

**VERNON
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**



**ELEMENTARY
HANDBOOK**

2010~2011

District Administration - Central Office

Mr. Richard J. Paskiewicz Office 860-870-6000 ext. 124
Interim Superintendent of Schools

Mrs. Deborah Murasso Office 860-870-6000 ext. 143
Assistant Superintendent

Mr. Stanley Karasinski Office 860-870-6000 ext. 123
Director of Business and Finance

Building Administration - Elementary

Mrs. Jocelyn Poglitsch Office 860-870-6300
Principal, Center Road School Nurse 860-870-6307

Mr. Robert Testa Office 860-870-6085
Principal, Lake Street School Nurse 860-870-6088

Dr. Lois Possell Office 860-870-6175
Principal, Maple Street School Nurse 860-870-6177

Mr. Michael DeBellis Office 860-870-6080
Acting Principal, Northeast School Nurse 860-870-6082

Mr. Matthew Wlodarczyk Office 860-870-6180
Principal, Skinner Road School Nurse 860-870-6185

SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

Welcome to the Vernon Public School System and to what I hope will be many years of rewarding and enjoyable experiences with your children and our staff. As defined in the district's Mission Statement and expressed in our Core Values, the Vernon Public School System is charged with the privilege and responsibility for educating successive generations of the town's young people to become competent, confident, thoughtful, and contributing members of society, and for providing them with the tools for continuous learning in adulthood. To accomplish this mission your collaboration with us is critical. We welcome and encourage your active participation in your child's education. Together, we can provide all students with the education they will need for their future.

Sincerely,

Richard J. Paskiewicz
Interim Superintendent of Schools

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
General Information	1
School Curricular Programs	
Reading/Language Arts	2
Mathematics	4
Social Studies	5
Science	7
Art.....	8
Learning with Technology	9
Health & Safety Education	10
School Wellness	11
Music.....	12
Physical Education.....	13
Scientific Research-Based Interventions (SRBI).....	14
Special Programs	
Vernon Preschool Collaborative.....	16
Kindergarten Program.....	16
Library Media Center.....	16
Reading/Language Arts Consultant/Laboratory	17
Title I	17
English as a Second Language	18
Special Education and Pupil Services.....	19
Renaissance Program.....	21
Elementary Summer School Program.....	21
Testing and Progress Reports	
Grading K-5.....	22
Reporting to Parents	23
Administration of Standardized Tests	24
General Policies	
Attendance	25
Absences	25
Requests for work	25
Educational Field Trips	26
Recess	26
Breakfast/Hot Lunch Program.....	26
No School/Delayed Opening Announcements.....	27
Emergency Dismissals.....	28
Visitors	28
Unauthorized Persons/Trespassing	29
Dress Code	30
Salute to the Flag/Silent Meditation	30
Student Behavior.....	30
Sexual Harassment.....	33
Elementary Grouping K-5.....	34

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Continued

	Page
Health & Safety-Related Issues	
School Insurance	35
Safety Patrol.....	35
Health Services	36
Spring Orientation to Grade Six	39
Board of Education Policies	
Transportation Policy	41
Bullying Behavior in the Schools.....	64
Parent Involvement	75

GENERAL INFORMATION

Board of Education

The purpose of the Board of Education is to establish programs and procedures which will best allow for the individual educational achievement of each student.

The Board consists of nine members. Six of the nine members are elected to four-year terms. They are elected on an overlapping basis, three members being elected at each biennial election. The remaining three members are elected for two-year terms in each biennial election of town officials.

The Board sets overall policies that govern the operation of the school system. It is also responsible for the preparation and the implementation of the school budget.

The Board of Education meets on the second and fourth Monday of each month. The agenda of the Board of Education is posted on the front door of each school, at the Superintendent's office and at the public library. Meeting notices are also sent to the local papers.

THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Mrs. Anne Fischer, Chairperson
Mr. Dean Houle, Vice Chairperson
Mrs. Vicky Rispoli, Secretary
Mr. George Apel, Treasurer
Mrs. Laura Bush
Mr. David Kemp
Mrs. Susan Norlie-Hesnan
Mr. Kyle Percy
Mr. Paul Stansel

SCHOOL CURRICULAR PROGRAMS

The Vernon Public Schools provide a comprehensive set of programs to achieve acquisition of basic skills, promote the use of critical thinking skills, assist children in acquiring aesthetic appreciation for the arts, foster habits for a healthy life style, and develop appropriate social and emotional skills.

This handbook is one attempt to articulate the school program and all of its components. Following is a summary of each curriculum area offered within the elementary school program.

Reading/Language Arts

The elementary reading/language arts curriculum is based on goals and objectives designed to promote reading, writing, and effective communication as a life-long habit. This program of study begins in kindergarten and continues through grade five. At all levels the link between reading and writing is emphasized focusing on strategies necessary for students to become independent readers and to be proficient in the skills of handwriting, spelling, and written communication. A variety of activities are provided for listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Students experience continuous practice and expansion of skills to communicate what they have read through a variety of writing forms.

The reading curriculum provides multiple opportunities for students to interact with fiction and nonfiction selections of authentic literature. Vocabulary development, word recognition, comprehension strategies, and study skills are an integral part of the program. Novels and classroom libraries provide students with additional opportunities to practice reading skills and develop an appreciation of literature.

The language arts curriculum provides developmental instruction in grammar, usage, and mechanics. Students are actively involved in all steps of process writing: prewriting, drafting, revising, proofreading, publishing, and conferencing. They respond in writing to a variety of purposes including narrating, informing, persuading, describing, classifying, researching and creating.

The reading/language arts curriculum is thematic, provides for curriculum integration, and continually assesses student progress.

Mathematics

The goal of the Vernon Public Schools elementary mathematics program is to provide ALL students with the competencies they need for further education, future employment, and responsible adulthood.

All students must be mathematically literate to make informed decisions about the world around them and ensure success in postsecondary study and in work. An individual who is mathematically literate:

- has a deep understanding of big ideas within the number, algebra, geometry, probability, and statistics standards;
- is able to compute, reason and communicate mathematically when solving problems;
- uses a variety of strategies, tools and technology to solve mathematics problems; and
- understands the application of mathematics to daily life.

The Elementary Mathematics Curriculum uses the Everyday Mathematics Program as its foundational textbook series. Everyday Mathematics is a structured, rigorous, proven program that helps students learn mathematical reasoning and develop strong math skills.

Social Studies

The Social Studies program integrates human experience and knowledge for the purpose of citizenship education. Citizenship education promotes participation in local, state, national, and global communities. It suggests a commitment to accept differences in cultures to work effectively with diverse peoples.

The social studies program includes the following:

Kindergarten

- Awareness of Self
- Awareness of Others
- Community Helpers
- Customs and Celebration
- Introduction to Maps and Globes

Grade 1

- Understanding the Family
- Community
- Holidays
- Cultural Awareness
- Map and Globe Skills

Grade 2

- Coming to America
- Native Americans of the Southwest
- Multicultural Similarities and Differences
- Current Events
- Map and Globe Skills

Grade 3

- Vernon - Our Town
- Connecticut - Our State
- Multiculturalism
- Graphs and Charts
- Current Events
- Map and Globe Skills

Grade 4

- Native Americans
- Explorers
- Colonial America
- Integrated Topics: Famous Women/Black Americans, Citizenship and Current Events
- Map and Globe Skills

Grade 5

- American Revolution
- Civil War
- Westward Expansion
- Post Civil War
- Formation of Government
- Map and Globe Skills

The resources and materials used to implement the program are varied and include nonfiction texts, map and globe materials, and locally developed teaching materials.

Science

The Vernon Public Schools' elementary science program currently uses a combination of FOSS (Full Option Science System), STC (Science, Technology & Children) and Insights Kits. The goal of the science program is to ensure that students participate in hands-on, minds-on science that develops content knowledge and inquiry and problem solving skills. The program is being built on research-based strategies to ensure that students achieve at the highest level in science.

The elementary science curriculum continues to be reviewed and revised to correlate with the Connecticut Core Science Curriculum Frameworks approved by the Connecticut State Department of Education in October 2004. The science curriculum addresses Life, Physical, and Earth Science strands throughout the grades. The emphasis in Pre-K through grade 2 will be the development of wonder about the natural world and the ability to observe, describe, and apply basic process skills. The emphasis in grades 3 through 5 will be on the development of descriptions of basic natural phenomena and the ability to perform simple experiments and record accurate data. The content standards for scientific inquiry, literacy, and numeracy are integral parts of the content standards for each grade level. Grade 5 students are tested in Science on the Connecticut Mastery Test.

Art

The philosophy of the Elementary Art Program is for students to build a foundation that sequentially develops their visual arts knowledge and skills. It seeks to foster students' awareness, appreciation and celebration of the visual arts and culture throughout lifelong learning.

