



STUDENT & FAMILY HANDBOOK

2021-2022

In response to the COVID-19 global pandemic, VSNB is following the guidance and regulations coming from the Vermont Department of Health, the State of Vermont Agency of Education, and the Centers for Disease Control. There will be no exceptions to safety requirements without documentation that shows the variation is appropriate and safe for the circumstances.

Any changes to this handbook will be communicated directly to students, families, and staff.

**9 School Street
P O Box 847
North Bennington, Vermont 05257
(P) 802-442-5955
(F) 802-447-2397**

info@vsnb.org www.vsnb.org

Welcome to The Village School of North Bennington (VSNB)

On behalf of the entire faculty and staff, we take this opportunity to welcome you. It is our hope that the school year will be one filled with happiness and personal accomplishments. The information in this Student and Family Handbook is designed to answer questions you may have about our school. Please reach out to faculty or staff if you have additional questions or need assistance.

Please visit the school's [website](#) for the most up-to-date information throughout the year, including the [school calendar](#) and a list of faculty and staff. The school's policies and handbooks are available online at www.vsnb.org/handbooks.

**Students are expected to uphold the pillars of the VSNB Constitution:
Be Safe, Be Kind, Be Respectful, and Have Fun!**

TIME SCHEDULES

Breakfast Program	7:45 a.m. - 8:15 a.m.
Morning Gym	7:45 a.m. - 8:00 a.m.
Front Doors Open	8:00 a.m.
Class Begins	8:15 a.m.
Dismissal	3:00 p.m.
After School Program	3:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

MORNING DROP-OFF (8-8:15 a.m.)

Students and adults must arrive at school wearing their face coverings. Drop-off and pick-up will happen on both School Street and Church Street. If you have students in multiple grades, please use the location designated for your youngest student.

- The Church Street "Drop-off Zone" is for families with students in Pre-K through First Grade. Staff members will escort these students into the school building. If you have older students, they should be dropped off here, as well.
- School Street is only for families with students in Second Grade through Sixth Grade.

As a reminder, students are expected to exit their vehicle wearing a face covering and will be required to hand sanitize at the entrance of the school building.

AFTERNOON PICK-UP

All students will be dismissed at 3 p.m. They should be picked up at the same location at which they were dropped off in the morning.

- As a reminder, if your family has students in Pre-k - First Grade, you should pick up all of your students on Church Street. If your family only has a student(s) in Second Grade - Sixth Grade, you should pick them up on School Street.
- When the weather is inclement, students will wait in their classrooms and will be contacted when an adult arrives to pick them up. We will do our best to keep everything moving quickly and smoothly, but please understand that pick up may take longer than usual.

PLEASE NOTE: All students will be released to parents/guardians or a contact designated for pick up. Students in second grade through sixth grade can be dismissed to walk or bike home ONLY if the school office has permission from a parent/guardian. Please contact info@vsnb.org or 802-442-5955 regarding permissions.

ABSENCE/TARDY/EARLY DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

If your student will be absent, please contact the office at 802-442-5955 or info@vsnb.org.

Tardy students should use the main entrance doorbell and wait to be greeted by a staff member, who will conduct the health screening and sign the student in. The adult who brings the student to school, must not leave until the staff member gives the thumbs-up that the student has passed the health screening.

Early Dismissal: Parents must email or call ahead to the main office at 802-442-5955 or info@vsnb.org to notify the school that your student(s) will be picked up early. Communicating this information to the teacher is not enough; please contact the main office. The main office will inform your student's teacher of the early pick-up. Anyone, other than a parent/guardian who is picking up a student early must be on your student's Emergency Contacts list.

The adult picking up a student should ring the school doorbell upon arrival. An office staff member will meet you at the door to sign out your student. Please be prepared to show your photo ID (e.g. a driver's license). The process of dismissing a student early may take up to 10 minutes, and we recommend you build this extra time into your schedule.

SAFETY POLICY

VSNB is committed to providing a safe environment for all students, staff members and community members. Our students, families and staff are important partners in helping make this possible. Consequently, negative conduct cannot and will not be tolerated within our school. Anyone having knowledge of negative conduct within our school has a responsibility to report this to one of the VSNB staff members.

