers, Airsoft pellet/BB guns, open beverage containers, permanent ink markers, hair spray, body spray, toys, and similar items. If you have any of these materials or any others that might disrupt the education process, they will be confiscated, and, in most cases, **will not be returned**. THE SELLING OF ANY MATERIAL IS NOT ALLOWED.

Students who bring electronic devices, such as cellular phones and games do so at their own risk and the school will not be responsible for stolen or lost items. If a student chooses to bring an electronic device to school, it must be off and placed in the locker during the school day. Use of electronic devices during the school day is a violation of the VCMS code of conduct. Students may be allowed to use electronic devices for educational purposes only with teacher permission and supervision.

The police may be notified of any student found to be in possession, selling or distributing alcohol, any narcotic substance, any restricted or controlled drug, any mood-altering substance, or any substance purported to be a restricted or controlled drug or substance on school premises or while participating or attending any school-sponsored activity. Discipline may include suspension in or out for ten (10) days and a referral to the Board of Education for expulsion.

The possession/use of weapons on school vehicles, school property or at school related events is prohibited. Such weapons include but are not limited to firearms, knives, explosives or any object used as a weapon. Any substance, material or object used to threaten or to cause or attempt to cause bodily harm to one's self or to another person or to the property of the Board of Education or to the personal property of another is forbidden.

Failure to comply with this regulation will result in suspension for ten (10) days and referral to the Board of Education for expulsion. The assistance of the police will be sought and the appropriate charges will be filed by the school administration against anyone who interferes with the safe and orderly operation of the school.

V Board of Education Policies

A. Attendance

Connecticut state law requires parents/guardians to cause their children to attend school regularly during the hours and terms the public school is in session. Parents/Guardians of a child five years of age have the option of not sending the child to school until ages six or seven. Mandatory attendance terminates upon graduation or withdrawal with written parent/guardian consent at age seventeen.

Learning experiences that occur in the classroom are meaningful and essential components of the learning process. Time lost from class tends to be irretrievable in terms of opportunity for instructional interaction. The Board of Education requires that accurate records be kept of the attendance of each student. A student should not be absent from school without the parents' or guardian's knowledge and consent.

B. Absences

An absence shall be considered "excused" when a student does not attend school due to illness or injury, death in the immediate family, religious obligation, an emergency, or other exceptional circumstances. Written excuse for such absences should be submitted to school officials by the child's parent or guardian. All other absences, with or without written explanation, shall be considered unexcused.

Students who plan to be absent for reasons other than those listed above, should seek approval by presenting a note from home to the Principal. Responsibility for completion of missed classwork lies with the student, not the teacher. Unless a student has an extended illness, all make-up work will be complete in a time frame to be determined by the teacher.

C. Requests for Early Dismissal

Request for release of a student during the school day must be handled by the administration to ensure maximum provisions for the student(s) safety and welfare.

Parents/guardians or designee requesting dismissal of a student before the end of the normal school day must submit in advance to the designated school personnel, a written request indicating the day and time for which the early dismissal is requested. The designated adult for the student in grade K-8 must come into the school office to pick up and sign out the student. Early dismissal should be requested only in emergency or unusual situations.

D. Religious-based Absences/Early Dismissals

Students may be released for days of religious observance upon written request by their legal guardian or adult responsible for the student.

Students shall be excused from school upon written request from parents or guardians for major religious holidays, and students shall have the right to make up tests and shall not be deprived of any awards because of absences on religious holidays.

E. Precautions

No student may be released from school to anyone other than the parent, guardian or child protective services personnel and law enforcement officers, pursuant to law, unless the name of the individual seeking release of the student appears on a list provided by the parent or guardian.

A student may be released to either parent unless a custodial parent supplies the building principal with a certified copy of a court order or divorce decree to the contrary.

The Superintendent of School shall develop procedures to enable parents and guardians to amend the list of persons authorized to obtain the release of their children.

Legal Reference:

Connecticut General Statutes
10-184 Duties of parents.
10-199 through 10-202 Attendance, truancy in general.
10-202e-f Policy on dropout prevention and grant program.
10-22 l (b) Board of education to prescribe rules.
Campbell v New Milford, 193 Conn 93 (1984).

F. Homework

The responsibility of the school district to educate the student is carried out by the teachers through effective classroom instruction and the careful delegation of independent study. It is important for the student to be taught the concepts related to the subject area and how to study in school before he/she is given work to do at home. There is, therefore, a steady increase in the amount of homework expected of students from the elementary grades through the senior high school.

Worthwhile homework benefits students. Homework should be an extension of the class lesson, be clearly understood by students, be well planned and meaningful, and be evaluated, corrected, and count for class credit.

All homework should have a sound educational purpose to:

1. Strengthen basic skills.
2. Extend classroom learning.
3. Stimulate and further interests.
4. Reinforce independent study skills.
5. Develop initiative, responsibility, and self-direction.
6. Stimulate worthwhile use of leisure time.
7. Acquaint parents/guardians with the work.

Guidelines for teachers:

Teachers will:

1. Explain the purpose of any given assignment.
2. Give clear directions on the method and means of accomplishing the assignment.
3. Ensure the availability of all necessary resources to carry out the assignment.
4. Post assignments in the classroom and on the student database in a timely manner, for grade 3 and beyond.
5. Acknowledge receipt of homework and provide students with specific and timely feedback.

6. Explain the method of evaluation of homework and its potential impact on the student's grade.
7. Suggest a reasonable time allotment on a daily assignment.
8. Give assignments as far in advance as is practical.
9. Provide students with opportunities for choice in extended learning projects.
10. Differentiate homework as needed.
11. Communicate with parents/guardians.

Guidelines for students:

Students will:

1. Understand the purpose and means of evaluation of an assignment, and ask for clarification when needed.
2. Record directions, time allotment, and requirements of assignments, beginning in grade 3.
3. Assume responsibility for completion of assignments.
4. Self-monitor grades and progress on the student database beginning in grade 6.
5. Consult with the teacher about work to be completed after an absence.
6. Assume responsibility for completing make up work.

Guidelines for Parents/Guardians:

Parents/Guardians will:

1. Reinforce the importance of homework in the learning process.
2. Provide a time, place, and atmosphere conducive to the completion of homework.
3. Monitor the student's performance.
4. Discuss specific problems with their student's teacher and/or school counselor.
5. Respond to teacher concerns regarding homework.

Guidelines for Administrators:

Administrators will:

1. Provide for homework consistency within grades, between teams, and among staff.
2. Communicate the Homework Policy to teachers, students, and parents/guardians.

Approximate times per night for homework completion are as follows:

- Kindergarten:** Up to 15 minutes per night plus – 20 minutes of family literacy experiences for grades K-5.
- Grade 1:** Up to 15 minutes per night plus – 20 minutes of family literacy experiences for grades K-5.
- Grade 2:** 15-20 minutes per night plus – 20 minutes of family literacy experiences for grades K-5.
- Grade 3:** 30 minutes per night plus – 20 minutes of family literacy experiences for grades K-5.
- Grade 4:** 40 minutes per night plus – 20 minutes of family literacy experiences for grades K-5.
- Grade 5:** 50 minutes of homework per night plus – 20 minutes of family literacy experiences for grades K-5.
- Grades 6 - 8:** Up to 20 minutes of homework per night per class
- Grades 9-12:** 30 Minutes per night per class, 45 minutes per honors class. 1 hour per Advanced Placement/ECE class.

Weighting Grades:

Departments at the middle school and the high school will clearly define the homework expectations/practice for each course and assign a consistent percentage of weight, not to exceed 20% of the quarter grade.

Make Up Work:

Assignments missed during an absence shall be completed in accordance with the Attendance/Excuses dismissal policy #5113.

G. Smoking

By state law, students under eighteen may not buy cigarettes. Smoking or the use of smokeless tobacco in any building, on any of the properties under the jurisdiction of the Vernon Board of Education, and on school buses is prohibited. Violation will result in suspension from school. **Students should realize that smoking or using chewing tobacco is injurious to one's health and should avoid it.**

H. Chemical Health Policy

Through the use of a revised curriculum, classroom activities, community support and resources, a strong consistent administrative and faculty effort, and rehabilitative and disciplinary procedures, the administration staff of the Vernon School System, in cooperation with the students, parents/guardians, will work to educate, prevent, and intervene in the abuse of all drug, alcohol, and mood altering substances by the entire student population in accordance with state law.

I. AIDS Prevention Education

Instruction in AIDS will be presented to all students in a planned, ongoing, and systematic manner. The Curriculum will be developmentally appropriate for the grade level to which it is assigned. Parents or guardians will have the right to exempt their child from AIDS instruction. A request for such an exemption must be made in writing to the building principal.

J. Nondiscrimination Statement

Vernon Public School System does not discriminate in its programs or activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, or handicap.

K. Suspension, Expulsion, and Due Process – Board of Education Policy 5114

It is the goal of the Board of Education to ensure the safety and welfare of all students in attendance, and to maintain an atmosphere conducive to learning. In keeping with this goal, students are expected to comply with school rules and regulations, as well as Board policies. Students may be disciplined for conduct on school grounds or at any school-sponsored activity that endangers persons or property, is seriously disruptive of the educational process, or that violates a publicized policy of the Board. Students may be disciplined for conduct off school grounds if such conduct is seriously disruptive of the educational process and violates a publicized policy of the Board. In working with students, emphasis shall be placed upon developing effective self-discipline as the most effective disciplinary approach.

Definitions

1. **"Exclusion"** shall be defined as any denial of public school privileges to a student for disciplinary purposes.
2. **"Removal"** shall be defined as an exclusion from a classroom for all or part of a single class period, provided such exclusion shall not extend beyond ninety (90) minutes.
3. **"In-School Suspension"** shall be defined as an exclusion from regular classroom activity for no more than ten (10) consecutive school days, but not exclusion from school, provided such exclusion shall not extend beyond the end of the school year in which such in-school suspension was imposed.
4. **"Suspension"** shall be defined as an exclusion from school privileges or from transportation services for no more than ten (10) consecutive school days, provided such exclusion shall not extend beyond the end of the school year in which such suspension was imposed. All suspensions will be in-school suspensions unless the administration determines (1) that the student being suspended poses such a danger to persons or property or such a disruption to the educational process that the student shall be excluded from school during the period of suspension or (2) that an out-of-school suspension is appropriate based on evidence of previous disciplinary problems that have led to suspensions or expulsion of the student and efforts by the administration to address such disciplinary problems through means other than out-of-school suspension or expulsion, excluding positive support strategies.
5. **"Expulsion"** shall be defined as an exclusion from school privileges for more than ten (10) consecutive school days and shall be deemed to include but not be limited to, exclusion from the school to which such student was assigned at the time such disciplinary action was taken, provided that assignment to a regular classroom program in a different school in the district shall not constitute a suspension or an expulsion. Such period of exclusion may extend to the school year following the school year in which the exclusion was imposed, up to one calendar year.
6. **"Emergency"** shall be defined as a situation under which the continued presence of the student in the school imposes such a danger to persons or property or such a

disruption of the educational process that a hearing may be delayed until a time as soon after the exclusion of such student as possible.

7. **"Days"** is defined as days when school is in session.
8. **"School-sponsored activity"** is defined as any activity sponsored, recognized or authorized by the Board of Education and includes activities conducted on or off school property.
9. **"Possess"** means to have physical possession or otherwise to exercise dominion or control over tangible property.
10. **"Deadly weapon"** means any weapon, whether loaded or unloaded, from which a shot may be discharged, or a switchblade knife, gravity knife, billy, blackjack, bludgeon, or metal knuckles.
11. **"Firearm"** means 1) any weapon (including a starter gun) which will or is designed to or readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive; 2) the frame or receiver of any such weapon; 3) any firearm muffler or firearm silencer; or 4) any destructive device. Firearm does not include any antique firearm. For purposes of this definition "destructive device" means any explosive, incendiary, or poison gas, bomb, grenade, rocket having a propellant charge of more than 4 ounces, missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than ¼ ounce, mine, or device similar to any of the weapons described herein.
12. **"Vehicle"** means a "motor vehicle" as defined in Section 14-1 of the Connecticut General Statutes, snow mobile, any aircraft, or any vessel equipped for propulsion by mechanical means or sail.
13. **"Martial arts weapon"** means a nunchakum kama, kasari-fundo, octagon sai, tonfa, or chinese star.
14. **"Dangerous Drugs and Narcotics"** is defined as any controlled drug in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes §21a-240.
15. **"Dangerous instrument"** means any instrument, article or substance which, under the circumstances in which it is used or attempted or threatened to be used, is capable of causing death or serious physical injury.
16. **"Bullying"** means the repeated use by one or more students of a written, oral or electronic communication, such as cyberbullying, directed at or referring to another student while attending school in the same school district or a physical act or gesture by one or more students repeatedly directed at another student attending school in the same school district that:
 - a. causes physical or emotional harm to such student or damage to such student's property,
 - b. places such student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself, or of damage to his or her property,
 - c. creates a hostile environment at school for such student,
 - d. infringes on the rights of such student at school, or
 - e. substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.Bullying shall include, but not be limited to, a written, oral, or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics.
17. **"Cyberbullying"** means any act of bullying through the use of the Internet, interactive and digital technologies, cellular mobile telephone or other mobile electronic devices or any electronic communications.

L. Removal From Class

1. All teachers are hereby authorized to remove a student from class when such student causes a serious disruption of the educational process within the classroom.
2. Such teacher shall send the student to a designated area and shall immediately inform the building Principal or his/her designee as to the name of the student and the reason for removal.
3. No student shall be removed from class more than six (6) times in any year nor more than twice in one week, unless such student is referred to the Building Principal or his/her designee and granted an informal hearing in accordance with the provisions of this policy, as stated in G(3).

M. Exclusion from Co-Curricular and Extra-Curricular Activities

Participation in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities is a privilege and not an entitlement. Students involved in such programs are expected to follow all school rules and demonstrate good

citizenship. Failure to do so may result in partial or complete exclusion from said activities and programs. Activities include, but are not limited to, athletic programs, musical or drama productions, clubs, field trips, and school trips out-of-state and abroad.

