

Vernon Public Schools Elementary Student and Parent/Guardian Handbook 2016



**Please complete, sign and return the last
page of this handbook to the school's
main office.**

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MISSION STATEMENT OF DISTRICT AND SCHOOL

The Vernon Public Schools, in partnership with family and community, is committed to provide a quality education, with high expectations, in a safe environment where all students become independent learners and productive contributors to society.

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 Material contained herein may therefore be superseded by such Board policy, administrative regulation or negotiated agreement.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.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

Each student is encouraged to develop and achieve individual educational goals. The district will provide every student with equal educational opportunities regardless of race, color, creed, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, religion, age, economic status, marital status, or disability. No student will be excluded on such basis from participating in or having access to any course offerings, student athletics, counseling services, employment assistance, extracurricular activities or other school resources. Programs and activities shall be accessible and usable by individuals with disabilities as prescribed by law.

Karen Giangregorio is the designated district compliance officer, who will coordinate compliance with the nondiscrimination requirements of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

ADMISSION/PLACEMENT

A student seeking enrollment in the Vernon Public Schools for the first time or following attendance in another Connecticut public school district, out-of-state attendance, private school attendance or admission through a bona fide foreign exchange program should contact the principal. A student who is transferring from non-public schools or schools outside the district will be placed at his/her current grade level pending evaluation and observation of the student after such assessment and consultation with the parents, the principal will determine the grade placement of the child. The Regional Educational Service Centers will determine which school

districts are close enough to make transportation feasible. The parent or person having control of a child seventeen years of age may consent to such child's withdrawal from school.

Parents of students attending District schools have the option to enroll their child(ren) in a magnet school with which the District is a nonparticipating district, if the magnet school has unused student capacity. The District will pay any tuition charge. (Does not include tuition for a preschool magnet program.)

ADVERTISING

The public schools maintain careful controls on the way in which students are exposed to materials and announcements, other than those directly related to school sponsored programs and activities. Caution is exercised to prevent exploitation of the system and its students. District-prescribed standards shall be met.

AMERICAN WITH DISABILITIES ACT AND SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ensures support for individuals with disabilities. Individuals with disabilities are provided a free and appropriate education (FAPE), and are accommodated and employed without discrimination related to their disabilities.

Section 504 prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities (both students and staff members) by school districts receiving federal assistance of any kind for any program or activity. Districts may not discriminate against any person with a disability, regardless of whether the program or activity in which that person is involved receives federal funding directly.

All individuals who are disabled or "handicapped" are protected under Section 504. However, individuals who have been determined to be "handicapped" under Section 504 may not be considered disabled under IDEA. IDEA, which can be viewed as a subcategory of Section 504, provides for special programming or placement, while Section 504 protects the rights of individuals with handicaps. Under IDEA, students are qualified for services under 13 IDEA disabling conditions; specially designed individual education programs are planned for each student by Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams. Under Section 504, students with "handicaps" are entitled to special accommodations to ensure that they can participate in and benefit from public education and programs, and a 504 accommodation plan is designed for each student according to individual needs.

Section 504 is not an aspect of special education, but is, rather, a responsibility of the comprehensive general public education system. Unlike an eligibility system based on clinic categories of disabilities, Section 504 works on a more functional premise. Under 504 [29 U.S.C. & § 706(8)] a person is considered to have a disability if that person:

1. has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of such person's major life activities.
2. has a record of such an impairment, or
3. is regarded as having such an impairment

While Section 504 provides a means for preventing discrimination against students with disabilities, this does not mean that 504 plans must focus on the disabling condition or on addressing the disability directly. Rather, 504 plans offer a means for focusing on students' strengths, for capitalizing on what students bring to the instruction process - not on what they lack.

Should you have any questions regarding Section 504, please call either your child's school principal or the Civil Rights Coordinator, Karen Giangregorio for the Vernon Public School District at 860-870-6000 ext 133.

ASBESTOS

Legislation requires all school buildings to be reevaluated to determine if asbestos is present and if it poses a significant health hazard to the building's occupants. The District has on file plans showing the location of asbestos in each building and measures undertaken to comply with regulations to maintain a safe school environment. Request to review these plans may be made in the school office.

ASSEMBLIES

There are times when classes, grades, teams or the entire school may gather for assembly programs. These programs are arranged to bring information or entertainment to the student community. A student's conduct in assemblies must meet the same standards as in the classroom.

ATTENDANCE

Connecticut state law requires parents to make sure that their children between the ages of 5 to 18 attend school regularly.* Daily attendance is a key factor in student success, thus any absence from school is an educational loss to the student. These rules are designed to minimize student absenteeism while providing students the opportunity to make up school work missed due to a legitimate absence.

Absence means an excused absence, unexcused absence or an in-school suspension that is greater than or equal to one-half of a school day.

A student is considered to be "in attendance" if present at his/her assigned school, or an activity sponsored by the school, such as a field trip, for at least half of the regular school day. A student serving an out-of-school suspension or an expulsion will always be considered absent.

The parent or person having control of a child shall have the option of waiting to send the child to school until the child is six or seven years of age, upon signing an option form at the school district offices.

A child whose total number of absences at any time during a school year is equal to or greater than 10% of the total number of days that the student has been enrolled at the school during the school year is considered a "chronically absent child." The child will be subject to review by the district and/or the school attendance team

A student must remain in school until age 18, unless he/she graduates or gets written consent from a parent/guardian on a district provided form to leave school at age 17.

Absence

Every attempt should be made to confine necessary appointments to after school, weekends and vacation periods. When a parent determines that an absence is necessary, parents are requested to contact the school on the day of the absence by telephoning the school.

If it is not possible to telephone the school on the day of absence, the parent is requested to send a written excuse to the school on the date of the student's return. The student should submit the excuse directly to the office. Parents should contact the principal in order to take advantage of special services such as the collection of homework assignments for the student who must be out several days.

Excused Absence

A student's absence from school shall be considered "excused" if a written documentation of the reason for such absence has been submitted within ten (10) school days of the student's return to school and meets the following criteria:

A. For absences one through nine, a student's absences from school are considered "excused when the student's parent/guardian approves such absence and submits appropriate documentation to school officials. (Define required documentation.)

B. Students receive an excused absence for the tenth absences and all absences thereafter, when they are absent from school for the following reasons:

1. Student illness, verified by a licensed medical professional, regardless of the length of the absence.
2. Students observance of a religious holiday.
3. Death in the student's family or other emergency beyond the control of the student's family.
4. Court appearance which are mandated. (Documentation required)
5. The lack of transportation that is normally provided by the district other than the one the student attends.
6. Extraordinary educational opportunities pre-approved by District administration and in accordance with Connecticut State Department of Education guidelines.
7. Additional 10 days for children of service members.

Unexcused Absence

Unexcused absences are those which do not fall under any of the excused absences. Such absences may also be reflected in the student's final grade.*

Absences which are the result of school or district disciplinary action are excluded from the definitions.

Although the school will maintain records and keep parents informed within the limit of its capability, parents and students are expected to keep accurate attendance records and compare them to report cards issued quarterly. Parents are also encouraged to contact the

teachers, guidance counselors and administrators to get help in verifying attendance and attendance records at any time during the year.

Chronic Absenteeism

A student whose total number of absences at any time during a school year is equal to or greater than percent of the total number of days that such student has been enrolled at such school during the school year is considered to be a “chronically absent child,” Such a student will be subject to review by the attendance review team and the chronic absenteeism prevention and intervention plan developed by the State Department of Education.

Leaving School Grounds/Release of Students From School

Under no circumstances may a student leave the school or school grounds during school hours without permission from his/her parents or guardians and school administration. In the event it is necessary for a student to be dismissed early, a parent or guardian should send a written request to the office. Telephone requests for early dismissal of a student shall be honored only if the caller can be positively identified as the student’s parent or guardian. Children of single-parent families will be released only upon the request of the parent whom the court holds directly responsible for the child and who is identified as such in the school records, unless prior arrangements have been made with the school. Arrangements should be made with the building administrator on the parent or guardian to pick up the student in the school office.

If someone other than a parent/guardian picks up the student, the person appearing in the school office should bring a note of identification from the parent or guardian.

Tardiness

Students who are not in their homeroom by 8:07 A.M. for Center Road School, Lake Street School and Maple Street School; 8:32 A.M. for Northeast School and Skinner Road School are considered tardy and must report directly to the office. A student who is repeatedly tardy may be considered truant.

*Students are late to school if they are not in their seats at the bell signaling the start of the first period class. If students arrive late, they must report to the office and sign in.

Truancy

A student age five to eighteen** inclusive with 4 (four) unexcused absences in one month or 10 (ten) unexcused absences in a school year will be considered a truant.

Parents have the responsibility to assist school officials in remedying and preventing truancy. The Superintendent of Schools will file a written complaint with Superior Court Juvenile Matters if the parent fails to cooperate with the school in trying to solve the student’s truancy problem.

Information about truancy will also be posted in the annual strategic school profile reports.

AUTOMATED PHONE MESSAGING SYSTEMS

The Vernon Public School system uses an automated phone messaging system which gives school administrators the ability to easily contact parents/guardians immediately of news that needs to be communicated. Administrators have the ability to send personally prerecorded messages to the entire school community, or they can tailor transmissions to smaller groups, when needed. The system allows the District to program up to three numbers for each parent/guardian of a District student. (home phone, work phone, cell).

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Board members are unpaid elected public officials with the responsibility for governance of the school district. The members of the Vernon Board of Education are: (list names)

Chairperson: Anne Fischer

Vice-Chairperson: David Kemp

Members: Michelle Arn, Laurie Bajorek, Linda Gessay, John Kopec, Stephen Linton, Thomasina Russell and Mark Kalina

In order to perform its duties in an open and public manner and in accordance with state law, the Vernon Board of Education holds regular business meetings on the second and fourth Monday of each month at 7:00 PM at Central Office, third floor conference room. Parents, students and other community members are encouraged to attend.

Meetings of the Board follow a planned and posted agenda. At a certain time in the agenda the Board chairperson will recognize individuals who want to make a statement. This portion of the meeting will take no more than 20 minutes in length. In addition, if they give advance notice to the Superintendent, individuals with relevant issues for discussion may have such issues placed on a future Board agenda for a more thorough discussion of the topic.

The Board's main purpose is policy setting designed to improve student learning. Board members are interested in the public's opinion on district issues, which can assist them in formulating policy which reflects community values and expectations.

