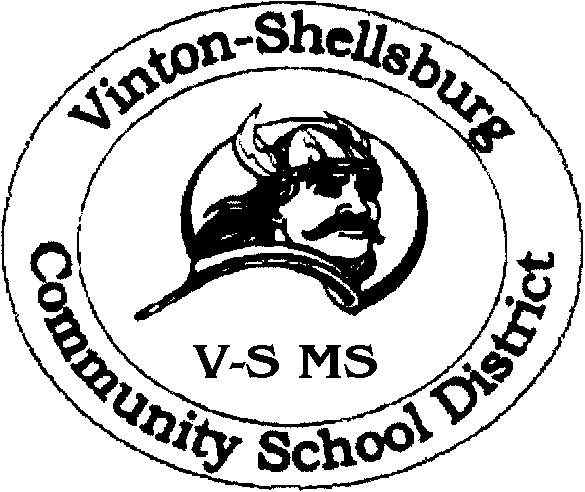
** Vinton-Shellsburg**

**Middle School**

**Student Handbook**

**2017 – 2018**

Office: 319-436-4728 x5600

Fax: 319-472-4014

[vscsd.org](http://www.vinton-shellsburg.k12.ia.us)

For On-line Parent Access:

You can have access to your student’s grades,

Attendance, and lunch account through our website. You will

Be issued a user name and access code prior to registration.

*This handbook belongs to:*

NAME \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

CITY/TOWN \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**DISTRICT MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of the Vinton-Shellsburg Community School District is to improve the quality of lives and assisting individuals in becoming contributing members of society through the accumulation and application of knowledge.

**Vinton-Shellsburg CSD EQUITY STATEMENT**

The Vinton-Shellsburg Community School District provides equal educational and employment opportunities and will not illegally discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, disability, religion, creed, age, marital status, sexual orientation, or gender identity.  Vinton-Shellsburg Community School District shall take affirmative action in recruitment, appointment, assignment and advancement of women and men, minorities and disabled.  Inquiries regarding compliance with equal educational or employment opportunities and/or affirmative action shall be directed to Kim Meyer, Equity Coordinator, Vinton-Shellsburg CSD, 1502 C Avenue, Vinton, Iowa  52349.  Inquiries may also be directed in writing to the Director of the Region VII Office of the United States Equal Employment Opportunities Commission, or the Director of the Region VII Office of Civil Rights, United States Department of Education in Chicago, IL.

**PRINCIPAL’S MESSAGE**

It is with great pleasure that we take this opportunity to welcome you to Vinton-Shellsburg Middle School. We are extremely proud of the programs we offer our students, and we encourage you to make the most of your time with us. This handbook has been developed by our faculty and administration to help you and your parents learn as much as possible about school policies and procedures and the services we offer.

Whether you are joining us as a sixth grader, or have been with us before, I’d strongly encourage you to become an active member of Vinton-Shellsburg Middle School. In addition to an excellent academic foundation, we offer many activities and sports to help students become well-rounded, mature young adults. Our “Commitment to Excellence” is our promise to you and our expectation of every student.

We look forward to this school year with great excitement and hope all of our students will have a rewarding and successful year.

Once again, welcome!

Shelly Petersen

Principal

**IMPORTANT NUMBERS**

Superintendent’s Office ….436-4728 x-5685

Principal’s Office ………. 436-4728 x-5603

Guidance Counselor …… 436-4728 x-5606

Transportation Office ….. 472-3118

Activities Director ……… 436-4728 x-5706

Level 1 Investigator – Shelly Petersen – 436-4728 x5603

Alternate Investigator – Erin Heims – 436-4728 x5606

Faculty e-mail: access through the VSMS website (see previous page), click on “Access G-mail”

**ACADEMICS**

**VINTON-SHELLSBURG MIDDLE SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY:**

The mission of mid-level education in the Vinton-Shellsburg School District is to provide a safe, positive, nurturing environment that maximizes intellectual and social growth and promotes self-esteem, mutual respect and responsibility in the young adolescent.

**Parents:** The Vinton-Shellsburg Middle School staff is dedicated to making your child’s middle school years successful. By working together we can provide your student with challenging and rewarding educational opportunities. Our doors are always open and we encourage you to contact us at any time if you have questions or concerns.