N. Suspension and Expulsion

1. A student may be suspended or expelled for conduct on school property or at a school-sponsored activity that endangers persons or property, is violative of a publicized policy of the Board, or is seriously disruptive of the educational process, including but not limited to one or more of the following reasons:
 - a. Conduct causing danger to the physical well-being of himself/herself or other people that is not reasonably necessary for self-defense;
 - b. Intentionally causing or attempting to cause physical injury to another person that is not reasonably necessary for self-defense;
 - c. Intentionally causing or attempting to cause damage to school property or material belonging to staff (private property);
 - d. Stealing or attempting to steal private or school property or taking or attempting to take personal property or money from any other person;
 - e. The use, either spoken or written on clothing, of obscene or profane language or gestures on school property or at a school-sponsored activity;
 - f. Deliberate refusal to obey the directions or orders of a member of the school staff;
 - g. Harassment and/or hazing/bullying/cyberbullying for any reason but not limited to age, abilities, race, religion, ethnic background, gender or sexual orientation;
 - h. Open defiance of the authority of any teacher or person having authority over the student, including verbal abuse;
 - i. Threatening in any manner, including orally, in writing, or via electronic communication, a member of the school including any teacher, a member of the school administration or any other employee, or a fellow student;
 - j. Blackmailing a member of the school community, including any teacher, member of the school administration or any other employee or fellow student;
 - k. Possession of a firearm, deadly weapon, dangerous instrument, or martial arts weapon, as defined in Section 53a-3, such as a pistol, knife, blackjack, etc.;
 - l. Possession of any weapon or weapon facsimile, including but not limited to knife, pistol.
 - m. Possession, transmission, distribution, selling, use or consumption of alcoholic beverages, dangerous drugs or narcotics or intoxicant of any kind or any facsimile of a dangerous drug, narcotic or intoxicant of any kind;
 - n. Knowingly being in the presence of those who are in possession of using, transmitting, or being under the influence of any dangerous drug, narcotic, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant of any kind;
 - o. Participation in any unauthorized occupancy by any group of students or others of any part of any school, school premises or other building owned by any school district after having been ordered to leave said school premises or other facility by the Principal or other person then in charge of said school building or facility;
 - p. Participation in any walkout from a classroom or school building by any group of students and refusing to immediately return to said classroom or school building after having been directed to do so by the Principal or other person then in charge of said classroom or school building;
 - q. Intentional incitement which results in an unauthorized occupation of, or walkout from, any school building, school premises, facility or classroom by any group of students or other persons;
 - r. Repeated unauthorized absence from or tardiness to school;
 - s. Intentional and successful incitement of truancy by other students;
 - t. The use or copying of the academic work of another and the presenting of it as one's own without proper attribution;
 - u. Violation of school rules and practices or Board policy, regulation or agreement, including that dealing with conduct on school buses and the use of school district equipment;
 - v. Violation of any federal or state law which would indicate that the violator presents a danger to any person in the school community or to school property;
 - w. Lying, misleading, or being deceitful to a school employee or person having authority over the student;
 - x. Unauthorized leaving of school or school-sponsored activities;
 - y. Smoking.

O. Suspension for Conduct Off School Grounds

1. Students are subject to suspension for conduct off school property and outside of school-sponsored activities in accordance with law, for conduct that violates a publicized policy of the Board and is seriously disruptive of the educational process, including but not limited to the following:
 - a. Conduct leading to a violation of any federal or state law if that conduct is determined to pose a danger to the student himself/herself, other students, school employees or school property.
 - b. Adjudication as a delinquent or a youthful offender as the result of a felony if the conduct leading to the adjudication is determined to pose a danger to the student himself/herself, other students, school employees or school property.
2. In making a determination as to whether conduct is "seriously disruptive of the educational process," the administration, Board of Education or impartial hearing board may consider, but such consideration shall not be limited to; (1) whether the incident occurred within close proximity of a school; (2) whether other students from the school were involved or whether there was any gang involvement; (3) whether the conduct involved violence, threats of violence or the unlawful use of a weapon as defined in Section 29-38 and whether any injuries occurred, and (4) whether the conduct involved the use of alcohol, narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate or marijuana.

P. Mandatory Expulsion

It shall be the policy of the Board to expel a student for one full calendar year if:

1. The student, on grounds or at a school-sponsored activity, was in possession of a firearm, as defined in 18 U.S.C. 921, as amended from time to time, or deadly weapon, dangerous instrument or martial arts weapon, as defined in C.G.S. 53A-3; or the student, off school grounds, did possess such firearm in violation of C.G.S. 29-35 or did possess and use such a firearm, instrument or weapon in the commission of a crime; or the student, on or off school grounds offered for sale or distribution a controlled substance, as defined in subdivision (9) of C.G.S. 21a-240, whose manufacture, distribution, sale, prescription, dispensing, transporting or possessing with intent to sell or dispense, offering or administering is subject to criminal penalties under C.G.S. 21a-277 and 21a-278.
2. Such a student shall be expelled for one calendar year if the Board of Education or impartial hearing board finds that the student did so possess or so possess and use, as appropriate, such a weapon or firearm, instrument or weapon or did so offer for sale or distribution such a controlled substance.
3. The Board may modify the period of a mandatory expulsion on a case-by-case basis.
4. A firearm, as defined by C.G.S. 53a-3 includes any sawed-off shotgun, machine gun, rifle, shotgun, pistol, revolver, or other weapon, whether loaded or unloaded from which a shot may be discharged, or a switchblade knife, a gravity knife, billy, black jack, bludgeon or metal knuckles.

*The definition of firearm as currently defined by 18 U.S.C. 921 is included in section A.11, page 2.

Q. Suspension Procedure

1. The administration of each school shall have the authority to invoke suspension for a period of up to ten days for one or more of the reasons stated in Section D, above, in accordance with the procedure outlined in this Section. The administration shall also have the authority to suspend a student from transportation services whose conduct while awaiting or receiving transportation violates the standards set forth in Section D, above. The administration shall have the authority to immediately suspend from school any student when an emergency exists as that term is defined in Section A, above. All suspensions will be in-school suspensions unless the administration determines that the student being suspended poses such a danger to persons or property or such a disruption to the educational process that the student shall be excluded from school during the period of suspension. The administration may also consider a student's previous disciplinary problems when deciding whether an out-of-school suspension is

warranted, as long as the school previously attempted to address the problems by means other than an out-of-school suspension or an expulsion.

If an emergency situation exists, the hearing outlined in paragraph G (3) shall be held as soon as possible after the exclusion of the student.

2. In the case of suspension, the administration shall notify the student's parents and the Superintendent of Schools within twenty-four (24) hours of the suspension as to the name of the student who has been suspended and the reason therefore. Any student who is suspended shall be given an opportunity to complete any class work including, but not limited to, examinations which such student missed during the period of his/her suspension.
3. Except in the case of an emergency, as defined in paragraph A, above, a student shall be afforded the opportunity to meet with the administration and to respond to the stated charges prior to the effectuation of any period of suspension or in-school suspension. If, at such a meeting the student denies the stated charges, he/she may at that time present his/her version of the incident(s) upon which the proposed suspension is based. The administration shall then determine whether or not suspension or in-school suspension is warranted. In determining the length of a suspension period, the administration may receive and consider evidence of past disciplinary problems which have led to removal from a classroom, in-school suspension, or expulsion.
4. No student shall be suspended more than ten times or a total of fifty (50) days in one school year, whichever results in fewer days of exclusion, unless a hearing as provided in paragraph H(5) is first granted.
5. No student shall be placed on in-school suspension more than fifteen times or a total of fifty (50) days in one school year, whichever results in fewer days of exclusion, unless a hearing as provided in paragraph H(5) is first granted.
6. For any pupil who is suspended for the first time pursuant to this section and who has never been expelled pursuant to section 10-233d, the administration may shorten the length of or waive the suspension period if the pupil successfully completes an administration-specified program and meets any other conditions required by the administration. Such administration-specified program shall not require the pupil or the parent or guardian of the pupil to pay for participation in the program.
 - a. The administration shortened the length of the suspension.
 - b. The suspension was waived due to the successful completion of an administration-specified program and the student met all other conditions required by the administration.

The suspension notice shall be expunged at the time the student completes the administration-specified program and meets all other conditions as required by the administration or when the pupil graduates from high school. This expunction will only take place if the student and/or parent/guardian of the student submits a written request for this action.

R. Expulsion Procedures

1. The Board of Education may, upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, expel any student for one or more of the reasons stated in this policy if in the judgment of the Board of Education, such disciplinary action is in the best interest of the school system.
2. Upon receipt of a recommendation for expulsion from the Superintendent of Schools the Board shall, after giving written notice to the student and his parents or guardian, if said student is less than 16 years of age, conduct a hearing prior to taking any action on the expulsion of said student, provided however, that in the event of an emergency as defined in this policy, the student may be expelled prior to the hearing but in such case even a hearing shall be held as soon after the expulsion as possible.
3. Three members of the Board of Education shall constitute a quorum for an expulsion hearing. A student may be expelled if a majority of the Board members sitting in the

expulsion hearing vote to expel and provided at least three affirmative votes for expulsion are cast.

4. A special education student's handicapping conditions shall be considered before making a decision to expel. A Planning and Placement Team (PPT) meeting must be held to determine whether the behavior or student actions violated the Board of Education standards set forth in policy governing suspension and expulsion are the result of the student's handicapping condition.
5. The procedure for any hearing conducted under this paragraph shall at least include the right to:
 - a. Notice prior to the date of the proposed hearing shall include a statement of the time, place and nature of the hearing; a statement of the legal jurisdiction under which the hearing is to be held; and a statement that the board is not required to offer an alternative educational opportunity to any student between 16 and 18 who was previously expelled or who is found to have engaged in conduct endangering persons which involved (1) possession of a firearm, deadly weapon, dangerous instrument or martial arts weapon on school property or school transportation or at a school sponsored activity or (2) offering for sale or distribution on school property or at a school sponsored activity a controlled substance, as defined in Section 21a-240(a) of the Connecticut General Statutes. This notice shall also include information on how to access locally available legal services that are provided free of charge or at a reduced rate, if desired.
 - b. A short and plain statement of the matters asserted, if such matters have not already been provided in a statement of reasons requested by the student;
 - c. The opportunity to be heard in the student's own defense;
 - d. The opportunity to present witnesses and evidence in the student's defense;
 - e. The opportunity to cross-examine adverse witnesses;
 - f. The opportunity to be represented by counsel at the parents'/student's own expense; and
 - g. The opportunity to have the services of a translator, to be provided by the Board of Education whenever the student or his/her parent or legal guardian do not speak the English language.
 - h. The prompt notification of the decision of the Board of Education, which decision shall be in writing if adverse to the student concerned.
6. The record of the hearing held in any expulsion case shall include the following:
 - a. All evidence received and considered by the Board of Education;
 - b. Questions and offers of proof, objections, and ruling on such objections;
 - c. The decision of the Board of Education rendered after such hearing; and
 - d. A copy of the initial letter of notice of proposed expulsion, a copy of any statement of reasons provided upon request, a statement of the notice of hearing and the official transcript, if any or if not transcribed, any recording or stenographic record of the hearing.
7. Rules of evidence at expulsion hearings shall assure fairness, but shall not be controlled by the formal rules of evidence, and shall include the following:
 - a. Any oral or documentary evidence may be received by the Board of Education but, as a matter of policy, irrelevant, immaterial or unduly repetitious evidence may be excluded. In addition, other evidence of past disciplinary problems which have led to removal from a classroom, in-school suspension, suspension, or expulsion may be received for considering the length of an expulsion and the nature of the alternative educational opportunity, if any, to be offered;
 - b. The Board of Education shall give effect to the rules of privilege by law;
 - c. In order to expedite a hearing, evidence may be received in written form, provided the interest of any party is not substantially prejudiced thereby;
 - d. Documentary evidence may be received in the form of copies or excerpts;
 - e. A party to an expulsion hearing may conduct cross-examination of witnesses where examination is required for a full and accurate disclosure of the facts;

- f. The Board of Education may take notice of judicially cognizable facts in addition to facts within the Board's specialized knowledge provided, however, the parties shall be notified either before or during the hearing of the material noticed, including any staff memoranda or data, and an opportunity shall be afforded to any party to contest the material so noticed;
- g. A stenographic record or tape-recording of any oral proceedings before the Board of education at an expulsion hearing shall be made; however, that transcript of such proceedings shall be furnished upon written request of a party to the Superintendent of Schools with the cost of such transcript to be paid by the requesting party. Findings of fact made by the Board after an expulsion hearing shall be based exclusively upon the evidence adduced at the hearing.
- h. Decisions shall be in writing if adverse to the student and shall include findings of fact and conclusions necessary for the decision. Findings of fact made by the Board after an expulsion hearing shall be based exclusively upon the evidence adduced at the hearing.

S. Notification

- 1. All students and parents within the jurisdiction of the Board of Education shall be informed, annually, of Board Policy governing student conduct by the delivery to each said student of a written copy of said Board Policy.
- 2. The parents or guardian of any minor student either expelled or suspended shall be given notice of such disciplinary action within twenty-four hours of the time of the institution of the period of expulsion or suspension.
- 3. The notice of an expulsion hearing to the student and his/her parents or guardians, if said student is less than eighteen years of age, shall include information on how to access locally available legal services that are free of charge or at a reduced rate, if desired.

T. Students with Disabilities

A special education student's and/or 504 disability shall be considered before making a decision to suspend. A student with disabilities may be suspended for up to ten school days in a school year without the need for the district to provide any educational services. A disabled student may be additionally removed (suspended) for up to ten school days at a time for separate acts of misconduct as long as the removals do not constitute a pattern. During any subsequent suspension of ten days or less of a student with disabilities, the district shall provide services to the disabled student to the extent determined necessary to enable the student to appropriately advance in the general curriculum and toward achieving his/her IEP goals. In cases involving removals for ten days or less, school personnel (school administration) in consultation with the child's special education teacher, shall make the service determination.

If the disabled student's suspensions beyond ten school days in a school year constitute a pattern because of factors such as the length of each removal, the total amount of time the child is removed and the proximity of the removals to one another, the IEP team (PPT) shall conduct a manifestation determination. Meetings of a student's IEP team (PPT) are required to develop a behavioral assessment plan or to review and modify as necessary one previously developed when the disabled student has been removed (suspended) from his/her current placement for more than ten school days in a school year and when commencing a removal (suspension) that constitutes a change in placement.

Whenever a student is suspended, notice of the suspension and the conduct for which the student was suspended shall be included on the student's cumulative educational record. Such notice shall be expunged from the record by the Board if the student graduates from high school.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the following procedures shall apply to students who have been identified as having one or more disabilities under the IDEA and/or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (a "student with disabilities"):

- 1. If a student with disabilities engages in conduct that would lead to a recommendation for expulsion, the district shall promptly convene an IEP team (PPT) meeting to determine whether the misconduct was caused by the student's disability. A student may be suspended for up to ten days pending the IEP team (PPT) determination.

2. If the IEP team (PPT) finds that the misconduct was not caused by the disability, the Superintendent may proceed with a recommendation for expulsion. During any period of expulsion, a student with disabilities under the IDEA shall receive an alternative educational plan consistent with the student's educational needs as determined by the IEP team (PPT) in light of such expulsion and the student's IEP. The services must continue to the extent determined necessary to enable the disabled student to appropriately advance in the general curriculum and to advance toward achieving the goals of his/her IEP.
3. If the IEP team (PPT) finds that the misconduct was caused by the disability, the Superintendent shall not proceed with the recommendation for expulsion. The IEP team (PPT) shall consider the student's misconduct and revise the IEP to prevent a recurrence of such misconduct and to provide for the safety of the other students and staff.
4. Should a parent of a student with disabilities who is eligible for services under the IDEA (or the student himself/herself if eighteen years of age or older) file a request for a due process hearing under C.G.S. 10-76h to contest an expulsion under subparagraph (2) above or a proposed change in placement under subparagraph (3), unless the parents (or student if eighteen years of age or older) and the Board otherwise agree, the child shall stay in his/her then current placement pending decision in said due process hearing and any subsequent judicial review proceedings. This "stay put" requirement shall not apply when modified by a court order or by the decision of a hearing officer.
5. Notwithstanding the provisions of the preceding subparagraph (4), a student with disabilities may be assigned to an interim alternative educational setting for not more than forty-five (45) days if the student brings a weapon to school or to a school function or knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance while at school or a school function. For purposes of this paragraph, "weapon" means a device instrument, material, or substance, animate or inanimate, that is used for, or is readily capable of, causing death or serious bodily injury, but excludes a pocket knife with a blade of less than 2 ½ inches in length. The interim alternative placement shall be determined by the IEP team (PPT). If a due process hearing is requested, the student shall remain in said interim alternative placement pending a decision in the due process hearing, unless the Board and the parents otherwise agree, or the Board obtains a court order.
6. In order for the district to unilaterally obtain a 45 day change in placement from a federal judge of Connecticut hearing officer, it must prove by substantial evidence that maintaining the current placement of the student is substantially likely to result in injury to the child or others. The school must also prove that it has made reasonable efforts to minimize the risk of harm the student presents in the current placement.