The Art curriculum advances students' creative and critical thinking skills enabling them to demonstrate mastery of visual arts skills, understanding of the relationship to past and present cultures and evaluation skills of their own work and the work of others. All of the program's goals and objectives are developed and achieved through various activities, discussion and exposure to places and periods of Art history, Art criticism and Aesthetics.

Students are provided instruction by Art specialists who assist them in solving art problems with an individual and creative approach through units and lessons that develop and advance their knowledge and skills as their age and grade level progress.

Learning with Technology

The elementary educational computer technology curriculum defines key roles learners will play as they use technology in order to achieve essential academic learning requirements. Students use technology as information navigators, critical thinkers and analyzers, creators of knowledge, media and telecommunications. Students become effective communicators through a variety of appropriate technologies and media and select appropriate technology for specific purposes. Students also take the roles of technician and responsible citizen, worker, learner, community member and family member in a technological age. Each role provides a different approach to the essential elements of learning with technology as represented in the general learning goals and in the student assessment models used in the district.

Health & Safety Education

The Vernon Public Schools elementary health and safety program was developed through the efforts of a systemwide committee with representation from all five elementary schools. Objectives and learning experiences were developed which are consistent with state and federal law as well as with Vernon Board of Education Policy. The curriculum was reviewed with respect to the National Health Standards as well as to the Connecticut Frameworks.

In response to national events affecting school safety and climate, the curriculum includes components on gun and ammunition safety and anti-bullying education. In addition, a “Disability Awareness” component has been included which raises students’ awareness regarding persons with disabilities.

The curriculum is organized into seven distinct strands which include:

- Substance Abuse
- First Aid/Safety
- Nutrition
- Disease Prevention
- Human Growth and Development
- Disability Awareness
- Bullying

While education is the best investment we can make in our children’s health, it is also a sensitive task for schools to undertake. If, for personal reasons, a parent or guardian does not wish his/her son or daughter to be given instruction in human growth and development or HIV and AIDS education, the parent or guardian should inform the principal of his/her concerns in writing. In concert with Board of Education guidelines, the student will be given an alternative assignment in lieu of these topic(s).

School Wellness

In response to Public Law 108-265 requiring school districts participating in USDA Child Nutrition Programs to set goals for nutrition education and physical activity designed to promote student wellness, and to Connecticut Law 06-63, An Act Concerning Healthy Food and Beverages in Schools, the Vernon Board of Education adopted School Wellness Policy #6142.101. To support the development of a healthy environment where children learn and participate in good nutrition and physical activity, the policy establishes the formation of a School Wellness Council whose responsibility is to work toward the development and implementation of a Coordinated School Health Model. Building awareness among all members of our school community (students, parents, teachers, food service staff, coaches, and nurses) about the importance of good nutrition and physical activity to academic success and lifelong wellness is a primary goal of the Councils' work.

The School Wellness Council wants to encourage our students to make healthy lifestyle choices. It is hoped that by following the suggestions below, we will encourage healthy eating habits consistent with our Wellness Policy and health curriculum. Parents would be notified if this list needed to be adjusted due to a specific food allergy in an individual classroom.

Healthy Snacks

Fresh Fruits or Vegetables
Cheese, Cottage Cheese
Dried fruits and raisins
Cheerios
Pretzels
Yogurt
Popcorn
Crackers
Rice Cakes

The School Wellness Council also supports "food free" birthday celebrations. A student's birthday is a special day and each class will choose activities to recognize this important day. We ask that parents do not send in food for their child's birthday.

Music

The elementary music program in the Vernon Public Schools services students in grades K-5. Kindergarten students receive twenty minutes each week of general music. Students in grades 1-3 and 5 receive sixty minutes of general music per week with students in grade 4 receiving seventy minutes per week. All general music classes including kindergarten are taught by staff who hold music certification for grades K-12. The program focuses on movement, singing, written notation, and instrument identification through listening. The Orff and Kodaly methods are used extensively with each elementary school having a full complement of Orff instruments. The recorder is introduced in grade 4 and is used in combination with the Orff instruments in this grade.

In addition to the general music classes, chorus is offered as an elective for students in grade 4 and 5 in each elementary school. Beginning instrumental music is offered to students in grade 5. These students meet for small group instruction with like instruments each week for thirty minutes. Students rent the instruments from area music stores. There are a few school owned instruments which are loaned to students based on need and student interest. The students in each school have a mixed band rehearsal each week and perform along with the chorus at the various concerts held in all five elementary schools. These students also perform with the Inter-Elementary Band in June which involves the students from all of the elementary schools.

Physical Education

Elementary school students in grades 1-5 participate twice a week and kindergarten classes participate once a week in a comprehensive program of physical education. The curriculum is taught by teachers who are certified in physical education.

The physical education curriculum consists of individual, dual, and team activities. The staff is devoted to improving the quality of physical fitness in an environment where individual differences are respected.

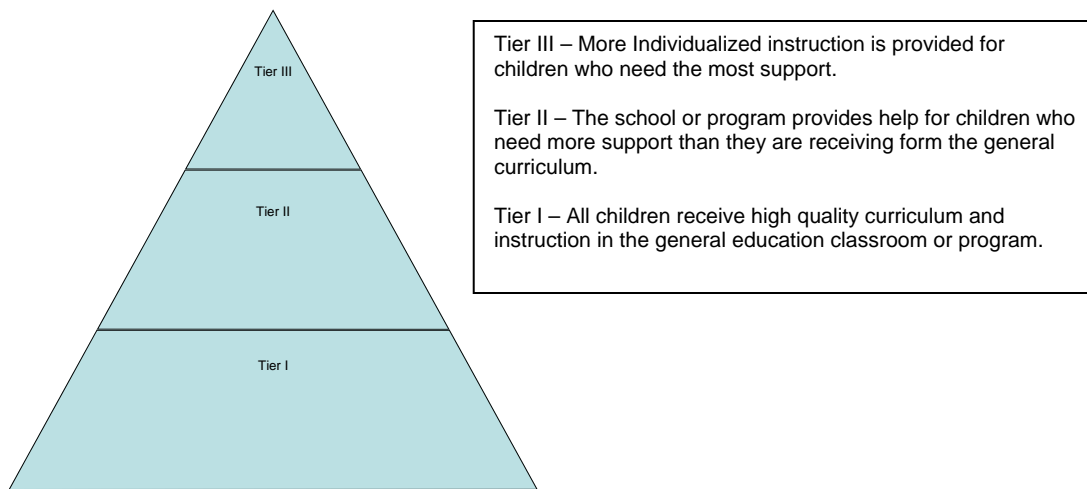
The curriculum is designed to allow for flexibility so that basic content can be presented in a variety of ways with different teaching styles.

The program is sequential in nature and has as its foundation motor skill acquisition, knowledge, social development, health-related fitness, and attitudes that are required to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Scientific Research-Based Interventions

Scientific Research-Based Interventions (SRBI) are a way to provide support and instruction to children who are struggling to learn. A child's progress is studied and findings are used to make decisions about teaching and other learning supports. SRBI are most commonly used in addressing needs in the areas of reading, math, and behavior. A "continuum of support" is developed to meet the needs of students.

The SRBI framework has three "tiers." Each tier provides differing kinds and degrees of support:



The key component to SRBI is that all children receive high quality curriculum and instruction in the general education classroom or program (Tier I).

Another component of SRBI is that the school or program conducts "universal common assessments." Universal common assessments review the progress of all children through the use of grade-age level assessments. These assessments help schools identify children who may need more support or other types of instruction. As a result, students may be identified as needing help in addition to the high quality instruction they are receiving in Tier I. Additional teaching strategies or methods that have been proven to be effective in helping children learning are used (Tier II). These teaching methods can happen in large or small groups, in or outside of the classroom.

Another key component to SRBI is “Progress Monitoring.” Progress monitoring is a way for teachers to better understand the growth children are making in a specific area. It shows how well the teaching strategy is working. It includes observations and other types of assessments. Progress monitoring helps determine whether a strategy is successful or needs to be changed.

When progress monitoring shows that a child is not responding to the additional help, another approach or strategy may be tried. However, when a higher level of support is needed, children may be provided individualized and/or small group instruction and the frequency and/or the duration of the intervention is increased (Tier III).

Talk to your child’s teacher or building principal for more information about SRBI.

(from A Family Guide: Connecticut’s Framework for RTI)

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Vernon Preschool Collaborative

The Vernon Public Schools, in collaboration with EASTCONN, provides a high quality comprehensive early childhood program to preschool aged children. Children may become eligible to attend the program through a lottery system or by need- eligible via federal income guidelines (Head Start) or as a preschooler with a disability. Classrooms are located within each one of our elementary schools and follow the Vernon Public Schools calendar, with most sessions being offered part day, Tuesday-Fridays. The program follows the Connecticut Preschool Frameworks curriculum endorsed by the Connecticut State Department of Education and includes a focus on forming partnerships with families.

