



**Parent-Student Handbook  
Vernon Middle School  
2018-2019**

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## **WELCOME TO VERNON MIDDLE SCHOOL**

The staff and I would like to welcome you and your student to Vernon Middle School and to a new and exciting part of your life. We look forward to working with you.

In our effort to help you become better informed about the educational experience at VMS, we have prepared this handbook. I hope that it will answer some of the questions that you may have over the year and give you the basic information concerning our programs, rules and regulations. Please keep this handbook available for ready reference during the year.

We can have a successful year if students are in school daily and abiding by the rules outlined in the handbook. We look forward to working with you this school year!

### **Marion Independent School District Mission Statement**

The MISD in partnership with parents and the community create a safe environment where each learner is nurtured to become successful.

### **Vernon Middle School Vision Statement**

Vernon Middle School exists to provide a safe, supportive environment where students are expected to reach a high level of academic achievement as determined by district and state standards. As a team we will identify, evaluate, and make accommodations based on individualized student needs.

### **Vernon Middle School Values**

All children have the right to learn.

All children deserve an education for empowerment, an education for freedom.

All children can learn, given the appropriate time, environment, and resources.

We can and must teach all children effectively.

# **Vernon Middle School**

## **Staff & School Day Information**

**Vernon Middle School Faculty & Staff Directory**  
Main Phone line is 377-9401 followed by the extension listed.

<b><u>Fifth Grade Staff</u></b>			<b><u>Eighth Grade Staff</u></b>		
Jenni Adams	4448	Band	David Anderson	4447	Band
Kevin Hahn	4471	Literacy	Nadine Bellinger	4419	Literacy
Tia Hale	4428	Art	Mark Brase	4434	Social Studies
Tom Hauck	4491	Physical Education	Melissa Champion	4415	Literacy
Kim Knapp	4472	Literacy	Tia Hale	4428	Art
Becky Knudson	4473	Science	Mike Manderscheid	4431	Math
Heath Mueller	4426	Technology	Tiffany McQuerry	4440	Math
Elli Netolicky	4413	Physical Education	Corey Meth	5150	Physical Education
Meredith Olson	4459	General Music	Heath Mueller	4426	Gateway to Tech
Dana Phillips	4474	Math	Katy Neff	4425	Science
Michelle Price	4449	Math	Elli Netolicky	4413	Physical Education
Tracy Slaughter	4410	Social Studies	Alan Read	4414	Physical Education
Alan Read	4414	Physical Education	Stephanie Roberts	4423	21 <sup>st</sup> Century Skills
Kari Scherbring	4427	Chorus	Kari Scherbring	4427	Chorus
Sandee Wolfe-Kerker	4418	Building Skills	Sandee Wolfe-Kerker	4418	Teen Living
<b><u>Sixth Grade Staff</u></b>			<b><u>Special Programming</u></b>		
Jenni Adams	4448	Band	Daniel Lang	4419	School Improvement
Susan Faley	4445	Math	Dani Carter	4487	Special Education
Laura Finneseth	4443	Literacy	Jake Fishell	4505	Special Education
Tia Hale	4428	Art	Tana Leaverton	4435	Special Education
Tom Hauck	4491	Physical Education	Cruz MacTaggart	4437	Special Education
Sara Lange	4417	Math	Kimberly McGuire	4460	Special Education
Deb Menken	4444	Science	Braden Miller	4438	Special Education
Heath Mueller	4426	Technology	Michelle Wilson	4409	Family Resource
Elli Netolicky	4413	Physical Education	Natalie Zaehringer	4462	ELL Coordinator
Meredith Olson	4459	General Music	Miranda Kroll	4480	Talented & Gifted
Sara Rael	4445	Social Studies			
Alan Read	4414	Physical Education			
Kari Scherbring	4427	Chorus			
Greg Wilkinson	4436	Literacy			
Sandee Wolfe-Kerker	4418	Building Skills			
<b><u>Seventh Grade Staff</u></b>			<b><u>Office Staff</u></b>		
David Anderson	4447	Band	Phil Cochran	4401	Principal
Josh Claypool	4432	Math	Kat Bevins	4416	Associate Principal
Jacqui Duvall	4430	Social Studies	Michelle Thomason	4405	Guidance Counselor
Tia Hale	4428	Art	Emma Ambrose	4446	Guidance Counselor
Corey Meth	5150	Physical Education	Mike Manderscheid	4431	Activities Director
Heath Mueller	4426	Gateway to Tech	LouAnn Phillips	4404	Administrative Asst.
Gretchen Mundorf	4463	Literacy	Ida Hangartner	4406	Administrative Asst.
Michele Aschbrenner	4439	Science	Cindy Hutchins	4467	Attendance Asst.
Elli Netolicky	4413	Physical Education	Nancy Alderdyce	4403	District Nurse
Alan Read	4414	Physical Education	Danielle Rice	4403	Health Associate
Stephanie Roberts	4423	Tech & Careers			
Kari Scherbring	4427	Chorus			
Kristen Schmitt	4422	Literacy			
Travis Stearns	4433	Math			
Sandee Wolf-Kerker	4418	Teen Living			
			<b><u>Building/Grounds</u></b>		
			Ricky Jacobs	4411	Maintenance
			<b><u>Library Staff</u></b>		
			Apra Loomis	4407	Teacher Librarian
			Angela Hahn	4407	Library Associate

## Communication & Questions for Staff

**\*All staff may be reached by email. The address is their first initial and last name followed by @marion-isd.org. For example Phil Cochran's email address would be pcochran@marion-isd.org.**

### FOR HELP GO TO.....

#### Main Office

- |                          |                       |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| *Change of Information   | *Lost & Found         |
| *Lockers                 | *Bus Passes           |
| *Withdrawals & Transfers | *Passes to Class      |
| *Fees                    | *Visitors             |
| *Lunch Money             | *Absence Notification |

#### Athletic Office

- |                      |                               |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| *Athletic Physicals  | *Schedule Questions           |
| *Coaches Information | *Athletic Booster Information |

#### Guidance Office

- |                      |                    |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| *Student Concerns    | *Personal Concerns |
| *Conflict Resolution | *Doctor Reports    |

#### Nurse

- |               |             |
|---------------|-------------|
| *Immunization | *Medication |
|---------------|-------------|

#### Teachers

- |                          |                         |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| *Homework Questions      | *Volunteer              |
| *Student Issues/Concerns | *Request a Team Meeting |

### PHONE NUMBERS

Vernon Middle School Office	377-9401
Mr. Phil Cochran, Principal	377-9401 Ext. 4401
Mrs. Kat Bevins, Associate Principal	377-9401 Ext. 4416
Mrs. Nancy Alderdyce, Nurse	377-9401 Ext. 5111
Mrs. Michelle Thomason, Guidance	377-9401 Ext. 4405
Ms. Emma Ambrose, Guidance	377-9401 Ext. 4446
Mrs. Michelle Wilson, Family Resource	377-9401 Ext. 4409
Mr. Mike Manderscheid, Activities Director	377-9401 Ext. 4431

## VMS Bell Schedule

5th Grade				6th Grade			
Block 1	1st Hour	7:55-9:34	Homeroom & Core	Block 1	1st Hour	7:55-9:34	Homeroom & Core
	2nd Hour				2nd Hour		
Block 2	3rd Hour	9:37-10:20	Band/Choir/SH	Block 2	3rd Hour	9:37-10:20	PE/Exploratory
	4th Hour	10:23-11:06	PE/Exploratory		4th Hour	10:23-11:06	Band/Choir/SH
Lunch	Lunch	11:06-11:36	Lunch/Recess	Block 3	Block 3	11:09-11:36	Core
Block 3	5th Hour	11:38-1:06	Core	Lunch	Lunch	11:36-12:06	Lunch/Recess
	6th Hour			Block 3	Block 3	12:08-1:06	Core
MTSS	7th/MTSS	1:09-1:32	MTSS	MTSS	7th/MTSS	1:09-1:32	MTSS
Block 4	8th Hour	1:35-3:00	Core	Block 4	8th Hour	1:35-3:00	Core
	9th Hour				9th Hour		

7th Grade			
Block 1	1st Hour	7:55-8:38	PE/Exploratory
	2nd Hour	8:41-9:24	Band/Choir/SH
Block 2	3rd Hour	9:28-11:06	Homeroom & Core
	4th Hour		
Block 3	Block 3	11:09-12:06	Core
	Lunch	12:06-12:36	Lunch/Recess
Lunch	Block 3	12:37-1:06	Core
MTSS	7th/MTSS	1:09-1:32	MTSS
Block 4	8th Hour	1:35-3:00	Core
	9th Hour		

8th Grade			
Block 1	1st Hour	7:55-8:38	Band/Choir/SH
	2nd Hour	8:41-9:24	PE/Exploratory
Block 2	3rd Hour	9:28-11:06	Homeroom & Core
	4th Hour		
Block 3	5th Hour	11:09-12:36	Core
	6th Hour		
Lunch	Lunch	12:36-1:06	Lunch/Recess
MTSS	7th/MTSS	1:09-1:32	MTSS
Block 4	8th Hour	1:35-3:00	Core
	9th Hour		

VMS Early Out Schedule		Fifth	Sixth	Seventh	Eighth
7:55-8:25	30 min	1	1	1	1
8:28-8:58	30 min	2	2	2	2
9:01-9:31	30 min	3	3	3	3
9:34-10:04	30 min	4	4	4	4
10:07-10:37	30 min	Lunch	5	5	5
10:40-11:10	30 min	5	Lunch	6	6
11:13-11:43	30 min	6	6	Lunch	8
11:46-12:16	30 min	8	8	8	Lunch
12:19-12:49	30 min	9	9	9	9
12:49-12:55	6 min	Check Out	Check Out	Check Out	Check Out

VMS Late Start Schedule		Fifth	Sixth	Seventh	Eighth
9:55-10:25	30 min	1	1	1	1
10:28-10:58	30 min	2	2	2	2
11:01-11:31	30 min	Lunch	3	3	3
11:34-12:04	30 min	3	Lunch	4	4
12:07-12:37	30 min	4	4	Lunch	5
12:40-1:10	30 min	5	5	5	Lunch
1:13-1:43	30 min	6	6	6	6
1:46-2:16	30 min	8	8	8	8
2:19-2:49	30 min	9	9	9	9
2:49-2:55	6 min	Check Out	Check Out	Check Out	Check Out





# **Vernon Middle School**

## **General Information**

## **Abuse of Students by District Employees**

An individual who has knowledge an employee has physically or sexually abused a student may immediately report it to the school district's Level I Investigator. Reports are directed to: Nicole Harmer by mail at 1400 10<sup>th</sup> Ave, Marion, Iowa or by telephone at 377-0183. The Level II Investigator is the Marion Police Dept.

## **Affirmative Action Statement**

It is the policy of the Marion Independent School District not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender (sex), sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, socioeconomic status, disability, religion, creed, age, or veteran status, in its educational programs, activities, or employment practices. If you believe you have (or your child has) been discriminated against or treated unjustly at school, please contact Chris Dyer, Superintendent and District Equity Coordinator at 377-4691.

## **Appearance & Dress Code**

There is a strong connection between academic performance, students' appearance and students' conduct. Inappropriate student appearance may cause material and substantial disruption to the school environment or present a threat to the health and safety of students, employees and visitors to the school. Students are expected to adhere to reasonable levels of cleanliness and modesty. **Students are expected to wear clothing that is appropriate to their age level and that does not disrupt the school or educational environment.**

Students are not to wear clothing with spaghetti straps, or that shows the belly or back with the arms raised. Shorts and skirts must be fingertip length. Shirts that drop too far in the front need to be covered with an additional shirt on top. All pants and shorts must be worn where they were intended and not dropped low enough for undergarments or skin to be shown.