U. Alternative Educational Opportunity

The Board of Education recognizes its obligation to offer any student under the age of sixteen (16) who is expelled an alternative educational opportunity during the period of expulsion. Any parent or guardian of such student who does not choose to have his or her child enrolled in an alternative educational program shall not be subject to the provision of Section 10-184 of the Connecticut General Statutes. Any expelled student who is between the ages of sixteen (16) and eighteen (18) not previously expelled and who wishes to continue his or her education shall be offered an alternative educational opportunity if he or she complies with conditions established by the Board of Education. Such alternative educational opportunity may include, but shall not be limited to, the assignment of a student (who is sixteen years of age or older) to an adult education program or placement of such student in a regular classroom program of a school other than the one from which the student has been excluded. Any student participating in an adult education program during a period of expulsion shall not be required to withdraw from school under C.G.S. 1-184. In determining the nature of the alternative education opportunity to be offered under this Section, the Board of Education may receive and consider evidence of past disciplinary problems which have led to removal from a classroom, suspension, or expulsion.

The Board of Education is not obligated to provide such alternative educational opportunity to any student eighteen years of age or older. The Board of Education is not required to offer such alternative educational opportunity to any student between the ages of sixteen and eighteen who is expelled because of conduct which endangers persons, if it was determined at the expulsion hearing that the conduct for which the student was expelled involved (a) carrying on or

introducing onto school property a firearm, deadly weapon or dangerous instrument as defined in C.G.S. 53a-3 or (b) offering for sale or distribution on school property or at a school sponsored activity a controlled substance, as defined in subdivision (8) of C.G.S. 21a-240, whose manufacture, distribution, sale, prescription, dispensing, transporting, or possessing with the intent to sell or dispense, offering, or administration is subject to criminal penalties under C.G.S. 21a-277 and 21a-278. If the Board expels a student for the sale or distribution of such a controlled substance, the Board shall refer the student to an appropriate state or local agency for rehabilitation, intervention or job training, or any combination thereof, and inform the agency of its action. If a student is expelled for possession of a firearm or deadly weapon, the Board shall report the violation to the local police department.

This provision shall not apply to students requiring special education who are described in subdivision (1) of sub-section (e) of C.G.S. 10-76a. The alternative educational opportunity for any such student shall be established by the IEP team (PPT) in accordance with the procedures described above.

Whenever the Board notifies a student between the ages of sixteen and eighteen or the parents/guardians of such student, that an expulsion hearing will be held, the notification shall include a statement that the Board is not required to offer an alternative educational opportunity to any student who is found to have engaged in conduct including possession of a martial arts weapon, firearms, deadly weapons or dangerous instruments on school property or at a school function.

V. Other Considerations

1. If a student is expelled, notice of the expulsion and the conduct for which the student was expelled shall be included on the student's cumulative educational record. Such notice shall be expunged from the cumulative educational record by the Board if the student graduates from high school unless the expulsion notice is based on possession of a firearm or deadly weapon.
2. The Board may adopt the decision of a student expulsion hearing conducted by another school district provided such Board of Education held a hearing pursuant to C.G.S.10-233d (a). Adoption of such a decision shall be limited to a determination of whether the conduct which was the basis for the expulsion would also warrant expulsion under the policies of this Board. The student shall be excluded from school pending such hearing. The excluded student shall be offered an alternative education opportunity in accordance with item K above.
3. Whenever a student against whom an expulsion hearing is pending withdraws from school and after notification of such hearing but before the hearing is completed and a decision rendered, (1) notice of the pending expulsion hearing shall be included on the student's cumulative educational record and (2) the Board shall complete the expulsion hearing and render a decision.
4. A student expelled for possession of a firearm or deadly weapon shall have the violation reported to the local police department.
5. The period of expulsion shall not extend beyond a period of one calendar year. A period of exclusion may extend into the next school year.
6. Readmission of Student from a Residential Placement:

A District student who has committed an expellable offense who seeks to return to a District school, after having been in a juvenile detention center, the Connecticut Juvenile Training School or any other residential placement, for such offense may be expelled but the period of expulsion shall run concurrently with the period of commitment.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

4-176e through 4-160a. Contested Cases. Notice. Record.

10-76a Definitions

10-76h Special Education Hearing and Review Procedure. Mediation of Disputes

10-184 Duties of Parents. School Attendance Age Requirements

10-233a through 10-233f. Suspension, removal and expulsion of students, as amended by PA 95-304, PA 96-244, PA 98-139, PA 07-66, PA 07-122, PA 08-160, PA 09-82, PA 09-6 (September Special Session) and PA 10-111.

21a-240 Definitions

21a-277 Penalty for Illegal Manufacture, Distribution, Sale, Prescription, Dispensing.

21a-278 Penalty for Illegal Manufacture, Distribution, Sale, Prescription or Administration by Non-Drug Dependent Person
 29-35 Carrying of Pistol or Revolver without permit is prohibited. Exceptions.
 14-1 Definitions
 Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act
 53a-3 Definitions.
 53a-217b Possession of Firearms and Deadly Weapons on School Grounds.
 PA 94-221 An Act Concerning School Discipline and Safety.
 GOALS 2000: Educate America Act, Pub. L. 103-227.
 18 U.S.C. 921 Definitions.
 Title III - Amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.
 Sec. 314 (Local Control Over Violence)
 Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965 as amended by the Gun Free Schools Act of 1994.
 P.L. 105-17 The Individuals with Disabilities Act, Amendment of 1997.
Kyle P. Packer PPA Jane Packer v. Thomaston Board of Education.
 20 U.S.C. Section 7114, No Child Left Behind Act

Policy Revised:

October 12, 2004
 October 27, 2008
 June 8, 2009
 March 8, 2010
 May 24, 2010
 August 23, 2010
 May 14, 2012

W. Bullying Behavior/Cyberbullying/Hazing – Board of Education Policy 5131.911

The Board of Education (Board) promotes a safe and positive school climate, conducive to teaching and learning that is free from threat, harassment and any type of bullying behavior. Therefore it shall be the policy of the Board that bullying of a student by another student is prohibited.

The Board believes that a school environment in which students feel safe, supported, engaged and helpfully challenged is optimal for learning and healthy development. The Board seeks an environment in which students and adults feel socially, emotionally, intellectually and physically safe; an environment that is free of harassment, intimidation and bullying.

Definitions

“Bullying” means the repeated use by one or more students of a written, oral or electronic communication, such as cyberbullying, directed at or referring to another student attending school in the same school district or a physical act or gesture by one or more students repeatedly directed at another student attending school in the same school district that:

- A. causes physical or emotional harm to such student or damage to such student’s property,
- B. places such student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself, or of damage to his or her property.
- C. creates a hostile environment at school for such student.
- D. infringes on the rights of such student at school, or
- E. substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Bullying shall include, but not be limited to, a written, oral, or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics.

Examples of bullying include, but are not limited to:

- 1. physical violence and attacks
- 2. verbal taunts, name-calling and/or put-downs including ethnically-based or gender-based verbal put downs
- 3. threats and intimidation
- 4. extortion or stealing of money and/or possessions
- 5. exclusion from peer groups within the school
- 6. the misuse of electronic communications for the purpose of bullying, harassing, or sexually harassing other students within school or out of school (“cyberbullying”)
- 7. targeting of a student based on the student’s actual or perceived “differentiating” characteristics such as race; color; religion; ancestry; national origin; gender; sexual orientation; gender identity or expression; socioeconomic or academic status; physical appearance; or mental, physical, developmental, or sensory disability.

Anonymous reports of bullying or teen dating violence may be made by students to school employees and written reports of suspected bullying or teen dating violence by parents or guardians. School Employees who witness acts of bullying or teen dating violence or receive reports of bullying or teen dating violence will immediately notify the safe school climate specialist or another school administrator.

“Cyberbullying” means any act of bullying through the use of the Internet, interactive and digital technologies, cellular mobile telephone or other mobile electronic devices or any electronic communications.

“Mobile electronic device” means any hand-held or other portable electronic equipment capable of providing data communication between two or more individuals, including, but not limited to, a text messaging device, a paging device, a personal digital assistant, a laptop computer, equipment that is capable of playing a video game or a digital video disk, or equipment on which digital images are taken or transmitted.

“Electronic communication” means any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photoelectronic or photo-optical system.

“Hostile environment” means a situation in which bullying among students is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the school climate;

“Outside of the school setting” means at a location, activity or program that is not school related, or through the use of an electronic device or a mobile electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by a local or regional board of education.

“School employee” means (a) a teacher, substitute teacher, school administrator, school superintendent, guidance counselor, psychologist, social worker, nurse, physician, school paraprofessional or coach employed by a local or regional board of education or working in a public elementary, middle or high school; or (b) any other individual who, in the performance of his or her duties, has regular contact with students and who provides services to or on behalf of students enrolled in a public elementary, middle or high school, pursuant to a contract with the local or regional board of education.

“School climate” means the quality and character of school life with a particular focus on the quality of the relationships within the school community between and among students and adults (and reflects norms, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices and organizational structures.)

Bullying is not acceptable behavior in this district and is prohibited. Such conduct is disruptive of the educational process.

Students who engage in any act of bullying, on school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by the Board of Education, or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the Board of Education, and outside of the school setting if such bullying:

1. creates a hostile environment at school for the victim,
2. infringes on the rights of the victim at school, or
3. substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school, are subject to appropriate disciplinary action up to and including suspension, expulsion and/or referral to law enforcement officials.

A comprehensive program, to improve the school climate, involving everyone in the schools and the community, to address bullying at all school levels is essential to reducing incidences of bullying. Such a program must involve interventions at all levels: school-wide, classroom, and individual.

The District’s program:

1. Requires the development and implementation of a safe school climate plan by the Board of Education to address the existence of bullying in its schools;
2. Permits anonymous reports of bullying by students to school employees and written reports of suspected bullying by parents or guardians;
3. Requires school employees who witness acts of bullying or receive reports of bullying to orally notify the safe school climate specialist or another school administrator if the safe school climate specialist is unavailable, not later than one school day after such school employee witnesses or receives a report of bullying, and to file a written report not later than two school days after making such an oral report;
4. Requires the safe school climate specialist to investigate or supervise the investigation of all reports of bullying and ensure that such investigation is completed promptly after receipt of any written report;

5. Requires the safe school climate specialist to review any anonymous reports, except that no disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report;
6. Requires each school to have a prevention and intervention strategy, as defined by statute, as amended, for school employees to deal with bullying, including language about bullying in student codes of conduct and in all student handbooks;
7. Provides for the inclusion of language in student codes of conduct concerning bullying;
8. Requires each school to notify parents or guardians of all students involved in a verified act of bullying not later than forty-eight hours after the completion of the investigation. The notice shall be simultaneously mailed to the parent/guardian with whom the student primarily resides and to the other parent/guardian if requested. The notice must describe the school's response and any consequences that may result from further acts of bullying;
9. Requires each school to invite the parents or guardians of a student who commits any verified act of bullying and the parents or guardians of the student against whom such act was directed, to a meeting to communicate to such parents or guardians the measures being taken by the school to ensure the safety of the student against whom such act was directed and to prevent further acts of bullying;
10. Establishes a procedure for each school to document and maintain records relating to reports and investigations of bullying in such school and make such list publicly available; and report such number to the Department of Education and in such manner as prescribed by the Commissioner of Education;
11. Requires the development of case-by-case interventions for addressing reported incidents of bullying against a single individual or recurrently perpetrated bullying incidents by the same individual that may include both counseling and discipline;
12. Prohibits discrimination and retaliation against an individual who reports or assists in the investigation of an act of bullying;
13. Requires the development of student safety support plans for students against whom an act of bullying was directed that addresses safety measures the school will take to protect such students against further acts of bullying;
14. Requires the principal of a school or the principal's designee, to notify the appropriate local law enforcement agency when such principal or the principal's designee believes that any acts of bullying constitute criminal conduct;
15. Prohibits bullying (A) on school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by a local or regional board of education, or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the local or regional board of education, and (B) outside of the school setting if such bullying (i) creates a hostile environment at school for the student against whom such bullying was directed, (ii) infringes on the rights of the student against whom such bullying was directed at school, or (iii) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school;
16. Requires, at the beginning of each school year, for each school to provide all school employees with a written or electronic copy of the school district's safe school climate plan;
17. Requires all school employees to annually complete the training required by C.G.S. 10-220a, as amended. Such training shall include identifying and responding to bullying and preventing and responding to youth suicide;
18. Requires students and the parents/guardians of students to be notified annually of the process by which they may make reports of bullying;
19. Requires the Board of Education to approve the safe school climate plan developed pursuant to statute and submit such plan to the Department of Education for its review, analysis, and cooperative assistance;
20. Requires that not later than thirty calendar days after approval by the Board, the safe school climate plan shall be made available on the Board's and each individual school in the District's Internet website and such plan is to be included in the District's publication of the rules, procedures and standards of conduct for schools and in all student handbooks.

The Board expects prompt and reasonable investigations of alleged acts of bullying. The safe school climate specialist of each school is responsible for handling all complaints of alleged bullying. The safe climate specialist shall investigate or supervise the investigation of all reports of bullying promptly. In addition, the norms that are established by adults through consistent enforcement of all policies pertaining to conduct and modeling appropriate behavior at school and at home will reduce the instances and damages of bullying. It is necessary for students to promote the concept that caring for others is a valued quality, one that is accepted and encouraged.

Forms to report bullying or teen dating violence are available in any school office or on the district website: www.vernonpublicschools.org under the tabs **District and documents and forms**.

(Ref: Vernon BOE Policy 5131.911 Bullying Behavior/Cyberbullying/Hazing)

Prevention and Intervention Strategy

The District shall implement, as required by C.G.S. 10-222d, as amended, a prevention and intervention strategy which may include, but is not limited to:

1. Implementation of a Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) process or another evidence-based model approach for safe school climate or for the prevention of bullying identified by the Department of Education.
2. School rules prohibiting bullying, harassment, and intimidation and establishing appropriate consequences for those who engage in such acts.
3. Adequate adult supervision of outdoor areas, hallways, the lunchroom, and other specific areas where bullying is likely to occur.
4. Inclusion of grade-appropriate bullying education and prevention curricula in kindergarten through high school.
5. Individual interventions with the bully, parents and school employees and interventions with the bullied child, parents, and school employees.
6. School wide training related to safe school climate.
7. Student peer training, education and support.
8. Promotion of parent involvement in bullying prevention through individual or team participation in meetings, trainings, and individual interventions.