BULLYING

Bullying of a student by another student is prohibited. Such behavior is defined as 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 to 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 students,
- 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. *(The student against whom the activity is directed must be attending school in the same district as the students engaged in the activity.)*

Examples of bullying include, but are not limited to:

1. Physical violence and attacks
2. verbal taunts, name-calling and 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.

Student 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 victims,
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 suspensions, expulsion and/or referral to law enforcement official.

Student and/or their parent may file a written report of conduct they consider bullying. Students may also make an informal complaint of conduct that they consider to be bullying by verbal report to any school employee, who will promptly reduce the complaint to writing and forward it to the Safe School Climate Specialist for review and action. The complaint procedure is to complete the form, located on the District’s website and the school website.

Students and parents are permitted to make anonymous reports of bullying. Parent written reports and student anonymous reports will be investigated by the Safe School Climate Specialist but no disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

The Safe School Climate Specialist is responsible for taking a bullying report and investigating the complaint. Parents of students involved in a verified act of bullying will be invited to attend at least one meeting at school.

Bullying behavior by any student in the Vernon Public Schools is strictly prohibited, and such conduct may result in disciplinary action, including suspension and/or expulsion from school. “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, verbal 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 physical, mental, 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.

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:

- A. Creates a hostile environment at school for the victim,
- B. Infringes on the rights of the victim at school, or
- C. Substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Students and/or parents may file verbal or written complaints concerning suspected bullying behavior, and students shall be permitted to anonymously report acts of bullying to school employees. Any report of suspected bullying behavior will be promptly reviewed. If acts of bullying are verified, prompt disciplinary action may be taken against the perpetrator, consistent with his/her rights of due process. Board policy and regulation #5131.911 set forth this prohibition and the related procedures in detail, and are available to students and their parents/guardians upon request.

BUS CONDUCT

School transportation privileges are extended to students conditional upon their satisfactory behavior on the bus. Students may be suspended from transportation services for unsatisfactory conduct while awaiting or receiving transportation to and from school which endangers persons or property or violates a Board policy or administrative regulation.

CAFETERIA

Rules of cleanliness are to be observed at all times. Misconduct in the cafeteria may be cause for receiving an assigned seat or forfeiting the right to eat in that location or such other disciplinary action deemed appropriate for the misconduct.

The District participates in the National School Lunch Program and offers to students nutritionally balanced lunches daily. Free and reduced price lunches are available based on

financial need. Information on this program can be obtained from the school office or Food Services Director Paul Olson, 860-870-6000.

It is the intent of the Board of Education that schools take a proactive effort to encourage students to make nutritious food choices. Food and beverages offered for sale to students, whether in the cafeteria, school store, or vending machines will meet federal and state standards and guidelines. All sodas and sports drinks will not be available for sale.

In conformity with applicable law, necessary accommodations will be provided, where required, for students with food allergies, including emergency procedures to treat allergic reactions which may occur.

Charging is not encouraged by the District but on those occasions that a student does not have money, they will be offered an alternate meal.

CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATIONS

If there is a question about a student's classes or work in school, it is best to first contact the person who is closest to the situation. In most cases this is the teacher. The proper channeling of complaints regarding instruction, discipline or learning materials is (1) teacher, (2) principal, (3) superintendent, (4) board of education .

CHEATING/PLAGIARISM (Academic Dishonesty)

Students are expected to pursue their school work with integrity and honesty. Cheating and plagiarism demonstrates a lack of integrity and character. That is inconsistent with District goals and values. All forms of cheating and plagiarism are not acceptable. The misrepresenting by students of homework, class work, tests, reports, or other assignments as if they were entirely their own work shall be considered forms of cheating and/or plagiarism. Consequences of cheating and/or plagiarism shall be academic in nature unless repeated incidences require disciplinary action. Consequences for cheating will take into account the grade level of the student and the severity of the misrepresentation.

CHILD ABUSE, NEGLECT AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

All school employees, including teachers, superintendents, principals, coaches of intramural or interscholastic athletics, paraprofessionals and other professional school staff including guidance counselors, social workers, psychologists, and licensed nurses are obligated by law (C.G.S. 17a-101) to report suspected child abuse, neglect, or if a child is placed in imminent danger of serious harm or sexual assault by a school employee to the Connecticut State Department of Children and Families Services. Specific procedures governing the reporting of abuse and neglect are in effect, and staff receive yearly training in their use.

Reporting of child abuse, neglect and sexual assault by a school employee is a responsibility which is taken seriously. If there is any doubt about reporting suspected abuse, neglect or a sexual assault a report will be made. The school will work with the parents and appropriate social agencies in all cases.

Child abuse is defined as any physical injury inflicted by other than accidental means or injuries which are not in keeping with the explanation given for their cause. Improper treatment such as malnutrition, sexual molestation, deprivation of necessities, emotional abuse, cruel punishment or neglect are also considered child abuse.

CLASS PLACEMENT

Every effort will be made to place students with teachers where a positive student-teacher relationship will be established. Parents will have an opportunity to provide information relative to placement. The final decision for placement rests with the principal or his/her designee.

COMPUTER RESOURCES –TECHNOLOGY USE

District resources have been invested in computer technology to broaden instruction and to prepare students for an increasingly computerized society. Use of these resources is restricted to students working under a teacher's supervision and for approved purposes only. Students and parents will be asked to sign a user agreement regarding appropriate use of these resources. Violations of this agreement may result in withdrawal of privileges and other disciplinary action.

Students and parents should be aware that e-mail communications, using district computers, are not private and may be monitored by staff. Students may not access social media sites using District equipment, while on District property, or at a District sponsored activity unless the posting is approved by a teacher. The District will not be liable for information posted by students on social media websites, such as Facebook, MySpace, YouTube, etc., when the student is not engaged in District activities and not using District equipment.

The District reserves the right to monitor, inspect, copy, review and store at anytime and without prior notice any and all usage of the computer network and Internet access and any and all information transmitted or received in connection with such usage. All such information files shall be and remain the property of the School District and no user shall have any expectation of privacy regarding such material.

Federal law requires the district to place filtering devices on school computers to block entry to visual depictions that are obscene, pornographic, harmful or inappropriate for students as defined in the Children's Internet Protection Act and as determined by the Superintendent or his/her designee.

The Board of Education is committed to aiding students and staff in creating a 21st Century learning environment. Therefore students (plus staff) will be permitted to access the District's wireless network with their personal devices during the school day. With teacher approval, students may use their own devices to access the Internet and collaborate with other students.

Students and parents/guardians participating in the Bring Your Own Device/Technology program must adhere to the Student Code of Conduct, as well as all applicable Board policies, particularly the Computer Acceptable Use policy.

CONDUCT

Students are responsible for conducting themselves properly in a responsible manner appropriate to their age and level of maturity. The district has authority over students during the regular school day and while going to and from school on district transportation. This jurisdiction includes any school-related activity, regardless of time or location, and any off campus school-related misconduct, regardless of time or location.

Student responsibilities for achieving a positive learning environment in school or school related activities include:

1. Attending all classes, regularly and on time.
2. Being prepared for each class with appropriate materials and assignments.
3. Being dressed appropriately.
4. Showing respect toward others.
5. Behaving in a responsible manner.
6. Paying required fees and fines.
7. Abiding by the code of conduct.
8. Obeying all school rules, including safety rules, and rules pertaining to Internet safety.
9. Seeking change in school policies and regulations in an orderly and responsible manner, through appropriate channels.
10. Cooperating with staff investigations of disciplinary cases and volunteering information relating to a serious offense.

Students who violate these rules will be subject to disciplinary action and shall be referred when appropriate to legal authorities for violation of the law.

Students at school or school-related activities are prohibited from:

1. Engaging in academic dishonesty, including cheating, intentionally plagiarizing, wrongfully giving or receiving help during an academic examination and wrongfully obtaining test copies or scores.
2. Throwing objects that can cause bodily injury or damage property.
3. Leaving school grounds or school-sponsored events without permission.
4. Directing profanity, vulgar language, or obscene gestures toward other students or staff.
5. Disobeying directives from school personnel or school policies, rules, and regulations.
6. Being disrespectful or directing profanity, vulgar language, or obscene gestures toward teachers or other school employees.
7. Playing with matches, fire, or committing arson.
8. Committing robbery or theft.
9. Damaging or vandalizing property owned by the school, other students, or school employees.
10. Disobeying school rules on school buses.
11. Fighting, committing physical abuse, or threatening physical abuse.
12. Committing extortion, coercion, or blackmail; that is, forcing an individual to act through the use of force or threat of force.

13. Name-calling, making ethnic or racial slurs or derogatory statements that may substantially disrupt the school program or incite violence.
14. Engaging in inappropriate physical or sexual contact disruptive to the school environment or disturbing to other students.
15. Assaulting a teacher, staff member or other individual.
16. Selling, giving, delivering, possessing, using, or being under the influence of drugs such as: marijuana; a controlled substance or drug; or an alcoholic beverage.
17. Possessing a deadly weapon, dangerous instrument, firearm, martial arts weapon, or weapon facsimile.
18. Prescription drugs which are given to person other than who the drug is prescribed.
19. Smoking or using tobacco products, including electronic nicotine delivery systems (e-cigarettes) and vapor products.
20. Hazing, bullying
21. Behaving in any way that disrupts the school environment or educational process.
22. Using electronic devices during the school day in school buildings, without prior approval of the principal.
23. Violating the district's Internet Safety policy and/or Online Social Networking Policy..
24. Using or possessing a laser pointer unless under a staff member's supervision and in the context of instruction.
25. Cheating, plagiarizing.
26. 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 another employee, or a fellow student.
27. Taking, storing, disseminating, transferring, viewing or sharing of obscene, pornographic, lewd or otherwise illegal images or photographs, whether by electronic data transfer of other means, including but not limited to texting and emailing.
28. Violating any state or federal law which would indicate that the student presents a danger to any person in the school or to school property.

Students are subject to disciplinary action, including suspension and expulsion, for misconduct which is seriously disruptive of the educational process and is a violation of publicized Board of Education policy, even if such conduct occurs off-school property and during non-school time. In determining whether conduct is “seriously disruptive of the education process” for purposes of suspension and expulsion, the administration in cases of suspension, and the Board of Education or impartial hearing board, in matters of expulsion may consider, but consideration is not limited to (1) whether the incident occurred within close proximity of a school, (2) whether other students were involved, or whether there was gang involvement, (3) whether the conduct involved violence, threats of violence, or the unlawful use of a weapon and whether any injuries occurred, and (4) whether the conduct involved the use of alcohol.