Students are prohibited from wearing clothing advertising or promoting items illegal for use by minors including, but not limited to, alcohol drugs, or tobacco, from wearing shoes with cleats except for outdoor athletic practices; and from wearing clothing displaying obscenity, profanity, vulgarity, racial or sexual remarks, making reference to prohibited conduct. Wearing chains at school is unacceptable. Under certain circumstances or during certain classes or activities, a stricter dress code may be appropriate, and students must comply with the stricter requirement. The principal makes the final determination of the appropriateness of the student's appearance. Students who are inappropriately dressed will be required to change their clothing, put on a t-shirt provided by the school, or leave the school.

Students will not be allowed to wear any type of headgear in the school building during the school day without prior approval from the administration.

## **Assemblies**

Throughout the year the school district sponsors school assemblies. Attendance at these assemblies is a privilege. Students must act in an orderly fashion and remain quiet on their way to an assembly, during an assembly and on their way back to the classroom after an assembly. Students attend assemblies unless, for disciplinary reasons, the privilege is taken away. Students who are not attending assemblies shall report to the office or library during those times.

## **Attendance, Truancy & Tardy Policy**

Students who have strong attendance records are more likely to achieve higher grades and enjoy school life to a greater degree. A student's attendance record is an important part of her or his permanent record and can be a significant factor not only in being admitted to college, but also in getting and keeping a job. Prospective employers expect promptness and regular attendance from employees and are reluctant to hire persons who have not established the good habits of responsibility that a positive attendance record indicates.

Something important happens in school every day in every class. The activity and interaction between teachers and students can never be exactly duplicated through makeup work. It is the responsibility of the school, working cooperatively with the parents, to provide accountability for student attendance.

The school requests that a parent call the school in the morning to report an absence for that day. Parents who need to call before 7:30 AM may leave a message on the answering machine. After 7:30 AM, a secretary will handle the call. The answering machine is also available after 3:45 PM on weekdays and all day on weekends. If a student is absent and there has been no call by 8:30 AM, the school will attempt to reach either parent at home or at work.

The school recognizes that there are certain valid and unavoidable reasons for absences that will be excused without question by the school. The school administrator reserves the right to determine an "Excused" or "Unexcused" absence. The following may be considered valid reasons to be absent:

1. Personal illness.
2. Death or serious illness in the immediate family or other unforeseen need for the student to help at home.
3. Doctor or dental appointments that cannot be scheduled outside of school time.
4. Educational trips with parents.
5. Specific and defined personal reasons that could not have been foreseen.
6. If, after the start of the school day, it becomes necessary to leave school for any reason including any of the above, the student must check out at the main office before leaving.

The following are examples of absences that may be considered UNEXCUSED:

1. Truancy: Being absent from school without the permission or knowledge of the parents or school.
2. Failure to check out before leaving school for an otherwise excused absence.
3. Oversleeping / missing the bus.
4. Hair appointments, tanning sessions.
5. No parental call within two (2) days of an absence.
6. Shopping trips.
7. Concerts out of town, too tired the next day or had to leave early to get there.
8. Employment other than through the school's work study program or approved by the administration.
9. Staying home to finish homework.

### **Excused Absences: Advance Notice**

Keeping in mind that the ultimate responsibility for school attendance rests with the student and parent, requests made in advance by a parent for a student's future absence will normally be honored and designated as an "excused" absence unless the request is for one of the examples listed

above. Such a request by the parent should normally be made at least one school day prior to the absence and earlier if more than one day will be involved in the absence.

The student will be given an Advance Make-Up Slip to present to the teachers to secure advance assignments for the dates of the absence. For this, and all other excused or unexcused absences, students will be allowed two days for each day missed to complete the make up work for classes that were missed.

#### **Excused Absences: School Related Activities**

Students who will be missing school for school related activities are expected to make up all work before the absence. If this is not possible, the teacher will decide on the makeup procedure. All assignments due or tests to be taken must be fulfilled immediately upon the return of the student. The one additional day rule for absences does not apply. Any assignment given during the student's absence will be given special consideration unless advance arrangements were not made.

#### **Absences: Appointments**

It is preferred that you schedule appointments after school hours. However, requests for early dismissal for dental and medical appointments are approved, provided the parent/guardian has sent a note or called to notify the school office of the appointment. A note from the doctor or dental office is optimal. If a student must leave the building during the school day, he/she must first receive permission from the office.

**Under no circumstances is a student to leave the building without a note or phone call from parents and without approval from the office. All work missed is the student's responsibility.**

#### **Half and Full Day Absences**

1. A student missing 4 or less periods is counted absent for a HALF DAY.
2. A student is that is absent more than 4 periods will be counted absent for a FULL DAY.

#### **Truancy**

Attendance is a top indicator of success in school and beyond. Students who attend school regularly do better than students who miss school frequently. Further, students who are under the age of sixteen (16) years before September 15 of the current school year are covered by the State of Iowa's compulsory attendance code 299.1A and are required to be in attendance at school. Excessive absenteeism, either excused or unexcused, may be grounds for referral to the county attorney for investigation and prosecution for truancy.

The Vernon Middle School Truancy Policy states:

**3<sup>rd</sup> Unexcused Absence in a Semester:** The student's parent will be notified by letter.

**5<sup>th</sup> Unexcused Absence in a Semester:** A letter will be sent home to notify the parent that their student has reached five absences and ask that the parent contact the school. The Grade Level team will be notified.

**8<sup>th</sup> Unexcused Absence in a Semester or 10<sup>th</sup> in a year:** The student and parent will be required to meet with the Principal, Guidance Counselor, and a Grade Level Team member for an attendance meeting.

**18<sup>th</sup> Unexcused Absence:** A letter will be sent to the parent and the Linn County Attorney's Office notifying them that when their student misses twenty days they will be referred to the Linn County Attorney's Office.

**20<sup>th</sup> Unexcused Absence:** An Attendance Mediation Meeting will be scheduled by the Linn County Attorney's Office. A formal agreement between the parent, student and school will be put into place.

Any additional unexcused absences or violation of the mediation agreement will be turned over to the Linn County Attorney's Office for prosecution.

Heads of households are responsible for their children. Penalties are as follows:

*First Offense:* Up to ten days in jail, or \$100.00 fine, or 40 hours unpaid community service (a simple misdemeanor).

*Second Offense:* Up to twenty days in jail, and/or \$500.00 fine, or unspecified number of community service hours in lieu of fine or jail sentence (a serious misdemeanor).

*Third Offense:* Up to thirty days in jail, and/or fine up to \$1000.00, or an unspecified number of community service hours.

#### **Tardies**

All students will be allowed three minutes of passing time between classes. This is a sufficient amount of time to enable students to change classes without being tardy for their next period. However, students must learn to move between classes quickly and efficiently without wasting time. Therefore, almost all tardiness is unexcused.

If a teacher or the office detains a student for some reason, that student will be issued an Excused Tardy Pass by the teacher or the office and will then be readmitted to class without penalty.

A student who is tardy first period must report to the office for a Tardy Admit before being admitted to her or his assigned class unless he or she has already received a pass. The teacher in charge will record the tardiness on the daily attendance and tardiness report, which is turned into the office.

#### **Vernon Middle School Tardy Policy**

1-2 Warning

3 Parent Contact

6 Detention (30 min) (Parent Contact)

9 Detention (45 min) (Parent Contact)

12 Detention (45 min) (Parent Letter)

15 Detention (Sat 1hr) (Parent Contact)

18 Detention (Sat 2hr) (Parent Meeting)

20 and over - Discipline would be any of the following:

8:00-11:00 Saturday Detention

In-School Suspension

Out-of-School Suspension

Referral to County Attorney for truancy (for students who are excessively absent in the mornings or afternoons without a valid excuse).

## **Bags**

Gym bags, backpacks, equipment bags, purses and other similar bags are to be used only to transport needed materials and supplies to and from school. These bags are to be stored in the student's locker during the school day. Teams using the organizational curriculum may request the students bring their bags to Connections (homeroom) to assist with organization.

## **Bicycles, Mopeds, & Scooters**

Leave bicycles, mopeds, and scooters in the racks provided on the south side of the building. Students leaving the school campus on bicycles or mopeds must come to a complete stop when entering city streets. All bicycles, mopeds, & scooters should be provided with LOCKS. The school cannot be responsible for damage or theft of parts while bicycles or mopeds are parked in the racks. Students who violate safety rules on their bikes may be denied the privilege of riding their bikes to school. Anyone borrowing a bike, or doing damage to a bike, will be subject to disciplinary action.

## **Board Policies**

All MISD school board policies, including the equal opportunity in education statement, are available online at [www.marion-isd.org](http://www.marion-isd.org) under "Board of Education".

## **Buses and Other School District Vehicles**

Buses are used to transport students to and from school. Students who ride the bus and other school district vehicles to and from school, extracurricular activities or any other destination must comply with school district policies, rules and regulations. Students are responsible to the driver while on the bus or in another school vehicle, loading or unloading or leaving the bus. The driver has the ability to discipline a student and may notify the principal of a student's inappropriate bus conduct.

Persons riding in school district vehicles shall adhere to the following rules. The driver, sponsor and chaperones are to follow the school district policies, rules and regulations for student violations.

- Riders must be at the designated loading point before the arrival time.
- Riders must wait until the vehicle comes to a complete stop before attempting to enter.
- Riders must not extend arms or heads out of the windows at any time.
- Aisles must be kept cleared at all times.
- Riders shall load and unload through the right front door. The emergency door is for emergencies only.
- Riders will depart from the vehicle at the designated point unless the parent has contacted the Transportation Office and made a request for a different location.
- Riders may be assigned a seat by the driver.
- Riders who damage seats or other equipment will reimburse the school district for the cost of the repair or replacement.
- Riders are not permitted to leave their seats while the vehicle is in motion.
- Waste containers are provided on all vehicles for riders' use.
- Permission to open windows must be obtained from the driver.
- Classroom conduct is to be observed by students while riding the vehicle except for ordinary conversation.

- The driver is in charge of the riders and the vehicle, and the driver is to be obeyed promptly and cheerfully.
- Riders should assist in looking after the safety and comfort of younger riders.
- Riders who must cross the roadway to board or depart from the vehicle must pass in front of the vehicle (no closer than 10 feet), look in both directions and proceed to cross the road or highway only on signal from the driver.
- Riders must not throw objects about the vehicle nor out through the windows.
- Shooting paper wads, squirt guns or other material in the vehicle is not permitted.
- Riders must keep their feet off the seats.
- Roughhousing on the vehicle is prohibited.
- Riders must refrain from crowding or pushing.
- The use or possession of alcohol, tobacco or look alike substances is prohibited in the vehicle.
- The good conduct rule is in effect.

### **Cafeteria**

The school district operates a lunch and breakfast program. Students may either bring their own lunches to school or purchase a lunch and other items, including milk and juice.

### **Care of School Property**

Students are expected to take care of school property including desks, chairs, books, lockers and school equipment. Vandalism is not tolerated. Students found to have destroyed or otherwise harmed school property may be required to reimburse the school district. In certain circumstances, students may be reported to law enforcement officials.

### **Church Night**

Church activities represent a very important part of a student's educational growth and development. Wednesday night of every week during the school year has been set aside as church night. All school-related activities will end no later than 6:00 p.m. on Wednesdays. Exceptions may be made for open house events to showcase the new building, etc.