District Safe School Climate Coordinator

The Superintendent of Schools shall appoint, from among existing District staff, a District Safe School Climate Coordinator.

The Coordinator shall:

1. Implement the District's safe school climate plan;
2. Collaborate with safe school climate specialists, the Board, and the Superintendent to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying in District schools;
3. Provide data and information derived from the safe school climate assessments, in collaboration with the Superintendent, to the Department of Education; and
4. Meet with the safe school climate specialists at least twice during the school year to discuss bullying issues in the District and make recommended changes to the District's safe school climate plan.

Safe School Climate Specialist

Each school Principal shall serve, or designate someone to serve, as the Safe School Climate Specialist for the school.

The Specialist in each school shall:

1. Investigate or supervise the investigation of reported acts of bullying in the school in accordance with the District's Safe School Climate Plan;
2. Collect and maintain records of reports and investigations of bullying in the school; and,
3. Act as the primary school official responsible for preventing, identifying and responding to bullying reports in the school.

Safe School Climate Committee

The Principal of each District school shall establish a new committee or designate at least one existing committee that is responsible for developing and fostering a safe school climate and addressing issues related to bullying in the school.

The Safe School Climate Committee shall:

1. Receive copies of completed reports following investigations of bullying;
2. Identify and address patterns of bullying among students in the school;

3. Review and amend school regulations relating to bullying;
4. Review and make recommendation to the District Safe School Climate Coordinator regarding the District's Safe Climate Plan based on issues and experiences specific to the school;
5. Educate students, school employees and parents and guardians of students on issues relating to bullying;
6. Collaborate with the District Safe School Climate Coordinator in the collection of data regarding bullying; and
7. Perform any other duties as determined by the School Principal that are related to the prevention, identification, and response to school bullying for the school.

As part of this policy, the Board of Education shall develop and implement a Safe School Climate Plan to address the existence of bullying in its schools. Such plan shall establish deadlines for reporting, investigating, and notifying parents and guardians about bullying incidents; prohibit retaliation against those who report bullying; and require school officials to notify law enforcement officials when it is believed that bullying conduct constitutes a crime.

The Superintendent shall develop rules and procedures, which carry out the provisions of this policy. In addition, the Superintendent shall notify students and parents of students of this prohibition against bullying and the penalties for violating the prohibition by ensuring the posting of such information at each school and by ensuring inclusion of such information in student and parent handbooks.

This policy shall not be interpreted to prohibit a reasonable and civil exchange of opinions, or debate that is protected by state or federal law.

(cf. 0521 – Nondiscrimination)
 (cf. 4131 – Staff Development)
 (cf. 5114 – Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process)
 (cf. 5131 – Conduct)
 (cf. 5131.21 – Violent and Aggressive Behavior)
 (cf. 5131.8 – Out-of-School Misconduct)
 (cf. 5131.912 – Aggressive Behavior)
 (cf. 5131.913 – Cyberbullying)
 (cf. 5131.91 – Hazing)
 (cf. 5144 – Discipline/Punishment)
 (cf. 5145.4 – Nondiscrimination)
 (cf. 5145.5 – Sexual Harassment)
 (cf. 5145.51 – Peer Sexual Harassment)
 (cf. 6121 – Nondiscrimination)
 (cf. 6121.1 – Equal Educational Opportunity)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-15b Access of parent or guardian to student's records. Inspection and subpoena of school or student records.

10-222d Policy on bullying behavior as amended by PA 08-160 and PA 11-232.

PA 06-115 An Act Concerning Bullying Policies in Schools and Notices Sent to Parents or Legal Guardians.

PA 11-232 An Act Concerning the Strengthening of School Bullying Laws.

Policy revised:

May 14, 2012

June 8, 2009

April 9, 2007

January 27, 2003

X. Sexual Harassment Policy – Board of Education Policy 5145.51

General: Sexual harassment will not be tolerated among students or staff of the school district. Any form of sexual harassment is forbidden whether by students, supervisory or non-supervisory personnel, individuals under contract, or volunteers in the schools. Students shall exhibit conduct which is respectful and courteous to employees, to fellow students, and to the public. In addition, the Board prohibits all discriminatory intimidation on the basis of any other status protected by law, including but not limited to race, color, age, gender, gender identity or expression, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, marital status, disability, or veteran status.

Definition: Sexual harassment is any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, whether verbal or physical, including, but not limited to:

1. Insulting or degrading sexual remarks or conduct;
2. threats or suggestions that a student's submission to, or rejection of, unwelcome conduct will in any way influence a decision regarding that student;
3. conduct of a sexual nature which substantially interferes with the student's learning or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive learning environment, such as the display in the educational setting of sexually suggestive objects or pictures.

Complaints Procedures: The board of education encourages victims of sexual harassment to report such claims promptly by making a written or oral complaint to the building principal. Should this individual be the alleged harasser, sexual harassment may be reported to the district's Title IX coordinator:

Director of Pupil Personnel Services
30 Park Street, Vernon, CT 06066
860-870-6000 Ext. 133

Complaints shall be investigated promptly and thoroughly and corrective action shall be taken when allegations are verified. Confidentiality shall be maintained to the extent practicable under the circumstances and no reprisals or retaliation shall occur as a result of good faith charges of sexual harassment or cooperation in the investigation of a complaint. If the complainant is a minor student, the person to whom the complaint is given should consider whether a child abuse report should be completed.

If it is determined that inappropriate conduct has been committed, the Board will take such action as is appropriate under the circumstance to eliminate the offending conduct and, where appropriate, impose discipline. When the harasser is a Board employee, such action may include discipline up to and including dismissal from employment, as deemed appropriate under the circumstances consistent with applicable law and collective bargaining agreements. When the harasser is a student, such action may include discipline up to and including expulsion and/or referral to the police or other appropriate agency.

The results of the investigation, including a good faith determination of whether or not harassment occurred as well as any disciplinary action to be taken, shall be maintained by the school district in a final report. The Complainant and the alleged harasser will be informed in writing of whether harassment has been found.

The district shall provide staff development for district administrators and other staff and annually shall distribute this policy to staff and students.

Legal Reference:

Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VII, 42 U.S.C. § 2000-e2(a).
Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Policy Guidance (N-915.035) on Current Issues of Sexual Harassment, effective 10/15/88.
Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 34 CFR § 106.
Revised Sexual Harassment Guidance, Harassment of Students by School Employees, Other Students, or Third Parties, Title IX (U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, Jan. 19, 2001)
Meritor Savings Bank. FSB v. Vinson, 477 U.S. 57 (1986)
29 C.F.R. ¶ 1604.11 (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission regulations)
Conn. Gen. Stat. §§ 46a-54, 46a-60
Constitution of the State of Connecticut, Article I, Section 20.

Policy revised:
September 12, 2011
January 26, 2010

Y. Science Dissection Policy

The dissection of animals has a long and well-established place in the teaching of life sciences. Well-constructed dissection activities conducted by thoughtful instructors can illustrate important and enduring principles in biology. Learning theory further reinforces the benefit of learning from active experiences rather than passive learning alone. Vernon Public Schools believes that dissection of animals and/or specific parts thereof is a valuable method of giving students a motivating, active biological experience in the study of the anatomy and physiology of organisms. When dissection is used in the classroom it is imperative that it is part of an approved and supervised curriculum and that:

1. The teacher thoroughly explains the learning objectives of the lesson and utilizes additional worksheet/audio-visual materials to maximize the educational benefit of the experience.

2. All specimens be treated with respect.
3. All students will be informed, prior to the dissection, that they will have the option of discussing individual objections to dissection with the appropriate teacher/administrator. Objections to dissection which could be initiated by the parent or student may be based on religious grounds, ethical grounds, or if the process is repulsive to the student. Students raising an objection to dissection may be given an alternative assignment whose grade could be used in lieu of dissection grade(s). All decisions regarding this matter will be made on an individual basis by the teacher/administrator. Students requesting an alternative assignment to dissection must have their parents put this request in writing to the classroom teacher.

Z. Search and Seizure Policy

Use of Trained Dogs for Search on School Property

The Board of Education considers students in possession of illegal drugs and other illegal substances in the school, on school property or at school-sponsored activities to be detrimental to the learning process and to the health of those involved. The Board supports the elimination of possession and/or use of illegal substances/drugs. The Board wants to convey a strong message to the community, faculty, and student body concerning the use or possession of illegal or improper substances in connection with the Vernon Public Schools.

All students, parents, and visitors are advised that it is the policy of the Vernon Board of Education that all lockers, desks, and any other areas used to store property at any school facility or on any school property are the property of the Board and are not the property of the students to whom they are assigned or who may be permitted to use them. Use of such facilities is a privilege, not a right. Likewise, permission for students and visitors to park on school property is a privilege, not a right. **As such, all lockers, desks and other storage places on school property as well as vehicles parked on school property are subject to search by Board employees or agents whenever there are reasonable grounds to believe that a search would produce evidence of illegal activity or of violation of Board policy or school rules.** All students and visitors must understand that they do not have the right to expect privacy in connection with their use of such lockers, desks, and other storage locations, as well as with their vehicles parked on school property, and that any illegal or improper items they may store on school property may be discovered by search or inspection. **Any person possessing illegal or controlled drugs/substances, alcoholic beverages, weapons and any other illegal items** under Board policy or state or federal law has no reasonable expectation of privacy when possession of such items is on school property or at a school-sponsored activity.

The Board shall permit the administration to invite law enforcement agencies or other qualified agencies or individuals to search school property with dogs trained for the purpose of detecting the presence of illegal substances in order to protect the health and safety of students, employees, and property, and to detect odor of the presence of illegal substances, including alcohol and/or drugs. The use of the trained sniffing canine is subject to the following:

1. The administration shall authorize the use of trained sniffing dogs and the Principal or his/her designee shall be present.
2. Parents and students shall be notified of this policy through its inclusion in whole or in part in the student/parent handbook.
3. All school property both inside and outside school buildings, such as lockers, desks, other areas used for storage of property, classrooms, parking areas, and vehicles on school property may be inspected. Dogs may not be used in areas occupied by persons except for demonstration purposes with the handler present or in serious life-threatening emergencies.
4. Individuals shall not be subjected to a dog sniff examination of their person. However, personal property such as book bags, backpacks, tote bags, purses and other objects or materials used to transport or store property that are not a part of the individual's clothing and are intended to be readily detached from the person may be examined.
5. Once notification has been given to parents and students through the student/parent handbook, the school district will have met its obligation to advertise the use of trained sniffing dogs. Additional notices need not be given and actual dates and times for planned sniffer dog use need not be released in advance.
6. Only the dog's handler will determine what constitutes an alert by the dog. If the dog alerts on a particular item or place, the student having the use of that item or place or responsibility for it shall, if available, be called to witness the search. If a dog alerts on a vehicle, the person who brought it onto district property or the person who is responsible for the vehicle shall be asked to open it for inspection. If a minor student does not cooperate in a search, efforts will be made to

contact the parents/guardians, and the search may nonetheless be completed. When in the judgment of the Principal or his/her designee, a clearly dangerous condition is present that threatens life, health, or safety, immediate action may be taken to respond to the emergency.

7. Law enforcement agencies will be given full authorization to investigate and prosecute any person(s) found to be responsible for illegal substance(s) on school property.
8. Any illegal substances/items that violate Board policy or student rules that are recovered on school property shall be confiscated and may be turned over to law enforcement officials.
9. In addition to possible referral to law enforcement officials, students in possession of illegal items may, where applicable, be subjected to discipline under Board of Education student disciplinary policies and procedures.

**Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes
10-221 Boards of education to prescribe rules.
New Jersey v T.L.O., 53 U.S.L.W. 4083 (1985)
PA 94-115 An Act Concerning School Searches.**

Policy adopted: April 10, 2006

B. Breathalyzer Testing

This policy provides the basic structure for the use of passive alcohol sensors in the Vernon School District to detect/confirm alcohol consumption by students.

The passive alcohol sensor device is a non-invasive high-speed breath alcohol-screening instrument. It may be used to sample a student's breath in order to detect alcohol use. The Board allows the use of passive alcohol-screening devices at school, on school buses or at any school-sponsored activity.

The District does not consider the use of a passive alcohol-screening device as constituting a "search"; therefore, the issue of trespass or intrusion into a student's privacy is not a factor in the use of this device. All due process rights of students will be observed. Students shall have the right to challenge the accuracy of positive screening results.

The passive alcohol sensor will be used for admittance to school-sponsored events. Administration will announce prior to certain school-sponsored activities that all students must submit to the passive alcohol screening for entrance to the event. Events will include, but not be limited to, dances and proms. In addition, Administrators will use such a device when reasonable suspicion exists that a student is under the influence or has used alcohol. Reasonable suspicion includes, but is not limited to, such factors as:

1. Observed use or possession of alcohol.
2. Apparent physical or verbal impairment.
3. Observed changes in personal behavior.
4. Information from other persons.
5. Involvement in accidents or mishaps.

The passive screening device shall be checked for accuracy monthly and for full calibration semi-annually. Only designated school personnel and/or the school resource officer(s) will be trained in the use of such instruments.

Students, parents/guardians and staff will be notified of the intended use of the passive alcohol sensor device. This notification shall be done through its inclusion in whole or in part in the student-parent handbook.

All students who possess, consume, or are under the influence of alcohol on school property or at a school-sponsored event or activity are subject to appropriate disciplinary action under the Board of Education policy and rules of student conduct.

Administrators may also make determinations about alcohol use in the absence of a passive alcohol sensor screening. When an administrator determines that reasonable suspicion exists that a student has consumed alcohol during or prior to attendance at school or at a school-sponsored event, the student will be given the option to take a passive alcohol sensor screening provided that screening equipment and facilities are readily available. If screening results are negative, no disciplinary action shall be taken.

However, if the student tests positive or declines to take the screening when reasonable suspicion exists, he/she shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action. If no screening equipment or facilities are readily available, appropriate discipline may also be imposed based upon the evidence available to the administrator and the administrator's training and experience.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10a-18 Programs to be offered on effects of drugs and alcohol.

10-19 Teaching about alcohol, nicotine or tobacco, drugs and acquired immune deficiency syndrome. Training of personnel.

10-154a Professional communications between teacher or nurse and student. Surrender of physical evidence obtained from students.

10-221d Boards of education to prescribe rules re; use, sale or possession.

21a-240 Definitions, dependency producing drugs.

21a-243 Regulation re schedules of controlled substances.