It is important for us to know who is at our school during the day. In the event of an emergency, we need to be able to account for and support all members of our school community. All exterior doors will be locked during the school day for the safety of our students and staff. Please do not prop the doors open, as this compromises our security efforts. We ask that all families and visitors follow our procedures.

Outside of school hours, students are not permitted in the building unless they are in the company of a staff member.

VISITING DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

Fully vaccinated adults will be permitted into the building for scheduled meetings, volunteering, and chaperoning for field trips. Visitors, volunteers, and chaperones will be asked to provide a copy of their vaccination card to the school nurse. Parents and guardians will not be permitted into the building for drop-off and pick-up regardless of vaccination status.

EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

The Head of School may close VSNB or dismiss students/staff early when hazardous weather or other emergencies threaten health or safety. When school is closed, all activities are cancelled.

Parents are requested to avoid calling schools on days of poor weather; it is important to keep school phone lines open.

All school closings and delays will be posted on the school website at www.vsnb.org and will appear on several of the local TV and radio stations.

Additionally, for parents and guardians who provided the school with cell phone numbers and email addresses, and have requested we alert you to school closings and delays, we will be sending out a text message and email to you when there are school closings and delays.

STUDENT DRESS CODE

Students and staff are expected to dress in a respectful manner, one that does not create a distraction from the learning environment. While we embrace individual freedoms, we recognize that school is a place of work for both staff and students and that their dress must underscore a climate of mutual respect. This policy requires all students and staff while attending school and all school-sanctioned functions to present themselves appropriately attired.

- Pants shall be worn fastened and at the waist.
- Skirts, dresses, and shorts of appropriate length are permitted. They must be long enough to reach mid thigh.
- Shirt tops and shirt blouses must meet the waistband of the pants/skirts.
- Skimpy or revealing clothing is not allowed. This includes transparent, see-through, or low cut tops; strapless, “tube,” halter, or spaghetti strapped tops; backless dresses or tops; “muscle shirts;” and other clothing that provides minimum coverage or shows cleavage. Sleeveless shirts, cut close around the arms, are acceptable.
- Clothing shall be worn in such a way that underclothing is not visible.
- Offensive Items: Anything that promotes or advertises drugs, alcohol, tobacco products, or things of a violent or sexual nature is not allowed. Anything that is vulgar, obscene, rude, lewd, or is aimed at demeaning a specific group or individual is prohibited.
- Sunglasses or hoods must be removed at the entrance of the school building and shall not be worn while in the school building. Hats will not be worn inside the schools, except for medical or religious reasons, or for a special event such as hat day.
- Any article of jewelry that is considered to be a safety hazard is prohibited (e.g. spiked or studded jewelry).

•Footwear must be worn at all times. Footwear that is a safety hazard will not be allowed. Footwear must provide the proper support necessary to prevent accidental tripping, slipping and/or falling. Rolling sneakers are not allowed.

•Exceptions: The administration may grant general exceptions for special events and individual exceptions (e.g. for religious or health reasons), upon application by the group or individual.

•Students, employees and volunteers are expected to meet dress code expectations each day of school. Anyone who chooses not to meet the dress code will not be permitted in class until the inappropriate clothing is replaced with appropriate clothing.

School administrators and teachers may require special clothing for health or safety reasons for students participating in physical education, certain extracurricular activities, work with or around machines or other activities. However, no particular brand may be required.

In all cases in accordance with this dress code, the Head of School will determine what is “appropriate attire.”

COMPREHENSIVE ATTENDANCE POLICY

We recognize that student attendance in school is an important component of student success. Numerous studies have shown the importance of the relationship between student attendance at school and academic achievement. Student interaction with teachers and other students in class helps to enhance the academic learning experience and provides a basis by which students can demonstrate mastery of subject matter. Daily attendance creates an environment that fosters subject competency, continuity of learning, and responsibility—all of which are integral to the education process. It also fosters and helps to build a positive work ethic and attitude, which will serve the student well in the future.