**Students:** Vinton-Shellsburg Middle School’s purpose is to provide you with a quality education. Achieving this goal requires the cooperation of everyone in the building. Every effort will be made to provide a favorable climate for learning, and you have a big responsibility for creating and maintaining that environment. You need to treat your classmates and teachers with respect and you need to work hard to keep up with the assignments your teachers give you. If you have questions about anything, make sure you ask until you get an answer. By working together -- students, parents and staff -- we can make this a great year.

**Teachers:** You, as parents and students, can expect our teachers to care about each student as an individual, listen to a logical explanation, and be of assistance to each student.

**GRADING SCALE**

A …………………………………............92% C………………………………………….72%

A- ...……………………………………….90% D+………………………………………..68%

B+ ………………………………………...88% D…………………………………………62%

B …………………………………………..82% D-…………………………………………60%

B- …………………………………………..80% F………………………………………….59% and below

C+ ………………………………………..78%

**GENERAL SCHOOL INFORMATION**

**STUDENT SERVICES:**

*GUIDANCE:* Students are encouraged to visit with the counselor for personal guidance and for information on grades, study help and testing programs. The counselor is available to discuss any home, school or social concern.

*NURSE’S OFFICE:* The school nurse’s office exists for emergency situations and as a waiting area for ill students who are going home. If a student must take medication while at school, she or he must bring it to the nurse’s office along with specific instructions signed by the prescribing physician. Students are not permitted to possess any drugs at any time at school. If the nurse is not available, go to the office for assistance.

*LMC:* Books, magazines, newspapers, maps and other reference materials are provided for you in the LMC. Please check out all materials you wish to take with you at the circulation desk. Treat these materials with respect; you are responsible for them when they are checked out to you. Return them by the date due so others may use them. Students may visit the LMC between classes or during the day with a pass. Browsing passes are available from teachers or study hall supervisors.

*TRANSPORTATION:* Students who ride school transportation at any time must maintain appropriate behavior and follow the driver’s rules. A student who fails to maintain appropriate conduct on the bus, waiting for the bus, or walking to or from the bus stop may lose the privilege of riding the bus and/or face disciplinary action.

*LUNCH/LMC/ACTIVITY CARDS:* All students will be given a photo ID, which should be used to purchase lunch and check-out materials from the LMC. Also, if a student purchases an activity pass we will affix a colored dot to the student’s card. All lunch account deposits should be taken to the office before or after school or at lunch time. Replacement cards may be purchased for $5.00.

*BREAKFAST/LUNCH:*  Breakfast will be served daily beginning at 7:40 a.m. Students who come into the building to eat breakfast will stay in the cafeteria until 8:00. Lunch count will be taken during morning advisor. If you wish to purchase an additional main item, or if you choose to have a salad as your main item, you must sign up at that time. Overdrawn lunch accounts will be frozen and become unusable when they reach -$5.00.

*LOCKERS:* Lockers are provided as a convenience. Students are responsible for keeping their lockers clean and orderly. No decorations are allowed on the outside of the locker. Students are advised not to share their combination with others. Locker assignments, combinations, and changes will be handled through the office.

*SAFE SCHOOL HELP-LINE:* Students with information about other students in need or the presence of weapons, drugs, etc. on school property can leave an anonymous message for school officials by calling 436-4728 x5603 (Principal) or x5606 (Counselor). This service is available 24 hours a day and is completely confidential.

*ABUSE OF STUDENTS BY SCHOOL EMPLOYEES*: If you or a student suspects that a student is being abused by an employee or volunteer of the school district, you should contact Mrs. Petersen at 319-436-4728 x5603, who is a Level 1 Investigator or Erin Heims at 319-436-4728 x 5606, who is an alternate investigator, to investigate complaints of suspected abuse.

*ASSIGNMENTS ON-LINE:* The on-line assignment notebook allows students and parents access to classroom assignments 24 hours a day by going to the VSMS website *(see cover page)* and clicking on the appropriate links.

*ON-LINE PARENT ACCESS:* You can have access to your student’s grades, attendance and lunch account through our website. Use your ID and password for Powerschool to access this information.