Kindergarten Program

Vernon Public Schools provides a traditional half day program, offering both a morning or afternoon session. In the past, full day kindergarten programs have been offered, however, this is now determined on a year to year basis dependent upon budget approval.

Library Media Center

The Elementary School Library Media Centers provide all elementary students access and opportunity to learn about and use the Library Media Center for both school topics and personal interests (i.e. appropriate leisure topics and reading). The Elementary Library Media Managers reinforce the classroom experiences and instructional program by assisting and directing students in finding and using the information resources of the Elementary Library Media Centers. These resources range from traditional print books and magazines to multimedia materials now including computerized CD Multi-Media encyclopedias, talking books, and more. Computerized access sometimes includes guided and supervised access, when appropriate, to online information and resources.

Library research skills are integrated into the classroom learning experiences. In this way students will have purposeful learning opportunities which will help them become lifelong learners and users of information.

Reading/Language Arts Consultant/Laboratory

Each elementary school contains a reading lab which is maintained by the reading/language arts consultant. The lab, a reading/language arts resource center, houses basic and ancillary components for the reading/language arts program, supplementary materials for remediation and enrichment, diagnostic and achievement tests, and record keeping components.

The reading/language arts consultant assists staff by recommending and distributing appropriate materials for instruction. The consultant may inservice staff on new instructional methodology and may facilitate the integration of reading/language arts with other content areas of curriculum.

Small groups of students may receive primary or supportive instruction from the consultant in the lab. Consultants also provide service in the classrooms through direct instruction with groups of students or team teaching with the classroom teacher.

Diagnosis is an important service provided through the lab. Students may be evaluated for confirmation of instructional level and identification of strengths and weaknesses on key reading skills. Diagnostic testing helps determine recommendations for remedial services, intervention programs, or other changes in programming for students.

Title I

The purpose of Title I as reauthorized by Congress through the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 is to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging state academic achievement standards and state academic assessments.

To minimize the achievement disparities that exist among groups of students, specifically the economically disadvantaged, funds are used to implement intervention programs at each of the district's Title I schools.

English as a Second Language (ESL)

The elementary ESL centers, located at Skinner Road and Center Road Schools, provide English language learners in grades K-5 with the necessary tools to enable them to function successfully in a new environment. Focusing on language acquisition and cultural assimilation, the center provides instruction in the following areas: spelling, vocabulary development, conversational skills, listening skills, penmanship, reading, writing, etiquette, and cultural awareness. ESL students in grade K-5 receive their language instruction as well as some of their content area instruction in the elementary ESL center. Students are grouped by grade and/or ability level and receive instruction from staff certified in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages).

The elementary ESL center is established on the research that the most effective programs for English language learners are those that incorporate a blend of both intensive English language instruction and opportunities for immersion into mainstream classes. At the elementary level students are assigned and begin each day with their mainstreamed peers in the regular classroom. Homeroom, physical education, music, art, lunch, and recess provide opportunities for student interaction. ESL students are also included in all special programs. The length of time each student remains in the program is determined on an individual basis. Student background factors such as length of time in the country, educational background, language ability, and native country are just a few factors that go into a determination of establishing the best program for each ESL student.

Special Education and Pupil Services

In order to provide appropriate educational programs to all students and to comply with federal and state mandates, Vernon Public Schools Department of Special Education and Pupil Personnel Services provides the following programs:

Instructional Programs:

- preschool classes for children who have been identified as disabled and eligible to receive special education services
- special education support for students in mainstream classrooms and in resource rooms or learning centers

Support Services and Programs:

- services provided by school social workers
- services provided by school psychologists, including evaluations, assessment, risk assessments, and plans for behavioral intervention
- services provided by speech and language pathologists including services provided to the hearing impaired
- school health services
- services of occupational therapists
- services of physical therapists
- transportation

Vernon's public schools have established policies and procedures to convene *Planning and Placement Team* meetings (P.P.T.) at each school site to process any referral made on behalf of any youngster who may be referred to be considered as eligible to receive special education or related services.

In conjunction with the P.P.T. process, Vernon Public Schools may conduct specific and detailed assessment in a number and variety of areas including, but not limited to, psychology, speech, language, and perceptual-motor function.

The information acquired through any assessment provides data to the P.P.T. as it considers identification eligibility, and appropriate programmatic options. Parents are an integral part of the P.P.T. process and are encouraged to participate.

A complete guide to parental rights and laws governing special education is available at each school site. This guide may also be obtained by contacting the Office of Pupil Personnel Services by telephone at 860-870-6000 ext. 133.

Renaissance Program

The Renaissance Program is designed to meet the individual needs of elementary age students requiring a level of intervention for social and behavioral needs which cannot be met in the general education setting without support. The Renaissance Program provides students with an opportunity to develop appropriate study habits and acceptable school behaviors so they can return to their regular classroom as soon as possible. This is achieved by providing close supervision that emphasizes and encourages positive behaviors. The focus is on many areas of student development including timely task completion, classroom participation, positive peer and adult interaction and following directions. Initially, heavy reinforcement for these activities is employed and the reinforcement decreases as students are able to succeed under conditions similar to a regular classroom setting. Students have an opportunity through many activities embedded in the Renaissance Program to practice coping skills, character traits and anger management techniques. These activities are aimed to improve students' social emotional growth.

Elementary Summer School Program

The elementary summer school program emphasizes remediation. As such it is designed to maintain and/or increase students' basic academic skills in the areas of math, reading, language arts, and written composition. The program is limited to Vernon students in grades K through 5 who are in need of remedial assistance in the basic skills. A tuition fee is established annually by the Board of Education. For more information, please contact the Supervisor of Assessment, Grants, and Career Education at 860-870-6000 ext. 142.

TESTING AND PROGRESS REPORTS

Grading K-5

The primary purpose of grading shall be to keep parents and students fully informed of student progress and to provide continuous and accurate records of each student's achievement for use in instruction. Report cards will be issued quarterly. All grades will be based on a student's achievement at a given level of the curriculum. Accommodations to support a student's achievement will be so noted on the comment section of the report card.

Students with special learning needs are graded on the basis of the objectives delineated in their Individualized Education Program. The teacher responsible for grading a student in academic areas will be determined by the Planning and Placement Team when the IEP is developed.

Reporting to Parents

Parents are encouraged to keep apprised of their child's academic progress throughout the school year. Conferences with the teacher may be arranged at any time at a mutually agreed upon time. Homework assignments play an important role in reinforcing skills taught in school. Please also review homework with your child. Encourage your child to do his or her best.

Throughout grades kindergarten through five, report cards are issued quarterly. Report cards evaluate each child's progress. In addition to grading academic progress, report cards evaluate work habits, attitudes and behavior.

Parent-Teacher conferences are scheduled for all parents/guardians of students in grades preschool through five at the end of the first marking period. A second conference is offered at the end of the third marking period upon a request from either the teacher or the parent. In addition, parents may request a conference at other times during the year.

Mid-term reports are also issued mid-way through each marking period to all pupils not working up to expectations or failing in given subject areas.

Administration of Standardized Tests

Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT)

Administered in the spring of each year, all students in grades 3-5 participate in the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT). The CMT was designed to determine the extent to which students have mastered Connecticut's content standards in reading, writing, and mathematics and in science in grade 5.

The results of the CMT help schools identify students who need additional support in reading, writing, and mathematics and help the district to identify strengths and weaknesses in its curriculum and instruction.

GENERAL POLICIES

Attendance

Connecticut state law requires parents/guardians to cause their children to attend school regularly during the hours and terms the public school is in session. Learning experiences that occur in the classroom are meaningful and essential components of the learning process. Time lost from class tends to be irretrievable in terms of opportunity for instructional interaction. The Board of Education requires that accurate records be kept of the attendance of each student. A student should not be absent from school without the parents' or guardians' knowledge and consent. All absences must be called into the school's nurse's office.

Absences

An absence shall be considered "excused" when a student does not attend school due to illness or injury, death in the immediate family, religious obligation, an emergency, or other exceptional circumstance. Written excuse for such absences should be submitted to school officials by the child's parent or guardian. All other absences, with or without written explanation, shall be considered unexcused. Schools monitor attendance daily and will notify parents regarding issues of attendance, truancy, and tardiness.

Requests for work

If a child has an absence, parents may call the office in the morning and request assignments. If an extended absence is anticipated, please contact your child's teacher in advance of the date to arrange for assignments. Please understand that in an interactive learning environment (discussions and analyses in reading, writing, and hands-on learning in mathematics, science, and social studies), make-up work is not easily replicated and alternative enrichment assignments may be provided instead.

Educational Field Trips

When trips are planned, permission slips and medical consent forms are sent home for parents to complete. The permission/health form must be completed before children are permitted to take the planned trip. Parents may be called upon to assist teachers by chaperoning. A volunteer/chaperone application must be completed in advance of this trip.