Excused Absences and Tardies

The following reasons for student absences, tardies and early departures shall be considered appropriate by VSNB standards:

1. Illness (extended illness of three or more consecutive days requires a physician’s note)
2. Illness or death in the family
3. Unsafe travel conditions
4. Religious observance
5. Medical appointments
6. Quarantine
7. Required court appearances
8. Participation in a school-sponsored activity
9. Other reasons as may be approved by the Head of School

Any other student absence, tardiness or early departure shall be considered to be unexcused. Disciplinary action may result for illegal absences.

Distance Learners and Distance Learning Day (Wednesdays)

VSNB expects K-6 Distance Learning students to participate in distance learning Monday through Friday. All K-6 students are expected to participate in Distance Learning on Wednesdays. Students must have at least one check-in

with a teacher and/or staff member to be counted as present, according to state guidance. A check-in can be through email, a phone call, or via one of the school's remote learning platforms (Google, Zoom, Seesaw).

HOMEWORK POLICY

In an information-saturated society such as ours, homework is an essential practice in every student's educational experience. Our goal is to provide purposeful homework as a means of contributing to the educational advancement of our students. There are many sound educational reasons for giving homework.

Among them are:

1. Its usefulness as an act of intellectual discipline;
2. Its ability to foster initiative, independence, and responsibility;
3. Its value in supplementing and reinforcing work done in school;
4. Its ability to bring the role of school and home closer together.

Homework Policy: Student's Responsibility (as age appropriate)

- Student will keep accurate, current record of assignments given and completed.
- Students will complete assignments and hand in assignments on the day that they are due.
- Students should regularly observe high standards of neatness and quality.
- Students will seek help and use resources when needed.
- Students will obtain assignments during or immediately following an excused absence and complete work promptly.

PROGRESS REPORTS AND PARENT CONFERENCES

Student progress reports will be completed by teachers to keep parents/guardians informed of their students' school progress.

Parent conferences are an important element in reporting student progress to parents/guardians, and teachers will reach out to schedule conferences at least twice a year. Parents/guardians may also initiate a conference by contacting the teacher, counselor, and/or Head of School. When a parent/guardian requests a conference with a teacher, the teacher will make every effort to arrange a mutually convenient time. Such conferences will be planned around the teacher's schedule so as not to interfere with class time.

FRIENDS OF THE VILLAGE SCHOOL (FVS)

Friends of the Village School welcomes family, friends, teachers, staff and community members—anyone who loves our school—for the purpose of community-building and providing more opportunities and enrichment for our students. FVS also organizes fundraisers in direct support of classroom activities and experiences. It strives to promote civic responsibility and the spirit of friendship and volunteerism within the school community. If you are interested in volunteering with FVS, please contact friends@vsnb.org to get involved and/or visit www.vsnb.org/fvs/ for more information.

STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES

For COVID-19 health guidelines, please refer to the “COVID-19 Addendum.”

Student Illness: If a student is injured or ill, he/she should tell a teacher and ask for permission to see the school nurse. If the nurse deems it necessary for the student to leave school, the parent or designee will be notified. The school nurse is authorized to administer emergency first aid. If an injury appears serious, the parents will be notified and transportation home or to the hospital will be arranged. It is very important that the school be provided with all parent contact numbers, as well as at least two emergency contacts in case the parent(s) cannot be reached.

Medication: If a student needs to take any medication, prescription or non-prescription, during the school day, he/she must follow these rules: Obtain a medication authorization form from the school nurse. This form must be completed and signed by the parent/guardian and the physician; return the form to the school nurse with the medication. The medication needs to be in the original packaging with the student’s name and DOB on it, and the doctor’s orders must be included. NO student is permitted to carry medication on school grounds. Parents or parent designee MUST deliver and pick up any medication. There are special circumstances in which students are given permission to “self carry” medications to use as needed. Approval from the school nurse and written prescription are required to “self carry.” Students carrying medications (prescription and non-prescription) without proper authorization as stated above are subject to disciplinary action.

Screening and Immunizations: Vision and hearing screening will occur for students in grades Pre-K, K,1,3,5, as well as for students with an IEP or 504 plan. VSNB complies with Vermont State law regarding immunizations. Our school nurse will contact any parent whose youngster may be missing a required immunization.

