

PLAIN LANGUAGE SUMMARY OF THE DISTRICT’S CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE
MAINTENANCE OF PUBLIC ORDER ON SCHOOL PROPERTY & AT SCHOOL
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I. Introduction

The District establishes this Code of Conduct for the Maintenance of Public Order on School Property and at School Functions to govern the conduct of students, teachers and other school personnel, and visitors. This Code of Conduct has been developed consistent with the Safe Schools Against Violence in Education Act (Chapter 181 of the Laws of 2000) and Section 100.2 of the implementing Commissioners Regulations and in collaboration with student, teacher, administrators and parent organizations, school safety personnel and other school personnel.

II. The Role of Teachers, Administrators, Other school personnel, the Board and Parents

Students, parents/guardians, instructional staff, administrators, the Superintendent and the Board of Education are all parties in maintaining safe, orderly and effective schools. The roles of and expectations for each of these individuals are specified in the code of conduct.

The Dignity Act Coordinators for each school are as follows:

Erin Sanchez, High School	315-829-7440
Brandy Lee Lappin, High School	315-829-7432
Carrie Hodkinson, Middle School	315-829-7444
Christina Ballard, Middle School	315-829-7449
Vince Pompo, W.A. Wettel Elementary	315-829-7300
Jasmine Peck, W.A. Wettel Elementary	315-829-7307
Gary Bissaillon, J.D. George Elementary	315-829-7361
Maria Tschaar, J.D. George Elementary	315-829-7372
Elizabeth Relyea, E.A. McAllister Elementary	315-829-7330
Chris Bolton, E.A. McAllister Elementary	315-829-7340

The Dignity Act Coordinators are trained in methods to respond to human relations in the areas of race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practices, disability, sexual orientation, gender, (including gender identity or expression) and sex. They are available to speak with any person who has witnessed possible discrimination, harassment, or bullying or if that person has experienced treatment that may be prohibited discrimination, harassment or bullying.

III. Strategies and Procedures for the Maintenance and Enforcement of Public Order on School Property

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A. Purpose

1. Rules and regulations are adopted for the maintenance of public order on district property and provide a program for enforcement. These rules shall apply to any individual on school property and/or at school functions including students, teachers and other school personnel, and visitors.

B. Prohibited conduct

1. No person, either singly or in concert with others, shall:
 - a. Willfully cause physical injury to any other person, or threaten to do so for the purpose of compelling or inducing such other person to refrain from any act which he has a lawful right to do, or to do any act which he has a lawful right not to do.
 - b. Willfully damage or destroy property of the district, or remove or use such property without authorization.
 - c. Without permission, express or implied, enter into any private office of an administrative officer, faculty member or staff member. This prohibition does not apply to law enforcement officers or individuals designated by the Superintendent to conduct lawful investigations of alleged misconduct.
 - d. Other than student or employee, enter a classroom or the building beyond the administrative office without written permission of the superintendent or his designee. Parents of students (who are not prohibited by being in their child's classroom by court order) need not obtain written permission from the Superintendent or designee. However, such individuals must be invited by the classroom teacher and must check in with the building principal's office upon arrival and departure.
 - e. Enter upon and remain in any building or facility for any purpose other than for authorized uses, or in such manner as to obstruct its authorized use by others.
 - f. Without authorization, remain in any building or facility after it is normally closed.
 - g. Refuse to leave any building or facility after being requested to do so by an authorized administrator.

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- h. Obstruct the free movement of persons and vehicles in any place to which these rules apply.
- i. Deliberately disrupt or prevent the peaceful and orderly conduct of classes, lectures and meetings, or deliberately interfere with any person who desires to express his views, including invited speakers.
- j. Have in his possession upon any premises to which these rules apply, any knife, shotgun, pistol, revolver, or other firearm or weapon without the written authorization of the superintendent, whether or not a license to possess the same has been issued to such person.
- k. Possess, consume, sell or exchange alcoholic beverages, drugs or narcotics (as defined in Policy 0021 and Regulation 1025.1) on school properties.
- l. Distribute or post any written material, pamphlet or poster without the prior written approval of the superintendent. This should not be construed as conflicting with any rights conferred on staff members by contract or law.
- m. Using in either words, clothing or signs profane, lewd, vulgar or abusive language or words which may incite or offend another person; or constitute a health or safety hazard (including clothing that promotes the sale or use of alcohol, tobacco and/or controlled substances) or a substantial disruption or material interference with the mission, work or discipline of the school community.
- n. Urge or incite, guard, protect, aid or abet others in the commission of any of the acts herein prohibited.
- o. Plan, direct, encourage, aid or engage in hazing, harassment or bullying.
- p. Violate any law or Board Policy.
- q. In addition to the preceding standards of conduct, the District prohibits discrimination, harassment and bullying against any student by employees or students that creates a hostile environment by conduct (with or without physical conduct) or verbal