Dangerous Weapons and Instruments

No guns, knives or any other objects, including martial arts weapons and facsimiles of weapons, capable of threatening or causing injury or death may be brought onto school grounds. Any object used to cause injury will be considered a weapon. Violators will be subject to arrest and prosecution, as well as, appropriate disciplinary action. Any student found to possess a weapon on school grounds or during a school-activity will be expelled from school.

An expelled student may apply for early readmission to school. Such readmission is at the discretion of the Board of Education (unless the Board has delegated authority for readmission decisions to the Superintendent.) The Board or Superintendent, as appropriate, may condition such readmission on specified criteria.

Dress Code

Student dress may be regulated and students are encouraged to dress in clothing appropriate to the school situation. Restrictions on freedom of expression may be applied whenever the mode of dress is unsafe, disruptive or contrary to law.

*Any school dress which impairs safety or increases the risk of injury to self or others, causes discomfort to others (e.g., uncleanliness, malodorousness, inappropriate language), causes distraction or disruption of the learning environment, advertises or advocates the use of alcohol or drugs, pornography, or is libelous or inherently contains unreasonable potential to upset and hurt others is prohibited.

Smoking

Student shall not smoke or use tobacco products or e-cigarettes or vapor product devices on school property or at any school-related or school-sanctioned activity, on or off school property as provided by state and federal law.

Substance Abuse

As stated in the CONDUCT section of this handbook, the school prohibits the manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession or use of alcohol or controlled substances on school grounds or during school activities. Any student in violation of this will be subject to the following disciplinary actions:*

In addition to the prohibition pertaining to alcohol, drugs, tobacco and inhalants, the Board of Education prohibits the use of performance-enhancing drugs, including anabolic steroids and food supplements, including Creatine, by students involved in school-related athletics or any co-curricular or extracurricular school activity or program, other than use for a valid medical purpose as documented by a physician.

Substance abuse or distribution of drugs and/or drug paraphernalia including alcohol may indicate serious, underlying problems. Every effort will be made to offer student assistance,

including early identification, referral for treatment to private or community agencies and aftercare support.

Disciplinary procedures will be administered with the best interests of the student, school population and community in mind and with due consideration of the rights of students. However, consideration must be given to the fact that substance abuse is illegal and subject to criminal prosecution. Unauthorized possession, distribution, sale or consumption of dangerous drugs, narcotics or alcoholic beverages are considered grounds for expulsion.

Students are encouraged to consult with teachers, administrators and other professional staff on substance abuse problems. A staff member who is contacted by a student regarding a drug or alcohol problem may elect to keep that information confidential and not disclose it to any other person in accordance with state law. However, the student will be encouraged at the earliest appropriate time to seek help from parents or guardians.

In such cases, the decision to involve the parents/guardians will be arrived jointly by the student and educator unless, in the judgement of the educator, the mental or physical health of the student is immediately and dangerously threatened by drug/alcohol use. If such danger is imminent, the parents/guardians and health officials will be notified so that appropriate action can be taken.

CYBER BULLYING

The District's computer network and the Internet, whether accessed on campus or off campus, during or after school hours, may not be used for the purpose of harassment. All forms of harassment over the Internet, commonly known as cyber bullying, are unacceptable, a violation of District policy and of the District's acceptable computer use policy and procedures. 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.

Cyber bullying includes, but is not limited to, such misuses of technology as harassing, teasing, intimidating, threatening, or terrorizing another person by sending or posting inappropriate and hurtful e-mail messages, instant messages, text message, digital pictures or images, or website postings, including blogs. It is also recognized that the author (poster or sender) of the inappropriate material may be disguised or logged on as someone else.

Students and community members who believe they have been the victims of such misuses of technology as described, should not erase the offending material from the system. A copy of the material should be printed and brought to the attention of the Safe School Climate Specialist, the Principal or Director of Technology. All reports of cyberbullying will be investigated by the Safe School Climate Specialist .

In situations in which the cyberbullying originated from a non-school computer, but brought to the attention of school officials, any disciplinary action shall be based upon whether the conduct is determined to be severely disruptive of the educational process so that it markedly interrupts or severely impedes the day-to-day operation of school. Also, such conduct must be violative of a publicized school policy. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to, threats, or making a threat off school grounds, to kill or hurt a teacher or student.

Disciplinary action may include loss of computer privileges, detention, suspension or expulsion. A communicated threat or a hate crime will be reported to the police.

Students will be provided instruction about appropriate online behavior.

DEFIBRILLATORS IN SCHOOLS (AED'S)

Each school will have (1) one automatic external defibrillator (AED) and (2) school personnel trained in AED operation and cardio pulmonary resuscitation (CPR). The AED and trained personnel will be available during the school's normal operational hours, at school-sponsored athletic events and practices on school grounds and at school-sponsored events not taking place during normal school operational hours. The school also has an emergency action response plan addressing the use of trained school personnel to respond to individuals experiencing sudden cardiac arrest or similar life threatening emergencies.

DISCIPLINE

A student who violates the district's code of conduct shall be subject to disciplinary action. The Vernon Public School's disciplinary actions may include using one or more discipline management techniques, such as detention, removal from class, removal to an alternative education program, in school suspension, out of school suspension, and expulsion. Disciplinary measures will be appropriate for the offense. In addition, when a student violates the law that student may be referred to legal authorities for prosecution. Students are subject to discipline, up to and including suspension and expulsion for misconduct, which is seriously disruptive of the educational process and violates publicized board of education policy even if such conduct occurs off-school property and during non-school time.

Detention

A student may be detained outside of school hours for violation of the code of conduct. The detention shall not begin, however, until the student's parents have been notified of the reason for the detention (and can make arrangements for the student's transportation on the day(s) of the detention).

Expulsion

An administrator or designee may remove a student from all classes when the student deliberately causes a serious disruption to the teaching and learning process within the classroom.

Prior to an expulsion hearing, information concerning legal services that are provided free of charge or at a reduced rate that are available locally and how to access such services shall be provided to the student and his/her parent or guardian.

The Board of Education may expel a student in grades 3 through 12 inclusive, from school privileges if, after a full hearing, the Board finds that the student's conduct endangers person(s), property or the educational process or is in violation of a publicized Board policy. Students who have been expelled may be eligible for an alternative educational program.

Expulsion from school will result in the loss of all extracurricular and social privileges during the period of expulsion.

For any student expelled for the first time and who has never been suspended, the Board of Education may shorten the length of or waive the expulsion period if the student successfully completes a Board specified program and meets any other conditions required by the Board,. Such a Board specified program does not require the student or the parent/guardian of the student to pay for participation in the program.

Students in grades kindergarten through grade 12 inclusive are subject to mandatory expulsion for the possession and/or use of weapons, including martial arts weapons, or other dangerous instruments in any school building, on school grounds, in any school vehicle, or at any school sponsored activity for a calendar year. A student in grades kindergarten through grade 12 inclusive, who offers illegal drugs for sale or distribution on or off school grounds is also cause for expulsion for a calendar year. The Board may modify the expulsion period on a case-by-case basis.

Whenever a student is expelled, notice of the expulsion and the conduct for which the student was expelled will be included on the student's cumulative education record. The record will be expunged if the student graduates from high school and the expulsion was not for weapon possession and/or for the sale or distribution of illegal drugs.

If students expulsion is shortened or the expulsion period waived based upon the fact that the student was expelled for the first time, has never been suspended and successfully completed a Board specified program and/or met other conditions required by the Board, the notice of expulsion will be expunged from the cumulative educational record if the student graduates from high school or, if the Board so chooses, at the time the student completes the Board specified program and meets other Board required conditions.

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 one year or more, in lieu expulsion from the

District, shall be permitted to return to the appropriate school setting within the District. Further, the District will not expel the student from any additional time for the offense(s).

Suspension

An administrator or designee may remove a student from a class when the student deliberately causes serious disruption of the teaching and learning process within the classroom. School administrators will determine, using state guidelines, whether the suspension will be in-school or out-of-school.

The administration may suspend a student for infraction of school rules. Suspension is defined as an exclusion from school privileges for not more than ten (10) consecutive days, provided such exclusion shall not extend beyond the end of the school year in which suspension was imposed.

Students in preschool through grade 2, inclusive, may only receive in-school suspensions, unless, after an informal hearing, the administration determines that an out-of-school suspension is appropriate based on evidence that the students conduct on school grounds is of a violent or sexual nature that endangers persons.

However, no student shall be suspended without an informal hearing before the building principal or his/her designee at which time the student shall be informed of the reasons for the disciplinary action and given an opportunity to explain the situation, unless circumstances surrounding the incident require immediate removal. In such instance the informal hearing will be held during the suspension.

Suspension from school will result in loss of extracurricular and social privileges during the period of suspension.

For any student suspended for the first time and who has never been expelled, the administration may shorten the length of or waive the suspension period if the student successfully completes an administration-specified program and meets any other administration-required conditions, which shall not incur an expense to the student or his/her parents.

Persistently Dangerous Schools/Victim of Violent Crime

Students enrolled in a school identified as “persistently dangerous” by the State Department of Education or a student who is the victim of a violent criminal offense, as defined by the State Department of Education, are entitled to transfer to a safe school elsewhere in the district with free transportation.

STUDENTS DISTRIBUTION OF MATERIALS

Printed materials may be distributed to parents by students as a means of communications. All requests from groups or individuals to have students distribute materials to the community, with the exception of school-connected organizations, will be referred to the office of the superintendent to determine whether the request complies with school policy.

The principal or his/her designee may approve such distribution providing:

1. The material is related to the school, community, local recreational or civic activity.

2. The material does not relate to any religious belief or activity, or promote private gain.
3. The material does not promote any outside governmental political party, candidate or position.
4. Does not promote profit making organizations.
5. Does not advocate a position regarding a referendum question.

Materials that have a religious content may be made available to students during non-instructional time. The District has the right to impose neutral time, place and manner restrictions on the dissemination of religious materials to ensure that students are aware that the materials are not endorsed or sponsored by the District.

Publications prepared by or for the school may be posted or distributed, with prior approval by the principal, sponsor or teacher. Such items include school posters, brochures, school newspapers and yearbook.

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

The Board of Education believes that the educational programs and services available in the school system are designed to provide opportunities for the academic, social, and emotional growth of our student population. Among its high priorities, the Board accepts the national challenge that academic excellence and quality education must be achieved and maintained with the fiscal parameters of the community. To that end, every effort will continue to be made to support the Superintendent, administrators, and staff, both professional and non-certified, in their recommendations to improve, expand, or change current programs and services.