When to Keep a Student with Illness at Home: It can be hard to know when to keep children home from school. Usually the best place for them is school, but there are times when staying home to rest or making an appointment with your health care provider is necessary and recommended. Please keep your student home if any of the following apply:

- A temperature greater than 100.4°F (this is considered a fever). The student must be fever-free for 24 hours, without the use of fever reducers (such as ibuprofen and acetaminophen), before returning to school. Please do not give students fever reducers and send them to school. They are still contagious and should not be around other children.
- Vomiting and/or diarrhea within the last 12 hours.
- Severe sore throat for more than 48 hours and/or exposure to strep throat; please contact your healthcare provider.
- Honey-crusted sores around the nose and mouth; please contact your healthcare provider.
- Unidentified rash on any area of the body; please contact your healthcare provider.
- Large amounts of mucus or discharge from nose and face pain or headache; please contact your healthcare provider.
- Severe ear pain or fluid coming from the ear; please contact your healthcare provider.
- Severe headache, especially with fever; please contact your healthcare provider.

Additionally, refer to the “COVID-19 Addendum” regarding when to keep a student home from school.

If you find your child is frequently asking to stay home from school and there do not appear to be any physical symptoms, if they are falling behind or appear anxious about school, contact the school nurse or your health care provider to discuss your concern.

SCHOOL COUNSELOR

The school counselor is available for all students at VSNB on a part-time basis. Our counselor provides the

following services:

- Individual and/or group counseling assistance to help students make wise decisions and improve problem-solving skills.
- Individual or group counseling assistance to help students who exhibit any attendance, academic, behavioral or adjustment problems.
- Student assistance in resolving conflicts with friends, parents and teachers.
- Providing an effective link between parents, students and teachers.

EVACUATION AND “CLEAR THE HALLS” DRILLS

The Head of School (or designee) is responsible for conducting evacuation and Clear the Halls (lockdown) in order to instruct students and staff in exiting the school building and staying safe within our building in an emergency in the shortest time possible and without confusion and panic. Evacuation drills shall include instruction on exit locations, as well as evacuation procedures. Clear the Halls drills will provide clear direction for staying safe within the building.

All students are expected to cooperate with staff members during these drills, and to remain quiet and orderly and listen carefully to safety instructions. For evacuation drills, the exit route is posted in each room. Students must stay with their teacher during these drills.

During the 2021-2022 school year, the Egress Fire drills along with Active Shooter/Violent Intruder drills, will be modified according to VT AOE guidance.

BREAKFAST & LUNCH

All students will have access to free breakfast and lunch for the 2021-2022 school year thanks to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Vermont Agency of Education (AOE), the Southwest Vermont Supervisory Union, and the Abbey Group. Breakfast will be served in the cafeteria from 7:45 - 8:15 a.m. Lunch will be served in the cafeteria, where students will eat with their classes at appointed times. If students want to participate in the meal program, they can order from the school menu on a daily basis. For students who want to purchase milk only, there will be a cost for milk of .50¢. Families who would like to send their students with lunch from home, may still do so.

Students are expected to:

- Treat others with respect
- Remain seated unless purchasing food or disposing of garbage/tray
- Return all trays and utensils to the designated area
- Clean up all litter from their table and immediate area.
- Talk, not shout
- Be courteous to fellow students and cafeteria staff in the lunch line and at their tables
- Keep “hands off” the food of others
- Refrain from throwing food or other material
- Respect the any allergy-free zones
- Follow the reasonable requests of the cafeteria supervisors

Complete Nondiscrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English. To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: <https://www.usda.gov/oascr/how-to-file-a-program-discrimination-complaint>, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

(1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

(2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or

(3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Education:

Students are entitled to an education without discrimination on the basis of sex, race, creed, or personal condition.

Each student has the right to:

1. Learn in a safe, healthy, orderly and courteous school environment.
2. Attend school and participate in school activities and programs unless removed from participation by the Head of School.
3. Take part in all school activities on an equal basis regardless of race, sex, national origin or disability.