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statements, intimidation, or abuse. We consider a hostile environment to be created when actions or statements directed at a student either (1) has or would have the effect of unreasonably and substantially interfering with a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits, or with the student's mental, emotional, or physical well-being, or (2) reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause a student to fear for their physical safety.

The prohibition of discrimination includes, but is not limited to, threats, intimidation, or abuse based on the student's actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practices, disability, sexual orientation, gender (including gender identity or expression), or sex.

C. Age Appropriate Restatement of Policy

You should never feel that it is not safe for you to come to school and participate in all school activities. You should never be prevented from concentrating on your schoolwork because another student or a school staff member is teasing you, making fun of you, pushing you around, or threatening you in some way, because of your actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin (where your family comes from), ethnic group, religion, religious practices, disability, sexual orientation, gender (including gender identity or expression), or sex.

You may not act toward another student in a way that reasonably might make them feel threatened or unsafe, or that might reasonably make them unable to concentrate on their school work, because of what you think about their race, color, weight, national origin (where their family comes from), ethnic group, religion, religious practices, disability, sexual orientation, gender (including gender identity or expression), or sex. It is against school rules for you to do this by your physical actions or by your verbal statements, including electronic messages.

D. Reporting and Responding to Violations

1. Reporting Possible Violations

All students are expected to promptly report violations of the code of conduct to a teacher, guidance counselor, the Building Principal or his or her designee. Any student observing a student possessing a weapon, alcohol or illegal substance on school property or at a school function shall

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report this information immediately to a teacher, the Principal, the Principal's designee or the Superintendent of Schools.

All district staff who are authorized to impose disciplinary sanctions are expected to do so in a prompt, fair and lawful manner. District staff who are not authorized to impose disciplinary sanctions are expected to promptly report violations of the code of conduct to their supervisor, who shall in turn impose an appropriate disciplinary sanction, if so authorized, or refer the matter to a staff member who is authorized to impose an appropriate sanction.

Any weapon, alcohol or illegal substance found shall be confiscated immediately, if possible, followed by notification to the parent of the student involved and the appropriate disciplinary sanction, which may include permanent suspension and referral for prosecution.

The Principal or his/her designee must notify the appropriate local law enforcement agency of those code violations that constitute a crime and substantially affect the order or security of a school as soon as practical, but in no event later than the close of business the day the Principal or his/her designee learns of the violation. The notification may be made by telephone, followed by a letter mailed on the same day as the telephone call is made. The notification must identify the student and explain the conduct that violated the code of conduct and constituted a crime.

2. Responding to Reports of Possible Harassment, Discrimination, and Bullying
 - a. In addition to the procedures described below for removal of disruptive students and possible suspension from attendance, the District provides a procedure for responding to reports of possible harassment, discrimination and bullying against students by another student, an employee, or any other person on school property or at a school function. The process is described in policies 0015, 6010, 7100 and 7101.
 - b. The District has also designated a Dignity Act Coordinator for each school. Those coordinators are appointed annually by the Board of Education. Students, faculty, staff, administrators, and parents are notified of the names of the Dignity Act Coordinators for each building annually.

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E. Penalties and Procedures

Persons who violate this code shall be subject to the following penalties:

- a. Visitors' authorization, if any, to remain on school grounds or at the school function will be withdrawn and they will be directed to leave the premises.
- b. Students will be disciplined in accordance with the code.
- c. Staff members will be disciplined in accordance with any applicable New York State laws and/or collective bargaining agreements.

F. Procedures to Inform Law Enforcement Officials of a Crime and Filing Criminal/Juvenile Delinquency Complaints

In the case of a violation of this section or any other provision of this Code of Conduct which constitutes a crime, the Superintendent has established procedures to report such an incident to the appropriate law enforcement agency and to follow through with filing a criminal/juvenile delinquency complaint.

IV. Student Conduct and Discipline

A. Student Rights and Responsibilities

1. Students Rights
 - a. Students of this district shall have the rights afforded to students under the provisions of the Federal and State constitutions and the laws of the State of New York.
 - b. Each student has the right to learn in a safe and orderly environment most suitable to the student.