***New Jersey v. T.L.O.*, 469 325; 105 S.C.T. 733 (1985)**

***Veronia School District 47J v. Acton*, 515 U.S. 646 (1995)**

***Todd v. Rush County Schools*, 133F.3d 984 (7th Cir. 1998)**

***Knox County Education Association v. Knox County Board of Education*, 158 F3d 361, 3885-386 (6th Cir. 1998)**

Policy adopted: April 10, 2006

C. Student Wellness Policy – Board of Education Policy 6142.101

The Vernon Board of Education recognizes that student health and success in school are interrelated. Schools cannot achieve their primary mission of education if students are not healthy and fit, physically, mentally and socially. Therefore, the Board promotes healthy schools, by supporting wellness, good nutrition, and regular physical activity as part of the total learning environment. The District supports a healthy environment where children learn and participate in positive dietary and lifestyle practices. Schools contribute to the basic health status of children by facilitating learning through the support and promotion of good nutrition and physical activity. Improved health optimizes student performance potential and ensures that no child is left behind. It is the Board's policy to:

- A. Provide a comprehensive learning environment for developing and practicing lifelong wellness behaviors.
- B. Support and promote proper dietary habits contributing to students' health status and academic performance.
- C. Provide opportunities for students to engage in physical activity.
- D. Establish and maintain a district-wide School Wellness Council with the purpose of promoting and advancing the implementation of this policy and evaluating its effectiveness.

Nutrition Standards

The Board believes that every student should develop the knowledge that will promote lifelong habits for good health and the skills needed for healthy eating behaviors. Effective nutrition education and the types of food available to students greatly influence eating behaviors.

D. Education

The Vernon School District has a comprehensive curriculum approach to nutrition in Pre-Kindergarten through 12th grade. All Pre-K-12 instructional staff will be encouraged to integrate nutritional themes from the Connecticut Department of Education's Healthy and Balanced Living Curriculum Framework into daily lessons when appropriate.

- 1. At the elementary level, nutrition topics are integrated into the curriculum.
- 2. At the middle school level, nutrition education is part of the required 6th grade curriculum and a component of the Unified Arts curriculum in 7th and 8th grades.
- 3. At the high school level, nutrition education is part of the freshmen and sophomore health program.

E. Food Services

- 1. Guidelines for Food Served/Sold During School Hours. Parents can also choose to pay for their child's school lunches by going into www.myschoolbucks.com.
 - a. The District shall provide school meals which meet the nutritional standards required by state and federal school breakfast and lunch programs. Meals

served in school before the end of the last lunch period shall conform to the U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

- b. Food of minimal nutritional value, as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, shall not be sold or served on school premises during school hours. All foods sold to students separately from reimbursable meals (a la carte menu items) must meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards. Foods meeting these requirements will be listed on the State Department of Education's List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages. The District will promote the sale of naturally nutrient-rich foods, such as fresh fruit, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy, lean meats, legumes and seeds.
- c. Beverages of minimal nutritional value, as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, shall not be sold or served on school premises during school hours. All beverages sold to students will meet the requirements of state statute. Beverages meeting these requirements will be listed on the State Department of Education's List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages.
- d. During the period of thirty (30) minutes before any meal program up until thirty (30) minutes after the end of the program, no competitive foods or beverages may be sold or served. Outside of this timeframe, competitive foods may only be sold on school premises during school hours if they meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards. All beverages sold to students on school premises during school hours must meet the requirements of state statute at all times.
- e. Food that is sold must meet the Health Department's standards in regard to storage, preparation, and serving.
- f. Students and staff will have access to safe, fresh drinking water throughout the school day. Fluoridated or bottled water should be made available for purchase by staff and students. Any bottled water sold to students during school hours must meet the beverage requirements of state statute.
- g. Foods and beverages served at school celebrations during school hours or as classroom snacks must meet the District's Nutritional Standards.
- h. The District will provide nutrition information to parents upon request. It is suggested that nutrition information also be available for foods other than school meals.
- i. During the summer months Vernon Youth Services coordinates access to the Summer Food Service Program.

2. Cafeteria Environment

- a. The District will ensure that the Food Service Director has the appropriate degree and certification as well as ensure training and professional development for the food service staff annually.
- b. The administration will work to optimize scheduling of meals to improve student nutrition.
- c. Any student may eat in the school cafeteria or other designated place and shall be provided a pleasant environment in which to eat.
- d. Access to hand washing before meals will be provided.
- e. Meal prices will be reviewed at least every two years and established by the Superintendent and the Food Service Supervisor, with the approval of the Board.
- f. Healthy option food should be competitively priced.
- g. Meal prices and menus will be conspicuously posted in each cafeteria or

designated meal area.

3. Guidelines for Food Served/Sold After School Hours on School Premises
 - a. Food items that do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards and beverages that do not meet the requirements of state statute can only be sold or served at the location of an event that occurs after the school day or on the weekend, provided the sale is not from a vending machine or the school store.
 - b. Foods sold or served after school hours when it is not part of a district-run after school program or at evening and community events on school grounds must provide healthy food options.
 - c. In an effort to promote healthy nutrition for our students and their families, all school organizations (PTOs, Booster Clubs, etc.) sponsoring food-based fundraisers must offer healthy food options that meet the District's Nutritional Standards. All fundraisers, including Booster Club fundraisers, require administrative approval (school principal or his/her designee).

F. Staff Development

1. Workshops

Ongoing in-service and professional development training opportunities for staff in the area of food nutrition will be encouraged and provided as necessary and appropriate. These educational opportunities may include, but not be limited to, the distribution of educational and informational materials and the arrangement of presentations and workshops that focus on nutritional value and healthy lifestyles, health assessments, and other appropriate nutrition-related topics.

2. Incentives

School staff shall encourage non-food alternatives as student rewards, including fundraising incentives. Alternative rewards should be developed and promoted. However, should the staff feel compelled to use food items as an incentive, they are required to adhere to the Connecticut Nutrition Standards and beverage requirements of state statute.

G. Family and Community Involvement

In order to promote family and community involvement in supporting and reinforcing nutrition education in the schools, the school administration is responsible for ensuring that:

1. Nutrition education and meal menus are made available to the parents.
2. Parents are encouraged to promote their child's participation in the school meal program. If their children do not participate in the school meal program, parents should provide their children with healthy snacks/meals.
3. School staff is encouraged to cooperate with other agencies and community groups to provide opportunities for student projects related to nutrition, as appropriate.
4. School staff considers the various cultural preferences in development of nutrition education programs and food options.

Physical Activity Standards

The Board believes every student should develop the knowledge and skills necessary to perform a variety of physical activities, maintain physical fitness, understand the short and long term benefits of physical activity, and value physical activity as an ongoing part of a healthy lifestyle. In addition, the staff is encouraged to participate in and model physical activity as a valuable part of daily life.

A. Education

The Vernon School System shall provide physical activity and physical education opportunities aligned with the Connecticut Healthy and Balanced Living Curriculum Framework that provides students with the knowledge and skills to lead a physically active lifestyle. The physical education program shall provide adequate space and equipment as well as conform to all applicable safety standards.

1. Physical education classes and physical activity opportunities will be available for all students. All physical education classes include at least 50% of moderate to vigorous activity.
 - a. At the elementary level, physical education classes will meet:

1. Kindergarten – once a week for a minimum of thirty minutes per week
 2. Grade 1 – twice a week for a minimum of sixty minutes per week
 3. Grades 2-5 – twice a week for a minimum of ninety minutes per week
 - b. At the middle school level, physical education classes will meet two times per week for a minimum of 100 minutes per week.
 - c. At the high school level, physical education classes will meet a minimum of two times per week per semester for a minimum of 160 minutes per week.
2. As recommended by the National Association of Sport and Physical Education (NASPE), school leaders of physical activity and physical education shall guide students through a process that will enable them to achieve and maintain a high level of personal fitness through the following:
 - a. Expose students to a wide variety of physical activities
 - b. Teach physical skills to help maintain a lifetime of health and fitness
 - c. Encourage self-monitoring so students can see how active they are and set their own goals
 - d. Individualize the intensity of activities
 - e. Focus feedback on the process of doing your best rather than on the product
 - f. Be active role models
 3. Physical Education classes shall be sequential, building from year to year, and content will include movement, personal fitness, and personal and social responsibility. Students should be able to demonstrate competency through application of knowledge, skill and practice.
 - a. The student-teacher ratio for physical education classes will comply with the Vernon Board of Education Class Size Policy.
 - b. Physical Education teachers will prepare confidential individual fitness assessments for students based on Connecticut's Fitness Standards. These assessments will be made available to parents upon request.
 - c. There will be no substitution of Physical Education classes for other physical activities.
 4. Intramural activities will be offered at the elementary schools. Intramural and Interscholastic activities will be offered at the Middle School and High School. All activities are contingent on budget constraints.
 5. Recess provides opportunities for physical activity, which helps students stay alert and attentive in class and provides other educational and social benefits. School authorities shall encourage and develop schedules that provide time for supervised recess in every elementary school. Daily recess shall provide opportunities for physical activity. Recess shall complement, not substitute for, physical education classes.
 6. Classrooms shall incorporate, where possible, appropriate, short breaks that include physical movement.
 7. The school district may consider programs such as promoting safe and walkable routes to school.

B. Staff Development

1. Workshops

The Physical Education staff will receive professional development on a yearly basis. These educational opportunities will include, but not be limited to, the distribution of educational and informational materials and the arrangement of presentations, and workshops that focus on healthy lifestyles, fitness activities, and other appropriate physical activity related topics.

The school district will promote periodic and ongoing programs to increase nutritional knowledge and physical activity for all faculty and staff.
2. Discipline
 - a. Staff members shall not deny a student's participation in recess or other physical activity as a form of discipline, unless the safety of students is in question. Each student is entitled to some portion of recess.

- b. The teaching and physical education staff members shall not order performance of physical activity as a form of discipline.

C. Family and Community Involvement

In order to promote family and community involvement in supporting and reinforcing physical education and activities in the schools, the school administration is responsible for ensuring:

1. Physical education activity ideas are sent home with students.
2. Parents are encouraged to promote their child's participation in the school's physical education programs and after school activities.
3. School staff considers the various cultural preferences in development of physical education programs.
4. School staff is encouraged to cooperate with community groups to provide opportunities for students to participate in physical activity programs.
5. Access to school sites will be provided through permitting use of facilities to community youth sports groups consistent with the District's facilities use policy so additional opportunities are available for youth to participate in quality physical activity, fitness, sports and recreation programs.

Evaluation

At the District level, the Board designates the School Wellness Council with the responsibility of ensuring that each school meets the requirements of the District Wellness Policy. At the School level, the principal of each school shall be responsible for the implementation and evaluation of the effectiveness of this wellness policy.

A. School Wellness Council

The District's School Wellness Council will meet monthly during the school year to assist in the ongoing development, evaluation, and implementation of the District-wide Student Wellness Policy. The council membership includes, but is not limited to, the District Food Service Manager, the Physical Education and Health Program administrator, a district administrative representative, a school board member, a building level administrator, a school nurse, a teacher, a staff representative from each school building, a local community partner preferably a representative from the town's Parks and Recreation Department, a parent, a student, and a health care professional. The members of this council serve at the discretion of the Board of Education. It is the responsibility of this School Wellness Council to:

1. Monitor the implementation of the District's Student Wellness Policy and its nutrition and physical activity components.
2. Work toward the development and implementation of a Coordinated School Health Model.
3. Evaluate policy progress, serving as a resource to school sites.
4. Recommend revisions of the policy through the Superintendent or designee, as needed.
5. Promote programs on physical activity, nutrition, and wellness-related topics.
6. Explore potential funding opportunities at the federal, state and local level to support program initiatives.
7. Prepare an annual report for the Board of Education.

B. School Level/Principal Responsibilities

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the school wellness program in promoting healthy eating and physical activity and implement program changes as necessary to increase the program's effectiveness, each school principal with the help of the physical education/health coordinator is responsible for ensuring that this Board policy and this administrative regulation are implemented as written. Further responsibilities shall include:

1. Nutrition Evaluation
 - a. Assessing all building, grade-level Health Education curricula and materials for accuracy, completeness, balance and consistency with state and local district educational goals and standards.
 - b. Providing Health Education throughout the student's school years as part of the District's age-appropriate health program.
 - c. Assessing periodically the school meal program with input from students, parents, and staff.
2. Physical Activity Evaluation
 - a. Assessing all building, grade-level Physical Education curricula and materials for accuracy, completeness, balance and consistency with state and local district educational goals and standards.
 - b. Providing Physical Education throughout the student's school years as part of the District's age-appropriate physical education program.
 - d. Monitoring and assessing regularly the district's physical activity and fitness programs in conjunction with other district academic and health related programs using the Connecticut Physical Fitness Assessment Test. Results of this test will be reported to the Board, school sites, and made available to parents and the community on an annual basis.

(cf. 3542 — Food Service)
 (cf. 3542.33 — Food Sales Other Than National School Lunch Program)
 (cf. 3542.34 — Nutrition Program)
 (cf. 3452.45 — Vending Machines)
 (cf. 6142.6 — Physical Education)
 (cf. 6142.61 — Physical Activity)
 (cf. 6142.62 — Recess/Unstructured Time)
 (cf. 6142.10 — Health Education)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-16b Prescribed courses of study.
 10-215 Lunches, breakfasts and the feeding programs for public school children and employees.
 10-221 Boards of education to prescribe rules, policies and procedures.
 10-215a Non-public school participation in feeding program.
 10-215b Duties of state board of education re feeding programs.
 10-216 Payment of expenses.
 0-221o Lunch Periods. Recess.
 Public Law 108-265, The Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004

Policy adopted: May 22, 2006
 Policy revised: May 24, 2010
 Policy reviewed: December 12, 2011

H. Acceptable Use of Electronic Networks

It is the general policy of Vernon Public Schools that network services are to be used in a responsible, efficient, ethical, and legal manner in accordance with the mission of the Vernon Public Schools. Users of the Vernon Public Schools network must acknowledge their understanding of the general policy and guidelines as a condition of using the network.

Use of the Vernon Public Schools network services is a privilege, not a right. Failure to adhere to this policy and administrative procedures may result in suspension or revocation of network access. Willful or intentional misuse could lead to disciplinary action or criminal penalties under applicable state and federal law.

Provisions

1. **Acceptable** uses of the network are activities which support learning and teaching. Network users are encouraged to develop uses which meet their individual educational needs and which take advantage of the network's functions.
2. **Unacceptable** uses of the network include, but are not limited to:
 - Violating the rights to privacy of students or employees of Vernon Public Schools, or others outside the school system.

- Using profanity, obscenity, or other language which may be offensive to another user.
 - Copying materials in violation of copyright law.
 - Plagiarizing, which is the taking of someone else's words, ideas, or findings and intentionally presenting them as your own without properly giving credit to their source?
 - Using the network for financial gain or for any commercial or illegal activity.
 - Attempting to degrade or disrupt system performance or unauthorized entry to and/or destruction of computer systems and files.
 - Re-posting personal communications without the author's prior consent.
 - Revealing home phone numbers, addresses, or other personal information.
 - Making personal purchases or unauthorized orders using the Vernon Board of Education name.
 - Accessing, downloading, storing, or printing files or messages that are sexually explicit, obscene, or that offends or tends to degrade others. The administration invokes its discretionary rights to determine such suitability.
 - Downloading or copying information on to disks or hard drives without prior teacher approval.
 - Violating the policy as outlined in the Vernon Board of Education Code of Student Conduct.
3. The staff of Vernon Public Schools will be responsible for:
- Teaching students the Vernon Public Schools Policy and Procedures for Internet
 - Supervising and guiding student access to the network and the Internet.
4. All users of the Vernon Public School network services are responsible for adhering to the Vernon Public Schools Policy and Procedures for Internet Use.
5. The following people are entitled to use the network:
- All Vernon Public Schools staff.
 - All Vernon Public Schools students under the supervision of a staff member and/or parent/guardian.
 - Others who request Guest Accounts from the Network Administrator. These requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and will be granted, if warranted, as needs and resources permit.
6. Vernon Public School makes no express or implied warranties for the Internet access it provides. Vernon Public Schools cannot completely eliminate access to information that is offensive or illegal and residing on networks outside of the Vernon Public Schools system. The accuracy and quality of information obtained cannot be guaranteed. Vernon Public Schools will not guarantee the availability of access to the Internet and will not be responsible for any information that may be lost, damaged, or unavailable due to technical or other difficulties. Information sent or received cannot be assured to be private.