Each student has the responsibility to:

1. Attend school regularly.
2. To be familiar with and abide by all school policies, rules, and regulations of the school pertaining to student conduct.
3. Respect the property of others and the school. Take responsibility for his/her belongings and understand the school will not be responsible for personal items brought to school.
4. Work to the best of his or her ability in all academic and extracurricular pursuits and strive toward the highest level of achievement possible.
5. React to direction given by teachers, administrators and other school personnel in a respectful, positive manner.
6. Ask questions when they do not understand.

Association:

Students have the right to participate in any and all student activities without restrictions on the basis of race, sex, national origin, or other arbitrary criteria.

Students have the responsibility to respect and follow the established guidelines of each activity by:

1. Behaving appropriately when participating in or attending school events and adhering to the highest standards of positive conduct.
2. Accepting responsibility for one's actions.
3. Seeking help in solving problems that might lead to disciplinary issues.

Child Welfare:

The school has a legal and moral responsibility to act on behalf of a child who may be neglected or mistreated. Teachers, administrators and other professional staff who hold teaching or administrative certificates are mandated child abuse reporters. Our staff members have been instructed to report signs of child abuse/neglect.

PROHIBITED STUDENT CONDUCT

The VSNB administration and staff expect all students to conduct themselves in an appropriate and civil manner, with proper regard for the rights and welfare of other students; school personnel and other members of the school community; and for the care of school facilities and equipment.

The best discipline is self-imposed, and students must learn to assume and accept responsibility for their own behavior, as well as the consequences of their misbehavior. School personnel who interact with students are expected to use disciplinary action only when necessary and to place emphasis on students' ability to grow in self-discipline.

VSNB recognizes the need to make clear and specific expectations for student conduct while on school property or engaged in a school activity. The rules of conduct listed below are intended to do that; they focus first and foremost on safety and respect for the rights and property of others. Students who will not accept responsibility for their own behavior and who violate these school rules will be required to accept the penalties for their conduct.

A. Do not engage in conduct that is disorderly. Examples of disorderly conduct include:

1. Running in hallways.
2. Making unreasonable noise.
3. Using language or gestures that are profane, lewd, vulgar, or abusive.
4. Obstructing vehicular or pedestrian traffic, including bicycles.
5. Computer/electronic communications misuse, including any unauthorized use of computers, software, or internet/intranet account; accessing inappropriate websites; or any other violation of the school's Acceptable Use of Electronic Resources.

B. Do not engage in conduct that is insubordinate or disruptive. Examples of insubordinate or disruptive conduct include:

1. Failing to comply with the reasonable directions of teachers, school administrators or other school employees in charge of students or otherwise demonstrating disrespect.
2. Lateness for, missing, or leaving school without permission.

C. Do not engage in conduct that is violent. Examples of violent conduct include:

1. Committing an act of violence (such as hitting, kicking, punching, and scratching) upon another student, a teacher, an administrator or another school employee, or attempting to do so.
2. Possessing a weapon; displaying what appears to be a weapon; threatening to use any weapon. Authorized law enforcement officials are the only persons permitted to have a weapon in their possession while on school property or at a school function.
3. Intentionally damaging or destroying the personal property of a student, teacher, administrator, or another school employee.
4. Intentionally damaging or destroying school property.
5. Threatening to harm another person.

Please note that if a staff member has reasonable suspicion of an inappropriate or dangerous item in a student's possession (backpacks, etc.) an immediate search will occur to protect the safety of everyone in our building).

D. Do not engage in any conduct that endangers the safety, morals, health or welfare of others. Examples of such conduct include:

1. Stealing the property of other students, school personnel, or any other person.
2. Defamation, which includes making false or unprivileged statements or representations about an individual or identifiable group of individuals that harm the reputation of the person or the identifiable group by demeaning them.
3. Discrimination, which includes the use of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or disability as a basis for treating another in a negative manner.