The Board of Education also places a high premium on accountability: in measurable achievement of student learning; in the evaluation of all staff performance and including the Board; in commending individual student and staff performance; and in maintaining appropriate fiscal controls. The Board recognizes that continuing improvement of the school system is facilitated by the support and interest of the community in which it serves and also rests on the professional abilities and commitment of its various staffs in the schools. The leadership role of the Superintendent and the policy and decision-making roles of the Board will be successful concomitant with the efforts of all concerned with the educational progress to work together to achieve those common goals. Incumbent with those roles is the high order need to communicate, to engage in constructive discussions when addressing identifiable change needs in the system, and to develop strong rationales with supportive data to support program or service recommendations.

Recognizing that within a school system there are diverse issues, strengths, and weaknesses, the overriding philosophy is to coalesce the positive energies of all involved personnel into a strong unit working together. There always is to be the opportunity for the alternative or divergent opinion to be considered in any decision-making process. When a final decision is made, however, there is the expectation that everyone will work in concert with the intent of that decision. To do otherwise would be counter-productive to the system's ability to progress.

Students are the primary focus of the system's activities, processes, and procedures. They have been entrusted to us for the expertise we can and do provide. That is an enormous responsibility.

That responsibility is the staging upon which the Board accepts its roles as guardian and advocate. This is the responsibility the Board of Education charges the system personnel to accept with total and unequivocal professionalism.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES AND GAMES (Radios, CD Players, Cell-Phones)

Students are not permitted to possess such items as pagers, radios, CD players, tape recorders, camcorders, DVD players, cameras, or electronic devices, games, or telecommunications devices with text messaging at school, unless prior permission has been obtained from the principal. Without such permission, the items will be collected by teachers and turned into the principal. The principal will determine whether to return the item at the end of the day to be taken home by the student or whether the parent will be contacted to pick up the item. Any disciplinary action will be in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. The use of electronic devices, such as but not limited to, walkmans, disc players, iPods and cell phones are prohibited during the regular school day. These items must be stored in lockers or backpacks upon entering the building. (or: For safety purposes, the District permits students to possess cell phones that do not have camera and text messaging capabilities; however, cell phones must remain turned off during the instructional day.) In no case will any personal communication device be allowed that provides for a wireless, unfiltered connection to the Internet or which has the capacity to take photographs of any kind. Students found to be using any electronic communication devices in violation of Board policy and school rules shall be subject to disciplinary action. Further, a student may be disciplined for creating and/or distributing written or electronic material, including Internet material and blogs, that cause substantial disruption to school operations or interferes with the rights of other students or staff members. The school is not responsible for any lost or damaged personal electronic devices or items.

The sending, sharing, viewing or possessing pictures, emails or other material of a sexual nature in electronic or any other form on cellphones or other electronic devices is prohibited in the school setting.

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSING INFORMATION

In the event school is closed because of bad weather or another emergency, announcements will be made on radio stations TV Stations (WFSB Channel 3, WTNH Channel 8, WVIT Channel 30, FOX Channel 61) and Radio Station (WTIC 1080AM). Parents can sign up for a text message for school closings by logging on to WFSB Channel 3 and selecting to receive mobile text alerts for the Vernon Public Schools. Emergency closings will also be posted on the district's website, <http://www.vernonpublicschools.org>. Families will be notified by an automated calling system.

ENGLISH FOR SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES (ESOL)

The number of students from non-English speaking backgrounds is increasing, including those with limited English proficiency. Such students will be identified, assessed and provided appropriate services.

EXEMPTION FROM INSTRUCTION

A student will be exempted from instruction on Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), Bilingual Education, or Family Life and Sex Education upon receipt of a written request for such exemption from his/her parent or guardian. In addition, a student will be excused from participating in, or observing animal dissections as part of classroom instruction upon a written

request from the student's parent or guardian. The student must complete an alternate assignment determined by the school.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Athletics

Athletics are considered an integral part of the school's educational program. Whether participation is on the intramural, interscholastic, or class level, students have an opportunity to acquire qualities of fitness, self-discipline, and cooperation.

Student athletes may not participate in any intramural or interscholastic activity unless the student athlete and his/her parent/guardian completes the concussion education plan and sign the informed consent form.

The concussion education plan may consist of written materials, online training or videos, or in person training. The consent form includes a summary of the school/district's concussion education plan and applicable school board concussion policies.

Student interscholastic activities shall be governed by the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC) regulations. Eligibility for participation is governed by state law as well as the regulations of the CIAC. (Consider listing here the district's eligibility requirements)

Any student athlete who has not reported to school by noon will not be permitted to practice or play that afternoon or evening. Exceptions to this rule will be considered only if the player's parent explains the unusual circumstances to the principal or designee.**

Clubs and Performing Groups

Student clubs, performing groups, athletic teams and other extracurricular activities may establish rules of conduct for participants that may be stricter than those of students in general.

Please note: Sponsors of student clubs and performing groups may establish standards of behavior, including consequences for misbehavior, that are stricter than those for students in general.

Social Events

Social events may be scheduled periodically during the school year. Only legally enrolled students of this school may attend social events unless other arrangements have been made and approved by the administration. Students are expected to dress appropriately for all events.

Student Publications

The official student newspaper provides an instructional device in the teaching of writing and other journalistic skills. It also provides a forum for the opinion of students, school staff and

members of the community, as well as to serve the entire school by reporting school activities.

The newspaper advisor shall have the primary responsibility of reviewing each article prior to its publication. The school principal or his/her designated representative other than the newspaper advisor may also review copy prior to its publication. However, such copy must be returned to the student editors within 72 hours* after it is submitted for review. No copy may be censored except for reasons listed in board policy.

FACILITIES

Certain areas of the school will be accessible to students before and after school for specific purposes. Students are expected to remain in the area in which their activity is scheduled to take place.

After dismissed and unless involved in a teacher/staff supervised activity, students are expected to leave the campus immediately.

FEES

Materials that are part of the basic educational program are provided without charge to students.. The student may be required to pay certain other fees or deposits, including but not limited to lost or damaged library books and school-owned equipment/property.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips may be scheduled for educational, cultural, or extracurricular purposes. Any student whose behavior is considered detrimental to the well-being of other students may be barred from participation by the principal. While on a trip, all students are considered to be “in” school. This means that conduct and dress standards will be appropriate for the field trip activity. The Board of Education strongly encourages all transportation of student to be on buses or other transportation vehicles which conform to the requirements of law and regulations of the State Department of Education.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Students will not be denied opportunity to participate in any class or school sponsored activity because of inability to pay for material fees, transportation costs, admission prices, or any other related expenses. Any student who needs financial assistance for school activities should contact a guidance counselor, advisor or administrator to request confidential help.

FIRE DRILLS AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Fire drills are held at regular intervals as required by state law. Students must follow the exit directions posted in each classroom. A crisis response drill will be substituted for one of the required monthly school fire drills every three months. Such crisis response drill will be planned and conducted with the local law enforcement agency. Such crisis response drills will incorporate the basic protocols of lockdown, evacuation, and shelter-in-place responses.

Students are expected to follow the direction of teachers or others in charge quickly, quietly and in an orderly manner.

The signal for a fire drill is a constant blast on a special horn. When the alarm sounds, students are to proceed along the posted exit routes in a quick, quiet and calm manner. Students should not return to the building until the return signal is given.

Local law enforcement and other local public safety officials will evaluate and provide feedback on fire drills and crisis response drills.

FIRST AMENDMENT RIGHTS

The Vernon Public Schools recognize that students have a right to bring into our schools, in a judicious manner governed by regulations, items for posting that are not considered obscene, libelous, disruptive, vulgar, and are deemed by the Administration to be consistent with community standards. Further, no expressed idea will be suppressed because it is not shared by the majority. However, expressions which involve false statements, disruptive or potentially dangerous content, the use of obscenities, and advocacy of violation of law or school regulations are unacceptable.

FOOD ALLERGIES

The school is committed to providing a safe environment for students with food allergies and to support parents regarding food allergy management. A plan based upon guidelines promulgated by the State Department of Education will be implemented for each student for the management of students with life-threatening food allergies and glycogen storage disease.

Substitutions to the regular meal provided by the school will be made for students who are unable to eat school meals because of their disabilities, when that need is certified in writing by a physician. Meal services will be provided in the most integrated setting appropriate to the needs of the disabled student. An Individualized Health Care Plan (IHCP) and an Emergency Care Plan (ECP) shall be developed and implemented for students identified with food allergies. Such students may also be eligible for accommodations and services under Section 504 and special education law.

The District's specific plan for managing students with life-threatening food allergies will be posted on the District website (and/or on the school's website.)

A student with glycogen storage disease is permitted to have a parent/guardian or a person they so designate to provide food or dietary supplements on school grounds during the school day.

FUND-RAISING

Student clubs or classes, outside organizations, and/or parent groups occasionally may be permitted to conduct fund-raising drives for approved school purposes.

Any food items sold as part of any fund-raising activity must meet the nutritional standards published by the Connecticut Department of Education. Beverage or foods not allowed for sale during regular school hours may be sold provided (1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend, (2) the sale is at the location of such event, and (3) the food or beverage are not sold from a vending machine or school store.

REPORT CARDS

Report cards are issued to students three times a year. Students are expected to deliver report cards to their parents.

GREEN CLEANING PROGRAMS

A green cleaning program to clean and maintain the school will be implemented by July 1, 2011. The program provides for the procurement and proper use of environmentally preferable cleaning products in the school. The cleaning products used meet standards approved by the Department of Administrative Services and minimize potential harmful effects on human health and the environment. Parents/Guardians may request a written copy of the District's policy pertaining to the green cleaning program and a written statement which includes the names and types of environmentally preferable cleaning products used in the school and where in the building they are applied; the schedule for applying the products; and the names of the school administrator or designee whom the parent/guardian or student may contact for more information.

“No parent, guardian, teacher, or staff member may bring into the school facility any consumer product which is intended to clean, deodorize, sanitize or disinfect” (a required statement by law).

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING

Social services and counseling are rendered by professionally qualified members of the school staff. The responsibilities of the social workers and school psychologists include helping the student function more successfully within the school environment. The district's comprehensive counseling program strives to assist students in acquiring critical skills in the academic, and personal/social aspects of development.

Mental Health professionals will use a variety of methods to assist students in overcoming barriers to learning, to make strong connections with the educational opportunities in the school and to ensure that every child learns in a safe, healthy and supportive setting.