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- c. Access to Educational and extracurricular activities on an equal basis, without regard to a persons actual or perceived race, color, creed, religion, national origin, weight, ethnic group, gender, gender orientation, or physical or mental ability including conduct that reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause motional harm.
- d. Learn in an environment free of discrimination, harassment, and bullying based on actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender or sex or reasonably cause or would reasonably be expected to cause physical injury to a student or to cause a student to fear for their physical safety;
- e. Participate equally in all school activities regardless of actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practices, disability, sexual orientation, gender or sex;
- f. Have complaints about school-related incidents that occur on school property or at school function, as well as to acts occurring off school property when those create or would foreseeably create a risk of substantial disruption within the school environment, and it is foreseeable that the conduct, threats, intimidation or abuse might reach school property investigated and responded to.

2. Student Responsibilities

- a. Contribute to maintaining a safe and orderly school environment that is conducive to learning and to show respect to other persons and to property.
- b. Be familiar with and abide by all district policies, rules and regulations.
- c. Attend school every day unless they are legally excused and be in class, on time, and prepared to learn.
- d. Work to the best of their ability in all academic and extracurricular pursuits and strive toward their highest level of achievement possible.

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- e. React to direction given by teachers, administrators and other school personnel in a respectful, positive manner.
- f. Accept responsibility for their own actions.
- g. Respect the rights of others, including the right to secure an education in an environment that is orderly and disciplined.
- h. Take advantage of the academic opportunities offered at school.
- i. Support and participate in school activities.
- j. Maintain habits of personal cleanliness.
- k. Respect school property.
- l. Strive for mutually respectful relationships with teachers and administrators recognizing their role as surrogate parent in matters of behavior and discipline.
- m. Be honest in all situations.
- n. Contribute toward establishing and maintaining an atmosphere that generates mutual respect and dignity for all.
- o. Reports threats of violence, observed or overheard, made towards staff, students, or the District. Reports may be made anonymously and confidentiality will be respected.
- p. Be informed regarding student rights and responsibilities and comply with all rules and regulations of this policy.
- q. Seek help in solving problems that might lead to discipline.
- r. Conduct themselves as representatives of the district when participating in or attending school-sponsored extracurricular events and to hold themselves to the highest standards of conduct, demeanor, and sportsmanship.
- s. Respect and treat others with tolerance and dignity regardless of actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender (including gender identity or expression) or sex.

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t. Immediately report acts of bullying, discrimination, harassment and other inappropriate actions that hurt others.

3. The above bill of rights and responsibilities shall be publicized and explained to all students on an annual basis. The manner and extent of the publication shall be determined by the Superintendent or his/her designee.

B. Student Conduct

1. Acceptable and appropriate conduct by students shall be consistent with the student responsibilities outlined in the code of conduct.

2. The Vernon-Verona-Sherrill School District staff and faculty have high expectations for student behavior. Each student will be expected to be respectful and responsible. Students will:

Treat all school personnel, visitors and their peers with courtesy and respect.

Respect all school and personal property.

Be on time and prepared for school and class.

Wear appropriate school clothing.

Keep their hands, feet and objects to themselves.

Use appropriate school language.

THESE EXPECTATIONS EXTEND TO ALL SCHOOL PROPERTY AND OFF CAMPUS ACTIVITIES INCLUDING SCHOOL BUSES, ATHLETIC EVENTS, FIELD TRIPS, ETC.

3. Unacceptable and Inappropriate behavior

a. Any violation of law

b. Being under the influence of alcohol on school premises or at school functions; selling, consuming or being in possession of alcohol on school premises (including buildings or grounds) or on a bus going to or from a school function or at a school function.