*CELL PHONES AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES:*  **Cell phones and other electronic devices may be brought to school but must be turned off and kept in student lockers**. If a student has a phone or device out or it rings/buzzes in class it will be taken to the office and may be picked up after school. The second, and successive times, a student has their phone or device taken, the parent/guardian must pick it up in the principal’s office.

**STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT**

**ATTENDANCE:**

Responsibility for attending class lies with the student. Student success in school is directly tied to attendance.

*ABSENCES:* If a student is absent from class, the parent/guardian/student should do one of the following:

1. **Call the attendance office (436-4728, 4, 1)** and give the date(s) of the absence and the reason(s). **Please do this prior to 8:45 a.m. if at all possible**. Use this option for an unplanned absence such as illness. All absences should be reported within one day of the absence. Absences not verified by the end of the next school day after the absence will be considered unexcused.

Students absent from school for any reason may be required by the school to submit an explanation or specific reason for the absence, the specific days or times they were absent, and verification by the doctor or dentist where appropriate.

**OR**

1. Bring a note to the attendance office from a parent or guardian stating the date(s) of the absence and the reason(s). Use this option for a planned absence which is upcoming, such as an appointment or vacation.

Students whose absences are excused by the principal/designee shall make up the assignments within two times the number of days absent and receive full credit. **It shall be the responsibility of the student to initiate a work procedure with the student’s teachers to complete the assignments missed**.

Acceptable reasons for a student’s absence from school may include:

1. Personal illness
2. Extended illness, hospitalization or doctor’s care
3. Death or illness in the student’s family
4. Medical and business appointments which cannot be scheduled outside of school hours:
5. Court appearance or other legal situation beyond the control of the family

Unacceptable reasons for a student’s absence from school may include:

a. Truancy/skipping

b. Working/job related

c. Missing the bus/car trouble

d. Shopping

e. Oversleeping

f. Picture, hair, tanning or other similar appointments

g. Absences not verified by the end of the next school day after the absence

h. Hunting, fishing, trapping or other similar like events

i. Concerts

j. Participation in parties and celebrations

k. Playing with or caring for a pet

\*\*The school nurse, principal or their **designee will make calls to parents/emergency contact to come pick up their student from school because of illness or injury. Students who call parents/others to come pick them up because of illness or injury will be considered unexcused.**

Excessive absenteeism is any absence beyond six days or individual class meetings per term. When a student has been absent from school or a class multiple times during a given term, the student’s parent or guardian will be contacted via telephone or mail regarding student’s attendance. The building administrator or designee will initiate the notification process.

Excessive absences will result in the following:

1. Notification of parents
2. Meeting with parents to create an attendance plan
3. Implementation of the attendance plan
4. If the plan is not followed and additional absences occur, the county attorney’s office will be contacted.
5. Based on the county attorney office’s involvement, another attendance plan may be created and implemented.

**If a student is absent for a total of 6 days – either excused, unexcused, or a combination thereof – his/her parents may be sent a letter of notification regarding the dates of the absences. If the total reaches twelve (12) absences, we may request a conference. Depending on the percent of days missed out the days school is in session, the county attorney may be contacted. The school district will monitor a student’s attendance and will involve the county attorney’s office after excessive absences. The school will participate in mediation if requested by the county attorney. The school district will monitor the student’s compliance with the mediation agreement**

Students who wish to participate in school-sponsored activities, performances, scheduled contests, programs or trips **must attend school ½ of the day** of the activity unless permission has been given by the principal/designee for the student to be absent. Students must be in school for at least ½ day to practice in any activity.

*TARDINESS:* Tardiness is considered a disruptive behavior and will be treated as a discipline problem. Sanctions may include, but are not limited to, warning, assigned detention, parent contact and referral to the truancy officer. A student will be considered tardy if he/she is less than 20 minutes late to a class. Anything over 20 minutes will be considered an absence.

*TRUANCY:* A student is truant when the student is absent from school or an assigned class or classes without school permission. Work missed because of truancy must be made up the same as work for all other absences. Incidents of truancy will be recorded as part of a student’s attendance record and will count toward the absences per term. The truancy officer will also determine what, if any, disciplinary action is appropriate including, but not limited to, warning, detention, in-school suspension or administrative referral.