I. Internet Use Procedures

Students may use the Internet in instructional areas where there is teacher or staff supervision. Teachers may allow students to use the Internet in the following ways:

1. Directed Searches

Teachers may work directly with small groups of students or with an entire class. Internet access will be limited to those sites approved by the teacher and previewed in advance, within a week prior to use. Use of directed searches does not require parental permission since the Internet sites will be screened in advance by the teacher. Teachers will be responsible for reviewing the Internet policy and procedures with students prior to any directed searches.

2. Independent Searches Students wanting to use the Internet for independent educational searches must meet the following criteria:

Students must be made aware of proper Internet behavior and Vernon's Acceptable Use Policy.

- a. An application for Student Internet Access Permission must be completed by the students and signed by a parent.
- b. Elementary students must have a signed form on file with their homeroom teacher. Secondary students will complete and return forms to receive Internet Access Privileges for Vernon Public Schools.
- c. Instant messaging and chat application use is strictly prohibited unless it is part of a special project or assignment and directly supervised by the teacher.
- d. Educational use of Internet e-mail as part of a special project, routine assignments or for student to teacher communications is permitted.

Vernon Public Schools Acceptable Use Guidelines (VCMS)

Introduction

Vernon Public Schools recognizes that access to technology in school gives students greater opportunities to learn, collaborate, communicate, and develop skills that will prepare them for work, life, and citizenship. We are committed to helping students develop 21st century technology and communication skills. To that end, we provide access to technologies for student and staff use.

This document outlines the guidelines and behaviors that users are expected to follow when using school technologies or when using personally-owned devices as detailed in Vernon Board of Education Policies 5131.81, 5131.82, 6141.3, 6141.326, & 6141.328.

- The Vernon Public Schools network is intended for educational purposes.
- All activity over the network or using district technologies may be monitored and retained.
- Access to online content via the network may be restricted in accordance with our policies and federal regulations, such as the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA).
- Misuse of school resources can result in disciplinary action.
- Vernon Public Schools makes a reasonable effort to ensure students' safety and security online, but will not be held accountable for any harm or damages that result from use of school technologies.
- Users of the district network or other technologies are expected to alert staff immediately of any concerns for safety or security.

Technologies Covered

Vernon Public Schools provides access to the Internet, computers, mobile devices, video-conferencing capabilities, online collaboration tools, Google Drive accounts, email, and more. As new technologies emerge, Vernon Public Schools will attempt to provide access to them. The policies outlined in this document are intended to cover all available technologies, not just those specifically listed.

Web Access and Filtering

Vernon Public Schools provides its users with access to the Internet, including web sites, resources, content, and online tools. That access will be restricted in compliance with CIPA regulations and school policies. Web browsing may be monitored and web activity records may be retained indefinitely. Users are expected to respect that the web filter is a safety precaution, and should not try to circumvent it when browsing the Web. If a site is blocked and a user believes it shouldn't be, the user should follow district protocol to alert an IT staff member or submit the site for review.

Email

Vernon Public Schools may provide users with email accounts for the purpose of school-related communication. Please remember that all email is part of public record and may be monitored. Users should not send personal information; should not attempt to open files or follow links from unknown or untrusted origin; should use appropriate language; and should only communicate with other people as allowed by the district policy or the teacher. **Users are responsible for all activity under their account.**

Users are expected to communicate with the same appropriate, safe, mindful, courteous conduct online as offline. Email usage may be monitored and archived.

Social / Web 2.0 / Collaborative Content

Recognizing the benefits collaboration brings to education, Vernon Public Schools may provide users with access to web sites or tools that allow communication, collaboration, sharing, and messaging among users. Users are expected to communicate with the same appropriate, safe, mindful, courteous conduct online as offline. Posts, chats, sharing, and messaging may be monitored. Users should not to share personally-identifying information online or include it in Google Drive files.

Personally-Owned Devices Policy (Board Policy 6141.328)

If not being used with permission from a teacher or staff member for educational purposes, students should keep personally-owned devices (including laptops, tablets, smartphones, and cell phones) put away during school hours. When using a personal device during the school day, internet access must be through the district provided gateway.

Plagiarism

Users should not plagiarize (or use as their own, without citing the original creator) content, including words, images, audio or video from the Internet. Users should not take credit for things they didn't create themselves, or misrepresent themselves as an author or creator of something found online. Research conducted via the Internet should be appropriately cited, giving credit to the original author.

Personal Safety

Users should never share personal information, including phone number, address, social security number, birthday, or financial information, over the Internet without adult permission. Users should recognize that communicating over the Internet brings anonymity and associated risks, and should carefully safeguard the personal information of themselves and others. Users should never agree to meet someone they meet online in real life without parental permission. If you see a message, comment, image, or anything else online that makes you concerned for your personal safety, bring it to the attention of an adult (teacher or staff if you're at school; parent if you're using the device at home) immediately.

Cyberbullying

Users must comply with Connecticut Law regarding cyber bullying. Connecticut law defines cyberbullying as "any act of bullying through the use of the Internet, interactive and digital technologies, cellular mobile telephones or other mobile electronic devices or any electronic communications." (Con. Gen Stat. Ann. §10-222d.) Engaging in these behaviors, or any online activities intended to harm (physically or emotionally) another person, will result in severe disciplinary action and loss of privileges. In some cases, cyberbullying can be a crime. Remember that your activities are monitored and retained.

Violations of this Acceptable Use Guidelines

Violations of this policy may have disciplinary repercussions, including:

- Suspension of network, technology, or computer privileges
- Notification to parents
- Detention or suspension from school and school-related activities
- Legal action and/or prosecution

I have read and understood this Acceptable Use Guidelines and will abide by it:

(Student Print Name)

(Student Signature) (Date)

I have read and discussed this Acceptable Use Guidelines with my child:

(Parent/Guardian Print Name)

(Parent/Guardian Signature) (Date)

Home Technology Access Survey:

Do you currently have **reliable internet access** at home and expect to have it for the entire school year?

Yes | No

Which **devices** are available to your student at home? (choose all that apply)

- ☐ Computer or Laptop
- ☐ Tablet
- ☐ Smart Phone

V Activities

A. Co-curricular Activities

For a student to participate in any after-school activity, including sports, a parental permission form must be completed before the student begins the activity. This form is available from the school office or the teacher directing the activity.

A number of co-curricular activities will be available to students during any given year, with some variation from year to year. These activities provide opportunity to pursue curricular, vocational, and recreational interests. Students should be aware that information about those types of opportunities will be announced and posted.

BAND AND CHORUS. The two performing groups meet during the school day to prepare for our annual concerts. Students choosing to drop band or chorus may do so only during the first week of school, at the end of the quarter, or at the discretion of the director. Students are challenged to improve and stretch their musical talents. Open to grades 6, 7 and 8.

Contacts: Ms. Bartolotta - Band Room and Mrs. Samsonenko - Chorus Room.

BERMUDA WORKSHOP. Students are provided an opportunity for extensive study in the biological and physical sciences at the Bermuda Biological Station for Research. Open to grade 8 students of excellent academic and citizenship standing.

Contact: Mr. Augustyn - Room 25.

CHEERLEADING. Interested students are given the opportunity to promote school spirit at sporting and special events. Open to grades 6, 7 and 8.

Contact: TBD

DRAMA CLUB. The Drama Club presents one or two productions annually. Students interested in acting, production, and backstage work are invited to participate. Open to grades 6, 7, and 8.

Contact: Mrs. Halpryn - Room 19.

FLUTE CHOIR. Flute players in the band are selected for participation in the choir. Members perform several pieces in our annual spring concert. Open to grades 7 and 8.

Contact: TBD

GEOGRAPHY BEE. All students may participate in our local Geography Bee with qualifying students competing at the state level. The state winner participates in the national exam in Washington, DC. The National Geographic Society sponsors the National Geography Bee. Open to grades 6, 7 and 8.
Contact: Mrs. Palmiter - Room 13.

HISTORY DAY CLUB. History Day in Connecticut is a program for students in grades 6-12 that encourages them to explore local, state, national, and world history. Students select and research a topic related to the annual theme, and then analyze their findings to create projects that present their findings. These projects can be entered into a series of competitions, from the local to the national level, where professional historians and educators evaluate them.
Contact: Mrs. Lee - Room 3.

INTERSCHOLASTIC SPORTS. Students on our school teams play students from other middle schools. Teams include soccer, basketball, baseball, softball and cross-country. Open to grades 6, 7 and 8.
Contacts: Physical Education Staff, Gym.

INTRAMURAL SPORTS. Students are provided the opportunity to become involved in sports activities with classmates. Activities may include basketball, flag football, floor hockey, golf, gymnastics, soccer, softball, wrestling, roller-skating and weight training. Open to grades 6, 7 and 8.
Contact: Mr. Russell - Gym Office.

JAZZ BAND. This is open through audition to students in the band. The ensemble performs in our spring annual concert. Open to grades 6, 7 and 8.
Contact: Ms. Bartolotta - Band Room.

MARCHING BAND/COLOR GUARD. The marching band and color guard are open to band members and students who may not play an instrument but wish to march with the color guard unit of the band. The marching band and color guard participate in the annual Memorial Day parade. Open to grades 6, 7 and 8.
Contacts: TBD

MATH OLYMPIAD. Club members are interested in mathematical problem solving, logic and thinking skills. Open to grade 6.
Contact: Mrs. Lee - Room 3.

MATH COUNTS. Students interested in mathematics have an opportunity to practice problem solving, logic, and thinking skills. Members participate in statewide competition. Open to grades 7 and 8.
Contact: TBD

NEWSPAPER CLUB. Students learn the art of publishing a regular newspaper containing news of interest to the VCMS community.
Contact: Ms. Grady - Room 37.

STUDENT COUNCIL. The Student Council plans the school's social and service projects. Class representatives serve on a voluntary basis. The members of the Council meet regularly with their advisor and the Administration during the school year. In past years, Student Council has sponsored dances and other school projects, as well as conducting activities to benefit various town agencies. Student Council provides an opportunity for members to develop leadership skills. Open to grades 6, 7 and 8.
Contact: Mrs. Rulli - Room 26 and Mrs. Hoyt - Room 33.

YEARBOOK CLUB. The club produces the annual student yearbook, *Glimpses*. Students serve in different capacities, including leadership roles. Students develop the skills associated with producing a major publication. Open to grades 6, 7 and 8.
Contact: Mrs. Dukette - Room 14

B. Assemblies

Assemblies are planned at intervals to commemorate some event or to present a guest speaker or other program. They are for your enjoyment as well as education. The following guidelines must be followed: You will sit with your class in the auditorium.

1. Once you have left your classroom to go to the assembly no conversation takes place.
2. Booing, whistling, stamping feet, or other noises are impolite. If these occur, an administrator will stop the program immediately, and the regular class schedule will resume.
3. Students will leave as directed in a quiet, orderly manner at the close of the assembly.
4. It is hoped that you will offer your comments on these programs so that worthwhile ones can be brought to you.

C. Intramurals

The following activities have been offered:

Basketball	Flag Football	Gymnastics	Softball	Volleyball
Bowling	Golf Skills	Handball	Tennis	Weight Training
Dance	Gym Hockey	Soccer	Track	Wrestling

Grade 6, 7 and 8 students are encouraged to participate in the above activities.

Some intramural activities have a student cost attached to them. Any student who wishes to participate but cannot afford the activity fee should discuss the situation with his/her guidance counselor. **Students and parents must arrange transportation home at the conclusion of the day's activity.**

D. Interscholastic Activities

These activities include sports and cheerleading. Students participating in any interscholastic activity must be good school citizens and must be in good academic standing. This means that a student cannot be failing more than 1 subject at any time.

1. A student who becomes ineligible for academic reasons shall become eligible once he/she is passing the required number of subjects. Any student who has lost his eligibility at midterm must remain ineligible for a minimum of one week. Any student who has lost his eligibility at the end of the trimester must remain ineligible for a minimum of two weeks.
2. It shall be the responsibility of the coach to substantiate the student's passing average. Another midterm report will be used and returned to the coach to verify the student's status. If the same student's grades again fall below passing average, it will be the teacher's responsibility to notify the coach that the student is again failing.
3. When a student fails to maintain his "regained" eligibility, the student will remain ineligible for the remainder of the trimester.
4. Student behavior - All athletes shall conduct themselves as good school and community citizens. Unsatisfactory behavior may result in suspension from the team. A student on the second level of the confidential list may not participate.
5. Attendance - day of game - Players must attend school on the day of the game unless special permission from the coach, and/or principal has been given. Violation of this rule will prohibit the player's participation in the athletic contest that day.
6. A letter award is given to an athlete upon recommendation of the coach. An athlete must be a member in good standing of the team until the conclusion of the season to qualify as a letter winner.
7. Athletes must travel to and from contests in transportation provided by the school. The principal or his/her designee must approve any exception to this rule in advance.

E. Student Council

In order for students to participate in the affairs of the school and to plan extracurricular activities, each grade has representatives who have volunteered for the Student Council. The members of the council meet regularly with their advisor and the Administration during the school year. In past years, Student Council has sponsored dances and other school projects, as well as conducting activities to benefit various town agencies. Student Council provides an opportunity for members to develop leadership skills.

F. Dances

School dances are held periodically throughout the school year for Vernon Center Middle School students only. Dances are planned and sponsored by the Student Council. Proper dress and behavior are expected from all who participate. The dances begin at 7:00 PM and end at 9:00 PM. Students are requested not to arrive before 6:45 PM and to arrange for their transportation home no later than 9:00 PM. Dances are open to our students only, no guests. Students on the Confidential List are denied participation in this activity. Students must attend school on the day of the dance/event in order to be able to participate. Students may also be excluded through administrative discretion (*see below).

G. Field Trips

School and team field trips are designed to provide students with opportunities not available within the school, therefore; full student participation is encouraged. There are times when students may be excluded from field trip participation based on the following:

1. Two or more in-school or out-of-school suspensions.
2. One suspension of five or more days.
3. Administration discretion in consultation with the team. * **See Below**

Accountability for this procedure will take effect on the date when the team announces the field trip and will remain in place until the field trip commences.

****** Administrative discretion will be based on poor attendance and/or poor academic or behavioral standing. At least a week's notice will be given to families if a student is deemed ineligible to attend a fieldtrip or other major school sanctioned event. Student must attend school on the day of any school event to be able to be allowed to participate.**

TRANSPORTATION OF STUDENTS

General Information

The safety of children who are residents of Vernon and who are going to and returning from school is a shared responsibility involving parents or guardians, the Vernon Board of Education and if transportation is provided by contract, the agencies providing that transportation.