### **Civil Rights Information**

The following information is provided should any parent or student wish to contact the office of Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education:

Office of Civil Rights, Chicago Office

U.S. Department of Education

111 North Canal Street, Suite 1053

Chicago, IL 60606 - 7204

Telephone: (312) 886-8434; Fax: (312) 353-4888

TDD: (216) 522-2540; E-mail: [OCR.Chicago@ed.gov](mailto:OCR.Chicago@ed.gov)

### **Closed Campus**

Vernon Middle School has a closed campus policy for the entire school day, including the lunch period. Students must have written permission from their parents to leave campus.



## **Corporal Punishment, Restraint and Physical Confinement & Detention**

State law forbids school employees from using corporal punishment against any student. Certain actions by school employees are not considered corporal punishment. Additionally, school employees may use “reasonable and necessary force, not designed or intended to cause pain” to do certain things, such as prevent harm to persons or property.

State law also places limits on school employees’ abilities to restrain or confine and detain any student. The law limits why, how, where, and for how long a school employee may restrain or confine and detain a child. If a child is restrained or confined and detained, the school must maintain documentation and must provide certain types of notice to the child’s parent.

If you have any questions about this state law, please contact your school. The complete text of the law and additional information is available on the Iowa Department of Education’s Website link <http://www.iowa.gov/educate/and> search for Timeout, Seclusion and Restraint.

## **Dances**

School-sponsored dances will be held periodically throughout the school year. The following rules will apply at all dances:

- Dances will be for Vernon Middle School students only.
- Visitors will not be allowed to attend.
- If a student needs to leave, he/she will not be allowed to return.
- All school rules apply at dances.
- No profanity is to be sung or chanted under any circumstances.
- Students are not to be in locker area, or in any part of the building outside of the area where the dance is held.
- Moshing, grinding or slam-dancing at school dances is prohibited.
- Violators will be asked and expected to leave. Detention and/or suspension may apply for violations.

## **Definitions**

In this handbook, the word “parent” also means “guardian” unless otherwise stated. An administrator’s title, such as superintendent or principal, also means that individual’s designee unless otherwise stated. The term “school grounds” includes the school district facilities, school district property, property within the jurisdiction of the school district or school district premises, school-owned or school-operated buses or vehicles and chartered buses. The term “school facilities” includes school district buildings. The term “school activities” means all school activities in which students are involved whether they are school-sponsored or school approved, whether they are an event or an activity, or whether they are held on or off school grounds.

## **Directory Information, Release of Personal Information**

The following information may be released to the public in regard to any individual student of the school district as needed. Any student over the age of eighteen or parent not wanting this information released to the public must make objection in writing to the principal. The objection needs to be renewed annually.

NAME, ADDRESS, TELEPHONE LISTING, DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH, E-MAIL ADDRESS, GRADE LEVEL, ENROLLMENT STATUS, MAJOR FIELD OF STUDY, PARTICIPATION IN OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZED ACTIVITIES AND SPORTS, WEIGHT AND HEIGHT OF MEMBERS OF ATHLETIC TEAMS, DATES OF ATTENDANCE, DEGREES AND AWARDS RECEIVED, THE MOST RECENT PREVIOUS SCHOOL OR INSTITUTION ATTENDED BY THE STUDENT, PHOTOGRAPH AND LIKENESS, AND OTHER SIMILAR INFORMATION.

### **Drug Dogs**

In accordance with Board Policy 502.8 Searches/Seizures, a drug dog, in cooperation with law enforcement, may randomly sweep through the building. This is a precaution and not an alarm that signals any drug use.

### **Dual Enrollment Students**

Home school or home school assistance program students enrolled in classes or participating in school activities in the school district are subject to the same policies, rules and regulations as other students and are disciplined in the same manner as other students. Dual enrollment students interested in participating in school activities or enrolling in classes should contact the guidance office.

### **Educational Records**

Student records containing personally identifiable information, except for directory information, are confidential. Only persons, including employees, who have a legitimate educational interest, are allowed to access a student's records without the parent's permission. Parents may access, request amendments to and copy their child's records during regular office hours. Parents may also file a complaint with the United States Department of Education if they feel their rights regarding their child's records have been violated. For a complete copy of the school district's policy on student records or the procedure for filing a complaint, contact the board secretary, in the central administration office.

### **Electronic/Technological Devices & Cell Phones**

**(Please refer to Technology for appropriate times for personal technology usage)**

Students may not possess radios, CD players, televisions, water guns, toys and other similar items on school grounds or at school activities. Cell phones are allowed at school but must be turned off and placed in their locker at the beginning of the day and not be removed from the locker or turned on until school is dismissed. **At no time should a cell phone or any other technology device that can record video or take pictures be brought into a school locker room.** Inappropriate use of a device or a prohibited item will be taken away from the student and returned at a later date. Students found in violation of this policy may be subject to discipline and, in cases where a law may be violated, law enforcement may be contacted. Students need to remember that whatever they put on a personal electronic device could end up anywhere so they need to ensure the devices are used appropriately.

Cellular phones will be confiscated and returned to the student after serving a main detention for the first offense. Each offense after the first will begin with detention and may lead to suspensions. Students with repeated offenses will have their phone confiscated and their parents/guardians will have to pick up the article. Disciplinary action will also be taken and may include detention and suspension from school.

Any of the above items used inappropriately will be confiscated and returned to the parent or guardian only.

### **Elevator**

Students with special needs (either short or long term) will be allowed to use the elevator, if they adhere to the following guidelines:

- Permission and/or a pass to use the elevator will be issued by the school nurse or office personnel.
- A maximum of one designated student may ride along to assist with school books and supplies.
- The elevator may only be used for a school related purpose.

### **Equity Statement**

The Marion Independent School District extends equal opportunities in its employment practices, educational programs and services and does not discriminate on the basis of color, gender, gender identity, race, national origin, religion, creed, age, sexual orientation, marital status, pregnancy, disability or as otherwise prohibited by law. For more information about this policy and accompanying complaint procedure, please contact Chris Dyer, Superintendent & EEO/AA Coordinator at (319) 377-4691; Marion Independent School District, Administrative Offices, 777 S. 15<sup>th</sup> Street, Marion, IA 52302.

### **Field Trips**

In certain classes, field trips and excursions are authorized and may be taken as an extension of the classroom to contribute to the achievement of the educational goals of the school district. If a field trip is required for a course, students are expected to attend the field trip. Absences in other classes or school activities due to attendance on field trips or excursions are considered excused absences.

While on field trips, students are guests and considered ambassadors and representatives of the school district. Students must treat employees, chaperones and guides with respect and courtesy.

A permission form for field trips was signed with your emergency form in the fall, giving your child permission for field trips that cover the entire school year.

### **Food/Beverages/Gum**

Containers for beverages, not sold/distributed by the school, are restricted from entering the school building unless they are in your lunch bag. Students may not bring beverage containers into the building or store such containers in the school's lockers. Food and beverages are not to be carried through the halls of the school or be present in the classrooms. Food and beverages are to be kept in the lunchroom area of the school during the lunch hour. Gum is not allowed during the school day.

### **Gang Activity or Association**

The Vernon Middle School philosophy is that the presence of gangs and gang activities has caused, and continues to cause, a substantial disruption of, or material interference with, school and school activities. A gang as defined in the Iowa Code 723A means any ongoing organization, association, or group of three or more persons, whether formal or informal, having as one of its primary activities, the commission of one or more criminal acts, which has an identifiable name or identifying sign or symbol, and whose members individually or collectively engage in or have engaged in a pattern of criminal gang

activity. The “pattern of gang activity” means the commission, attempt to commit, or solicitation of two or more criminal acts, provided the criminal acts were committed on separate dates or by two or more persons who are members of, or belong to, the same criminal street gang. By this policy we act to prohibit the existence of gangs and gang activities as follows:

No student on or about school property or at any school activity:

- Shall wear, possess, use, distribute, write, draw, display or sell any clothing, jewelry, emblem, badge, symbol, sign, colors, or any other thing, which is evidence of membership in or affiliation with any gang.
- Shall commit any act or omission or use any speech, either verbal or nonverbal (gestures, handshakes, etc.) showing membership or affiliation in a gang.
- Shall use any speech or commit any act or omission in furtherance of the interests of any gang or gang activity, including but not limited to: a) Soliciting others for membership; b) Requesting any person pay for “protection”, otherwise intimidating or threatening any person; c) Committing any illegal act or violation of school district policies.
- Inciting another student to act with physical violence upon another student.

### **Homeless Services**

The district will make reasonable efforts to identify homeless school-age youth, support and encourage their enrollment and work to eliminate policy and practice barriers to their receiving a free and appropriate public education. This includes students living in a shelter, motel or campground due to lack of other adequate accommodation, in a car, park, abandoned building or bus or train station or doubled up with others due to loss of housing or economic hardship.

Eligible students have the right to:

Enroll in school immediately, even if lacking documents normally required for enrollment.

Enroll in school and attend classes while the school gathers needed documents.

Enroll in the local school; or continue attending their school of origin (the school they attended when permanently housed or the school in which they were last enrolled), if that is their preference.

If the school district believes that the school selected is not in his/her best interest, then the district must provide the student with a written explanation of its position and inform the student of his/her right to appeal its decision.

Receive transportation to and from the school of origin, if requested.

Receive educational services comparable to those provided to other students, according to the students' needs.

The homeless liaison at MISD coordinates many additional activities to assist homeless families with school age children including providing referrals to community agencies, school supplies, clothing, financial assistance, food and holiday gifts.

The district's homeless liaison is:

Michelle Wilson

Phone: (319) 377-9401

E-mail: [mwilson@marion-isd.org](mailto:mwilson@marion-isd.org)

## **Honor Roll**

The honor roll applies to 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade. To be placed on the Honor Roll a student must earn a 3.25 GPA or better in all classes for the reporting period.

## **Human Growth and Development**

The school district provides students with instruction in human growth and development. Parents may review the human growth and development curriculum prior to its use and have their child excused from human growth and development instruction. Parents should contact the principal if they wish to review the curriculum or to excuse their child from human growth and development instruction.

## **Illegal Items Found in School and/or in Student Possession**

Students are prohibited from distributing, dispensing, manufacturing, possessing, using, and being under the influence of alcohol, drugs or look-alike substances; and possessing or using tobacco, tobacco products or look-alike substances.

## **Inclement Weather**

When school is canceled because of inclement weather prior to the start of the school day, students and parents are notified over the radio and television stations listed below.

**Radio** - FM 98.1, AM 600, FM 102.9, FM 88.3

**TV** – KCRG (9), KGAN (2), KWWL (7)

If school is dismissed because of inclement weather after the school day has begun, parents are notified by the same means. Parents of students who ride the bus are notified how students will be returned home with the notification over radio and television stations that school has been dismissed.

Extracurricular activities or practices scheduled for the day or evening of a day when school is canceled or dismissed early are generally canceled and re-scheduled.

Parents who wish to be on the Emergency Notification Mailing List can sign up by going to our website at [www.marion.isd.org/sites/District/weather.html](http://www.marion.isd.org/sites/District/weather.html).

## **Inspection of Educational Materials**

Parents and other members of the school district community may view the instructional materials used by students in the office. Copies may be obtained according to Board policy. Tests and assessment materials are only available for inspection with the consent of the superintendent. Persons wishing to view instructional materials or to express concerns about instructional materials should contact the Curriculum Director in the Central Office at 377-4691.

## **Interferences in School**

Students may not possess radios, televisions, game boards, playing cards, sports trading cards, water guns, toys and other similar items on school grounds or at school activities. The items are taken away from the students and will be returned at a later date.