Recess

The school's policy regarding outdoor recess is as follows: All children who are able to attend school are to participate in the outdoor recess whenever it is offered. Children should bring the appropriate clothing (coats, hats, mittens, boots) to match the weather conditions. Alternate arrangements to address personal exceptions must be addressed in writing to the principal.

Breakfast/Hot Lunch Program

Hot lunch and breakfast are served daily in the Elementary School's Cafeteria.

Breakfast times are as follows:

Center Road School	7:55 A.M.
Lake Street School	7:50 A.M.
Maple Street School	7:50 A.M.
Northeast School	8:17 A.M.
Skinner Road School	8:17 A.M.

Students may pay on a daily basis or prepay weekly or monthly.

Milk is available to students bringing cold lunch and may be purchased daily.

All snacks and ice milk products sold in the cafeterias meet the strict Connecticut Nutrition Standards which limits fat, trans-fats, added sugar, and portion sizes of these products.

No School/Delayed Opening Announcements

During the school year, there may be days when school is delayed (2 hours) or canceled due to inclement weather or for other reasons. This decision is made by the Superintendent of Schools and announced over the following radio stations beginning at 5:30 a.m.: WTIC-1080 AM and 96.5 FM.

Television stations Channel 30, Channel 3 and Channel 61 have continuous updates at the bottom of the screen. Additionally, the Connecticut Weather Center provides a free e-mail notification service for posting weather-related announcements. To register for this free service, go to www.ctweather.com, and complete the four easy steps.

1. Scroll down the menu on the left to “e-Notifications”.
2. Click on “e-Notifications” and then click on “Schools”.
3. Complete the easy registration process by submitting your e-mail address. You can duplicate this process and submit more than one address if needed.
4. Within 72 hours, you will receive a confirmation request. Reply to the request by clicking on the link and follow the directions to access your account and identify **Vernon** in the pull-down menu. ***You must identify and submit Vernon as a notification district - this is not automatic.*** You can identify as many districts as needed by duplicating the “identify and submit” process. ***It is very easy and user-friendly.***

Each parent/guardian has the final decision about sending his/her child to school when adverse weather conditions exist.

Emergency Dismissals

If school must be dismissed early because of hazardous weather or other emergencies, make certain your child knows what to do and where to go if you are not at home. Also make sure that the school has a telephone number for any emergency that your child might encounter. It is important that this information is kept up-to-date.

Visitors

Upon arrival, all visitors must stop in the main office to sign in and to obtain visitors' badges.

School Visitation

Parents may visit the school and/or meet with staff if prior arrangements have been made with the school principal. Visitors must request a school visit at least one day in advance. A visitor's pass must be obtained from and will be issued by the office upon arrival at the school.

Students from other schools may visit for a special purpose, on a cooperative agreement between the principal and parent.

Classroom Visitation Guidelines

1. The person visiting a class is an observer and should not interrupt the instructional process.
2. The principal will arrange a conference if so desired by the parent or guardian.
3. The number of times a person may visit will be determined by the principal.
4. The principal will not permit a classroom visitation during testing and special activities.

Unauthorized Persons/Trespassing

Any person shall be considered trespassing when remaining in or about a school building without the permission of the school principal. Unauthorized persons shall not be permitted to remain in school buildings or on school grounds and will be asked to leave. School principals are authorized to take appropriate action to remove such persons from entering the building or from loitering on the grounds. Such persons will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

For purposes of this policy, trespassers/unauthorized persons shall be defined as:

1. persons who have not been authorized by the school principal to be in the school building or on school grounds;
2. students on external suspension who re-enter school property without authorization;
3. persons who do not have legitimate business within the school or on school grounds.

The police shall be called when individuals ignore the warnings.

Dress Code

Pupil attire has a direct bearing on conduct; therefore, students are to dress in such a manner as not to disrupt, in the opinion of the principal, the normal operation of the school. Footwear that could endanger the health or safety of a student or create unnecessary maintenance problems (carbon base soles) shall not be worn in school.

Salute to the Flag/Silent Meditation

Per Board of Education policy, the administration shall provide for students and teachers the opportunity to salute the flag and to observe a moment of silent meditation at the beginning of each school day.

Student Behavior

Maintaining appropriate behavior is important to establishing an effective learning environment. Those primarily responsible for developing a safe and orderly environment and for fostering a positive self-image in pupils include:

1. The teacher who establishes and supervises the classroom setting,
2. The school principal who establishes and supervises the school's culture, and
3. The parent/guardian who establishes and supervises behavioral limits at home and supports the school.

Discipline is successfully initiated in the pre-school years by parents who take the responsibility for developing a consistent and positive attitude towards socially acceptable behavior and achievement. It must be emphasized that there is a consequence for all actions, either positive or negative, and that for the good of the child the value of positive behavior must be stressed. No action or policy taken by the schools can be effective without parent acceptance of their primary responsibility.

Appropriate student behavior and a safe and orderly environment are necessary for the accomplishments of the goals of public education and for the preparation of students to become responsible citizens. Student behavior should be conducive to a positive learning atmosphere, facilitate beneficial student/teacher relationships and be acceptable by society in general.

Our schools shall develop and promote positive standards of behavior and achievement relating to student conduct in order to implement the policies of the Board of Education. These standards or rules shall be consistent with humane principles and will reflect a concern for the individual worth and dignity of each student.

Our schools are committed to the principle that disruptive and disorderly behavior is unacceptable and cannot be allowed to interfere with the opportunity for other students to receive their education. Most discipline situations are the responsibility of the classroom teacher, but students and parents, administrators and the Board of Education have the responsibility to support and maintain the enforcement of discipline within the school system.

All students are required to conduct themselves in a manner that will be in the best interest of the school and its students. Every reasonable effort will be made to maintain and control students within the schools using suspension or expulsion only as a final resort.

All students, parents and staff should be reminded that:

1. No individual student has the right to disrupt the education process within the school.
2. All students have the right to due process procedures in matters of suspension or expulsion.
3. Each student will be individually evaluated on the basis of past record, performance, and present placement in school. Each case will be determined on what is best for the student and other students attending the school.

Sexual Harassment

Vernon Public Schools are committed to providing each student a safe, orderly, and supportive environment that is free from unsolicited and unwelcomed verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. The rights of students to study, to learn, to achieve and to participate in school activities without discrimination and harassment is protected under federal and state law.

Any student who believes that he or she has been subjected to discrimination on the basis of gender or sexual harassment should speak with the school's principal or with the Director of Pupil Personnel Services.

Elementary Grouping K-5

Elementary grouping practices used to implement the curriculum are identified as heterogeneous with the flexibility to regroup based on student need and on the purposes for learning. In flexible grouping, students move in and out of the full group to become members of a variety of temporary organizational structures. Each ad hoc group is formed to accomplish a meaningful task related to the purpose of the whole community of learners. Group memberships are not static but change with the needs of the group and of the individual students.

In establishing classroom groupings, it is imperative that grouping conferences be held involving all teachers of each grade level. At these conferences, the following are considered in the development of class groups for the next school year:

- Student ability
- Social development
- Achievement
- Staff differences
- Equalization of class size
- Development of class balance (male/female)
- Avoidance of placing children together who do not work well
- Avoidance of placing a child with the same teacher for two consecutive years
- Number of special education mainstreamed students

Principals will use paraprofessional help in those classes where the greatest need exists.

HEALTH & SAFETY-RELATED ISSUES

School Insurance

Information and envelopes to purchase school insurance will be issued to each child at the start of school each year. If you wish school insurance, please make a check out for the exact amount. Then place it in the envelope and return it to the child's teacher. If you do not wish this insurance, please indicate this and return the empty envelope to the teacher. Checks should be made out to the insurance company.

Safety Patrol

Through the efforts of the Parent Teacher Organizations, the Vernon Council of Parents and the Physical Education Department, a townwide Safety Program has been set up in all our elementary schools. The Safety Patrol is made-up of grade four and five students and provides assistance for our young children as they go to and from school. The Safety Patrol also offers participating children an opportunity to develop their own leadership skills.

Health Services

Each elementary school has a full time school nurse who is available during regular school hours. Information on the district's health services and health requirements is presented below. These procedures are designed to afford each student the opportunity to achieve his/her full potential by minimizing health-related barriers.

1. Physical - All students are required by Connecticut State Law and Vernon Board of Education Policy to have a pre-entrance physical in Grade K. The physical must be done by a legally qualified medical practitioner within one year of entrance to kindergarten. All students transferring into the Vernon School System from another Connecticut town must show proof of physical exam records. Students transferring into the Vernon School System from outside the State of Connecticut must show proof of a physical exam completed within 12 months of entry to the Vernon School System.
2. Immunizations - All students entering the Vernon School System must show written proof that Connecticut State mandated immunizations are up-to-date.