Parent/Guardian Responsibility

- a. Students not transported by Board-approved vehicles: Within the school district assigned to a student, and based on the distance between the location where a student leaves the supervision of parents, guardians, or care-takers and the student's assigned school, some students may be classified as 'walkers'. It is the responsibility of those charged with the care of such students to assure their safety until the student is on school property. It is also their responsibility to assure the safety of such students after the student leaves school property. The Board of Education is not responsible for providing vehicular transportation for any student who is placed under the care or supervision of persons at facilities outside their assigned school district.
- b. Students transported by Board-approved vehicles: For students who are to be transported by bus or other vehicles *authorized by the Board of Education*, it is the responsibility of the parents, guardians, or designated care-takers to see to the safety of the students until the student enters the assigned vehicle at the designated point. It is also the responsibility of the parents, guardians, or caretakers to assure the safety of the student when the student, returning from school, leaves the bus/vehicle.
- c. Students transported by parents, guardians, care-takers, or others: In no instance is the school system responsible for students who are brought to their assigned school before that school is officially open for students to enter.
- d. Parents should make sure that children reach the school bus stop at least five minutes prior to the scheduled bus pick-up.
- e. Parents should accompany younger students to the bus stop for the first few days or as long as they deem necessary. Parents are responsible for students' behavior at the bus stop and should periodically monitor this.
- f. Parents should instruct children to:
 - 1) walk facing traffic, if they must walk on the highway;
 - 2) look both ways before crossing the highway;
 - 3) wait on the shoulder, off the pavement;
 - 4) behave responsibly at the bus stops and on the bus.

Board of Education Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the Board of Education to establish and enforce the rules and regulations governing the means by which students reach and leave their assigned schools. Board of Education policy will be used to establish bus stops and walking routes for public and non-public schools within the Town of Vernon. It is recognized that the Vernon Board of Education and the Town of Vernon will not be able to determine all of the specific parameters of safety and hazards as outlined in this policy for each area in town and compare them to the guidelines contained herein prior to bus route scheduling. If specific areas are questioned by citizens re: safety, distances and/or hazards, the Vernon Board of Education will make every reasonable effort to ascertain the specific safety, hazard, or walking problem with reference to the specific section of the Transportation Policy. If dangerous situations are recognized in reference to bus routes, bus stops, walking routes, such situations will be modified in accordance with the Transportation Policy as contained herein.

The Board of Education may grant an exception to any provision of this guideline wherein a peculiar condition or combination of conditions renders such condition(s) a hazard based upon reasonable judgment. The Board is aware that the health and physical powers of the pupil, the terrain to be traversed, physical security and environmental hazards, the opening and closing school hours with reference to daylight available during walking time, and the statutes pertaining to children eligible for special education services will at times necessitate exceptions to be made relative to the policy relating to walking distances.

Superintendent's Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the Superintendent to arrange for establishing bus transportation boundaries, and the planning of routes and schedules. Bus stops along these routes shall be responsibly planned by the Superintendent or designee using these guidelines. In planning bus stops, the Superintendent or designee shall take into consideration the number of students at each stop, any safety hazards as described in this policy, and the physical terrain at the stop. Whenever a stop is moved from year to year or during the year, the rationale for the change shall be documented.

Obtain whatever information is pertinent in determining that bus drivers, whether employed by the school system or by a school bus contractor, are in all respects qualified to drive a school bus. A system shall also be established to register any complaints about bus drivers or their methods of operating school buses. Complaint should be recorded on a standardized form and forwarded to the Superintendent.

Make reasonable to assure that all motor vehicles used in transporting school children shall comply with current statutes and regulations of the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles.

Public Notification of Bus Routes

Each year, not less than one week prior to the opening of school, the routes and bus/vehicle stops are published through one or more newspapers serving the town. In addition, by the second week in August, this information is available from the Transportation Supervisor in the office of the Director of Business and Finance, located in the school system Administration Building.

Educational and extra-curricular trips must be approved by the principal and the Superintendent or designee. The general policy of the Board is to use a commercial carrier with full public liability and property damage insurance.

Vernon residents with children attending private, non-profit schools in Vernon will be offered transportation in accordance with Section 10-281 of the Connecticut General Statutes.

Vernon Public Schools will not provide transportation to out-of-town schools except as required by statutes. Transportation will not be offered on a space available basis except as specifically stated in this policy.

In determining the exceptions which are necessary, the Board will review the matter with pertinent agencies (i.e., police, fire, and public works departments) in an attempt to reach a reasoned and logical conclusion. The guidelines presented in this policy section are applicable to public roads only.

Exceptions

When exceptions are made relative to providing transportation or the location of a bus stop, the following information shall be stated as part of the rationale for the exception and shall be on file in the office of the Superintendent of Schools:

1. the specific reason for special exception consistent with Board of Education policy;
2. the duration of the special exception;
3. required annual review of all exceptions.

Definitions

1. **"School transportation"** means the procedure, program, or fully effective and implemented plan by which a pupil is conveyed to and/or from school from his/her residence or the bus stop at public expense, whether by use of publicly owned equipment or by contract. Such transportation shall be over public roads approved by the municipality.
2. **"Walking distance"**, means the linear measure of a prescribed or authorized pedestrian route between the pupil's residence and his/her school or bus stop. Walking distance shall be measured from the closest point to the school or bus stop from the child's home where the public street or public sidewalk meets the residential driveway or the residential walkway at the child's home to the nearest allowable entrance of the school grounds, or to a bus stop. Measurements of contested walking distances shall be made by trundle wheel by the pupil transportation department. The maximum walking distances from home to school or to a prescribed point of embarkation (bus stop) are as follows:
 - a) pupils enrolled in grades K through 5, one mile
 - b) pupils enrolled in grades 6 through 8, one and one-half miles
 - c) pupils enrolled in grades 9 through 12, two miles
 - d) kindergarten pupils at mid-day, both AM session dismissal and PM session pick-up, one-half mile limit
3. **"One mile walking distance"** means a reasonable measurement of a route to be traversed extending from the point of measurement at least 5,280 feet, but not more than 5,380 feet.
4. **"Grade K"** means Kindergarten, or a school program appropriate to a beginning pupil.
5. **"Hazard"** means a thing or condition, as prescribed in these guidelines, affecting the safety of pupils walking to and from school, or a designated bus stop; a possible source of peril, danger, duress, or difficulty (cf., Webster)
6. **"Sidewalk"** means a portion of the landscaped right of way, usually parallel to the traffic lanes, which is paved; walkway means a public right of way, planned future sidewalk area, or any path designated as a walking route by the Board of Education for pupils to get to a bus stop or school, or area along the side of a road delineated by a white or yellow line.

7. **“Pupil”** means any individual of school age residing in Vernon enrolled in a public or nonprofit private school or enrolled in a vocational technical school or special education program.

Hazardous Conditions on Designated Walking Routes When Students Travel to or from School or a Bus Stop

1. When Sidewalks or Walkways are Available

A street or road having an adjacent or parallel sidewalk or walkway on either side shall be deemed hazardous when any of the following conditions exist:

- a. **For pupils enrolled in grades K through 5**, who must cross an intersection to get to a bus stop or to school, it shall be deemed hazardous where there is no stop sign, crossing guard, or traffic control signal at the intersection and the traffic count on the street being crossed exceeds one hundred and twenty vehicles per hour.
- b. **For pupils enrolled in grades 6 through 6**, who must cross an intersection to get to a bus stop or to school, it shall be deemed hazardous where the intersection has no stop sign, crossing guard, or traffic control signal, and the traffic count on the street being crossed exceeds one hundred eighty vehicles per hour.
- c. **For all pupils**
 - 1) Any street, road or highway with posted speed limits in excess of 40 miles per hour which does not have pedestrian crossing lights or crossing guards or other safety provisions at points where pupils must cross when going to or from school or the bus stop.
 - 2) Where a street has a sidewalk on only one side, pupils residing on said street shall be required to use the sidewalk to walk to and from a bus stop or school.

2. When no Sidewalks or Walkways are Available

The following guidelines are used to determine when a street, road, or highway, with no walkway on either side may be considered hazardous:

a. For pupils enrolled in grades K through 5 any street, road, or highway:

- 1) Possessing a traffic count of ninety or more vehicles per hour;
- 2) Having traffic in excess of 40 vehicles per hour and the line-of-sight visibility and posted speed limits do not permit vehicular braking/stopping in accordance with the Connecticut Drivers Manual or Department of Transportation, Division of Design. In contested cases tests shall be conducted by an independent traffic engineer who shall be hired by the Board.
- 3) Possessing a speed limit in excess of 30 miles per hour.

The walking hazard testing for pupils in grades K through 5 shall consist of the setting up of a mannequin the average height of a kindergarten pupil (43”), on the side of the road, a car traveling at the posted speed limit around the curve and/or poor visibility area, and a measurement made of the time and distance it took the driver to stop from the time he/she first noticed the mannequin until the car came to a full stop. The distance will then be compared with the above criteria and a determination made by the traffic engineer as to whether or not the car stopped before reaching the mannequin.

b. For pupils enrolled in grades 6 through 8, any street, road, or highway:

- 1) Possessing a traffic count of one hundred eighty or more vehicles per hour where the traffic count exceeds 80 cars per hour and the line-of-sight visibility and/or posted speed limits do not permit vehicular braking/stopping in accordance with the Connecticut Drivers Manual or Department of Transportation, Division of Design.

c. For all pupils:

- 1) Any roadway available to vehicles that does not have a minimum width of 22 feet with a traffic count of 40 or more vehicles per hour;
- 2) Where a street has a sidewalk on only one side, pupils residing on said street shall be required to use the sidewalk.

The walking hazard testing for pupils in grades 6 through 8 shall be conducted by an independent traffic engineer who shall be hired by the Board in contested cases. The testing shall consist of the setting up of a mannequin the average height of a sixth grade pupil (58 ½”) on the side of the road, a car traveling at the posted speed limit around the curve and/or poor visibility area, and a measurement made of the time and distance it took the driver to stop from the time he/she first noticed the mannequin until the car came to a full stop. The distance will then be compared with the above criteria and a determination made by the traffic engineer as to whether or not the car stopped before reaching the mannequin.

3. Other Hazards

a. For pupils in grades K through 5

- 1) A lake, pond, stream, waterway, or bridge shall be deemed a hazard in the absence of a fence or suitable barrier fixed between the pupil and the water and within 15 feet of the sidewalk.
- 2) Any area adjacent and within five feet to a roadway, sidewalk, or bridge having a drop of three or more feet per four feet of travel length on either side of the established lanes, the absence of a fence or other suitable barrier shall be deemed hazardous.

- #### b. For pupils in grades K through 8, walking to or from school or the bus stop at any time prior to one-half hour before sunrise or any time one-half hour after sunset, as determined by the U.S. Weather Bureau shall be deemed hazardous.

4. Adjustments for Special Situations

When any of the aforementioned conditions exist, bus stops shall be provided no more than 500 feet from the point in the approved walking route to the bus stop where the condition exists. This distance, however, is not to result in bus stops being less than 500 feet apart for grades K-5. These stops will be no more than 750 feet for grades 6-8 provided that this distance will not result in bus stops for grades 6-8 being less than 750 feet apart.

Pupils possessing physical handicaps and/or health conditions rendering them unable to walk to either the bus stop or school, as determined by their physician or the school medical advisor, shall receive appropriate transportation. Special education pupils shall be evaluated on an individual basis as a result of an I.E.P.

Traffic-Related Hazardous Condition Identification (see chart)

Transportation to Child Care Sites

The Vernon Board of Education, recognizing the expanding needs of society, will provide busing to a child care location under the guidelines as contained herein. The provisions of this policy will apply to grades K - 8 only, for both public and non-public schools within the district.

Definition: A day care location is identified as the point of contact between the child and the person or facility having custody of a child with parents' or guardians' permission. If other than a relative to the parents or guardians, the person or facility must represent a paid position or arrangement.

Dissemination of Day Care Transportation Information

A comprehensive packet shall be prepared, including a map of the town by school district, a copy of the policy, necessary forms, an elementary school handbook, and a time-table for making application, and be made available to all parents at Kindergarten screening. Also included in this packet will be information as to where in the state to call for information on obtaining day care services.

The administration shall make an effort to publicize this transportation policy through the media.

All Vernon Center Middle School students shall be included in the existing policy, and a transportation packet will be made available at 6th grade orientation.

Guidelines for Transportation to Child Care Sites

1. Pupils requesting transportation may be either riders or walkers. However, the child care location must be within the student's home school district boundaries, in an area served by Vernon school buses, and at least one-half mile away from the pupil's home.
2. Transportation to child care locations will only be provided for a fully scheduled school week. Transportation will be provided in the AM or PM or both AM and PM
3. If transportation to a child-care location is both in the morning and afternoon, the pupil must ride the same bus. However, kindergarten pupils, because of the route schedules, may ride different buses.
4. Parents or guardians of pupils whose home address would make them eligible to ride may make application prior to July 1 for special transportation to a child-care location. They will be guaranteed space for their child on that bus to the child-care location.
5. Requests for transportation to a child care location, which are presented to the Board after July 1, both for pupils who would be required to walk to and from school and for regularly assigned bus riders, will be honored on a space available basis. Seats would be allocated to pupils seeking transportation to child care locations after allowances are made for all regularly assigned bus riders. Requests received after September 1 that fall within policy guidelines will be honored as space becomes available.

6. After July 1, pupils seeking transportation to a child care location, and who normally ride, will be assigned to their requested bus prior to the assignment of any pupils who normally walk to school. All pupils will be assigned on a space available basis after allowance is made for all regularly assigned pupils who reside in the area served by the bus.

7. Parent or guardian must present written permission to the principal for their child to get on or off the bus at the closest stop assigned to the child-care facility. The permission request must include name of child-care person/facility with address and telephone number, period of time requested for child-care arrangements and bus stop(s) where pupil will get on/off the bus.

8. Pupils must board or leave the bus at their designated school bus stop.

Policy Revised: June 8, 2009

Bus Service, Bus Driver Responsibilities

The driver shall be responsible for enforcing the rules and regulations for the safety of all pupils while they are on and about the bus, shall be responsible for reporting violations of any rules and regulations adopted by the Board of Education concerning the conduct of pupils on or about the bus, and shall attempt to maintain order among the pupils in his or her charge.

Drivers shall always follow the general instructions for route designations. Specifically they shall:

- a. Transport only the designated pupils on their route, except by special order of school authorities through the bus supervisor and in case of emergency.
- b. Run their route in exactly the sequence as outlined on the route sheets except when road detours or dangerous conditions prevent the route from being followed exactly.
- c. Make changes only upon written or verbal authorization from the bus supervisor, except for detours and emergencies.
- d. Remain on the buses during loading and unloading operations.
- e. Not alter or exceed their time schedule, except with permission of school authorities through the bus supervisor except for cases of emergencies.
- f. Not leave a regular bus stop if pupils are in sight and making an effort to reach the bus, unless, after warning, the tardiness continues and appears to be willful
- g. Not stop their bus in an intersection to receive or discharge passengers.
- h. Not permit hazardous/dangerous materials, dogs, or other pets on the bus.
- i. Govern the loading of school buses pupils fill the rear seats first.
- j. Unload buses from the front to the rear.