### **Lighters and Other Incendiary Devices**

Students are not allowed to have in their possession lighters, matches or any other incendiary devices. Students who have these devices in their possession will be suspended and the object will be confiscated. Students who use the devices in a manner as to vandalize or damage school or personal property will also be suspended. If the devices are used to harm other students or cause significant property damage, the student will be suspended and may be brought before the Board for expulsion. The decision to contact authorities will be made on a case-by-case basis.

### **Lost and Found**

Articles found in the building or on the grounds should be turned in to the office. Also, persons are advised to come to the office for any lost articles. Articles not claimed at the end of the school year will be donated.

### **Middle School Guidance Counseling Program**

Our guidance program addresses academic, career, and personal/social needs of students at the middle school level. The program is provided through guidance curriculum, responsive services, individual planning and system support.

The guidance program is responsible for assisting students in their development and addressing student needs, such as self-awareness, conflict management/problem solving, decision making, life planning, substance abuse prevention, relationships, coping strategies, sexual issues, tolerance/diversity, and educational planning. Every student needs sound emotional and social skills to achieve maximum benefit from the education program. The guidance program is designed to assist students throughout their educational and life experience. The Vernon Middle School Counselor is Michelle Thomason.

### **Money/Valuables**

The carrying of large sums of money and valuable items of any kind to school is strongly discouraged. If materials or cash are brought into the school, please check them in with the office, so they can be stored in the safe until taken home. If you have experienced a theft, please report it to the principal's secretary at once. Students are encouraged to contact their insurance carrier to see if theft loss is covered by the parents' policies.

### **Parents Right to Know**

Parents have the right to know the qualifications of the child's teacher. Parents will be notified in writing if their child has been assigned to or will be taught for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who is not highly qualified.

### **Passing in the Hall**

At every change of class there will be a large number of pupils going from one room to another. In order to keep the noise and confusion to a minimum, you are asked to:

1. BE COURTEOUS TO EACH OTHER WITH PROPER LANGUAGE.
2. SHOW RESPECT FOR YOUR FELLOW STUDENTS.

3. MAKE THE CHANGE AS QUICKLY AND QUIETLY AS POSSIBLE.
4. GO FROM ONE CLASS TO ANOTHER WITHOUT RUNNING OR PUSHING.

### **Positive Behavior Supports**

Vernon Middle School has established several clear rules for the behavior we expect in all areas of our school. We will explicitly teach those expectations to the students and reward them frequently with positive reinforcement for their good behavior. The expectations for all student behavior will be clear throughout our building. You will be able to ask your child, "What are the rules in your school?" "How do you follow those rules?" "What happens when a teacher sees you following the rules?"

We will apply consistent consequences and positive reinforcement for all students. By detailing every expected behavior and teaching students in a positive way, we will provide a common language for everyone in our building, including students, teachers, front office staff and our paraprofessionals.

We believe that by helping students practice good behavior, we will build a school community where all students have an environment where they can succeed and grow.

The four rules that all students and staff at Vernon Middle School will follow are: Respect, Responsibility, Integrity & Safety.

### **Posting of Information**

Students who wish to post or distribute information must receive permission from the principal at least five days before the posting or distribution. This applies whether the information deals with school sponsored or non-school sponsored activities. The principal can explain or answer questions regarding the school's rules on posting and distributing materials.

### **Profanity**

The use of profanity at school will not be tolerated. Students using profanity in the school will be subject to the district's discipline plan.

### **School Announcements**

Students are responsible for knowing the content of daily announcements. Students who wish to have an item included in the daily announcements must have permission from the principal before 1st period.

### **School Day**

Students may be present on school grounds before 7:30 a.m. or after 3:10 p.m. only when they are under the supervision of an employee or an extracurricular activity sponsor. If school is dismissed early, students are expected to leave the school grounds within 15 minutes of dismissal. Students involved in the morning breakfast program may be in the cafeteria at 7:30 a.m. Lunch is from 11:06 - 1:06 and unless students have principal permission to leave because of special circumstances, students are all expected to eat at school. We have a closed lunch hour.

## **School Fees, Bus Fees, & Other Fees**

Please call us at 377-9401 or check our school website for the current fee schedule.

MISD bussing is available if your student lives more than seven blocks from school. Please call Transportation at 377-0123 for transportation fees and available bus routes. Applications and payment for first semester bussing are due by June 30, 2012. Second semester applications are due by December 1, 2012.

Students pay an annual book fee. Books must be returned at the end of the class. If books are not returned, students are charged a replacement fee. Damage to a book in excess of normal wear and tear is also charged to the student. Students who have concerns about not being able to pay these fees can work out a monthly payment plan for the year with the office.

## **School Grounds**

To preserve the neat appearance of our grounds and school building, always use the sidewalks and place any trash in waste cans. Students and staff at Vernon Middle School support recycling. We recycle all white and colored paper, cardboard, plastics, envelopes, and most other recyclable materials with the exception of glass and plastic bags. The VMS Science Club picks up the recycling boxes every week and fills our large recycling bin. Please support our recycling efforts to save our planet and its natural resources. Litter only detracts from the beauty of the grounds and building that the community has provided for your education. Take pride in your school.

## **School Parties**

The school observes holidays with parties for our 5th and 6th grade students through the school year including, but not limited to Halloween, Christmas, Valentines and the end of the school year. Students who do not wish to participate in these events or activities may be excused with a note from home.

## **Search & Seizure Board Policy 502.8**

All school property is held in public trust by the Board of Directors. School authorities may, without a search warrant, search a student, student lockers, desks, work areas or student automobiles under certain circumstances to maintain order and discipline in the schools, promote the educational environment, and protect the safety and welfare of students and school personnel. School authorities may seize any illegal, unauthorized or contraband materials discovered in the search. Items of contraband may include but are not limited to nonprescription controlled substances, apparatus used for the administration of controlled substances, alcoholic beverages, tobacco, weapons, explosives, poisons and stolen property. Such items are not to be possessed by a student anywhere on the school premises. School authorities may conduct periodic assessment of all school lockers.

A school authority may search an individual student or a protected student area under the following conditions:

- There is a reasonable suspicion that a criminal offense or a school rule or regulation bearing on school order has been violated.



- There is a reasonable belief that the search will produce evidence of such violation.
- The suspicion and belief described above is particular to the student to be searched.

Under no circumstances may a search be made which is unreasonable in light of the age of the student, the non-seriousness of the violation, the sex of the student, or the nature of the suspected violation. A school authority shall not conduct a search that involves a strip search, a body cavity search or the use of a drug-sniffing animal to search a student's body. The search of a student by a school authority not of the same gender as the student is prohibited.

### **Skateboard, Scooters, Bikes, & Rollerblades**

No skateboarding, rollerblading or riding of bikes and scooters is allowed on school grounds at any time. Students who continually ride their skateboards on school property will lose that privilege.

### **Smoking & Other Tobacco Products**

School district buildings, grounds and vehicles shall be off limits for smoking and use of other tobacco products. This requirement includes all district personnel and visitors.

Students who smoke or use tobacco on any part of the school grounds at any time or while representing the school at school activities will be placed on suspension (three days for middle school and high school students). Students should not have in their possession or in their locker any smoking or chewing tobacco. Teachers and administrators will take tobacco products from students. These materials will not be returned to the student.

### **Student Lockers**

Students' lockers are the property of the school district. Students shall use the lockers assigned to them for storing their school materials and personal items necessary for attendance at school. It shall be the responsibility of each student to keep the student's assigned locker clean and undamaged. The expenses to repair damage done to a student's locker are charged to the student.

A student's locker can be searched whenever an administrator or teacher has a reasonable and articulable suspicion that a criminal offense or a school district policy, rule or regulation bearing on school order has been violated and the administrator or teacher has a reasonable and articulable belief that the search will produce evidence of the violation. Items in violation of school district policies, rules or regulations found in student lockers are confiscated. Illegal items may be given to law enforcement officials.

Locker maintenance inspections are conducted periodically throughout the school year. These inspections are generally for the purpose of ensuring that lockers are clean and well kept. Prior to a maintenance inspection, students are given 24 hours' notice.

There will be random times during the school year that drug dogs may be brought into the building for the purpose of locating illegal drugs and prescriptions.

## **Students ID Cards**

At the beginning of the school year each student will be issued a photo ID card. The card must be presented at dances and athletic events. Replacement for lost ID cards will be done in the office. ID cards are not transferable.

## **Student Lunch Information**

Please visit our website or contact us at 377-9401 for the most-up-to date lunch prices. Breakfast and hot lunch are available for all students every day. All students are encouraged to eat a hot lunch or bring a sack lunch. Skipping lunch is not healthy. Lunch at the middle school is "closed". Students do not leave the building for lunch.

Our district uses the School Dining System as our program for school meals. The lunch accounts are pooled together into "family" accounts that include other family members. Parents have access to their student's accounts 24 hours a day, seven days a week through the district website at <http://www.marion.isd.org>. Deposits to lunch accounts can be made online. The link to the School Dining System is located under the "Community" menu item on the above website. You will be assigned a family ID number and a password. Checks or online deposits go into the family account and the funds are accessible from any building. Please make sure your family account has a positive balance at all times. A complete statement of the lunch charge policy was given to families at registration or is available at the office.

Each student will receive a plastic scan card on the first day of school. This card must be presented to the food service personnel to purchase any lunch items. Students will not be allowed to purchase snack items if they have lost their lunch card and have not yet purchased a replacement card. The fee for a replacement card is \$5.00. Students with continually or excessively negative lunch balances will be provided an alternate meal at the discretion of the lunch staff and administration. It is the goal of Vernon Middle School to zero out all lunch balances at the conclusion of each school year. Phone calls, emails and notes may be sent home to indicate a payment is needed on the account. If the debt is not resolved in a timely manner, the amount owed may be turned over to the District Business Office for further attempts at collection. Please refer to the food service policies handed out at registration for further details.

## **Student Photographs**

When photographs are taken during the school year for records and school memory book, students are not required to purchase their pictures. In September or October, students will have school pictures taken. All students will be photographed for the yearbook. Price lists will be sent home in advance of picture day. Payment must be made at the time photos are taken. Spring photos may also be offered.

## **Student Records**

### **Board Policy 506.1-R1**

A student's parents may access the student's educational records. Other than the parents, only authorized certified personnel, and the student, authorized government officials from the U.S. Comptroller General, the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, the Commissioner and the Director of the National Institute of Education, the Assistant Secretary for Education and State Education Department, and appropriate authorities in a health or safety emergency may access the student's educational records without the approval or the notification of the student's parents. Information from

students' educational records, designated as directory information by the school district in compliance with Board policy, "Student Directory Information", may be released without the consent of parents. Parents will have an opportunity to deny the release of directory information without their consent. It shall be the responsibility of the superintendent to provide parents with notice annually informing them of their rights under this policy and allowing them to deny the release of directory information. It shall be within the discretion of the superintendent to determine the method of notice that will inform parents.

Students' educational records may be accessed during the regular business hours of the school district. If copies of documents are requested, a fee for such copying may be charged. School district personnel shall be informed annually about their rights and about parents' rights to access student records and the procedure for doing so under this policy.

It shall be the responsibility of the superintendent to develop administrative regulations regarding this policy. The administrative regulations shall include, but not be limited to, the location and types of educational records maintained by the school district, an explanation of the process for amendment of the records, the name of the contact person for access to the records, a procedure for recording disclosures of the records, the amount of a fee to be charged for copies of the records, and the name of the contact person for clarification of the records.

### **Surveillance**

Surveillance equipment is being used at various locations throughout the building for student safety.