Exemption for any student from the immunization requirements will be allowed for the following reasons:

- A certificate from a physician stating that such immunization is medically contraindicated and why.
- A written statement from the parent stating such immunization would be contrary to the religious beliefs of such child.
- A certificate from a physician or local health agency stating that initial immunizations have been given to such child and additional immunizations are in process under guidelines and schedules specified by the commissioner of health services.
- A certificate from a physician or local health agency stating the child has had a confirmed case of Measles, Mumps, Rubella, Chicken Pox, or Hepatitis B.

3. Health Screening

Vision: Each student in Grades Pre K-5 will be screened annually for visual acuity.

Hearing: Each student in Grades Pre K-3, & 5 will be screened annually for hearing.

Scoliosis: All grade 5 students will be screened for signs of scoliosis (curvature of the spine) unless excused by a parent, in writing.

Parents/Guardians will be notified by the school nurse if their child does not pass a vision, hearing or scoliosis screening. The parent will be referred to their physician for further evaluation, diagnosis and recommended treatment.

4. Dental Health

Students in grade K-5 are offered a Weekly Fluoride Mouth Rinse Program. The program is offered for a nominal fee.

Students in grades K-8 may be offered preventive dental services during school hours, including an exam, cleaning, sealants, and fluoride application. Signed permission from the parent will be required for the above services.

5. Medication

Connecticut State Law and the Vernon Board of Education Policy state that if a student requires medication during school hours written authorization from the parent and physician must be on file in the health office. The school nurse will provide the appropriate authorization form along with additional instructions to any student who will need medication at school.

6. Reporting Illness and Absenteeism

Parents are requested to call to report a student absence by 9:00 a.m. each day a student is absent. The parent will also report to the school/nurse the reason for the child's absence. The school nurse will advise the parent as to the current policies regarding exclusion for communicable illnesses.

Examples of more commonly reported communicable diseases in school age children and the exclusion period:

Disease	Exclusion Period
Streptococcal & Staphylococcal	Exclude until 24 hours after the start of antibiotic therapy and the absence of fever.
Conjunctivitis	Exclude until under treatment (pink eye) as prescribed by physician.
Chicken Pox	Exclude until all eruptions have crusted.
Pediculosis (head lice)	Exclude until treated with prescribed medicated shampoo and removal of "nits".

The school nurse will monitor communicable illnesses in the school population. Please contact your school nurse if you have any questions.

SPRING ORIENTATION TO GRADE SIX

In May, Vernon Center Middle School guidance counselors provide an orientation program at the middle school for 5th grade students. This orientation provides the students with a chance to tour the building during a regular school day and to experience lunch in the cafeteria. This orientation also includes:

- An audio-visual program prepared by VCMS staff members and students
- An explanation of the school schedule
- An overview of teaming in the middle school
- Information regarding clubs, intramural sports, the yearbook, and special events
- Dialogue between grade 5 and grade 6 students regarding questions and concerns of the 5th graders

Shortly after the student visitation to VCMS, an evening parent and student open house program is held in May at Vernon Center Middle School. During the evening, both parents and students have an opportunity to learn about the various 6th grade programs, become familiar with the school facility, and visit with the grade 6 staff.

Scheduling Students from 5th to 6th Grade

In preparation for the transition to middle school, written evaluations of students are completed by personnel at the elementary school level who are familiar with the students in the 5th grade. Individuals involved in this process include:

- Classroom Teachers
- Special Education Case Managers
- Reading Specialists
- Title I Teachers
- Remediation Teachers

Meetings between 5th and 6th grade personnel are then held in late spring. In attendance are guidance counselors and specialists from the middle school, and the appropriate grade 5 staff members who work with each student. At these meetings all aspects of a student's record, strengths, and needs are discussed. Grade 5 teachers are responsible for making grade 6 class level recommendations for each student, and then informing parents of these decisions.

In September, meetings are held with special education personnel, guidance counselors, all support staff, and classroom teachers regarding special needs and special programs for students.

Throughout the school year the guidance counselors, support staff, administrators, and resource teachers meet weekly with classroom teachers regarding the grouping and instruction of individual students. Changes and/or modifications are made when necessary.

BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICIES

Transportation of Students (BOE Policy 3541)

General Information

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

Parent/Guardian Responsibility

- a. Students not transported by Board-approved vehicles: Within the school district assigned to a student, and based on the distance between the location where a student leaves the supervision of parents, guardians or care-takers and the student's assigned school, some students may be classified as 'walkers.' It is the responsibility of those charged with the care of such students to assure their safety until the student is on school property. It is also their responsibility to assure the safety of such students after the student leaves school property. The Board of Education is not responsible for providing vehicular transportation for any student who is placed under the care or supervision of persons at facilities outside their assigned school district.
- b. Students transported by Board-approved vehicles: For students who are to be transported by bus or other vehicles *authorized by the Board of Education*, it is the responsibility of the parents, guardians or designated care-takers to see to the safety of the students until the student enters the assigned vehicle at the designated point. It is also the responsibility of the parents, guardians, or care-takers to assure the safety of the student when the student, returning from school, leaves the bus/vehicle.
- c. Students transported by parents, guardians, care-takers or others: In no instance is the school system responsible for students who are brought to their assigned school before that school is officially open for students to enter.

- d. Parents should make sure that children reach the school bus stop at least five minutes prior to the scheduled bus pick-up.
- e. Parents should accompany younger students to the bus stop for the first few days or as long as they deem necessary. Parents are responsible for students' behavior at the bus stop and should periodically monitor this.

Parent/Guardian Responsibility

Parents should instruct children to:

- a. walk facing traffic, if they must walk on the highway.
- b. look both ways before crossing the highway.
- c. wait on the shoulder, off the pavement.
- d. behave responsibly at the bus stops and on the bus.

Pupil Responsibility

1. While waiting for school bus transportation to school, pupils should:

- a. be at the designated bus stop 5 minutes before the scheduled time;
- b. wait until the bus comes to a full stop before trying to get aboard.
- c. when waiting across the road from the designated bus stop, continue to wait until the bus comes to a full stop and displays its flashing lights before attempting to cross the street.

2. When leaving school, pupils should:

- a. follow directions of the teacher or the Safety Patrol;
- b. obey the directions of the bus driver;

3. While riding in the bus, pupils should:

- a. remain in their seats while the bus is in motion;
- b. not jeopardize the safety of others, observing the usual rules of good conduct;
- c. converse quietly, not shouting at other pupils or the driver;
- d. not throw objects about in the bus;
- e. not destroy or deface seats in the bus;
- f. secure permission of driver before opening windows of the bus;
- g. be respectful in language use;
- h. recognize that eating, drinking, smoking or the use/possession of controlled substances is not permitted on the bus.

4. When leaving the school bus at the destination, pupils should:

- a. watch their step getting off the bus;
- b. take their turn and not crowd;
- c. not loiter at the bus stop;
- d. if the stop is across the road from home, stand on the shoulder of the road at the front of the bus until the driver signals that it is safe to cross, then cross in front of the bus;
- e. if it is not necessary to cross the highway, stand aside on the shoulder of the road until the bus has moved on; then, when they can see traffic in both directions, walk on the shoulder of the road (or the sidewalk) to their destination.
- f. walk on the left facing traffic, if there is no sidewalk and it is necessary to walk on the roadway;
- g. obey the adult in charge on any trip away from school;

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

Board of Education Responsibility

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

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

Superintendent's Responsibilities

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

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

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

School Building Administrator Responsibilities:

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

1. All drivers must present a written and signed report of discipline problems in duplicate to the bus supervisor.
2. Except in emergencies when conditions would not allow sufficient time to prepare a written report, the following procedures shall be followed: (However, in emergencies the report must be given to the bus supervisor on the next school day).
3. Where pupil actions on the bus violate standards for safe and appropriate behavior, the driver will, at the end of the morning or afternoon route, present a written report to the bus supervisor on a form authorized by the bus company and supplied by the Board of Education.

4. The bus supervisor will contact the school principal as soon as possible and forward one copy of the written report to the principal within twenty-four (24) hours.
5. The principal or designee will investigate the incident and arrange an informal hearing for the pupil(s) involved. The principal or designee will notify the bus supervisor of the disposition of the case and forward a written report concerning the disposition to the central office as soon as possible.
6. The principal will notify the parents of the pupil(s) of the infraction and the disposition of the case. However, the principal will not send the parents and/or pupil(s) the written report signed by the driver.

Public Notification of Bus Routes

Each year, not less than one week prior to the opening of school, the routes and bus/vehicle stops are published through one or more newspapers serving the town. In addition, by the second week in August, this information is available from the Transportation Supervisor in the office of the Director of Business and Finance, located in the school system Administration Building. Educational and extra-curricular trips must be approved by the principal and the Superintendent or designee. The general policy of the Board is to use a commercial carrier with full public liability and property damage insurance.