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- c. Being under the influence of, the use, possession, sale or gift of any drug or controlled substance (as defined in Policy 0021 and Regulation 1025.1), or any instrument for the use of such drugs or controlled substance such as pipe, syringe or other paraphernalia, while on school premises (including buildings or grounds) or on a bus going to or from a school function or at a school function as defined by Section I (B). Excepted is any drug taken in accordance with a current prescription signed by a physician that is to be taken by that particular student at the time in question.
- d. Stealing, lying, cheating, plagiarism or other acts of dishonesty.
- e. Verbal or physical intimidation including ~~physical~~ specific and non-specific threats of violence.
- f. Fighting or causing physical harm to another.
- g. Disrespect toward an administrator, faculty or other staff member.
- h. Possession or use of a weapon, which constitutes a firearm or dangerous and /or explosive device including firearms (device), on school premises or at any school functions. School premises include school grounds, school buildings, or a school bus.
- i. Possession or use of knives or other weapons not included in subsection (i) on school premises. School premises include school grounds, school buildings, or a school bus.
- j. Failure to comply with the directions of a teacher, administrator or other school employee.
- k. Engaging in acts of harassment or sexual harassment as defined in the district's policies.
- l. Using in either words, clothing, or signs, profane, lewd, vulgar, abusive language or words which may incite or offend another person; or constitute a health and safety hazard (including clothing that promotes the sale or use of alcohol, tobacco and/or controlled substances) or a substantial disruption or material interference with the mission, work or discipline of the school community.
- m. Selling, using or possessing obscene material.

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- n. Lateness for, missing or leaving school or class without permission or an excuse given by a faculty member.
 - o. Smoking a cigarette (including electric and water vapor cigarettes), cigar or pipe, or using chewing or smokeless tobacco on school premises (including buildings or grounds) or on a bus going to or from a school function or a school-sponsored function.
 - p. Any willful act which disrupts the normal operation of the school community.
 - q. Unacceptable classroom behavior including being disrespectful to a teacher or staff member, student or visitor or inappropriate talking in class.
 - r. Unacceptable bus behavior including not staying seated, throwing objects, excessive loudness or other activities that distract the driver of the bus.
 - s. Public displays of affection
 - t. Gambling.
 - u. Vandalism of school district property or the personal property of a teacher, administrator, other district employee or any person lawfully on district property.
 - v. Hazing, bullying, harassment, discrimination
4. Student Dress
- a. All students are expected to give proper attention to personal cleanliness and to dress appropriately for school and school functions. Students and their parents have the primary responsibility for acceptable student dress and appearance. Students may be required to wear appropriate protective gear in applicable classes (e.g. home economics, physical education).

Teachers and all other district personnel should exemplify and reinforce acceptable student dress and help students develop an understanding of appropriate appearance in the school setting.

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- b. A student's dress, grooming and appearance, including hair style/color, jewelry, make-up and nails, shall:
 - 1. Be safe, appropriate and not disrupt or interfere with the educational process.
 - 2. Recognize that extremely brief garments such as tube tops, net tops, halter tops, spaghetti straps, plunging necklines (front and/or back) and see-through garments are not appropriate.
 - 3. Ensure that underwear is completely covered with outer clothing.
 - 4. Include footwear at all times. Footwear that is a safety hazard will not be allowed.
 - 5. Not include the wearing of hats in the educational setting except for a medical or religious purpose.
 - 6. Not include items that are vulgar, obscene, libelous or denigrate others on account of race, color, religion, creed, national origin, gender, sexual orientation or disability.
 - 7. Not promote and/or encourage other illegal or violent activities.
 - 8. Not constitute a health or safety hazard (including clothing that promotes the sale or use of alcohol, tobacco and/or controlled substances).
- c. Each building principal or his designee shall be responsible for informing all students and their parents of the student dress code at the beginning of the school year and any revisions to the dress code made during the school year.
- d. Students who violate the student dress code shall be required to modify their appearance by covering or removing the offending item and, if necessary or practical, replacing it with an acceptable item. Any student who refuses to do so shall be subject to discipline, up to and including in-school suspension for the day. Any student who repeatedly fails to comply with the dress code

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shall be subject to further discipline, up to and including out-of-school suspension.

5. Gun-Free Schools

- a. In accordance with the Gun-Free Schools Law (20 U.S.C.A. Section 3351), the Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994 (20 U.S.C.A. Section 8921), New York State Education Law Section 3214(3), and this Board policy, the punishment for violation of Section IV subsection (B) (2) (h) shall be a suspension from attendance upon instruction for a period of not less than one calendar year, unless the superintendent shall determine to modify such punishment. The superintendent's determination shall be on a case-by-case basis.

C. Disciplinary Responses to Student Misconduct

The purpose of all discipline is to teach students appropriate and constructive behaviors. Disciplinary measures shall be appropriate to the seriousness of the offense and, where applicable, to the previous discipline record of the student.