If, in the driver's opinion, the difficulty being caused by the pupil(s) is such that it makes driving the bus hazardous, the driver should, (1) return to school and notify the principal and bus supervisor, or (2) return to the bus lot and notify the bus supervisor (who shall immediately notify the school or administration), or (3) park the bus, call the bus supervisor, who will notify the school principal or administration and wait for the bus supervisor or other help to arrive. In addition the driver:

- a. Should always stop the bus when correcting the actions of a rider;
- b. Shall inform problem riders what the problem rider is to do, i.e., what change in behavior is required;
- c. Should report problem riders to the supervisor who will notify the principal in accordance with the rules and regulations as approved by the Board of Education;
- d. Shall not put a disruptive pupil off the bus in the middle of a run, but transport such student to the pupil's destination and report the offense to the bus company;
- e. Shall not use physical punishment or abusive language in attempting to control disruptive students.

Maintaining a Safe Environment on School System Vehicles

The safety of the students while at bus stops or while being transported can be affected by student behavior. Pupils shall be informed of the rules and regulations for bus transportation through their individual schools. To assure, where possible, the maximum safety of students involved with the school transportation system, the following guidelines have been instituted. The Vernon School Board does not imply that school transportation safety measures are limited to those listed.

Pupil Responsibility

1. While waiting for school bus transportation to school, pupils should:
 - a. be at the designated bus stop five (5) minutes before the scheduled time;
 - b. wait until the bus comes to a full stop before trying to get aboard;
 - c. when waiting across the road from the designated bus stop, continue to wait until the bus comes to a full stop and displays its flashing lights before attempting to cross the street.
2. When leaving school, pupils should:
 - a. follow directions of the teacher or the Safety Patrol;

- b. obey the directions of the bus driver.
- 3. While riding in the bus, pupils should:
 - a. remain in their seats while the bus is in motion;
 - b. not jeopardize the safety of others, observing the usual rules of good conduct;
 - c. converse quietly, not shouting at other pupils or the driver;
 - d. not throw objects about in the bus;
 - e. not destroy or deface seats in the bus;
 - f. secure permission of driver before opening windows of the bus;
 - g. be respectful in language use;
 - h. recognize that eating, drinking, smoking, or the use/possession of controlled substances is not permitted on the bus.
- 4. When leaving the school bus at the destination, pupils should:
 - a. watch their step getting off the bus;
 - b. take their turn and not crowd;
 - c. not loiter at the bus stop;
 - d. if the stop is across the road from home, stand on the should of the road at the front on the bus until the driver signals that it is safe t cross, then cross in front of the bus;
 - e. if it is not necessary to cross the highway, stand aside on the shoulder of the road until the bus has moved on; then, when they can see traffic in both directions, walk on the should of the road (or the sidewalk) to their destination.
 - f. walk on the left facing traffic, if there is no sidewalk and it is necessary to walk on the roadway;
 - g. obey the adult in charge on any trip away from school.

Pupils who fail to observe the rules and regulations may be denied transportation in accordance with the Board of Education's policy governing bus conduct.

School Building Administrator Responsibilities

Assure that a school building administrator or designee is at the loading/unloading area for buses at each school. The following procedures will be followed by all school principals in all cases involving bus discipline and/or vandalism:

- 1. All drivers must present a written and signed report of discipline problems in duplicate to the bus supervisor;
- 2. Except in emergencies when conditions would not allow sufficient time to prepare a written report, the following procedures shall be followed: (However, in emergencies the report must be given to the bus supervisor on the next school day).
- 3. Where pupil actions on the bus violate standards for safe and appropriate behavior, the driver will, at the end of the morning or afternoon route, present a written report to the bus supervisor on a form authorized by the bus company and supplied by the Board of Education.
- 4. The bus supervisor will contact the school principal as soon as possible and forward a copy of the written report to the principal within twenty-four (24) hours.
- 5. The principal or designee will investigate the incident and arrange an informal hearing for the pupil(s) involved. The principal or designee will notify the bus supervisor of the disposition of the case and forward a written report concerning the disposition to the central office as soon as possible.
- 6. The principal will notify the parents of the pupil(s) of the infraction and the disposition of the case. However, the principal will not send the parents and/or pupil(s) the written report signed by the driver.

Appeals

Any parent, guardian, student at majority, or any agent or officer whose duty it is to compel the observance of the laws concerning attendance at school may appeal any administrative decision concerning school transportation in the following manner:

- 1. Discuss the matter with the principal of the school to which the student is assigned.
- 2. If no resolution is reached under (1) above, discuss the matter with the coordinator of transportation or designee.
- 3. If no resolution is reached under (2) above, discuss the matter with the Superintendent.

Any parent, guardian, student at majority, or officer whose duty it is to compel the observance of attendance laws who believes that the Superintendent, or designee, is not furnishing school accommodations, by transportation or otherwise, to himself or herself or to his/her child in a manner consistent with the laws of the State of Connecticut or Board of Education policy or regulations may, in writing, request a hearing before the Board to show the Board the manner in which the Superintendent has allegedly failed to furnish such required accommodations.

The Board shall hold a hearing within ten (10) days following receipt of such request. The hearing before the Board will be in compliance with the provisions of Section 4-177 to 4-1 180 inclusive of the Connecticut General Statutes.

A stenographic record or tape recording shall be made of such hearing.

Safety Records and Reports

The Superintendent of school shall:

1. develop procedures for reporting all complaints relative to school transportation, including complaints about bus drivers;
2. maintain a written record of all such complaints;
3. within thirty (30) days of the close of school each year, submit a report containing all complaints received within the previous twelve month period to the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles;
4. within ten (10) days of its occurrence, the Superintendent make a written report to the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles, of the circumstances involving a motor vehicle and any student pedestrian at, or in the immediate vicinity of, a school bus stop;
5. on a regular basis, and upon occurrence as appropriate, review with the Board of Education any complaints received and any accidents reported between motor vehicles and district students.

Temporary Bus Pass Procedures

A temporary 1 day bus pass will be issued to students for daycare/babysitting purposes who bring in a written note the day of, from the parent/legal guardian. The note must be brought into the office before homeroom and it must contain: the bus number the student will be riding, exact address to where the student is going, parent's name and phone number. A call will be made to verify the information. Requests cannot be taken over the phone.

Offenses-Penalties for Inappropriate Behavior on School Vehicles

Pupils may be suspended from transportation privileges only and not suspended from school in accordance with Board of Education policy per Connecticut State Statutes. Other disciplinary action may be worked out with the parents, school, and bus company when necessary.

a. Minor offenses include but are not linked to:

- 1) Loud talking, shouting repeatedly, use of vulgar or obscene language; minor pushing/shoving altercations, not staying seated properly, putting things outside window, opening windows without permission, throwing object on/or at the bus.
- 2) Riding on the wrong bus or a walker riding on a bus, eating on the bus, not following the driver's directions, violation of any other rules or regulations for bus conduct.

Penalties: One warning is given by the school principal to elementary pupils, grades K-5, followed by up to five (5) days suspension from transportation for subsequent offenses. The same penalty will apply to secondary students in grades 6-12, except that secondary students may be immediately suspended from transportation by the principal for up to five (5) days for the first reported offense if they have been previously warned by the bus driver. Students must be suspended for up to five (5) days for the second offense and subsequent offenses. The principal will contact the parent or guardian by phone or letter for each suspension and/or warning.

b. Major offenses include but are not limited to:

- 1) Complete disrespect for the bus driver (after failing to follow the bus driver's directions as indicated under minor offenses), assaulting the bus driver;
- 2) Fighting – major incident;
- 3) Bus vandalism;
- 4) Use or possession of alcohol, drugs, explosives, flammables, weapons, and/or other hazardous materials;
- 5) Any other major incident which violates rules and regulations for student conduct when on or about a bus where there is risk of injury or the behavior is criminal in nature.

Penalties: Immediate suspension from transportation by the school principal for at least five (5) days. Additional penalties may be imposed consistent with appropriate state statutes.

Hearing for Suspension from School System Transportation

An informal hearing will be held before the building principal or his designee at which the pupil is to be informed of the reasons for his suspension and be given an opportunity to respond. All suspensions will be in accordance with state statutes.

Pupils residing in Vernon who attend State Vocational Technical Schools will be subject to the same regulations for pupil transportation as pupils attending Vernon Public Schools. However, since the jurisdiction of the Vernon Board of Education only encompasses the transportation of the aforementioned students, when one of these pupils is suspended from a vocational technical school bus, the administrator of that school will be notified and may take whatever action they deem necessary.

Vocational technical school authorities will receive notification of all bus suspensions from the Superintendent's office of the Vernon Public Schools.

Consequence for Bus Vandalism

Parents and/or guardians of pupils found guilty of bus vandalism will be expected to make restitution consistent with the Connecticut State Statutes to the bus company for actual damages. Due process hearings will be held by the principal according to the procedure required by state law.

Procedure

A suspension letter will be mailed by the principal to the parents of the suspended pupil.

Along with the suspension letter each parent will be mailed a copy of Section 52-572 of the General Statutes (Parental Liability for Willful Acts of Minor Children).

A copy of the suspension letter will be sent to the bus company. The bus company will be responsible for notifying the school principal if and when payment for damages is received.

If the school principal is not notified within thirty days by the bus company that payment has been made, a copy of the suspension letter and a memo will be sent to the Superintendent of Schools by the principal. The Superintendent of Schools will again request payment by letter to the parent. If no response is received, the Superintendent, at his discretion, may turn the matter over to a collection agency for assistance in collecting the cost of actual bus damage.

Notification of Rights under FERPA for Elementary and Secondary Institutions

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive federal funds.

FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their child's education records. When a student reaches the age of eighteen or attends a post-secondary school or college, the parent's rights transfer to the student and the student is then an "eligible student" under the law.

Under FERPA, parents and eligible students have the following rights:

To inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school within forty-five days of the school's receipt of a written request: The request should identify the record(s) being inspected. The school is not required to provide copies of records and may charge a fee if copies are requested. The following staff person may be contacted to seek access to your child's record: Mr. James Harrison, Principal, at 860-870-6070 or e-mail Jim.Harrison@vernonct.org. You will be notified of the place and time the record(s) may be available for review.

To request that a school correct records believed to be inaccurate or misleading: The request must be in writing and clearly specify: (a) the part of the record requesting to be changed, and (b) why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to a hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement in the record about the contested information. The school is not required to consider requests for grade or disciplinary decisions, opinions of school officials in the education record, or the child's special education determination. The following staff person may be contacted to request an amendment to your child's record: Mr. David Caruso, Principal, at 860-870-6070 or e-mail David.Caruso@vernonct.org.

To control the disclosure of their child's personally identifiable information from their education record: The school or district must, with certain exceptions, obtain parent written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from education records. An exception which permits disclosure without consent is disclosure to school staff with legitimate educational interests, such as a person employed by the district; a person serving on the school board; a person or company with whom the district has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a grievance or disciplinary committee or assisting another school official; and/or an official of another school district in which a student seeks to enroll. A school official has a legitimate education interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill a professional responsibility. A school district may also disclose personally identifiable information from education records without prior written consent to appropriate parties in connection with an emergency if knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals. Student directory information may also be disclosed without prior consent if the categories to be disclosed are designated and parents are given the opportunity to opt out prior to disclosure.

You have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education at the following address if you feel the school district has failed to comply with the requirements of FERPA:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-4605

Annual Notice to Parents of Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) (see included page)

FERPA Disclosure Important Information Concerning Student Privacy Rights

During the school year your child may make headlines as a hero of the big game, or he or she might win an academic honor. Often, stories about what is happening at school will feature students. We also might want to use your child's name or may get a great photograph or videotape of your child that we'd like to use in a school district publication or presentation.

The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) permits school districts to release "Directory Information" to certain people or institutions, such as the news media, unless the child's parent or guardian requests that such information not be released. "Directory Information" includes the following:

- | | |
|--|--|
| • Student name, address and phone number | • Dates of attendance |
| • Date and place of birth | • Degrees and awards received |
| • Major field of study | • The most recent previous educational agency or institution attended by the student |
| • Participation in officially recognized activities and sports | • Publishing student names in the school newsletters or other publications |
| • Weight and height of athletic team members | |

Vernon Public Schools will not release student information for commercial or other purposes. The purpose of a release will always be related to the conduct of school business.

If you do NOT want us to release "Directory Information" and/or publish your child's photograph, and/or release videotape of your child, please complete and return the form below as soon as possible. OTHERWISE, IT IS NOT NECESSARY TO TAKE ANY ACTION. If you have any questions, please call (860) 870-6070.

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Vernon Center Middle School **Directory Information & Photographs**

Please print - Return one form for each child.

Directory Information

- ☐ **Do not** release any "Directory Information" on my child.
or
☐ **Do not** release "Directory Information" on my child, but you can include my child's name in the school newsletter and school directory.

Photograph/Videotape

- ☐ **Do not** release my child's photograph/videotape to the news media or use my child's photograph in any District-wide printed publication (such as the calendar).

Class Photograph

- ☐ **Do not** release my child's individual class photo for use in the school annual or yearbook.

Child's Name: _____ Grade: _____

Parent/Guardian Printed Name: _____ Phone Number: (____) _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)

Annual Notice to Parents

Dear Parent/Guardian:

It is very important to us to let you know of your rights regarding district surveys, collection and use of student information for marketing purposes, and certain physical examinations. These rights include:

1. *Consent* before students are required to complete a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected areas if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education.
 - Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent;
 - Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family;
 - Sex behavior or attitudes;
 - Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating or demeaning behavior;
 - Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships;
 - Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors or ministers;
 - Religious practices, affiliations or beliefs of the student or parents; or
 - Income, other than is required by law to determine program eligibility.
2. *Receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of –*
 - Any other protected information survey, regardless of funding;
 - Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under State law; and
 - Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others.
3. *Inspect*, upon request and before administration or use –
 - Protected information surveys of students;
 - Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales or other distribution purposes; and
 - Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum.

When a student reaches the age of 18 or is an emancipated minor under State law, the parent's rights transfer to the student.

The district has adopted policies, in consultation with parents, regarding these rights as well as arrangements to protect student privacy in the administration of protected information surveys and the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales or other distribution purposes. Parents will be notified of these policies at least annually at the start of each school year and after any substantive changes. The district will also inform parents at the beginning of the school year if the district has identified the specific or approximate dates of activities or surveys and will provide an opportunity for the parent to opt his or her child out of participating in a specific activity or survey.

For activities scheduled after the school year starts, parents will be provided reasonable notification of the planned activities and surveys and will be provided an opportunity to opt their child out of such activities and surveys. Parents will also be provided an opportunity to review any pertinent surveys. The following are specific activities and surveys covered under this requirement:

- collection, disclosure or use of personal information for marketing, sales or other distribution;
- administration of any protected information survey non funded by the U.S. Department of Education; and
- any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening as described above.

Attached, if scheduled at this time, is a "Scheduled Activities and Surveys" notice. For your convenience, we have also attached a "Parent Consent and Opt-Out Response" form that must be returned to the office.

To file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the district to comply with the requirements of PPRA, contact:

*Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20202-5901*