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

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

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

Exceptions

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

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

Appeals

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

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

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

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

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

Safety Records and Reports

The Superintendent of schools shall:

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

Bus Ticket/Bus Pass Procedures (Grades 6-12 only and Cheney Technical School)

On opening day, the student is issued a bus ticket with his or her name, address and bus number. The student must have his or her bus ticket when he or she gets on the bus. If a student does not have his or her bus ticket after two days' (48 hours') notice, the driver will allow the student on the bus but will issue the student an official discipline referral. The school administration will issue a one day bus suspension for each day a student does not have his/her bus ticket as long as they were on the bus for the two day (48 hour) notice.

If a student loses a bus ticket, the student will be issued a new one upon receipt of a note from a parent requesting the issuance of a new bus ticket. Students will be billed \$.50 payable to the book repair account. The bus ticket is non-transferable.

When a student is suspended from the bus, the ticket will be taken by the bus driver and held until the suspension is lifted.

Definitions

1. **"School transportation"** means the procedure, program, or fully effective and implemented plan by which a pupil is conveyed to and/or from school from his/her residence or the bus stop at public expense, whether by use of publicly owned equipment or by contract. Such transportation shall be over public roads approved by the municipality.

2. **"Walking distance"** means the linear measure of a prescribed or authorized pedestrian route between the pupil's residence and his/her school or bus stop. Walking distance shall be measured from the closest point to the school or bus stop from the child's home where the public street or public sidewalk meets the residential driveway or the residential walkway at the child's home to the nearest allowable entrance of the school grounds or to a bus stop. Measurements of contested walking distances shall be made by trundle wheel by the pupil transportation department. The maximum walking distances from home to school or to a prescribed point of embarkation (bus stop) are as follows:
 1. pupils enrolled in grades K through 5, one mile
 2. pupils enrolled in grades 6 through 8, one and one-half miles
 3. pupils enrolled in grades 9 through 12, two miles
 4. kindergarten pupils at mid-day, both a.m. session dismissal and p.m. session pick-up, one-half mile limit

3. **"One mile walking distance"** means a reasonable measurement of a route to be traversed extending from the point of measurement at least 5,280 feet, but not more than 5,380 feet.

4. **"Grade K"** means Kindergarten, or a school program appropriate to a beginning pupil.

5. **"Hazard"** means a thing or condition, as prescribed in these guidelines, affecting the safety of pupils walking to and from school, or a designated bus stop; a possible source of peril, danger, duress or difficulty (cf., Webster)

Definitions - continued

6. "**Sidewalk**" means a portion of the landscaped right of way, usually parallel to the traffic lanes, which is paved; walkway means a public right of way, planned future sidewalk area, or any path designated as a walking route by the Board of Education for pupils to get to a bus stop or school, or area along the side of a road delineated by a white or yellow line.

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

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

1. When Sidewalks or Walkways Are Available

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

- a. For pupils enrolled in Grades K through 5**, who must cross an intersection to get to a bus stop or to school, it shall be deemed hazardous where there is no stop sign, crossing guard, or traffic control signal at the intersection and the traffic count on the street being crossed exceeds one hundred and twenty vehicles per hour.
- b. For pupils enrolled in grades 6 through 8**, who must cross an intersection to get to a bus stop or to school, it shall be deemed hazardous where the intersection has no stop sign, crossing guard, or traffic control signal, and the traffic count on the street being crossed exceeds one hundred eighty vehicles per hour.
- c. For all pupils**
 1. any street, road or highway with posted speed limits in excess of 40 miles per hour which does not have pedestrian crossing lights or crossing guards or other safety provisions at points where pupils must cross when going to or from school or the bus stop.
 2. where a street has a sidewalk on only one side, pupils residing on said street shall be required to use the sidewalk to walk to and from a bus stop or school.

2. When No Sidewalks or Walkways Are Available

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

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

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

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

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

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

c. For all pupils:

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

The walking hazard testing for pupils in grades 6 through 8 shall be conducted by an independent traffic engineer who shall be hired by the Board in contested cases. The testing shall consist of the setting up of a mannequin the average height of a sixth grade pupil (58½") on the side of the road, a car traveling at the posted speed limit around the curve and/or poor visibility area, and a measurement made of the time and distance it took the driver to stop from the time he/she first noticed the mannequin until the car came to a full stop. The distance will then be compared with the above criteria and a determination made by the traffic engineer as to whether or not the car stopped before reaching the mannequin.

3. Other Hazards

For pupils in grades K through 5

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

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

4. Adjustments for Special Situations

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

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

Transportation to Child Care Sites

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

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

Dissemination of Day Care Transportation Information

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

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

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

Guidelines for Transportation to Child Care Sites

1. Pupils requesting transportation may be either riders or walkers. However, the child care location must be within the student's home school district boundaries, in an area served by Vernon school buses, and at least $\frac{1}{2}$ mile away from the pupil's home.
2. Transportation to child care locations will only be provided for a fully scheduled school week. Transportation will be provided in the a.m. or p.m. or both a.m and p.m.

3. If transportation to a child-care location is both in the morning and afternoon, the pupil must ride the same bus. However, kindergarten pupils, because of the route schedules, may ride different buses.

Guidelines for Transportation to Child Care Sites

4. Parents or guardians of pupils whose home address would make them eligible to ride may make application prior to July 1 for special transportation to a child-care location. They will be guaranteed space for their child on that bus to the child-care location.
5. Requests for transportation to a child care location, which are presented to the Board after July 1, both for pupils who would be required to walk to and from school and for regularly assigned bus riders, will be honored on a space available basis. Seats would be allocated to pupils seeking transportation to child care locations after allowances are made for all regularly assigned bus riders. Requests received after September 1 that fall within policy guidelines will be honored as space becomes available.
6. After July 1, pupils seeking transportation to a child care location, and who normally ride, will be assigned to their requested bus prior to the assignment of any pupils who normally walk to school. All pupils will be assigned on a space available basis after allowance is made for all regularly assigned pupils who reside in the area served by the bus.
7. Parent or guardian must present written permission to the principal for their child to get on or off the bus at the closest stop assigned to the child-care facility. The permission request must include name of child-care person/facility with address and telephone number, period of time requested for child-care arrangements and bus stop(s) where pupil will get on/off the bus.
8. Pupils must board or leave the bus at their designated school bus stop.

Policy Revised: June 8, 2009

Bus Service, Bus Driver Responsibilities

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

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

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

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

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

Maintaining a Safe Environment on School System Vehicles

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

Offenses-Penalties for Inappropriate Behavior on School Vehicles

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

a. Minor Offenses Include but Are Not Limited to:

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

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

b. Major Offenses Include but are not Limited to:

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

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

Hearings for Suspension from School System Transportation

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

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

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

Consequences for Bus Vandalism

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

Procedure

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

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

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

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

CONNECTICUT GENERAL STATUTES SECTION 52-572

(Parental Liability for Willful Acts of Minor Children)

The parent or parents or guardian of any unemancipated minor or minors, which minor or minors willfully or maliciously cause damage to any property or injury to any person, or, having taken a motor vehicle without the permission of the owner thereof cause damage of such motor vehicle, shall be jointly and severally liable with such minor or minors for such damage or injury to an amount not exceeding three thousand dollars, if such minor or minors would have been liable for such if they had been adults; provided nothing herein shall be construed to relieve such minor or minors from personal liability for such damage or injury.

The liability herein provided for shall be in addition to and not in lieu of any other liability which may exist at law. As used in this section, "damage" shall include depriving the owner of his property or motor vehicle or of the use, possession or enjoyment thereof.

Bullying Behavior in the Schools (BOE Policy 5131.911)

In accordance with the state law, it is the policy of the Vernon Board of Education that any form of bullying behavior, whether in the classroom, on school property or at school-sponsored events, is expressly forbidden.

As provided by statute, such regulations shall:

1. enable students to anonymously report acts of bullying to teachers and school administrators, and require that students be notified annually of the process by which they may make anonymous reports of bullying to teachers and school administrators;
2. enable the parents or guardians of students to file written reports of suspected bullying;
3. require teachers and other school staff who witness acts of bullying or receive student reports of bullying to notify school administrators;
4. require school administrators to investigate any written reports filed pursuant to subdivision (2) and to review any anonymous reports;
5. include intervention and prevention strategies for school staff to deal with bullying;
6. provide for the inclusion of language in student codes of conduct concerning bullying;
7. require school administrators to notify both the parents or guardians of students who commit any verified acts of bullying and the parents or guardians of students against whom such acts were directed, and;
8. require each school within the district to maintain a list of the number of verified acts of bullying in such school and make such list available for public inspection.

The notification required pursuant to subdivision (7) shall include a description of the response of school staff to such acts and any consequences that may result from the commission of further acts of bullying. Any information provided under this policy shall be provided in accordance with the confidentiality restrictions imposed under the Family Educational Rights Privacy Act (FERPA) and the district's Confidentiality and Access to Student Information policy and regulations.