### **Technology**

#### **One to One Laptop Policy**

All students are assigned a Chromebook for technology access 24/7. A separate handbook will be shared with all parents and students at the start of the school year and can also be found on our website: [www.marion-isd.org/vernon-home](http://www.marion-isd.org/vernon-home).

#### **Personal Technology Devices in Classrooms**

1. Students must have permission from the teacher prior to bringing any technology devices into the classroom.
2. Students will leave all technology devices in their lockers off when attending classes where the teacher has not given permission.
3. Devices must be turned off when transitioning classes and upon arrival to a classroom where they are allowed. When the teacher has given permission, they may be turned on at that time. Devices must be turned off before the end of the period.
4. Technology devices must be in the possession of the student at all times. Devices cannot be left in hallways, the cafeteria, or any other places where they can be broken or stolen. Students are not allowed to loan or share their devices.
5. Vernon Middle School is not responsible for misplaced, stolen or broken technology devices. The school will assist students to the best of our ability, but students are ultimately responsible for the devices they bring in.

6. All policies related to technology apply to personal devices and usage. School consequences will be applied in cases where the policy is violated. If a student violates the policy and privileges are revoked, they will be revoked in all settings regardless if the teacher allows the devices or not.

### **Student Technology Use Before/After School & Lunch/Recess**

Students will be allowed to bring electronic devices to the cafeteria during their lunch period. The procedures and expectations are as follows:

1. Electronic devices brought to school must be turned off and put in the students' locker.
2. Students will be allowed to go to their locker on their way to the cafeteria when dismissed for lunch. The devices shall remain off until the students arrive in the cafeteria.
3. Once in the cafeteria the students may turn on their electronic devices and use them. The devices must have headphones if they are making any type of noise or be on silent.  
Examples of electronic devices include:  
Nintendo DSi, Sony PSP, iPod, iPhone/Cell Phone
4. When the lunch period is close to being over and the adult is preparing the students to line up, students will be asked to switch their devices back into the off position.
5. Students will leave the cafeteria and return their devices to their lockers and go to class.

Devices that are playing/showing anything inappropriate will be confiscated and returned only to the parent. That student will forfeit their right to bring an electronic device for a specific amount of time deemed appropriate by the administrator.

Devices that are used for any type of bullying/harassment will also be confiscated and returned to the parent. That student will forfeit their right to bring an electronic device for a specific amount of time deemed appropriate by the administrator. Bullying/harassment paperwork may also be started.

Devices must remain in the students' lockers when not in the cafeteria. Students who have these devices outside of the cafeteria will be in violation of our policy and will receive the consequences outlined in the parent/student handbook.

### **Telephone Calls & Messages**

The office telephone is for office use and student emergencies. Students are to use the phone between classes or get a pass from a teacher to make an emergency phone call.

Classroom interruptions will be kept to a minimum. Only emergency messages will be delivered to students. Routine messages and items that could be arranged in advance will not be delivered. Parent messages will be given broader consideration. Parents are encouraged to call teachers before (7:30-7:50 AM) or after (3:00-3:30 PM) school or during their plan/team time (please contact the office to know when this happens for a specific teacher). Teachers at Vernon Middle School have voicemail (and e-mail) to allow parents the ability to leave messages at your convenience.

### **Use of School District Facilities by Student Organizations**

School district facilities are available during non-school hours to school-sponsored and non-school-sponsored student organizations for the purpose of meetings or activities. Students wishing to use the school district facilities should contact their sponsor, the principal, or the activities director, to reserve a room. School district policies, rules and regulations are in effect during these meetings.

## **Vernon Parent Teacher Organization**

The Vernon PTO provides much-needed financial and volunteer support for staff and students here at VMS. All interested individuals are welcome. Your support and participation are greatly appreciated.

### **Visitors**

Parents/guardians are welcome to visit school and/or their child's classes during the school day. Please stop at the office and sign in first. It would be helpful if the classroom teacher could be notified before your visit. Please plan to have your visit last through a full class period. We discourage school age friends or relatives from requesting a special visit.

### **Volunteers**

We encourage and welcome volunteers to help in our school. If you are interested in helping at Vernon on a volunteer basis, please call our office at 377-9401. There are various opportunities for involvement in the school district through service on advisory committees.

Individual buildings as well as the school district as a whole have organizations and advisory groups. At VMS there is a Parent Group, which meets monthly and is open to all parents of Vernon Students. If you would like to become an active member please contact the Vernon office at 377-9401.

Booster Clubs are another part of the supports available for fine arts and athletics. If you are interested in learning more about Athletic and/or Fine Arts booster clubs, contact Marion High School at 377-9891.

There are advisory committees to which members are appointed by the Board. Such committees include the Superintendent's Advisory Committee as well as the School Improvement Advisory Committee (SIAC). The SIAC committee meets a couple times a year in the evening to discuss student achievement, learn about district initiatives, receive updates on state requirements and make recommendations on district goals. The Superintendent's Advisory Committee operates in a similar manner but provides feedback without the expectations for district goal recommendations. If you would like to be considered to serve on the SIAC please contact Superintendent Chris Dyer.

### **Withdrawing From or Adding Classes**

Band and Choir are optional classes offered at VMS. However, adding or dropping these classes is allowed only per the guidelines set forth in the music handbook. Such changes need to be processed through the Guidance Office after the parent/guardian has communicated with the band or choir teacher.

### **Withdrawing From School**

If your child will no longer attend Vernon Middle School, please do the following:

- Notify the office of the withdrawal date and they will prepare a Student Checkout Sheet.
- The student will take this sheet to teachers, media center, lunch cashier, school nurse and the principal for their signatures indicating materials have been returned and all fees paid. The new school will request the student's records.
- If your child rides a bus, please notify the Transportation Department at 377-0123.

# **Vernon Middle School**

## **Student Safety & Anti-Bullying**

## Anti-Bullying & Harassment Policy

Harassment and bullying of students and employees are against federal, state and local policy, and are not tolerated by the Board. The Board is committed to providing all students with a safe and civil school environment in which all members of the school community are treated with dignity and respect. To that end, the Board has in place policies, procedures, and practices that are designed to reduce and eliminate bullying and harassment as well as processes and procedures to deal with incidents of bullying and harassment. Bullying and harassment of students by other students, by school employees, and by volunteers who have direct contact with students will not be tolerated in the school or school district.

The Board prohibits harassment, bullying, hazing, or any other victimization, of students, based on any of the following actual or perceived traits or characteristics, including but not limited to, age, color, creed, national origin, race, religion, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical attributes, physical or mental ability or disability, ancestry, political party preference, political belief, socioeconomic status, or familial status. Harassment against employees based upon the employee's race, color, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, religion, age or disability is also prohibited.

This policy is in effect while students or employees are on property within the jurisdiction of the Board; while on school-owned or school-operated vehicles; while attending or engaged in school-sponsored activities; and while away from school grounds if the misconduct directly affects the good order, efficient management and welfare of the school or school district.

If, after an investigation, a student is found to be in violation of this policy, the student shall be disciplined by appropriate measures, which may include suspension or expulsion. If after an investigation a school employee is found to be in violation of this policy, the employee shall be disciplined by appropriate measures, which may include termination. If after an investigation a school volunteer is found to be in violation of this policy, the volunteer shall be subject to appropriate measures, which may include exclusion from school grounds. "Volunteer" means an individual who has regular, significant contact with students.

When looking at the totality of the circumstances, harassment and bullying mean any electronic, written, verbal, or physical act or conduct toward a student which is based on any actual or perceived trait or characteristic of the student and which creates an objectively hostile school environment that meets one or more of the following conditions:

- Places the student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or property;
- Has a substantially detrimental effect on the student's physical or mental health;
- Has the effect of substantially interfering with the student's academic performance; or
- Has the effect of substantially interfering with the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

"Electronic" means any communication involving the transmission of information by wire, radio, optical cable, electromagnetic, or other similar means. "Electronic" includes but is not limited to communication via electronic mail, internet-based communications, pager service, cell phones, electronic text messaging or similar technologies.

Harassment and bullying may include, but are not limited to, the following behaviors and circumstances:

- Repeated remarks of demeaning nature;

- Implied or explicit threats concerning one's grades, achievements, property, etc.;
- Demeaning jokes, stories, or activities directed at the student; and/or
- Unreasonable interference with a student's performance.

Sexual harassment of a student by an employee means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to the conduct is made either implicitly or explicitly a term or condition of the student's education or benefits;
- Submission to or rejection of the conduct is used as the basis for academic decisions affecting that student; or
- The conduct has a purpose or effect of substantially interfering with the student's academic performance by creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive education environment.

In situations between students and school officials, faculty, staff, or volunteers who have contact with students, bullying and harassment may also include the following behaviors:

- Requiring that a student submit to bullying or harassment by another student, either explicitly or implicitly, as a term or condition of the targeted student's education or participation in school programs or activities; and/or
- Requiring submission to or rejection of such conduct as a basis for decisions affecting the student.

Any person who promptly, reasonably, and in good faith reports an incident of bullying or harassment under this policy to a school official, shall be immune from civil or criminal liability relating to such report and to the person's participation in any administrative, judicial, or other proceeding relating to the report. Individuals who knowingly file a false complaint may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

Retaliation against any person, because the person has filed a bullying or harassment complaint or assisted or participated in a harassment investigation or proceeding, is also prohibited. Individuals who knowingly file false harassment complaints and any person who gives false statements in an investigation shall be subject to discipline by appropriate measures, as shall any person who is found to have retaliated against another in violation of this policy. Any student found to have retaliated in violation of this policy shall be subject to measures up to, and including, suspension and expulsion. Any school employee found to have retaliated in violation of this policy shall be subject to measures up to, and including, termination of employment. Any school volunteer found to have retaliated in violation of this policy shall be subject to measures up to, and including, exclusion from school grounds.

The school or school district will promptly and reasonably investigate allegations of bullying or harassment. The principal or designee will be responsible for handling all complaints by students alleging bullying or harassment. The principal or designee will be responsible for handling all complaints by employees alleging harassment.

It also is the responsibility of the superintendent, in conjunction with the investigator and principals, to develop procedures regarding this policy. The superintendent also is responsible for organizing training programs for students, school officials, faculty, staff, and volunteers who have direct contact with students. The training will include how to recognize harassment and what to do in case a student is harassed. It will also include proven effective harassment prevention strategies. The



superintendent will also develop a process for evaluating the effectiveness of the policy in reducing bullying and harassment in the board.

The Board will annually publish this policy. The policy may be publicized by the following means:

- Inclusion in the student handbook,
- Inclusion in the employee handbook,
- Inclusion in the registration materials,
- Inclusion on the school or school district's web site,

And a copy shall be made to any person at the central administrative office at 777 S. 15<sup>th</sup> St.

### **ANTI-BULLYING/HARASSMENT INVESTIGATION PROCEDURES**

Individuals who feel that they have been harassed should:

- Communicate to the harasser that the individual expects the behavior to stop, if the individual is comfortable doing so. If the individual wants assistance communicating with the harasser, the individual should ask a teacher, counselor or principal to help.
- If the harassment does not stop, or the individual does not feel comfortable confronting the harasser, the individual should:
  - tell a teacher, counselor or principal; and
  - write down exactly what happened, keep a copy and give another copy to the teacher, counselor or principal including;
    - what, when and where it happened;
    - who was involved;
    - exactly what was said or what the harasser did;
    - witnesses to the harassment;
    - what the student said or did, either at the time or later;
    - how the student felt; and
    - how the harasser responded.