Counseling is an opportunity to talk with someone about things that are important to students. These opportunities to talk may be personal, social, or educational. Counselors will listen and be open and honest with students.

Referral for psychological and/or psychiatric assistance by other social services agencies within or outside the school may also be recommended. Please note: The school will not conduct a psychological examination, test, or treatment without first obtaining the parents/guardian's written consent.

HARASSMENT STATEMENT

Every child has the right to feel safe, valued and comfortable in school. No one else's behavior should ever make children feel afraid or embarrassed because of their race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or any disability they may have. The District has zero tolerance for harassment of any kind. Students are expected to treat

other students and district employees with courtesy and respect; to avoid any behaviors known to be offensive; and to stop those behaviors when asked or told to stop.

Parents are urged to reinforce with their child(ren) that if he/she is harassed or sees harassment happening to someone else that he/she should report the behavior to a teacher or the principal. To maintain a productive and positive learning environment, the Board of Education will make every attempt to halt any harassment of which they become aware by calling attention to this policy or by direct disciplinary action, if necessary.

A student who believes he/she has been harassed is encouraged to report the incident to the school personnel. The allegations will be investigated and addressed and appropriate disciplinary action taken, where necessary.

HAZING ACTIVITIES

Students are prohibited from participating in any hazing activities. Hazing is any activity that recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student for the purposes of initiation or admission into or affiliation with any student organization.

HEALTH SERVICES

The school nurse office is designed to provide care to students who become ill or are injured while in school.

A cumulative health file is maintained for each student. This file includes notations of past illnesses, results of physical examinations, and other pertinent health information. Scoliosis and hearing tests are administered to students in grade eight. The results are provided to the parents.

Parents are notified of any deviation from the normal pattern of health and suggestions are given for follow-up. It is likewise important that parents notify the school nurse in case of a student's illness. If a student is to be excused or limited for an extended period from participation in school activities, he/she is required to bring a statement signed by a physician. The school nurse is available to parents and students for conferences regarding health issues.

Administration of Medication

Parents of students requiring medication during school should contact the school nurse. Special forms are required to permit the administration of medicine in school. They are available from the school nurse. All medication must be in original container with proper labels.

In cases in which a student is able to self-administer medication, the parents or guardians must submit a signed statement that the medication must be taken during the school day and the student is capable of administering the medication. The statement must be accompanied by a physician's, dentist's or advanced practice registered nurse's statement indicating the necessity and naming the medication, the strength, and the prescribed dosage. It must specify the schedule on which it is to be taken and the details of administration. Such statements must be renewed at the beginning of each school year.

A student with asthma or an allergic condition may carry an inhaler or an epipen or similar device in school at all times if he/she is under the care of a physician, physician assistant or advanced practical nurse and such practitioner certifies in writing that the child needs to keep an asthmatic inhaler or epipen at all times to ensure prompt treatment of the child's asthma or allergic condition and to protect the child against serious harm or death. A written authorization of the parent/guardian is required.

A school nurse, or in the absence of the nurse, a "qualified school employee" may administer epinephrine in a cartridge injector for the purpose of emergency first aid to students who experience allergic reactions but were not previously known to have serious allergies and therefore do not have prior written authorization of a parent/guardian or qualified medical professional for the administration of epinephrine. Parents/guardians may submit in writing to the school nurse and school medical advisor that epinephrine shall not be administered to his/her child.

A school nurse, or in the absence of the nurse, a "qualified/school employee" may administer anti-epileptic medication to a specific student with a medically diagnosed epileptic condition that requires prompt treatment in accordance with the student's individual seizure action plan. Written parental permission and written order from a physician is required.

A student with diabetes may test his/her own blood glucose levels if the student has written permission from his/her parents/guardian and a written order from a Connecticut licensed physician. The time or place of such testing shall not be restricted.

A school nurse or the principal will select a qualified school employee to, under certain conditions, give a glycogen injection to a student with diabetes who may require prompt treatment to protect him/her from serious harm or death. Written parental permission and written order from a physician are required.

The District does not allow the ingestion of marijuana for palliative (medical) use in any school, on school grounds or at school-sponsored activities, on or off school grounds.

Communicable/Infectious Diseases

Students with any medical condition which within the school setting may expose others to disease or contagious and infectious conditions may be excluded from school and referred for medical diagnosis and treatment. Additional information concerning this may be obtained from the school nurse.

Before a child may return to school after an absence due to such condition, parents and students may be required to submit medical evidence that their child has recovered sufficiently to prevent exposing others.

Disabilities

School district will not discriminate on the basis of disability as required under ADA, IDEA and Section 504 and C.G.S. 10-76a and any similar law or provision.

Emergency Medical Treatment

Parents are asked each year to complete an emergency information form for use by the school in the event of a medical emergency.

Health Records

School nurses maintain health records using the Connecticut “Health Assessment and Record Form.” These records are accessible to certified staff working with the child and to school health aides if permission is granted by the nurse or building administrator. Parents may request to inspect the health records of their child. Copies may be provided if requested. Original copies of the record are sent where a student transfers to another school in the state. If moving out-of-state, a copy will be forwarded. Health records are maintained for at least six years after the student graduates. The District will comply with the requirements of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA) to maintain the privacy of protected health information.

A diabetic student may test his/her own blood glucose level per the written order of a physician or advanced practice nurse stating the need and the capacity of the student to conduct self testing. Such self-testing shall be done in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Commissioner of Education.

Homebound

Home instruction is available to students who are unable to attend school for medical and/or mental health reasons for a period of two weeks or longer as diagnosed by a physician, psychiatrist or the Planning and Placement Team. Home instruction may also be provided for those students who have been excluded from regular school attendance for disciplinary reasons.

Homeless Students

Homeless students, as defined by federal and state legislation, will have all programs, services, and transportation that other students enjoy and may continue to attend the school of origin. The local liaison for homeless children is Karen Giangregorio 860-870-6000 ext. 133.

ILLNESS

Immunizations

All students must be immunized against certain diseases and must present a certificate from a physical or local health agency. If the student should not be immunized due to medical or religious reasons, a statement from a physician or the parent as appropriate must be provided. The required immunizations are: Diphtheria, Tetanus, Polio, Pertussis, Measles, Mumps, Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, Varicella (Chickenpox), Meningococcal, Pneumococcal, Rubella, Influenza and Hemophilus Influenza Type B.* Parents or guardians of any children unable to have the mandated immunizations prior to initial school entry and the boosters as required in

the later grades may have the immunizations, on the recommendation of the Board of Education, be paid by the town.

Parents/guardians wanting their children to be excused from immunizations if such immunizations are contrary to the religious belief of the child or of his/her parent/guardian must request such exemption in writing to the superintendent. The request must be officially acknowledged by any of the following: notary public, judge, clerk/deputy clerk of a court, town clerk, justice of the peace, attorney or school nurse. Such request must be made before initial entry into the school system and prior to entering grade 7.

In addition to the required immunizations for initial entry into school for kindergarten, regular and special education preschool programs, additional immunizations are required for entry into seventh grade and for entry into eighth grade and ninth or tenth grade. The school must enroll any homeless student even if the student is unable to produce the required medical and immunization records.

For further information regarding immunizations contact school nurse.

Physical Examinations

All students must present evidence of a physical examination upon enrollment to the district. (C.G.S. 10-204a) Health assessment shall also be required in grade 6 (or 7) and in grade 9 (or 10). All students in grades K and grades 1, 3,4,5 will undergo vision screening by the school nurse or school health aide. Hearing screening will be conducted for all students in grades K, 1,3, 4, and 5. Postural screening will be conducted for all female student in grades 5 and 7 and for male students in grade 8 or 9. If a homeless student, as defined by federal statute, lacks immunization/medical records, the school will enroll the child and refer the parent/guardian to the district's homeless liaison.

HOMEWORK

The purpose of homework is to help students become self-directed, independent learners and is related to the educational progress of the student. It serves to help all students reach their instructional goals.

Specific homework assignments may strengthen basic skills; extend classroom learning; stimulate and further interests; reinforce independent study skills; develop initiative, responsibility, and self-direction; stimulate worthwhile use of leisure time; and acquaint parents with the student's work in school.

In order for homework to be an effective support for learning, the homework policy requires a partnership among the school system represented by the teacher, the student and their parents. Without this partnership in support of learning, students will not achieve their full potential.

INSURANCE

School insurance is made available to families through a specific program. Information will be made available to all students at the beginning of each academic year. While the program is not mandatory, it is suggested that parents take advantage of the opportunity to provide adequate protection for their children while in school. Any such arrangements is contractual between the parent and insurance carriers and the Vernon Public School assumes no liability from disputes arising from such contract.

LASER POINTERS

Students are not permitted to possess or use laser pointers while on school property, while using District transportation, or while attending school-sponsored or school-related activities, whether on or off school property unless under a staff member's supervision and in the contest of instruction. Laser pointers will be confiscated and students will be disciplined.

LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT (LEP) STUDENTS

Parents of Limited English Proficient (LEP) Students participating in a language instructional program will be notified within 30 days of their child's placement in the program. The notification will include an explanation of why, a description of the program, and the parent's rights to remove their child from the LEP program. In addition, the notification will explain how the program will help the child to develop academically, learn English and achieve the standards necessary for promotion.

Students not meeting the English mastery standard or demonstrating limited progress will be provided with additional language support services which may include, but are not limited to, English as a Second Language program, sheltered English programs, English Immersion programs, summer school, after-school assistance, homework assistance and tutoring. Students after 30 months in a bilingual program will not be offered additional bilingual education.

LOST AND FOUND

Any articles which are found in the school or on school grounds should be turned in at the main office. Unclaimed articles will be disposed of at the end of the school year. Loss or suspected theft of personal or school property should be reported to the main office.

LIBRARY/MEDIA CENTER

Students are invited to use the books, magazines, newspapers, videos, CD's and other materials, including computers, located in the media center. Students are responsible for any material they sign out. Materials must be returned to the librarian at the circulation desk. Students must pay for any materials they lose or damage.

Guidelines have been established for the use of the Internet. Student violations of the guidelines can result in the termination of access privileges and in disciplinary actions. It is the policy of the Board of Education that all student must sign an acceptable use policy which indicates that a

student agrees to use the Internet exclusively for educational purposes. Each contract must also include a signature from the student's parent/guardian.

LUNCH CHARGING

Charging is not encouraged by the District but on those occasions that a student does not have money, they will be offered an alternate meal.