4. Harassment, which includes a sufficiently severe action or a persistent, pervasive pattern of actions or statements directed at an identifiable individual or group which are intended to be or which a reasonable person would perceive as ridiculing or demeaning.
5. Intimidation, which includes engaging in actions or statements that put an individual in fear of bodily harm.
6. Hazing, which includes any intentional or reckless act directed against another for the purpose of initiation into, affiliating with, or maintaining membership in any school sponsored activity, organization, club, or team.
7. Selling, using, or possessing obscene material.
8. Using vulgar or abusive language, cursing, or swearing.
9. Smoking a cigarette, cigar, pipe, or using chewing or smokeless tobacco.
10. Possessing, consuming, selling, distributing, or exchanging alcoholic beverages or illegal substances or cannabis (including marijuana, medical cannabis and hashish), or being under the influence of these.
11. Inappropriately using or sharing prescription and over-the-counter drugs.
12. Indecent exposure, that is, exposure to sight of the private parts of the body in a lewd or indecent manner.
13. Initiating a report warning of fire, bomb, or other catastrophe without valid cause, misuse of 911, or discharging a fire extinguisher.

E. Do not engage in any form of academic misconduct.

Examples of academic misconduct include plagiarism, cheating, or copying.

REPORTING VIOLATIONS

All students are expected to promptly report violations of the code of conduct to a teacher, guidance counselor, the Head of School, or another staff member. Any student observing a student possessing a weapon, alcohol, or illegal substance on school property or at a school activity shall report this information immediately to a teacher, the Head of School, or any other school personnel. The Head of School or his or 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 school.

Disciplinary Penalties

Procedures and Referrals

Discipline is most effective when it deals directly with the problem at the time and place it occurs, and in a way that students view as fair and impartial. School personnel who interact with students are expected to use disciplinary action only when necessary and to place emphasis on the student's ability to grow in self-discipline.

Disciplinary action, when necessary, will be firm, fair, and consistent so as to be the most effective in changing student behavior. In determining the appropriate disciplinary action, school personnel authorized to impose disciplinary penalties will consider the following:

1. The student's age;
2. The nature of the offense and the circumstances which led to the offense;
3. The student's prior disciplinary record;
4. The effectiveness of other forms of discipline;
5. Information from parents, teachers, and/or others, as appropriate;

6. Other extenuating circumstances.

As a general rule, discipline will be progressive. This means that a student's first violation will usually merit a lighter penalty than subsequent violations. If the conduct of a student is related to a disability or suspected disability, the student shall be referred to the Educational Support Team; and discipline, if warranted, shall be administered consistent with the separate requirements of this code of conduct for disciplining students with a disability or presumed to have a disability. A student identified as having a disability shall not be disciplined for behavior related to their disability.

Penalties:

Students who are found to have violated the school's code of conduct may be subject to the following penalties, either alone or in combination:

1. Verbal warning
2. Oral or written notification to parent
3. Recess detention
4. Detention with teacher, Head of School, or Designee
5. Removal from activities or privileges
6. Removal from classroom by teacher
7. Suspension from school by Head of School
8. Out of school suspension by Head of School or Designee
9. Long-term (more than five days) suspension from school by Head of School
10. Reporting of violations to appropriate authorities

Agency of Education (AOE) State Rule 4500 for the Use of Restraint in Schools

VSNB closely adheres to the state rules on the use of restraint when a student's behavior poses an imminent and substantial risk of injury to self or others. Specific Parent/Guardian notification will be provided if a child is involved in a restraint as per AOE rules on appropriate use of restraint to protect the safety and welfare of children and adults in our school.

SCHOOL GUIDELINES FOR BULLYING, HAZING AND HARASSMENT

VSNB recognizes that hazing, harassment, sexual or otherwise, and/or bullying of students and staff is abusive and illegal and that such behavior harms victims and negatively impacts the school culture by creating an environment of fear, distrust, intimidation, and intolerance. The Board further recognizes that preventing and remedying bullying, harassment, and/or hazing is essential to ensure a healthy, nondiscriminatory environment in which students can learn and employees can work productively.

VSNB is committed to providing an educational and working environment that promotes respect, dignity, and equality and that is free from all forms of harassment. To this end, VSNB condemns and strictly prohibits all forms of hazing, harassment, and/or bullying on school grounds and at all school-sponsored activities, programs, and events, including those that take place at locations outside the school.