### **COMPLAINT PROCEDURE**

An individual who believes that the individual has been harassed or bullied will notify the building principal, the designated investigator. The alternate investigator is the Level I investigator. The investigator may request that the individual complete the Harassment/Bullying Complaint form and turn over evidence of the harassment, including, but not limited to, letters, tapes, or pictures. The complainant shall be given a copy of the completed complaint form. Information received during the investigation is kept confidential to the extent possible.

The investigator, with the approval of the principal, or the principal has the authority to initiate an investigation in the absence of a written complaint.

### **INVESTIGATION PROCEDURE**

The investigator will reasonably and promptly commence the investigation upon receipt of the complaint. The investigator will interview the complainant and the alleged harasser. The alleged harasser may file a written statement in response to the complaint. The investigator may also interview witnesses as deemed appropriate.

Upon completion of the investigation, the investigator will make written findings and conclusions as to each allegation of harassment and report the findings and conclusions to the principal. The investigator will provide a copy of the findings of the investigation to the principal.

### **RESOLUTION OF THE COMPLAINT**

Following receipt of the investigator's report, the principal may investigate further, if deemed necessary, and make a determination of any appropriate additional steps, which may include discipline.

Prior to the determination of the appropriate remedial action, the principal may, at the principal's discretion, interview the complainant and the alleged harasser. The principal will file a written report closing the case and documenting any disciplinary action taken or any other action taken in response to the complaint. The complainant, the alleged harasser and the investigator will receive notice as to the conclusion of the investigation. The principal will maintain a log of information necessary to comply with Iowa Department of Education reporting procedures.

### **POINTS TO REMEMBER IN THE INVESTIGATION**

- Evidence uncovered in the investigation is confidential.
- Complaints must be taken seriously and investigated.
- No retaliation will be taken against individuals involved in the investigation process.
- Retaliators will be disciplined up to and including suspension and expulsion.

### **CONFLICTS**

If the investigator is a witness to the incident, the alternate investigator shall investigate.

## HARASSMENT COMPLAINT FORM

Name of complainant: \_\_\_\_\_

Position of complainant: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of student or  
employee target: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of complaint: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of alleged harasser or bully: \_\_\_\_\_

Date and place of incident  
or incidents: \_\_\_\_\_

Nature of Discrimination or Harassment Alleged (Check all that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	Physical Attribute	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sex
<input type="checkbox"/>	Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	Political Belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sexual Orientation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Familial Status	<input type="checkbox"/>	Race/Color	<input type="checkbox"/>	Socio-economic Background
<input type="checkbox"/>	Marital Status	<input type="checkbox"/>	Religion/Creed	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other – Please Specify:
<input type="checkbox"/>	National Origin/Ethnic Background/Ancestry	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	

Describe misconduct: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of witnesses (if any): \_\_\_\_\_

Evidence of harassment, i.e., letters, photos, etc. (attach evidence if possible): \_\_\_\_\_

Any other information: \_\_\_\_\_

I agree that all of the information on this form is accurate and true to the best of my knowledge.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## ANTI-BULLYING/HARASSMENT WITNESS DISCLOSURE FORM

Name of complainant: \_\_\_\_\_

Position of witness: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of testimony, interview: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of incident witnessed: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Any other information: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I agree that all of the information on this form is accurate and true to the best of my knowledge.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Emergency Drills**

The school will hold regular emergency fire and tornado drills. At the beginning of each semester, teachers notify students of the procedures to follow in the event of a drill. Emergency procedures and proper exit areas are posted in all rooms.

Students are expected to remain quiet and orderly during a drill or an emergency. Students who pull the fire alarm or call in false alarms, in addition to being disciplined under the school district's policies rules and regulations, may be reported to law enforcement officials.

## **False Reports**

The Code of Iowa discussion of false reports is as follows:

### 718.6 False Reports To Law Enforcement Authorities Or Communications With Public Safety Entities

1. A person who reports or causes to be reported false information to a fire department, or a law enforcement authority, or other public safety entity, knowing that the information is false, or who reports the alleged occurrence of a criminal act knowing the same act did not occur, commits a simple misdemeanor, unless the alleged criminal act reported is a serious or aggravated misdemeanor or felony, in which case the person commits a serious misdemeanor.
2. A person who telephones an emergency 911 communications center knowing that the person is not reporting an emergency or otherwise needing emergency information or assistance commits a simple misdemeanor.

## **Sexual Harassment & Assault Information**

The Iowa Department of Education has directed school districts to provide age appropriate materials and a list of available community and web-based resources on sexual harassment and assault to parents at registration and to include the materials and resource list in the student handbook. Included below is a list of age appropriate web-based resources and materials that have been approved by the Iowa Department of Education:

### **Middle School Resources**

How to Protect your Child from Child Abuse ([www.BSA-IA.org](http://www.BSA-IA.org))

Stop It Now! ([www.stipitnow.org](http://www.stipitnow.org))

Cadette Girl Scout Handbook

([www.GirlScouts.org](http://www.GirlScouts.org))

American School Counselor Association ([www.schoolcounselor.org](http://www.schoolcounselor.org))

Stay Safe Online

([www.siecus.org/pubs/families/FATnewsletterV3N3.pdf](http://www.siecus.org/pubs/families/FATnewsletterV3N3.pdf))

## **Threats of Violence**

All threats of violence, whether oral, written, or symbolic, against students, employees, visitors, or to school facilities are prohibited. All such threats will be promptly investigated. Law enforcement

may be contacted. Threats issued and delivered away from school or school activities may be grounds for disciplinary action if the threat impacts the orderly and efficient operation of the school.

Students engaging in threatening behavior will face disciplinary consequences up to and including expulsion.

The following factors will be considered in determining the extent to which a student will be disciplined for threatening or terroristic behavior: the background of the student, including any history of violence or prior threatening behavior; the student's access to weapons of any kind; the circumstances surrounding the threat; the age of the student; the mental and emotional maturity of the student; cooperation of the student and his or her parent(s) or guardian(s) in the investigation; the existence of the student's juvenile or criminal history; the degree of legitimate alarm or concern in the school community created by the threat; and any other relevant information from any credible source.

Students may also be required by the school to attend an at-risk assessment meeting before resuming classes.

### **Weapons Policy**

The Board believes weapons, other dangerous objects and look-alikes in school district facilities cause material and substantial disruption to the school environment or present a threat to the health and safety of students, employees and visitors on the school district premises or property within the jurisdiction of the school district. For purposes of this policy, the term "weapons and other dangerous objects" shall include any instrument designed or intended to be used in either offensive or defensive combat.

School district facilities are not an appropriate place for weapons, dangerous objects and look-alikes. Weapons and other dangerous objects shall be taken from students and others who bring them onto the school district property or onto property within the jurisdiction of the school district or from students who are within the control of the school district.

Parents of students found to possess weapons, dangerous objects or look-alikes on school property shall be notified of the incident. Confiscation of weapons or dangerous objects shall be reported to the law enforcement officials, and the student will be subject to disciplinary action including suspension or expulsion.

Students bringing a firearm to school shall be expelled for not less than twelve months. The superintendent may recommend this expulsion requirement be modified. For purposes of this portion of this policy, the term "firearm" includes any weapon which is designed to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive or other propellant, the frame or receiver of any such weapon, a muffler or silencer for such a weapon, or any explosive, incendiary or poison gas: bomb, grenade, rocket, missile, or similar device.

Weapons under the control of law enforcement officials shall be exempt from this policy. The principal may allow authorized persons to display weapons, other dangerous objects or look-alikes for educational purposes. Such a display shall also be exempt from this policy. It shall be the responsibility of the superintendent, in conjunction with the principal, to develop administrative regulations regarding this policy.

# **Vernon Middle School**

## **Health & Wellness**

## Communicable and Infectious Diseases

Students who have an infectious or communicable disease are allowed to attend school as long as they are able to do so and their presence does not pose an unreasonable risk of harm to themselves or does not create a substantial risk of illness or transmission to other students or employees. If there is a question about whether a student should continue to attend classes, the student shall not attend class or participate in school activities without their personal physician's approval. Infectious or communicable diseases include, but are not limited to, mumps, measles, head lice, and chicken pox.

## Compliance-Current Asbestos Regulations

In order to remain in compliance with current asbestos regulations governing schools the district is required to give an annual notification to staff, parents, and legal guardians of students in the Marion Independent School District of the presence of and the availability of the management plan for that particular building which is located in the administration offices at 777 S. 15th Street. Should you want to know the locations and or the volume of asbestos in our buildings this information is located in the management plans. Also included in these are past activities the district has taken to remove and or encapsulate the asbestos to maintain safety to all occupants.

Regulations require that the district have a full inspection of our facilities every three years and periodic surveillance inspections every six months to insure that it is maintained in a non-hazardous condition. In addition to this we have undergone E.P.A. audits and inspections in the last ten years, which have found that the district is in full compliance on its program. Activities that have occurred in the past, in addition to our re-inspection, have been abatement of floor tile and thermal pipe insulation at Marion High School, Starry Elementary, and Francis Marion Intermediate in preparation of construction activities that occurred in the past. Should you have any questions please contact Ken Cook, Director of Operations, at 377-4974.

## Head Lice

The Marion Independent School District has a written strategy on dealing with head lice. As part of a community plan, the district will support families by emphasizing preventions, early detection and education as the best edge in controlling head lice.

Pediculosis (head lice) represents a common childhood condition which children may experience. Community involvement is very important and families must actively participate at home in the treatment and prevention of head lice. **Head checks should be done at home as a weekly routine for preschool and school age children.** The plan established by the Marion Independent School District is designed to be family friendly and sensitive to individual needs. Our goal is to support families and keep kids where they need to be-in school.

Students with signs and symptoms of head lice will be referred to the school health office for an evaluation and recommendations for treatment. This plan emphasizes comprehensive education and community involvement. Enhanced support will be offered to families. Working together, we can minimize the impact of head lice in our schools and community.

Our plan was developed after reviewing the recommendations of the Linn County Public Health Department, Iowa Department of Public Health, National Association of School Nurses, American Academy of Pediatrics and the Harvard School of Public Health.



## **Hearing Screenings**

Grant Wood Area Education Agency (GWAEA) screens all students in Alternative Kindergarten (AK), kindergarten, and grades 1, 2, and 5. Students in the Early Learning Program with IEP's will be screened. Students in grades 3, 4, middle, and high school, who are new to the school, that don't have a documented hearing test, and some students with a history of known hearing loss will also be tested. Follow up testing may occur periodically if previous hearing test results were not within normal limits. Parent/guardians not wishing their child's hearing tested should notify the health office in writing at the beginning of the year. Parents/guardians with concerns about their child's hearing should contact the school nurse.

## **Immunizations**

Prior to starting school or when transferring into the school district, students must present an approved Iowa Department of Public Health immunization certificate signed by a health care provider stating that the student has received the immunizations required by law. Students without the proper certificate are not allowed to attend school until they receive the immunizations. Only for specific medical or religious purposes are students exempted. Parents who have questions should contact the nurse's office at 377-9401.

## **Latex Balloons**

For the safety of our students, staff and the general public who use our buildings, the district is no longer allowing the use of latex balloons in any capacity, in any school building, at any time of the day. However, Mylar (foil) balloons are still allowed. Latex (rubber) is a substance that can have an immediate or life-threatening impact when a person is exposed to it. The district has already implemented alternatives for latex, in items such as gloves, for years.