MAGNET SCHOOLS

It is recognized that some students may benefit from attendance at a magnet school not limited by school district boundaries. District students may enroll directly into a magnet school, with which the District does not have a participation agreement, on a space available basis. The District will be responsible for any tuition for such enrollment, but not for transportation, unless the magnet school is within the boundaries of the school district. Tuition will not be paid by the district for student placed by their parents/guardians in a pre-school (PK) magnet program. Parents/Guardians are required, not later than two weeks following an enrollment lottery for an interdistrict magnet school, to notify the district of their child's enrollment or placement on a waiting list for enrollment in the coming school year.

MAKE-UP WORK

A student will be permitted to make-up tests and to turn in projects due in any class missed because of absence. The student is responsible for obtaining and completing make-up work within the time specified by the teacher.

MIGRANT STUDENTS

The district has a program to address the needs of migrant students. A full range of services will be provided to migrant students, including applicable Title I programs, special education, gifted education, vocational education, language programs, counseling programs and elective classes. Parents/guardians of migrant students will be involved in and regularly consulted about the development, implementation, operation and evaluation of the migrant program.

NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS (NAEP)

The federal No Child Left Behind Act requires schools selected to participate in this national testing program to notify parents of children who will be taking the test of their right to exclude their child. Parents also have the right to inspect all NAEP data, questions and assessment instruments.

OUT OF SCHOOL MISCONDUCT

Students are subject to discipline, up to and including suspension and expulsion for misconduct which is seriously disruptive of the educational process and is a violation of a publicized board policy, even if such conduct occurs off-school property and during non-school time.

Examples of off-school conduct that may result in such discipline include but are not limited to:

1. Sale, possession, use, or distribution of dangerous weapons, including marital arts weapons;
2. Use, possession, or distribution of illegal drugs;
3. Violent conduct;

4. Making of a bomb threat;
5. Threatening to harm or kill another student or member of the staff; where any such activity has the reasonable likelihood of threatening the health, safety or welfare of school property, individuals thereon, and/or the educational process.

PARENT CONFERENCES

Parents are encouraged to become partners in their child's educational successes. Conferences with teachers may be held at any time during the school year. Parents and students, as well as teachers, counselors or administrators may initiate a conference.

A parent or student may arrange a conference with an individual member of the school staff or a group conference with school staff members. Conferences are held during school hours but every effort will be made to accommodate parent schedules.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT/COMMUNICATIONS

Education succeeds best when there is a strong partnership between home and school based on communications and interactions. Parents/guardians are urged to encourage their children to put a high priority on education and to make the most of their educational opportunities available. Parents/guardians should become familiar with all of the child's school activities and with the District's academic programs, including special programs. Attendance at parent-teacher conferences, participation in campus parent organizations, attendance at board of education meetings and being a school volunteer are strongly encouraged.

PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS

PTA/PTO is a vital link between the school, community and the parents it serves. Thus, parents are urged to join and take an active part in the PTA/PTO.

PESTICIDE APPLICATION

Only certified pesticide applicators shall be used in schools for any non-emergency pesticide use in school buildings or on school grounds. Pesticide applications are limited to non-school hours and when activities are not taking place. Areas to receive pesticide application will be posted and a written record of all pesticide applications will be maintained for five years. Parents/guardians and staff who want to receive advance notice of all pesticide use will be listed on a registry and such notice will be provided as required by law (Schools without an integrated pest -management plan must send prior notice by mail.) . Parents/guardians who want to be notified prior to pesticide applications inside their child(ren)'s school assignment area may contact William Peluso, 860-870-6000 ext. 119.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

All students enrolled in elementary school shall have included in the regular school day, time devoted to physical exercise, of not less than twenty minutes in total. This requirement may be altered by a Planning and Placement Team (PPT) for a child requiring special education and related services.

This daily period of physical activity for elementary school students can be a combination of planned physical education classes, recess, and/or teacher-directed classroom activities.

Students may not be required by school employees to engage in physical activity as a form of discipline during the school day. This restriction does not apply to brief period of respite/time-outs, referrals to a building administrator, or for safety reasons.

PHYSICAL EXERCISE

All students in elementary school shall have in the regular school day, time devoted to physical exercise, of not less than twenty minutes in total, unless altered for a student by a Planning and Placement Team for a child requiring special education. Such physical exercise can be a combination of planned physical education classes, recess, and/or teacher-directed classroom activities. The period of physical activity will not be taken away from an elementary student as a form of punishment. In addition, students in all grades, K-12, cannot be assigned physical activity as a form of punishment.

PROMOTION, RETENTION AND PLACEMENT

A student shall be promoted from one grade to the next on the basis of academic performance.

Student promotion is dependent on each student's mastery and acquisition of basic learning objectives. Normally, students will progress annually from grade to grade. Students who master objectives at an exceptional rate may be considered for acceleration to another grade or class. Students who fail to master basic learning objectives at a normal rate will be considered for retention. Retention and acceleration decisions are the responsibility of the teaching staff and principal, after prior notification and discussion with parents. The final decision rests with the school principal.

Students must demonstrate attainment of the basic skills needed for graduation based on the district's assessment program. A failure to attain these skills may necessitate involvement in additional courses, special help programs, summer school, retesting, etc.

PROPERTY, LOCKERS, AND EQUIPMENT

It is the policy of the Board to hold students responsible for any loss of or damage to the property of the school under the jurisdiction of the Board when the loss or damage occurs through fault of the student.

Any student damaging or defacing school property will be financially liable for restoring the property regardless of the condition of the property at the time of the destructive act, in addition to any other discipline up to and including arrest or civil prosecution as deemed appropriate.

In addition, anyone who witnesses such an act and fails to report it to the proper authorities will be considered as having contributed to that action. Such charges for damaged property will be exactly those which the school must incur to repair the damage.

Each student is assigned a (desk), (hall locker) and/or other equipment. These items are the property of the school, loaned to students for their convenience during the school year, should be kept in good order and not abused.

Searches of desks or lockers may be conducted at any time there is reasonable cause to believe that they contain articles or materials prohibited by district policy. Parents will be notified if any prohibited items are found in the student's desk or locker.

Students should not attempt to repair school equipment but should notify the (main office) immediately if it isn't function properly. Any damage done will be the responsibility of the person to whom it was loaned for the current year. Students (may/may not) bring in locks from home and attach to assigned lockers. Students are warned not to bring large sums of money or valuables to school, liability for these items remains with the student.

PSYCHOTROPIC DRUG USE

School personnel is prohibited from recommending the use of psychotropic drugs for any student enrolled within the school system. School nurses, nurse practitioners, district medical advisor, school psychologists, school social workers and school counselors, may recommend that a student be evaluated by an appropriate medical practitioner. Further, the District is prohibited from requiring a child to get a prescription before he/she may attend school, be evaluated to determine eligibility for special education or receive special education.

PUBLIC COMPLAINTS

The right of community members to register individual or group concerns about district instruction, programs, materials, operations and/or staff members is recognized. Complaints and grievances will be handled and resolved as close to their origin as possible. Complaints will be referred back through the proper administrative channels before investigation or action by the Board unless the complaint concerns Board actions or operations only. A procedure also exists for the placing and response to criticism or approval of instructional materials.

Specialized complaint procedures exist regarding identification, evaluation or educational placement of a student with a disability; loss of credit due to absences; discrimination on the basis of sex; harassment; sexual abuse or harassment; and instructional materials.

READING (REMEDIAL)

The school will utilize in grades kindergarten through grade three reading assessments to identify students reading below proficiency and to assist with the identification of students at risk for dyslexia.

SAFETY/ACCIDENT PREVENTION

Student safety on campus and at school related events is a high priority of the District. Although the District has implemented safety procedures, the cooperation of students is essential to ensure school safety. A student should:

- Avoid conduct that is likely to put the student or other students at risk.
- Follow the school's code of discipline

- Remain alert to and promptly report safety hazards, such as intruders on campus.
- Know emergency evacuation routes and signals.
- Follow immediately the instructions of staff who are over-seeing the welfare of students.

SCHOOL ALTERNATIVES

Connecticut schools offer a range of educational program to meet the diverse needs and career aspirations of its students in a variety of settings, including comprehensive local schools, regional vocational-technical schools, vocational agriculture centers, charter schools and magnet schools. These programs serve to prepare student for college, the workplace and active citizenship.

The district offers an alternative education program in a setting that addresses the emotional, social, behavioral and academic needs of students. Information about alternative education offered by the district, including purpose, location, contact information, staff directory and enrollment criteria is posted on the district’s website.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AREAS

Students will attend the school designated within the school boundary in which the student resides, except that in the best interests of the child the Superintendent, within his/her sole discretion, may approve a student’s attending a school in another boundary.

SCHOOL CEREMONIES AND OBSERVANCES

The school district recognizes the value of certain ceremonies and observances in promoting patriotism and good citizenship among the students. Therefore, activities in schools commemorating national holidays such as Memorial Day, Thanksgiving and President’s Day are encouraged. Vernon Public Schools reminds students, faculty and administration of the variety of religious beliefs, and all are urged to be conscious of and respect the sensitivities of others.

Activities related to a religious holiday or theme will be planned to ensure that the activity is not devotional, and that students of all faiths can join without feeling that they are betraying their own beliefs. Therefore,

1. school and class plays shall not be overly religious, and church-like scenery will be avoided;
2. religious music shall not entirely dominate the selection of music; and
3. program notes and illustrations shall not be religious or sectarian.

Students shall be given the option to be excused from participating in those parts of a program or curriculum involving a religious theme which conflicts with their own religious beliefs. If a parent or student has any questions regarding the use of religious music, artwork and/or symbols in a particular course/activity, the Building Principal should be contacted.

An opportunity will be provided, at the beginning of each school day, for students to observe an appropriate period of silent meditation and to recite the Pledge of Allegiance. Participation in these activities is voluntary. Nonparticipants are expected to maintain order and decorum appropriate to the school environment.

SCHOOL DISTRICT RECORDS

Interested persons may inspect “public district records” which are maintained at the office of the Superintendent of Schools, during normal hours of business. Copies of records, permitted by law to be disclosed, may also be attained.

SCHOOL SECURITY AND SAFETY

Each school in the District will develop and implement a school security and safety plan based upon the standards issued by the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection. Each school, as required by law, shall establish a school security and safety committee which will assist in the development and administration of the school’s security and safety plan. Each district school will conduct a security and vulnerability assessment every two years.