This code divides types of misbehaviors into four levels of increasing seriousness, with more stringent disciplinary measures provided for at each level. If an infraction appears to fall between two levels, it should be categorized and dealt with at the less stringent level. At each level there are examples of infractions to be treated at that level. The list is intended to be descriptive rather than exhaustive. Each level also has a description of procedures which school officials should follow in administering discipline, and a menu of disciplinary choices. Because each child and each misbehavior is different, school officials should tailor the discipline for each infraction to best encourage the child to make better choices in the future.

Responses to acts of harassment, bullying and/or discrimination against students by students shall use measured, balanced, and age-appropriate remedies and procedures, with the goals of prevention and education, as well as intervention and discipline. We will consider the nature and severity of the conduct, the developmental age of the student engaging in the conduct, the actor's prior disciplinary record, and the impact of the conduct on the student at whom it was directed.

D. Removal of disruptive students from the classroom and school property.

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Teachers have a limited authority to remove disruptive pupils from the classroom. Such removal shall be consistent with this code of conduct and the V.V.S.T.A. Contract Article Student Discipline and Disturbed Children (see page 21a.).

E. Student Suspension from School

1. The suspension of pupils shall be conducted in accordance with the regulations of Section 3214 of the Education Law.
2. Minimum Suspension for Pupils who Repeatedly are Substantially Disruptive

Pupils who repeatedly are substantially disruptive to the educational process or who substantially interfere with the teacher's authority in the classroom shall be subject to a minimum out-of-school suspension of two (2) days. A student who "repeatedly is substantially disruptive of the educational process or substantially interferes with the teacher's authority in the classroom" is defined as one who is removed from the classroom by a teacher more than four (4) times in a semester. Such suspension period may be reduced on a case by case basis consistent with law.

3. Minimum Suspension for Violent Pupils

Students who are deemed to be "violent pupils" as defined by Education Law Section 3214 (2-a) (a) shall be subject to a minimum out-of-school suspension of at least five (5) days.

F. PINS Petition/Referral to Human Services Agencies

Students may be referred to outside agencies, as appropriate for assistance in addressing behavioral or other problems.

V. Procedure in the Prevention, Early Identification and Resolution of Discipline Difficulties

Students, Parents and others shall report students who are having difficulties or appear to be having difficulty regarding matters covered in the Code of Conduct to the building principal.

Teachers and Pupil Service Personnel shall report orally to their principal, the Superintendent, or designee any incident of harassment, bullying and/or discrimination that they witness or that is reported to them, not more than one day later; and file a written report not later than two (2) school days after the initial oral report.

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Principals shall report to the Superintendent, or designee any incident of harassment, bullying and/or discrimination that they witness or that is reported to them, not more than one day later.

The **Superintendent** shall process in a timely manner all reports of harassment, bullying and/or discrimination, including insuring that an appropriate investigation is conducted and appropriate reports are made to law enforcement.

VI. Discipline of Students with Disabilities

The Board of Education recognizes that the need to address disruptive or violations of the code of conduct within its schools may result in the suspension, removal or other discipline of students with disabilities eligible for services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Article 89 of the Education Law (Article 89) and their implementing regulations. It also recognizes that these students with disabilities enjoy certain procedural protections whenever school authorities intend to impose discipline upon them.

VII. Conduct by School Employees

Acceptable conduct by school employees shall be consistent with the role of teachers and staff outlined in the code of conduct.

VIII. Prohibition of Corporal Punishment

- A. No teacher, administrator, officer, employee or agent of the District shall use corporal punishment against a pupil. Corporal punishment means any act of physical force upon a pupil for the purpose of punishing that pupil.
- B. However, reasonable physical force may be used: to protect oneself, another pupil, teacher or any other person from physical injury; to protect the property of the school or others; or to restrain or remove a pupil whose behavior is interfering with the orderly exercise and performance of District functions, powers and duties, if that pupil has refused to comply with a request to refrain from further disruptive acts.

IX. Standards and Procedures to Assure the Security and Safety of Students and School Personnel.

The district has an established emergency management/school safety plan, which has been developed in accordance with applicable law and regulation to assure the security and safety of students and school personnel.

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X. Copies of the District's Code of Conduct

This document is a plain language summary of the District's Code of Conduct. Copies of the District's Code of Conduct may be obtained through your student's school office or the Office of the Superintendent.

Vernon-Verona-Sherrill School District

Adopted: 07/05/05, 11/13/07

Revised: 04/09/12, 07/02/12, 08/06/13, 08/18/14, 10/27/14, 08/03/17, 01/22/18

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