## **Medication Procedures**

Prescription medication brought to school is to be turned into the office or nurse's office. For safety reasons, parents should transport all medication to and from school. A physician must have prescribed the medication and the following information must be on the prescription bottle:

- Name of student
- Name of medication
- Time of day to be given
- Dosage
- Physician's name and Pharmacy name

### **NOTE: ONLY PROPERLY LABELED PRESCRIPTIONS WILL BE ADMINISTERED!**

A signed permission slip must accompany the medication in order for it to be administered. Please remind your child that he/she is responsible for asking for the medication at the appropriate time. Unless indicated by your physician, medication to be given three times per day should be given at home before school, after school, and at bedtime. An exception to this is if the medication is to be taken with meals or on a full stomach.

Nonprescription medication, such as Tylenol, will be administered following the same procedure. Medication must be accompanied by a note or medication form signed by the parent and must come in the original container. For safety reasons, parents should transport all medication to and from school.

At the end of the year, arrangements should be made to have any medication left in the office picked up by a parent. Any medication left in the office will be sent home with the student on the last day of school. Any medication left at school will be discarded.

If you have any questions concerning this medication policy, please contact Nancy Alderdyce, Health Coordinator. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

### **Nurse**

A Health Associate is on duty from 7:55 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. daily. If your child is ill or injured, the following procedure will be followed:

- The school nurse, health associate, or secretary will examine the child.
- Minor cuts, scrapes and injuries will be treated with first aid methods.
- Students with more serious injuries will receive first aid and their parents will be phoned. When students who are ill are sent to the nurse, their temperature will be taken and parents phoned if necessary.

**If an illness is accompanied by a fever, your student should be fever-free for 24 hours before returning to school.**

Each day many parents are faced with a decision: should they keep their sick children home or send them off to school? The following guidelines, recommended by experts at the Mayo Clinic, should be considered when making this sometimes difficult decision. A student should remain home when he or she:

- Vomits or has diarrhea in the last 24 hours.
- Has an oral temperature higher than 100 degrees.
- Coughs almost constantly or complains of difficulty breathing.
- Exhibits abdominal pain for more than two hours.
- Has sores on mouth or skin that are crusty, yellow or draining.
- Shows symptoms of contagious diseases such as chicken pox, mumps, whooping cough, strep throat.
- Has constant runny nose with green or yellow discharge.
- Displays an unexplained skin rash or red eye (with or without crusting/drainage).

Keeping a sick child home prevents the spread of illness in the school. It also allows the child opportunity to rest and recover. A sick child cannot learn effectively and is unable to participate in classes in a meaningful way. If you have questions, please contact the school nurse.

### **Student Illness or Injury at School**

A student who becomes ill or is injured at school must notify his or her teacher, the nurse, or another employee as soon as possible. In the case of a serious illness or injury, the school shall attempt to notify the parents according to the information on the emergency form. If the student is too ill to remain in school, the student is released to the student's parents or, with parental permission, to another person directed by the parents.

While the school district is not responsible for treating medical emergencies, employees may administer emergency or minor first aid if possible. The school contacts emergency medical personnel if necessary and attempts to notify the parents where the student has been transported for treatment.

**Student Insurance**

The Marion Independent School District does not carry medical insurance to cover injuries to students while they are at school or while they are participating in school activities. Parents are encouraged to have their children covered by health insurance. If children are not covered by health insurance, parents may wish to purchase private insurance. The state of Iowa has a medical insurance called "Hawk-I" for children of low-income families. Learn more about "Hawk-I" by calling 1-800-257-8563.

**Vision, Hearing, & Dental Screening**

Annual hearing, vision, and dental screenings may be provided during the school year. The dates of the testing will be posted on the school's website. Parents who do not wish to have their child screened need to notify the school in writing prior to the testing.

# **Vernon Middle School**

## **Academic Information**

## **Agenda Book Use**

The agenda book should be used for writing down assignments, passes, and communication with parents. In order to leave a classroom or study hall, students must have their agenda book. The teacher/associate sign the agenda book after the student has filled in the date, time, and location.

Students that need to report to a classroom other than their study hall or before school need to have that teacher sign on that date in the agenda book so that the student can go. Students that do not have the prior signature will not be allowed to leave their class or go to the teacher's classroom.

Passes to the nurse or office during classroom instruction will only be honored in case of an emergency. Students can stop in between classes and ask for permission to come, but it must be signed on that date in order to be able to go.

Adults will approach students found in the hallway without their agenda book. Those students will be sent back to their classrooms.

Students that do not have an agenda book will still be allowed to use the restroom in the case of an emergency. They will be given an "emergency pass" to leave the room and go directly to the restroom and back. Students will have a 15-minute detention after school for using the emergency pass. Students are encouraged to stop by the classroom before class starts and then let the teacher know they are going to the restroom. Students who do not abuse that privilege will not be marked tardy or receive a detention.

Every middle school student will be given an agenda book and have it available at all times. The teacher and family will use the agenda book to improve the success of each student with the monitoring of assignments. Parents are encouraged to check this each night and sign that they have assisted their student in the time management and homework completion process. Replacement agenda books are available in the office for \$5.00.

## **Cheating**

Students are expected to do their own schoolwork. Cheating by looking at another student's schoolwork, copying others work, copying from other sources or similar cheating is not tolerated. In addition to the discipline outlined in this handbook, discipline may include the loss of class credit.

Plagiarism occurs when you present material as though it is your own when it actually comes from someone else. If you plagiarize, you steal another person's ideas about a subject, his method of organizing or presenting ideas, or the actual work itself.

Plagiarism should be avoided in oral presentations, written work, and other media. If you plagiarize written material, you have used the exact words of your source, your works, or both.

To avoid plagiarism in classroom and homework, always do your own work so you can show your knowledge of the material and your skill in organizing it. If you want to work with another person, first seek your teacher's approval. To avoid plagiarism in research projects, carefully acknowledge your source (author and text) for each idea that is not your own.

Plagiarism is a serious offense, warranting harsh penalties. Discipline in cases of plagiarism will be determined by the principal and/or the teacher.

## **Exploratory Classes**

The following classes will meet every other day (opposite of PE) and on rotating Fridays. These classes are an important part of adolescent development to become well-rounded, diverse citizens that are ready for the challenges ahead in their academic and social future. It is the expectation that

students strive to perform to the best of their ability in each of these classes. **These classes do not contribute to the student's overall GPA and honor roll status as they are graded on a Pass/Fail basis.**

#### **5<sup>th</sup> Grade**

- Building Skills
- General Music
- Art
- Technology

#### **6th Grade**

- Building Skills
- General Music
- Art
- Technology

#### **7th Grade**

- Teen Living
- Art
- Technology & Careers
- Gateway to Technology (STEM Course)

#### **8th Grade**

- Teen Living
- Art
- 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills
- Gateway to Technology (STEM Course)

### **Federal Section 504**

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits discrimination against persons with a disability in any program receiving federal financial assistance. The Marion Independent School District has the obligation, under Section 504 to identify, evaluate, and, if the student is determined to be eligible, to afford access to appropriate educational services. If the parent or guardian disagrees with the determination made by the professional staff of the school district, he/she has a right to a hearing with an impartial hearing officer. The District 504 Coordinator is Janelle Brouwer.

### **Grade Reports**

Students receive progress reports in the form of report cards at the end of each quarter and semester. Students who have concerns about their grades should talk to their teachers to determine how they can improve their performance.

Students who receive an incomplete in a class must complete the class within three weeks after the start of the next quarter. Extensions may be granted by the teacher with the permission of the principal. Failure to finish an incomplete may result in a failing grade. Parent - Teacher Conferences are set up during first and second semester.

### **Grading & Homework Principals**

- Differentiation of instruction is essential in order for students to grow and progress.
- We value our students' attendance, behavior, cooperation, motivation, and positive attitude.
- Grades will be based on what the student is able to show they have learned. Therefore, extra credit will not be given at any time.
- Grades will be entered into PowerSchool within five days of due date.
- Retakes and revisions of assessments are allowed (teachers can determine a cut-off date).
- Students will be allowed multiple opportunities to demonstrate proficiency in various ways. When proficiency is demonstrated, students will be given the opportunity to extend their learning.
- Students are expected to complete all assigned work.
- There will be times that students are expected to do work outside of the school day.
- Independent practice will be meaningful, purposeful, of high quality and aligned with learning goals.
- Teachers will determine proficiency by considering multiple points of data using the most recent data and provide evidence to support their determination.
- Students will have multiple opportunities for practice before the learning goals are assessed for a proficiency score.

The following scale will be used for all graded courses:

100-98	A+
97-93	A
92-90	A-
89-88	B+
87-83	B
82-80	B-
79-78	C+
77-73	C
72-70	C-
69-68	D+
67-63	D
62-60	D-
59-0	F

All families are encouraged to sign up for PowerSchool. PowerSchool allows parents to see their student's grades on a weekly/daily basis. Parents should contact the middle school office to sign up for this service.

### **MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports)**

MTSS opportunities are offered to all students at Vernon Middle School with the intent of providing enrichment and/or remedial instruction within the school day. Staff and administration will analyze data and make recommendations for placement within these classes. Students may receive MTSS in a variety of areas throughout the year depending upon their need for enrichment or remediation.

It is the intent of the MTSS time to provide opportunities to have a similarly positive academic experience to those students not in band/choir. Students are expected to participate and carry out the tasks set forth within the MTSS time.

### **School Acceleration/Promotion/Retention Policy Board Policy 605.3**

Promotion and acceleration practices for students in the Marion Independent School District shall have as their objective the placing of the students in an environment where their maximum development will take place.

#### **Retention of a Student**

The principal and appropriate staff shall determine a student's placement. Input from parents/guardians shall be considered when the principal or staff has initiated consideration for retention of a student in the same grade or class. Parental/guardian initiated requests for a student's retention shall be considered by the principal and appropriate staff. Requests for retention need to be made in a timely manner because the process may take considerable time and time is needed to prepare schedules for the following school year.

#### **Acceleration of a Student**

Students with high academic ability, demonstrated or potential, may have extended needs that are best addressed through services that expand the delivery of instruction. Such services include, but are not limited to:

- Single subject acceleration
- Liaison services with other programs for exceptional learners
- Mentorship
- Provision of appropriate counseling to the student and his/her family
- Whole grade acceleration.(See 605.3R)

Whole-grade acceleration is a radical form of curriculum modification considered after options such as for curriculum extensions and interventions have been explored. The *Iowa Acceleration Scale (IAS)* developed by the Belin-Blank International Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development will be used to inform the acceleration team when whole-grade acceleration is being considered. This team will include:

- Administrator(s)
- Student's parents
- Student, if appropriate,
- Current and future classroom teachers
- Guidance counselor(s)
- AEA staff
- TAG teacher(s)
- Other staff as determined by the team

The IAS is composed of ten sections, each of which contains items relevant to the success of an acceleration, which should be discussed and considered by the acceleration team.



## **Competency**

At the 8<sup>th</sup> grade level, all non-IEP students shall demonstrate competency in the four basic core areas and exploratory classes by passing with 60% proficiency. Any student who fails to meet these standards shall be required to enroll in a remedial summer school program (if offered). IEP students shall demonstrate competencies in accordance with those stipulated in his/her Individual Education Plan.

## **Special Services**

The following special services are available at Marion Independent Schools:

- Speech therapy
- Hearing and vision screening
- Social worker
- School psychologist
- Resource room

Additional support services are available to assist teachers when concerns arise. These services include our building staff, (special education teacher, counselor, nurse, etc.) and Grant Wood Area Education Agency support staff, (psychologist, social worker, consultant, speech-language pathologist, occupational and physical therapist and others). Teachers and families may make use of input on an informal basis or request formal assistance in identifying strategies to address a concern, in carrying out these strategies, or in monitoring individual student progress. These services are available for all students through teacher or parent request.