The District has developed, maintains, an emergency disaster preparedness and response plan for implementation as needed. The plan is based upon the standards promulgated by the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection Development and implementation of the plan includes collaboration with local and state emergency responders, (law enforcement, fire department, emergency rescue squads and local public health administrators). The plan, representing an all hazards approach, utilizes the four recognized phases of crisis management: (1) mitigation/prevention, (2) preparedness, (3) response, (4) recovery.

If the school utilizes school resource officers, include here language pertaining to their role, also stressing the use of a graduate/response model in student disciplinary situations.

SEARCH AND SEIZURE

The right to inspect desks, lockers and other equipment assigned to students may be exercised by school officials to safeguard students, their property and school property. An authorized school administrator may search a student’s locker or desk under the following conditions:

1. There is reason to believe that the student’s desk or locker contains contraband material.
2. The probable presence of contraband material presents a serious threat to the maintenance of discipline, order, safety and health in school.

This document serves as advance notice that school board policy allows desks and lockers to be inspected if the administration has reason to believe that materials injurious to the best interests of students and the school are contained therein.

Under special circumstances, school officials may search students, particularly if there is reasonable suspicion that a student possesses illegal matter, such as a dangerous weapon or illegal drugs. Students must be aware that such items are forbidden both on school property and at school-related activities.

SECLUSION/RESTRAINT, USE OF

List in this section the District’s position pertaining to the use of physical restraints and seclusion as specified in PA 15-141 and the revised policy and administrative regulations required by statute. Indicate when they may be used and the applicable guidelines and reporting requirements. The use of restraint or seclusion will be used only by trained school staff in emergency situations only to prevent immediate or imminent injury to a student or others. Restraint or seclusion will not be used to discipline a student or because it is convenient or

instead of a less restrictive alternative. Such use will also be constantly monitored by a school employee. When used, parents will be notified within 24 hours, but a reasonable attempt will be made to notify parents/guardians immediately after restraint or seclusion is initiated.

SEXUAL ABUSE PREVENTION AND EDUCATION PROGRAM

Students in grades K-12 will be involved in a prevention-oriented child sexual abuse program which teaches students age-appropriate techniques to recognize child sexual abuse and how to report it. Parents/guardians may permit their child to opt out of the awareness program or any part of it by notifying the school in writing of such a request.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The district wants all students to learn in an environment free from all forms of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is against state and federal laws. It is unwelcome sexual attention from peers, teachers, staff or anyone with whom the victim may interact. Any student who believes that he or she has been subjected to sexual harassment should report the alleged misconduct immediately to his/her teacher, social worker, guidance counselor, administrator, school nurse or any responsible individual with whom the student feels comfortable, either informally or through the filing of a formal complaint.

The district will notify the parents of all students involved in sexual harassment by student(s) when the allegations are not minor and will notify parents of any incident of sexual harassment or sexual abuse by an employee.

A complaint alleging sexual harassment by a student or staff member may be presented by a student and/or parent in a conference with the principal or designee or with the Title IX Coordinator, Karen Giangregorio, 860-870-6000 ext 133.

SPECIAL NETWORKING SITES

Students may not access social media sites using District equipment, while on District property or at District-sponsored activities unless the posting is approved by a District representative/teacher/staff member. Social media websites are websites such as, but not limited to, Facebook, MySpace, You Tube, Flickr and Twitter.

The District will not be liable for information/comments posted by students on social media websites when the student is not engaged in District activities and not using District equipment. For safety purposes, the district employs both Internet filters and firewalls.

The School District reserves the right to monitor, inspect, copy, review and store at any time and without prior notice any and all usage of the computer network and Internet access and any and all information transmitted or received in connection with such usage. All such information files shall be and remain the property of the School District and no user shall have any expectation of privacy regarding such materials.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

The district provides special programs such as but not limited to, gifted and talented, bilingual, learning disabilities and for those with other disabilities which affect a student's success at school. A student or parent with questions about these programs should contact (name, title of

staff); the coordinator of each program is available to answer questions about eligibility requirements, programs and services offered in the district or by other organizations.

The District utilizes Scientific Research Based Intervention (SRBI) process which combines systematic assessment, decision-making and a multi-tiered delivery model to improve educational and behavioral outcomes for all students. Academic and behavioral support and targeted interventions will be provided for students who are not making academic progress at expected levels in the general curriculum.

For students in need of Special Education programs, a planning and placement team (PPT) is designed to provide communication and decision-making at the school level concerning the effective use of available resources. The team is also responsible for follow-up and periodic review of all students presently in Special Education and special services programs.

Any child identified as possibly needing special education and/or related services must be referred to a special education Planning & Placement Team for evaluation (PPT). The PPT will determine whether special education services are required. Parents must give their consent before any evaluation can be done or any services can begin. An Individualized Education Plan, based upon the diagnostic findings of the evaluation study will be developed by the PPT, with parental involvement. Parents will be informed regarding the use of scientific, research-based interventions. Parents have the right to have the school paraprofessional assigned to their child, if any, attend and participate in PPT meetings. Parents, as required by law, will be provided information at PPT meetings about their right to have advisors and paraprofessional attend PPT meetings.

STUDENT COMPLAINTS/GRIEVANCES: DUE PROCESS

A student or parent who has a complaint should first bring the matter to the appropriate teacher. If the outcome is not satisfactory, a conference with the principal should be requested as soon as possible. If the outcome of the conference with the principal is not satisfactory, a conference with the Superintendent or designee can be requested. If the outcome of this conference is not satisfactory, the student or parent may appear before the Board of Education, in accordance with Board policy.

A student and/or parent with a complaint regarding possible discrimination on the basis of gender should contact Karen Giangregorio, 860-870-6000, ext. 133.

A complaint or concern regarding the placement of a student with disabilities concerning special education or programs and services should be discussed with Karen Giangregorio, 860-870-6000, ext. 133.

STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Students have the right to express their views in speech, writing, or through any other medium or form, limited solely by those restrictions imposed on all citizens generally and those specifically applicable to children and youths in a school setting.

The school encourages student publications not only because they offer an educational activity through which students gain experience in reporting, writing, editing, and understanding responsible journalism, but also because they provide an opportunity for students to express their views and a means of communicating both within and beyond the school community.

All student publications must comply with the rules for responsible journalism. Libelous statements, unfounded charges and accusations, obscenity, also statements, materials advocating racial or religious prejudice, hatred, violence, the breaking of laws and school policies and/or regulations, or materials designed to disrupt the educational process will not be permitted.

Expressions of personal opinion must be clearly identified as such and must bear the name of the author. Opportunity for the expression of opinions differing from those of the student publishers must be provided.

In addition, student newspapers and/or publications which are paid for by the school district and/or produced under the direction of a teacher as part of the school curriculum are not considered a public forum. In such cases, the Board of Education reserves the right to edit or delete such student speech which is feeling is inconsistent with the district's basic educational mission.

DISTRIBUTION OF LITERATURE

Students have a right to distribute literature on school grounds and in school buildings provided such distribution does not interfere with or disrupt the educational process. No literature may be distributed unless a copy is submitted in advance to the Superintendent of Schools and/or the Building Principal.

STUDENT RECORDS

A student's school records are confidential and are protected by federal and state law from unauthorized inspection or use. A cumulative record is maintained for each student from the time the student enters the district until the student withdraws or graduates. This record moves with the student from school to school.

By law, both parents, whether married, separated, or divorced, have access to the records of a student who is under 18 or a dependent for tax purposes. A parent whose rights have been legally terminated will be denied access to the records if the school is given a copy of the court order terminating these rights.

The principal is custodian of all records for currently enrolled students at the assigned school. The Superintendent is the custodian of all records for students who have withdrawn or graduated. Records may be reviewed during regular school hours upon completion of the written request form. The record's custodian or designee will respond to reasonable requests for explanation and interpretation of the records.

Parents of a minor or of a student who is a dependent for tax purposes, the student (if 18 or older), and school officials with legitimate educational interests are the only persons who have general access to a student's records. "School officials with legitimate educational interests" include any employee such as an administrator, teacher, support staff, Board of Education

member, attorney, agents, or facilities with which the district contracts for the placement of students with disabilities, as well as their attorneys and consultants, who are:

1. Working with the student;
2. Considering disciplinary or academic actions, the student's case, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for a student with disabilities under IDEA or an individually designed program for a student with disabilities under Section 504;
3. Compiling statistical data; or
4. Investigating or evaluating programs.

Certain other officials from various governmental agencies may have limited access to the records. Parental consent is required to release the records to anyone else. When the student reaches 18 years of age, only the student has the right to consent to release of records.

The parent's or student's right of access to, and copies of, student records does not extend to all records. Materials that are not considered educational records, such as teachers' personal notes on a student that are shared only with a substitute teacher and records pertaining to former students after they are no longer students in the district, do not have to be made available to the parents or student.

A student over 18 and parents of minor students may inspect the student's records and request a correction if the records are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy or other rights. If the district refuses the request to amend the records, the requestor has the right to a hearing. If the records are not amended as a result of the hearing, the requestor has 30 school days to exercise the right to place a statement commenting on the information in the student's record. Although improperly recorded grades may be challenged, parents and the student are not allowed to contest a student's grade in a course through this process. Parents or the student have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education if they believe the district is not in compliance with the law regarding student records. The district's policy regarding student records is available from the principal's or superintendent's office.

Copies of student records are available upon request. Parents may be denied copies of a student's records when the district is given a copy of a court order terminating the parental rights.

The District, when a student moves to a new school system or charter school, will send the student's records to the new district or charter school within ten business days of receiving written notice of the move from the new district. Unless the parents/guardians of the student authorize the record transfer in writing, the sending District is required to send a notice when the records are sent to the new district.

Parents and eligible students have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the District to comply with the Requirements of FERPA. Complaints may be addressed to: Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 5400 Maryland Avenue, S.W., Washington, DC 20202-4605.

The district's HIPPA Privacy Officer is Karen Giangregorio, 860-870-6000, ext. 133.

SURVEYS/STUDENT PRIVACY

Your child will not be required to participate without parental consent in any survey, analysis, or evaluation that concerns:

1. political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student's parent;
2. mental or psychological problems of the student or the student's family;
3. sex attitudes or behaviors;
4. illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating and demeaning behavior;
5. critical appraisals of other individual with whom respondents have close family relationships;
6. legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians and ministers;
7. income; or
8. religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or the student's parents.

In addition, parents have the right to inspect, upon request, a survey that is to be administered by a school to a student, prior to its use. Parents will be notified at least two weeks in advance of any survey that will be given to their children.