*HALL PASSES:* Students are not permitted in the hallways during instructional time unless they have a hall pass. Students must have a pass from teacher to leave study hall and go to their room for assistance.

**STUDENT HEALTH, WELL BEING AND SAFETY**

Children of all ages must be physically, mentally and emotionally healthy so they are able to learn. Vinton-Shellsburg school nurses promote the health and safety of our students in school, at home and in the community. Services provided by the school nurses includes:

1. Promotion of healthy lifestyles
2. Health care counseling or guidance to students, their family and to staff
3. Identify health concerns by observation and assessment of needs and provide appropriate care.
4. Medication management
5. Immunization verification according to state guideline requirements
6. Screenings: vision, hearing, dental, height and weight.

**Health Concerns:** If your child has any health concerns such as asthma, allergies, diabetes, breathing or heart concerns, hearing or vision concerns, taking prescribed medication, or others, please complete health forms and contact the school nurse. At the beginning of each school year, parents must file an emergency form with the office providing the telephone numbers of emergency contacts in the event the school is unable to locate the parents. The emergency form also includes a statement that gives the school district permission to release the student to the alternate person in the event the parents cannot be reached. Parents must notify the office if the information on the emergency form changes during the school year.

**Physical Education Guidelines**: All students are expected to participate in physical education. A student may be excused from PE for one class period with a note from home. The student will be expected to participate in the next PE class unless they have a written excuse from a physician.

**Illness/Injury at School**: If your child becomes ill or injured at school, they need to be seen by the school nurse. If the nurse determines that the student needs to go home, the nurse will attempt to call the parent/guardian at the phone numbers provided to the school. Please notify the school of any phone number changes. If you cannot be reached, the school will attempt to call one of the emergency contacts that the parent/guardian provides to the school. In case of a serious injury/illness, 911 will be called if necessary. Parents will be notified immediately. If the nurse determines that the student is OK to stay at school, they will be sent back to class. Any student who lingers in the nurse’s office after being determined OK will be unexcused for any additional class time missed.

**Guidelines for keeping your child at home**: The main reasons for keeping your child home from school and school activities are:

* If the child is too sick to be comfortable at school and school activities
* He or she might spread a contagious disease to other children and staff

**Keep your child home if:**

* Has a fever 100 degrees or higher. The child needs to be fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication such as Tylenol or Ibuprofen
* If the child vomited the evening before
* If the child had diarrhea the evening before
* Been diagnosed with a bacterial infection such as streptococcus or staphylococcus. The child must follow the fever guidelines and not return to school until 24 hours after the first does of antibiotic was given.

**STUDENT BEHAVIOR:**

School rules have been developed to encourage respect for self, others, and property. Students and staff must be guaranteed an environment that is safe. Mutual respect is the underlying principle in the classroom, in the hallways and on school grounds. All rules will be publicized, explained and equitably enforced. All students are given three expectations:

* **Show Respect.** Respect means showing consideration for the worth of another person, for a thing, or for a belief. You, as a student, are asked to respect other people and their property, and the authority of the teachers.
* **Be safe**. Being safe means following the school rule to maintain order and being prepared for school.
* **Be Responsible.** You are to be responsible for your own learning and behavior without interfering with others. You need to be trustworthy and be able to answer for your conduct and obligations.
* *DRESS CODE:* Clothing must be in good taste, following community and school standards. Inappropriate attire is any clothing that disrupts the educational process, threatens the learning environment or endangers the health or safety of students or any other persons.
* *DRUGS, ALCOHOL, TOBACCO:* Use and/or possession of tobacco products in the school building, on school grounds, or at school events is prohibited. In addition, the possession and/or usage of any alcoholic beverage, narcotic, controlled drug (other than prescription drugs) or intoxicant at any school activity is strictly prohibited. Failure to comply with these regulations will result in disciplinary action.
* *CHEATING:* Students who cheat, plagiarize or forge in connection with academic endeavor and/or school procedures are subject to disciplinary action.
* *FIGHTING:* Students involved in violence of any kind – either before, during or after school on school property, or in an area that will reflect negatively on the school – will be suspended and a parent will be notified.
* *HARASSMENT/BULLYING:*  Harassment and/or bullying in any form will not be tolerated. If violations occur, disciplinary action will be taken. Any discrimination on the basis of race, creed, national origin, sex, age, or handicap will not be tolerated.
* *ON-LINE POLICY:* The use of electronic resources is supported provided that abuses do not occur. Access is a privilege that will be denied if used inappropriately. In addition, disciplinary and/or legal action may be taken.
* *SEARCH & SEIZURE:* School District authorities may search a student, student lockers, desks, work areas, etc. based on a reasonable suspicion that a Board Policy, school rule, or law has been broken. The search shall be in a manner reasonable in scope to maintain order and discipline in the school.
* *STEALING, VANDALISM, DAMAGE TO PROPERTY:* Treat school and other people’s property with respect. Any student caught stealing will be expected to return the item or pay for it. Likewise, the guilty student should pay for any damage to school property. (This includes damage to textbooks beyond normal wear.) In addition to repayment, parents will be notified, disciplinary action will result, and law enforcement may be notified.
* *WEAPONS:* Students shall not possess any weapon (or look alike) or dangerous object. Offensive/dangerous weapons are not allowed in school, on school grounds, or at any school-sponsored activity. Possession and/or use of firearms will be an automatic one-year expulsion from school and notification to police department.
* *PROHIBITED ITEMS:* **Please leave your electronics at home**. They are expensive and are more likely to be stolen or broken than at home. **Cell phones and other similar communication devices must be turned off and left in your locker**. Violations of this policy will result in an office referral. Food and drink items are to be consumed only in the cafeteria or on special occasions in the classroom if your teacher allows it.
* *PROFANITY:* Speaking in a profane manner and/or rude, boisterous behavior is also not tolerated at school, on school grounds, or at school-sponsored activities.
* *BICYCLES, SKATEBOARDS, ETC.:* Bicycles and motorbikes should be kept in the racks provided and off the sidewalks. It is strongly suggested that you use a lock to prevent theft or unauthorized usage of your bike. For safety reasons, skateboards and scooters are not to be ridden on school property during school business hours.
* **DISCIPLINARY ACTION:**

If a student violates school rules, the administration may impose in-house suspension, out-of-school suspension, noon detention, after-school detention, attendance or behavioral contracts, expulsion, parent/guardian conferences, or revocation of student privileges.

**TOP TEN TIPS**

**(FOR HAVING A SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL YEAR)**

1. Understand that effort and attitude are everything. What you get out of anything is directly proportional to the effort you put into it.
2. RESPECT yourself and others. RESPECT the property of others. Everyone has the right to go to a school where they feel safe, physically and socially/ emotionally.

* KEEP YOUR HANDS AND FEET TO YOURSELF.
* KEEP YOUR VOICES AT A CONVERSATIONAL LEVEL.
* NO RUNNING IN THE BUILDING.

1. VSMS is a “gum-free”/trash-free building. Pick up after yourself (and others if necessary). All food and drink will be consumed in the cafeteria. The juice and pop machines are on a timer. They will not be on between 8:00 and 2:30.
2. Common areas are part of the building. You must keep your voices at a conversational level in the halls, in the auditorium, and in the cafeteria. Yelling is for outside.
3. Study halls are for working, not talking.
4. Communicate. If you have questions, ask. It’s likely others have the same question. Teachers, the counselor, the principal, the secretaries, the custodian, the cooks, etc., are all here to help. We want you to be successful.
5. You are changing. Your friendships may be changing. You need to understand this process and deal with it appropriately. Talk to someone if this becomes difficult for you.
6. Get involved. School is much more fulfilling if you are involved in lots of activities. Live life to its fullest. Don’t miss an opportunity to learn. It’s important that you learn to work with others and enjoy.
7. Attend regularly, always be on time, and always do your best. Promptness, regular attendance, and working hard are just as important as the curriculum.
8. Be organized and be prepared. Keep your locker neat and clean. Take all of your books and materials with you to every class, every day.