Working together, we can provide the best education possible for all of our children. At some time during the year, it may be beneficial for teachers and parents to request the help of these trained people. Your written permission is needed for some of these services.

# **Vernon Middle School**

## **Extra- Curricular Activities**

## **Activities/Activity Rules**

Actively enrolled Vernon Middle School students are eligible to practice and participate in a wide variety of extra-curricular activities. All athletes must have a physical before they can participate in athletics. All athletic physicals are valid for one year from the examination date. All students should also be covered by either school insurance or a home accident policy as the school is not responsible for injuries. A participant's eligibility for all extra-curricular activities will depend on his/her grades, behavior, attendance at practices, and compliance with state association and local school board policies as well as rules provided by each activity sponsor and the Activities Director.

## **Academic Eligibility for Activities & Athletics**

Students must maintain a minimum academic performance to be eligible to participate in interscholastic activities and contests.

Eligibility for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students at Vernon Middle School participating in interscholastic athletic competition will be determined biweekly based on each individual student's grades. Every student must be passing all classes to be eligible for competitions. However, students ineligible for competition will still be a member of the team and may continue to participate in practices throughout the season.

When it has been reported that a student has a failing grade in any subject, the student will be ineligible for the next scheduled competition. The student will regain eligibility for any and all following competitions until the next grade-reporting period, which shall occur approximately every two weeks. If a student has three or more failing grades, that student will be ineligible for all competitions until the next grade-reporting period. For example, a student who has an overall failing grade in a class on Friday will not be eligible for the contest on Tuesday, but he/she will be eligible for the following game on Thursday. A student who has three failing grades would be ineligible for both contests.

It is the philosophy of the Vernon Middle School staff and administration that participation in extra-curricular activities is an integral part of the middle school level educational experience. Students are encouraged to get involved. When you become affiliated with an organization, you will do your utmost to make that organization better because you are a part of it. Be a working member, whether you are a reserve on the football squad or have the lead in the school play. Sometimes students become members of too many groups and as a result, their academic work begins to suffer. Make sure you make academics your top priority. This policy is designed to assist students in maintaining that focus.

The above policy applies to all athletic teams for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade and the following activities and their performances and contests: Show Choir, Jazz Band, and Cheerleading.

## **Eligibility for Seventh and Eighth Grade Extra-Curricular Activities**

All Seventh and Eighth grade students are eligible to participate in extra-curricular activities; however, a student may be declared Ineligible for the following reasons:

1. **Grades:** Student athletes may not have a failing grade at grade checks biweekly during season. Exemptions to the grade rule can be made for students with special circumstances as deemed by the coaches and at the final discretion of the building principal.

2. Misconduct while participating in an extra-curricular activity.
3. Failure to attend practices or meetings for that activity.
4. Athletes are ineligible if they do not have a current physical and a current insurance release on file in the office.
5. Students who are removed from class due to behavior may not get to participate. Students who are removed from class often may be removed from the activity completely.
6. A student must be in attendance the last half of the day or more of school unless the principal excuses him or her. Athletes are ineligible to participate in practices or contests on any day that they have been excused from physical education.
7. All students are ineligible to participate or be spectators at school-sponsored events during a period of suspension.
8. No middle school student is allowed to participate after he/she has reached the age of 16 years. No student may participate in middle school athletics for more than two (2) years with the exception of summer sports.
9. **In-School Suspension:** Student athletes assigned to in-school suspension are not eligible to attend and/or participate in activities that are scheduled for that calendar day.
10. Students who have been suspended from school for violation of school rules on alcohol, drugs, tobacco or illegal conduct, or are found to be in violation of the Marion Independent Schools Good Conduct Code will be subject to the consequences listed in that Code.
12. Ineligible students may practice at the discretion of the Activities Director and middle school principal.

Primary emphasis should be placed on attaining academic skills. Representing the Marion School District is a privilege, and as such, participation in and commitment to an activity should be taken seriously.

### **School-Sponsored Student Organizations**

School-sponsored student organizations are those which are recognized by the school district and Board. School-sponsored student organizations are:

<u>Grades</u>	<u>Organizations</u>
5 <sup>th</sup> , 6 <sup>th</sup> , 7 <sup>th</sup> & 8 <sup>th</sup>	Band
6 <sup>th</sup> , 7 <sup>th</sup> & 8 <sup>th</sup>	Jazz Band
5 <sup>th</sup> , 6 <sup>th</sup> , 7 <sup>th</sup> & 8 <sup>th</sup>	Chorus
6 <sup>th</sup> , 7 <sup>th</sup> & 8 <sup>th</sup>	Show Choir
* 7 <sup>th</sup> & 8 <sup>th</sup>	Basketball
5 <sup>th</sup> , 6 <sup>th</sup> , 7 <sup>th</sup> & 8 <sup>th</sup>	Student Council
* 7 <sup>th</sup> & 8 <sup>th</sup>	Cheerleading
* 7 <sup>th</sup> & 8 <sup>th</sup>	Cross Country
* 7 <sup>th</sup> & 8 <sup>th</sup>	Football
* 7 <sup>th</sup> & 8 <sup>th</sup>	Track
* 7 <sup>th</sup> & 8 <sup>th</sup>	Volleyball
* 7 <sup>th</sup> & 8 <sup>th</sup>	Wrestling
6 <sup>th</sup> , 7 <sup>th</sup> , & 8 <sup>th</sup>	STEM Club
6 <sup>th</sup> , 7 <sup>th</sup> & 8 <sup>th</sup>	Drama

The above athletic activities that are (\*) asterisked require proof of physical examination prior to the start of that activity.

### **Student Council**

The purpose of the Vernon Middle School Student Council is:

- To foster friendliness and cooperation among the students and faculty.
- To consider and resolve problems of concern to the student body.
- To give students a chance to assist with the work of the school in a democratic way.
- To promote school spirit.
- To stimulate interest in developing high standards of citizenship and scholarship.
- To encourage desirable community and school relationships.

Membership will consist of five representatives elected by students and staff from each grade level, plus a president elected from the eighth grade. Members can be dropped from the council if they are not performing as good representatives and school citizens.

# **Vernon Middle School**

## **Discipline Rights & Responsibilities**

## **Breach of Discipline**

Conduct which materially and substantially interferes with the educational process will be considered a breach of discipline.

- \* Conduct which materially and substantially disturbs or interferes with the orderly, efficient and disciplined atmosphere of the school or school related activities.
- \* Documented conduct detrimental to the best interests of the school district.
- \* Refusal to conform to school policies, rules or regulations.
- \* Refusal to comply with directions from teachers, administrators or other school personnel.

## **Concerns – Chain of Command**

If you have concerns regarding a situation at school, you are urged to follow this procedure:

Step 1: Contact your child's teacher to discuss the problem and possible solutions.

Step 2: If the concern is not resolved, request a conference with the principal.

Step 3: If the concern is not resolved, request a conference with the superintendent.

## **Discipline**

Discipline procedures at Vernon have three intended outcomes:

- Provide a safe and orderly school environment conducive to optimal learning.
- Modify the behavior of students who are habitually disruptive to the learning process.
- Set boundaries and expectations for student behavior.

If a student violates a classroom, school, or district procedure and is referred to the office, the building principal or designee will determine the nature and length of the consequence for the student. The disciplinary consequences assigned to the student will be determined by the policy or procedure which the student has violated and the number of times the student has violated that policy or procedure. Teachers and teams will communicate positive behavior plans and procedures regarding grade specific expectations within their classrooms. Teachers and paraprofessionals may assign consequences within the classroom based on violations of those or building expectations as the situation warrants.

The following items are examples of things that may receive disciplinary actions. Note: This list is not all inclusive and may include other items that violate School Board policy and/or the safety or learning environment for students at Vernon Middle School:

- Noon or lunchroom violation
- Violation of cell phone/electronic device policies
- Insubordination
- Foul language
- Disrespect
- Fighting
- Failure to serve classroom detention

- Unexcused tardiness/truancy
- Violation of school dress code
- Failure to comply with or follow teacher/team expectations or systems
- Possession or use of weapons
- Profanity or obscenity
  - Deliberate and open defiance of authority (verbal or physical)
  - Inciting offers to violence or disobedience
- Vandalism
- Theft
- Drugs or alcohol

## **Detention**

A detention room will be used for students who are staying after school because of truancy or some problem not directly related to classroom responsibility. All other detention cases are to be taken care of in the individual classrooms. Failure to serve detention at the arranged time will result in being assigned additional consequences. Students will be expected to read or work on assignments while serving detention. All students are responsible for arranging their own transportation to and from school for detention.

Teachers assigning a student to serve detention for inappropriate behavior must notify the principal or associate principal before 2:30 p.m. or the student will be required to stay the following day. (Principal may handle serious cases immediately.) Students will be required to spend the 45-minute time studying or reading quietly. No written requirements will be assigned unless a student has nothing to do.

Students causing problems during detention will have the following consequences:

- First time - student will be required to repeat the detention time.
- Second time - parents will be called and student will repeat the detention with additional time.
- Third time - a one-day suspension will be enforced.

If a teacher calls the student to the classroom after school for academic or disciplinary reasons, the student is to spend the time doing homework, reading or sitting quietly. If the student fails to attend, he/she will be on main detention. If necessary, a parent conference should be scheduled by the classroom teacher to correct the problem. No sentences may be assigned as punishment; homework or reading is required. If a student refuses to cooperate he/she will be assigned detention again the following night, and the teacher will contact the parents.

Students who are required to see more than one teacher after school should go to each teacher and notify them of other obligations.

Students failing to show up for detention will be held accountable for the one skipped plus one additional night. Students or parents may ask to make up time at a later date for an appropriate reason. (Staff will decide if appropriate.)



## **Due Process**

In the event the student refuses to comply with the teacher's directions to report to the office, the teacher may request assistance from the principal. The administration will follow due process procedures in related situations as directed by Board policies.

## **Suspensions**

Students may be assigned ISS (in-school suspension) or OSS (out-of-school suspension) depending upon the violation and the student's academic situation. Students may be suspended from class from one to ten days for a variety of reasons.

The reasons may include:

- Habitual violation of one or more rules
- Possession or smoking of cigarettes or tobacco
- Possession or use of alcoholic beverages and/or drugs
- Insubordination and/or profanity
- Failure to make up detention time
- Fighting
- Disrespect to property, adults, and fellow students
- Petty thievery
- Truancy
- Sexual harassment
- Other items as determined by the principal and/or designee

## **In-School Suspension (ISS) Rules**

- Bring all books and materials with you when you report to the office for ISS (including lunch scan card).
- Use the restroom during the one morning and afternoon break.
- Ala carte items are not available for ISS students.
- Teachers will send assignments to you. Many students finish work early. You need to bring additional reading materials.
- At no time is sleeping allowed.
- You are responsible for the appearance and condition of the furniture, carpet, and walls in the ISS area. You will be held accountable for any damage.
- If you are in ISS, you may not participate in any school activity that day.
- Conversation with other students in the ISS area is prohibited.

Failure to follow the above rules may result in additional suspension time. Repeat offenders may be suspended for up to three days.

## **Saturday Restitution**

Students may be assigned restitution on a Saturday to assist them in their academic success. There may also be occasions where students are assigned to serve a disciplinary consequence on

Saturday. All Saturday restitution sessions will begin at 8 a.m. and are supervised by a Vernon staff member. Students failing to serve their Saturday school as assigned will receive additional consequences. Students are expected to follow all school rules and expectations while in attendance at this program.