Parents will be notified of any non-emergency, invasive physical examination that is required as a condition of attendance administered by the school and which is not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of students.

TARDY PROCEDURE

If a student arrives after the start of the official starting time, he/she is to report directly to the office for check-in. All tardy arrivals will be considered unexcused unless accompanied by a doctor's note for illness and be signed by a parent. All unexcused tardy arrivals are subject to school disciplinary consequences.

TEACHER AND PARAPROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

Parents have the right to request information about the professional qualifications of their child's teacher(s). The response will indicate whether the teacher is certified for the subject matter and grade taught; the teacher's undergraduate major and any graduate degrees or certifications a teacher may have. Parents will also be advised, if requested as to whether the child is provided service by paraprofessionals and their qualifications.

TESTING

All students in grades 3 through 8 inclusive and grade 11 shall annually, in March or April, take a mastery examination in reading, language arts and mathematics. Students in grades 5, 8 and 10 shall annually, in March or April take a statewide mastery examination in science. Special education students participate in mastery testing programs except in the rare case when participation in an alternate assessment is detrimental to the student's IEP. In order to graduate students must meet District standards for graduation, in addition to required course credits. The mastery examination test is one of the measures to be used to determine if students have met the

identified standards. Student scores on each component of the statewide grade 10 or 11 state assessment test may/shall be included on transcripts and permanent records.

TEXTBOOK CARE AND OBLIGATIONS

Students are responsible for the care of books and supplies entrusted to their use. They will be assessed damage to textbooks, equipment or materials. In accordance with state law, the school reserves the right to withhold grades, transcripts, or report cards until the student pays for or returns the textbooks, library book or other educational materials.

TITLE I COMPARABILITY OF SERVICES

All district schools, regardless of whether they receive Federal Title I funds, provide services that, taken as a whole, are substantially comparable. Staff, curriculum materials and instructional supplies are provided in a manner to ensure equivalency among district schools.

TITLE I PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parents of a child in a Title 1 funded program will receive a copy of the district's parental involvement policy, including provisions of an annual meeting and involvement of parents in the planning, review and implementation of Title 1 programs.

TRANSFERS AND WITHDRAWALS

Students withdrawing from school must notify the main office one week in advance of their last day. At that time, they will be given forms for their parents to complete. Included will be a formal written statement of withdrawal and release of records form.

TRANSPORTATION

School transportation privileges are extended to students conditioned upon their satisfactory behavior on the bus. Unsatisfactory student behavior on the bus may result in suspension of transportation services or such other disciplinary action that is appropriate for misconduct.

The following rules shall apply to student conduct on school transportation:

1. Passengers shall follow the driver's directions at all times.
2. Passengers shall board and leave the bus in an orderly manner at the designated bus stop nearest their home.
3. Passengers shall not stand while the bus is in motion.
4. Passengers shall keep books, instrument cases, feet, and other objects out of the aisle of the bus.
5. Passengers shall not deface the bus and/or its equipment.
6. Passengers shall not extend head, hands, arms, or legs out of the window nor hold any object out of the window nor throw objects within or out of the bus.
7. Passengers shall not smoke or use any form of tobacco.
8. Passengers shall not eat on the bus.
9. Usual classroom conduct shall be observed. Unruly conduct, including the use of obscene language, will subject the passenger to disciplinary action.

10. Upon leaving the bus, the passenger will wait for the driver's signal before crossing in front of the bus.
11. Students must ride the bus to which they are assigned.

The following procedures shall be followed when a discipline concern arises on a bus serving a regular route or an extracurricular activity:

1. A conference involving the principal, the student passenger, the driver, and the parent(s) may be required.
2. The principal may suspend the student's bus-riding privileges. If such a suspension occurs, the parents will be notified prior to the time the suspension takes effect.
3. In the case of serious misconduct that endangers the safety of other passengers or the driver, the driver shall have the authority to remove the student and call for law enforcement assistance. The principal and parents shall be notified of the situation as soon as possible. The student shall not be provided bus service again until a conference involving all persons listed above has been held.

Disciplinary sanctions and changes in transportation for a student with a disability shall be made in accordance with the provisions of the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP).

All vehicles coming into or leaving the school grounds are subject to the regulations of the school.

TRANSPORTATION SAFETY COMPLAINTS/PROCEDURES

All complaints concerning school transportation safety are to be made to the Transportation Coordinator/District Business Manager. A written record of all complaints will be maintained and an investigation of the allegations will take place.

TUTORING

Teachers may not teach privately (tutor) students of the school in which he/she teaches. This does not apply to teacher of homebound children employed by the Board of Education.

VACATIONS

School policy strongly encourages the scheduling of family vacations and trips during times which coincide with school vacations. Student absences for reasons of a family vacation or trip that takes place when school is in session are considered "unexcused absences."

VIDEO RECORDERS ON SCHOOL BUSES/SCHOOL CAMPUS

The district has installed video recording equipment on school buses to monitor school transportation and discipline. Videotaping will be done randomly during the school year, students will not be notified when a recording device has been installed and in use on their bus. Tapes will be viewed by the administration. Students violating bus conduct rules will be notified and disciplinary action will be taken. Videotapes shall be treated as protected student records under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

Video/audio equipment will be used to monitor student behavior in common areas or campus. Students will not be told when the equipment is being used. The principal or his/her designee will review the tapes routinely and document stud schools. All visitors must first report to the principal's office. Visits to individual classrooms during instructional time shall be permitted only with the principal's approval, and such visits shall not be permitted if their duration or frequency interferes with the delivery of instruction or disrupts the normal school environment.

All doors that open to the outside of any school must remain locked in order to preserve the safety and security of students and staff. Unauthorized persons shall not be permitted in school buildings or on school grounds. School principals are authorized to take appropriate action to prevent such persons from entering the building or from loitering on the grounds. Such persons will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

All visitors are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of courtesy and conduct. Disruptive behavior will not be permitted. Visits cannot interfere with the educational program of the school nor interrupt teaching activities.

WEBSITES

School web pages must contain material that reflects on educational purposes. School web pages are not to be used for personal, commercial or political purposes; and are considered a publication of the Board of Education. The Principal or his/her designee will approve all material posted on the school's web page. Student maintaining personal web pages may be subject to disciplinary action for the content of such sites under certain conditions.

WELLNESS

Student wellness, including good nutrition and physical activity, is promoted through the District's educational program, school activities, and meal programs. Federal and state standards will be met pertaining to all foods and beverages available for sale to students. A sequential program of physical education is provided, in addition to time in the elementary school day for supervised recess.

VERNON PUBLIC SCHOOLS POLICIES

These policies can be accessed on the Vernon Public Schools website.

- 0000 - Mission Statement
- 0521 - Nondiscrimination
- 1110.1 - Parent Involvement
- 1110.3 - School Governance Councils
- 1250 - Visits to Schools
- 3521.1 - Pesticide Management Plan
- 3541.5 - Transportation Complaints
- 5110/5111 - Student Attendance

5112 - Attendance
5114 - Suspension/Expulsion
5118.1 - Homeless Students
5121 - Examination/Grades/Ranking
5123 - Promotion/Acceleration/Retention
5125 - Student Records
5125.11 - Health/Medical Records
5131.6 - Drugs, Tobacco, Alcohol
5131.7 - Weapons and Dangerous Instruments
5131.81 - Electronic Devices
5131.911 - Bullying
5131.913 - Cyberbullying
5132 - Dress and Grooming
5141.21 - Administration of Medications
5141.23 - Psychotropic Drug Use
5141.25 - Accommodations for Students with
Special Dietary Needs
5141.4 - Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse
5141.5 - Suicide Prevention
5144.1 - Physical Restraint/Seclusion
5145.12 - Search and Seizure
5145.14 - On-Campus Recruitment
5145.4 - Equal Opportunity/Non-Discrimination
5145.4 - Sexual Harassment
5145.5 - Sexual Harassment
6141.311 - Limited English Proficiency Program
6141.312 - Migrant Students
51411.321 - Computer Acceptable Use Policy
6141.322 - Computers: Websites
6142.101 - Wellness (Student and Nutrition and Physical Activity)
6144.1 - Exemption from Instruction
6146 - Graduation Requirements
6146/6146.1 - Grading System
6154 - Homework
6162.4 - School Volunteers
6162.51 - Student Privacy/Surveys
6172.41 - Title I Parental Involvement
6172.6 - Virtual/Online Courses

Vernon Public Schools
Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
Annual Notice of Student Education Record Privacy

Parent/Guardian:

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 18 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:

- 1) To inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school within 45 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:

Center Road School, Jocelyn Poglitsch, email: Jocelyn.Poglitsch@vernonct.org (860) 870-6300
Lake Street School, Terese Duenzl, email: Terese.Duenzl@vernonct.org (860) 870-6085
Maple Street School, Melissa Trantola, email: Melissa.Trantola@vernonct.org (860) 870-6175
Northeast School, Brenda Greene, email: Brenda.Greene@vernonct.org (860) 870-6080
Skinner Road, Sandye Simon, email: Sandye.Simon@vernonct.org (860) 870-6180

- 2) 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:

Center Road School, Jocelyn Poglitsch, email: Jocelyn.Poglitsch@vernonct.org (860) 870-6300
Lake Street School, Terese Duenzl, email: Terese.Duenzl@vernonct.org (860) 870-6085
Maple Street School, Melissa Trantola, email: Melissa.Trantola@vernonct.org (860) 870-6175
Northeast School, Brenda Greene, email: Brenda.Greene@vernonct.org (860) 870-6080
Skinner Road, Sandye Simon, email: Sandye.Simon@vernonct.org (860) 870-6180

- 3) 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

Vernon Public Schools 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
- Date and place of birth
- Major field of study
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Weight and height of athletic team members
- Dates of attendance
- Degrees and awards received
- The most recent previous educational agency or institution attended by the student
- Publishing student names in the school newsletters or other publications

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 have any questions, please call Vernon Public Schools 860-870-6000.

Vernon Public Schools
Please print - Return one form for each child.

Please check all that apply:

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 district/school's social media site).

Class Photograph

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

Handbook

- My child and I have reviewed and understand the Vernon Public Schools Parent/Student handbook.

Technology

- My child and I have reviewed the Vernon Public Schools technology use policy. (pg. 16 of the Parent/Student handbook)

Child's Name: _____ Grade: _____

Parent/Guardian Printed
Name: _____

Phone Number: (____) _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____