For purposes of this policy, “**Bullying**” shall mean any overt acts by a student or group of students directed against any student(s) with the intent to ridicule, harass, humiliate, or intimidate any student(s) while on school grounds, at a school-sponsored activity, or on any school transportation vehicle, and which acts are repeated against any student(s) over time.

For purposes of this policy, “**School-Sponsored Activity**” shall mean any activity conducted on or off school property (including school buses and other school-related vehicles) that is sponsored, recognized, or authorized by the Board of Education.

Students who engage in bullying behavior shall be subject to school discipline up to and including expulsion in accordance with the Board’s policy on student discipline.

Administrative Regulations

The following sets forth the procedures to implement Board Policy #5131.911 concerning the prohibition against bullying in the Vernon Public Schools. Bullying behavior is strictly prohibited, and students who are determined to have engaged in such behavior are subject to disciplinary action, which may include suspension or expulsion from school. The district’s commitment to addressing bullying behavior, however, involves a multi-faceted approach, which includes education and the promotion of a school atmosphere in which bullying will not be tolerated by students or staff.

It is imperative that bullying be identified only when the specific elements of the definition are met, because the designation of conduct as bullying carries with it special statutory obligations. Any misconduct by one student against any student(s), whether or not appropriately defined as bullying, however, will result in appropriate disciplinary consequences for the perpetrator.

I. Definition:

In accordance with state law and Board policy, “bullying” means any overt acts by a student or a group of students directed against any student(s) with the intent to ridicule, harass, humiliate or intimidate any student(s) while on school grounds, at a school-sponsored activity, or on any school transportation vehicle, and which acts are repeated against any student(s) over time.

In accordance with this definition, the following factors should be considered before identifying conduct by a student or group of students as bullying in violation of Board policy. The determination that conduct does not constitute bullying under state law and Board policy, however, does not restrict the right of the Administration and of the Board of Education to impose appropriate disciplinary consequences for student misconduct.

* Location: Bullying behavior in violation of Board policy must occur on school grounds or at a school-sponsored activity (which by Board policy includes transportation services). Conduct that occurs off-campus (e.g. harassment over the Internet, physical intimidation in the community) is not bullying under this Policy and Regulation.

While not considered bullying under state law and Board policy, conduct that would otherwise be considered bullying occurring off-campus (and outside of any school-sponsored activity) may subject the perpetrator to disciplinary action. Discipline for such conduct may be imposed if such conduct violates a publicized policy of the Board and is seriously disruptive of the educational process. Unless such conduct triggers a mandatory expulsion under Conn. Gen. Statute. § 10-233d(a), however, school officials are authorized to impose discipline for such off-campus conduct only if such conduct markedly interrupts or severely impedes the day-to-day operation of the school.

* Repeated misconduct: Bullying behavior in violation of Board policy must be “repeated against any student(s) over time.” An isolated incident, however egregious, is not “bullying” under state law and Board policy. Numerous acts of misconduct against different students constitutes “bullying” under state law and Board policy.

* Ridicule, harassment, humiliation, and/or intimidation: Bullying behavior is more than misconduct. Such behavior is marked by the intent to ridicule, harass, humiliate, or intimidate the victim. In evaluating whether conduct constitutes bullying, special attention should be paid to the words chosen or actions taken, whether such conduct occurred in front of others or was communicated to others, how the perpetrator interacted with the victim, and the motivation, either admitted or appropriately inferred, of the perpetrator.

* Types of conduct: Bullying can take many forms and can include many different behaviors having the overt intent to ridicule, humiliate, or intimidate another student. Examples of conduct that could constitute bullying include:

1. Physical violence and/or attacks;
2. Verbal taunts, name-calling and put-downs, including taunts based on ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or other protected and/or individual characteristics;
3. Threats and intimidation (through words and/or gestures);
4. Extortion or stealing of money and/or possessions.

II. Complaint processes

A. Publication of the prohibition against bullying and related procedures

The prohibition against bullying shall be publicized by including the following statement in the student handbook of each of the district schools:

“Bullying behavior by any student in the Vernon Public Schools is strictly prohibited, and such conduct may result in disciplinary action, including suspension and/or expulsion from school. “Bullying” means any overt acts by a student or a group of students directed against any student(s) with the intent to ridicule, harass, humiliate, or intimidate any student(s) while on school grounds, at a school-sponsored activity, or on any school transportation vehicle, and which acts are repeated against any student(s) over time. Students and parents or guardians may file verbal or written complaints concerning suspected bullying behavior, and students shall be permitted to anonymously report acts of bullying to teachers and school administrators. Any report of suspected bullying behavior will be promptly investigated. If acts of bullying are verified, prompt disciplinary action may be taken against the perpetrator, consistent with his/her rights of due process. Board policy and regulation #5131.911 set forth this prohibition and the related procedures in detail, and are available to students and their parents/guardians upon request.”

B. Formal complaints

Students and/or their parents or guardians may file written reports of conduct that they consider to be bullying. Such written reports shall be reasonably specific as to the actions giving rise to the suspicion of bullying, including time and place of the conduct alleged, the number of such incidents, the target of such suspected bullying, and the names of any potential student or staff witnesses. Such reports may be filed with any teacher or administrator, and they shall be promptly forwarded to the building principal for investigation and action in accordance with Section IV below.

C. Informal complaints

Students may make informal complaints of conduct that they consider to be bullying by verbal report to a teacher or administrator. Such informal complaints shall be reasonably specific as to the actions giving rise to the suspicion of bullying, including time and place of the conduct alleged, the number of such incidents, the target of such suspected bullying, and the names of any potential student or staff witnesses. A teacher, other professional employee, or administrator who receives an informal complaint shall promptly reduce the complaint to writing, including the information provided. Such written report by the teacher, other professional employee, and/or administrator shall be promptly forwarded to the building principal for investigation and action in accordance with Section IV below.

D. Anonymous complaints

Students who make informal complaints as set forth above may request that their name be maintained in confidence by the teacher(s) and administrator(s) who receive the complaint. Should anonymity be requested, the principal or his/her designee shall meet with the student to review the request for anonymity and the impact that maintaining anonymity of the complaint may have on the investigation of the complaint and/or possible remedial action. At such meeting, the student shall be given the choice as to whether to maintain the anonymity of the complaint. All anonymous complaints shall be investigated and reasonable action will be taken to address the situation, to the extent such action may be taken that:

1. does not disclose the source of the complaint
2. is consistent with the due process rights of the student(s) alleged to have committed acts of bullying.

III. Staff responsibilities including Prevention and Intervention Strategies

A. Teachers and other staff

Teachers and other school staff, who witness acts of bullying or receive reports of bullying, as defined above, shall promptly notify the building principal and/or his/her designee of the events observed, and shall promptly file a written incident report concerning the events witnessed. Teachers and other school staff who receive student or parent reports of suspected bullying shall promptly notify the building principal and/or his/her designee of such reports(s). If the report is a formal, written complaint, such complaint shall be forwarded promptly (no later than the next school day) to the building principal or his/her designee. If the report is an informal complaint by a student that is received by a teacher or other professional employee, he or she shall prepare a succinct written report of the informal complaint, which shall be forwarded promptly (no later than the next school day) to the building principal or his/her designee. If the report is an informal complaint by a student that is received by other school staff, this employee shall verbally report the matter to the principal and/or his designee promptly (no later than the next school day).

In addition to addressing both informal and formal complaints, teachers and other professional staff members are encouraged to address the issue of bullying in other interactions with students. Teachers and other professionals may find opportunities to educate students about bullying and help eliminate bullying behavior through class discussions, counseling, and reinforcement of socially-appropriate behavior. Teachers and other professional employees should intervene promptly whenever they observe student conduct that has the purpose or effect of ridiculing, humiliating or intimidating any student(s), even if such conduct does not meet the formal definition of “bullying.”

Administrator responsibilities

1. Investigation

The principal (or other responsible program administrator) shall be promptly notified of any formal or informal complaint of suspected bullying received by any building administrator, teacher, or other professional employee. Under the direction of the building principal or his/her designee, all such complaints shall be investigated promptly. A written report of the investigation shall be prepared when the investigation is complete. Such report shall include findings of fact, a determination of whether acts of bullying were verified, and when acts of bullying are verified, a recommendation for intervention, including disciplinary action. Where appropriate, written witness statements shall be attached to the report.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, when a student making an informal complaint has requested anonymity, the investigation of such complaint shall be limited as is appropriate in view of the anonymity of the complainant. Such limitation of investigation may include restricting action to a simple review of the complaint (with or without discussing it with the alleged perpetrator), subject to receipt of further information and/or the withdrawal by the complaining student of the condition that his/her report be anonymous.

2. Remedial actions

Verified acts of bullying shall result in intervention by the building principal or his/her designee that is intended to assure that the prohibition against bullying behavior is enforced, with the goal that any such bullying behavior will end as a result.

Bullying behavior can take many forms and can vary dramatically in how serious it is, and what impact it has on the victim and other students. Accordingly, there is no one prescribed response to verified acts of bullying. While conduct that rises to the level of "bullying" as defined above will generally warrant disciplinary action against the perpetrator of such bullying, whether and to what extent to impose disciplinary action (detention, in-school

suspension, suspension, or expulsion) is a matter for the professional discretion of the building principal.

3. Possible Interventions for Enforcement of this Policy

a. Non-disciplinary Interventions

When verified acts of bullying are identified early and/or when such verified acts of bullying do not reasonably require a disciplinary response, students may be counseled as to the definition of bullying, its prohibition, and their duty to avoid any conduct that could be considered bullying.

If a complaint arises out of conflict between students or groups of students, peer mediation may be considered. Special care, however, is warranted in referring such cases to peer mediation. A power imbalance may make the process intimidating for the victim and therefore inappropriate. The victim's communication and assertiveness skills may be low and could be further eroded by fear resulting from past intimidation and fear of future intimidation. In such cases, the victim should be given additional support. Alternatively, peer mediation may be deemed inappropriate to address the concern.

b. Disciplinary Interventions

When acts of bullying are verified and a disciplinary response is warranted, students are subject to the full range of disciplinary consequences. Anonymous complaints that are not otherwise verified, however, shall not be the basis for disciplinary action.

In-school suspension and suspension may be imposed only after informing the accused perpetrator of the reasons for the proposed suspension and giving him/her an opportunity to explain the situation.

Expulsion may be imposed only after a hearing before the Board of Education, a committee of the Board or an impartial hearing officer designated by the Board of Education in accordance with Board policy. This consequence shall be reserved for serious incidents of bullying and/or when past interventions have not been successful in eliminating bullying behavior.

c. General Intervention Strategies

In addition to the prompt investigation of complaints of bullying and direct intervention when acts of bullying are verified, other district actions may ameliorate any potential problem with bullying in school or at school-sponsored activities. While no specific action is required and school needs for such interventions may vary from time to time, the following list of potential intervention strategies shall serve as a resource for administrators, teachers, and other professional staff members in each school:

1. Respectful responses to bullying concerns raised by students, parents or staff;
2. Planned professional development programs addressing bully/victim problems;
3. Data collection to document bully/victim problems to determine the nature and scope of the problem;
4. Use of peers to help ameliorate the plight of victims and include them in group activities;
5. Avoidance of sex-role stereotyping (e.g., males need to be strong and tough);
6. Awareness and involvement on the part of staff and parents with regards to bully/victim problems;
7. A curriculum that promotes communication, friendship, assertiveness skills, and character education;
8. Modeling by teachers of positive, respectful, and supportive behavior toward students;
9. Creating a school atmosphere of team spirit and collaboration that promotes appropriate social behavior by students in support of others;

10. Employing classroom strategies that instruct students how to work together in a collaborative and supportive atmosphere.

4. General Prevention Strategies

Each school shall implement prevention strategies which may include, but not be limited to:

- a. A school survey to determine the prevalence of bullying.
- b. Establishing a bullying prevention coordinating committee.
- c. School rules that prohibit bullying, harassment and intimidation and contain appropriate consequences for violators.
- d. Adequate adult supervision of areas where bullying is likely to occur, such as the lunchroom, hallways, and outdoor areas.
- e. Grade-appropriate bullying prevention curricula from kindergarten through high school.
- f. Individual interventions with the bully, parents, and school staff as well as the victim, parents and school staff.
- g. School wide training related to safe school climate.
- h. Promotion of parental involvement in bullying prevention through individual or team participation in meetings, trainings, and individual interventions.

IV. Reporting obligations

A. Report to the parent or guardian of the perpetrator

If after investigation, acts of bullying by a specific student are verified, the building principal or his/her designee shall notify the parent or guardian of the perpetrator in writing of that finding. If disciplinary consequences are imposed against such student, a description of such discipline shall be included in such notification.

B. Reports to the victim and his/her parent or guardian

If after investigation, acts of bullying against a specific student are verified, the building principal or his/her designee shall notify the parent or guardian of the victim of such finding. In providing such notification, care must be taken to respect the statutory privacy rights of the perpetrator of such bullying. The specific disciplinary

consequences imposed on the perpetrator, as reflected in the student's educational records, shall not be disclosed to the parents or guardian of the victim, except as provided by law.

C. List of verified acts of bullying

The principal of each school shall maintain a list of the number of verified acts of bullying in the school, and this list shall be available for public inspection upon request. Given that any determination of bullying involves repeated acts over time, each report prepared in accordance with Section III (1) above that includes verified acts of bullying shall be tallied as one verified act of bullying unless the specific actions that are the subject of the report involve separate and distinct acts of bullying. The list shall be limited to the number of such verified acts of bullying in the school, and it shall not set out the particulars of each verified act, including but not limited to any personally identifiable student information, which is confidential information by law.

Each principal must report the number of verified acts of bullying to the State Department of Education in a manner prescribed by the commissioner.

Policy Adopted: January 27, 2003

Policy Revised: April 9, 2007

June 8, 2009

Parent Involvement (BOE Policy 6172.4)

The goal of the Vernon Board of Education is to provide high quality academic programming and instructional opportunities to maximize the achievement of all students and to minimize the achievement disparities that exist among groups of students. Vernon's Title I Program is one means by which the Vernon Board of Education ensures that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency in meeting the State's challenging academic achievement standards and state academic assessment goals. Because research overwhelmingly demonstrates the positive effect that parent involvement has on a child's academic achievement, the Vernon Board of Education expects the participation of parents/guardians in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities.

To facilitate active and effective district parent involvement, the Vernon Public Schools, as required by federal legislation *No Child Left Behind*, will:

- A. Involve parents in the joint development/revision of the district's parent involvement policy by convening an annual meeting in September, at a convenient time, to which all parents shall be invited and encouraged to attend
 - to inform them of their rights in the five key areas addressed in NCLB, including assessment and accountability, highly qualified teachers, highly qualified paraprofessionals, English language learners, and parental involvement; and
 - to engage them as key stakeholders in the annual revision of the parent involvement policy

- B. Provide coordination, technical assistance and other support necessary to assist all schools in planning and implementing effective parent involvement activities to improve student academic achievement and school performance by

- convening monthly meetings of the district’s administrative team, the district’s instructional council, and the school’s PTO presidents to strategize renewed efforts to expand parent participation and to create links between and among the parents, the schools, and the district office.
- accessing the expertise and resources offered by the state department of education to assist the district’s schools in developing the school-level parental involvement compacts
- supporting school level participation (parents, teachers, and administrators) in professional workshops and conferences aimed at enhancing the school-family-community partnership

C. Build the schools’ and parents’ capacity for strong parental involvement by

- providing materials and training to help parents understand what they can do to support their child’s motivation and readiness to learn
- informing parents and parent organizations of the existence and purpose of the state’s Parent Information and Resource Center
- educating teachers in how to reach out, communicate with, and work with parents as equal partners
- ensuring, to the extent possible, that information related to school and parent programs, meetings, and other activities is sent to the parents/guardians of children in a format and in a language that parents can understand
- providing financial support for parental involvement activities
- coordinating with the schools to provide parents timely information about programs (i.e. Elementary Handbook); a description and explanation of the curriculum in use (i.e. Curriculum on the Wall); the academic assessment used to measure student progress; the proficient levels students are expected to meet
- engaging the buildings’ PTOs to actively seek out and invite parents/guardians through regular communication updates and information sessions

- publishing a master calendar of district meetings
 - providing child care to enable parents to participate in school-related meetings and training sessions
- D. Coordinate and integrate parental involvement strategies with other programs and initiatives
- through active participation in the monthly School Readiness Council meetings, which includes stakeholders from the Hockanum Valley Day Care Council, Head Start, the Rockville Public Library, Maple Street's Family Resource Center, the Vernon Regional Adult Basic Education Program, Vernon Youth Services, and Vernon Town Council
 - through the implementation of Vernon's strategic plan *Catalyst for Excellence*
 - through collaboration with other organizations and agencies that serve the interests and needs of students and their families
- E. Conduct, with the involvement of parents, an annual evaluation (survey) of the effectiveness of the parental involvement policy in improving the academic quality of the schools, which includes identifying barriers to greater participation, and using the findings to design strategies for more effective involvement
- F. Involve parents in the activities of the schools
- by communicating opportunities for parental involvement (which include volunteering, sharing expertise, leadership, home support, school decision-making, parent education, professional development, etc.) and by making personal connections to recruit them
 - providing calendar information to parents/guardians of upcoming meetings, discussions, and events and encouraging their participation

Policy Adopted: January 12, 2004

In conclusion, the information presented in this handbook is designed to be helpful to you as a parent or guardian. By being an informed adult, you can help make your child's school experience more rewarding and successful. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact any of the people listed on the inside covers. Your comments and suggestions will be appreciated.

NOTES

NOTES

NOTES