- A. No student, teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor or other employee of the school district shall plan, direct, encourage, aid or engage in bullying, harassment and/or hazing.
- B. No teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor or other employee of the school district shall permit, condone or tolerate bullying, harassment and/or hazing.
- C. Apparent permission or consent by a person being bullied, harassed or hazed does not lessen the prohibitions contained in this policy or the enforcement of this policy.

- D. This policy applies to behavior directly connected to school activities that occur on or off school property and before, during, and after school hours.
- E. A person who engages in an act that violates school policy or law shall be subject to discipline for that act.

Harassment can occur employee to student, student to employee, employee to employee, student to student, male to female, female to male, male to male, or female to female. It shall be a violation of this policy for any student, employee, or third party (school visitor, vendor, etc.) to harass any student or employee. Words alone can constitute harassment. Words can create an atmosphere that is so severe, pervasive, and offensive that it denies a victim equal access to educational or employment opportunities.

Bullying consists of inappropriate persistent behavior including threats, or intimidation of others, treating others cruelly, terrorizing, coercing, or habitual put-downs and/or badgering others. Bullying, similar to all forms of harassment and hazing, are prohibited behaviors.

Bullying has three key components:

1. Rude and disrespectful behavior;
2. Repeated harmful acts;
3. An imbalance of power, real or perceived.

It can involve repeated physical, verbal, or psychological attacks, or intimidation directed against a victim (target) who cannot properly defend oneself because of size, strength or because the victim is outnumbered or less psychologically resilient.

STUDENT ACCEPTABLE USE OF ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

Refer to the “Technology” section of the VSNB website (<https://vsnb.org/technology/>) for additional policies and information.

Giving students access to computers and the Internet provides students with positive educational experiences and motivates students to improve academic skills. Our goal is to effectively use electronic resources to support and enrich the curriculum. However, we also recognize that with student access to computers comes the possibility that a student may discover controversial or inappropriate information or material. We believe that the benefits to students from access to electronic information and the opportunities it provides far exceed the potential risks and disadvantages, but we also recognize the importance of minimizing the risks. School staff will provide basic instruction to students on appropriate use of electronic resources and the Internet, but shall not be liable for students’ unacceptable use or violations of copyright restrictions or other laws.

Students are not permitted to use personal electronic devices (PEDs) at school. Students may possess PEDs in school, but they must be powered off and out of sight in backpacks. It is not permissible for PEDS to be on “silent” or vibrate” during this time.

PEDs may include but are not limited to: laptops, tablets, existing and emerging mobile communication systems and smart technologies (cellular phones, iPhones, Smartphones, internet-enabled phones), handheld entertainment systems (video games, CD players, compact DVD players, MP3 players, iPods, earphones, Apple Watches, etc.), and current or emerging wireless handheld technologies or portable information technology systems that can be used for word processing, wireless internet access, image capture/recording, sound recording, and information

transmitting/receiving/storing, etc.

If your child has a legitimate reason for using a PED during the school day, it will be necessary for a parent/guardian to write a letter to the Head of School explaining why your child needs to use the PED.

RESPONSIBLE COMPUTER, NETWORK & INTERNET USE

Refer to the “Technology” section of the VSNB website (<https://vsnb.org/technology/>) for additional policies and information.

VSNB recognizes that information technology (IT) is integral to learning and educating today’s children for success in the global community and fully supports the access of these electronic resources by students and staff. The purpose of this policy is to:

1. Create an environment that fosters the use of information technology in a manner that supports and enriches the curriculum, provides opportunities for collaboration and enhances staff professional development.
2. Ensure VSNB takes appropriate measures to maintain the safety of everyone that accesses VSNB’s information technology devices, network, and web resources.
3. Comply with the requirements of applicable federal and state laws that regulate the provision of access to the internet and other electronic resources by school districts.

It is the policy of VSNB to provide students and staff access to a multitude of information technology (IT) resources, including the Internet. These resources provide opportunities to enhance learning and improve communication within our community and with the global community beyond. However, with the privilege of access comes the responsibility of students, teachers, staff and the public to exercise responsible use of these resources. The use by students, staff or others of district IT resources is a privilege, not a right.

The same rules and expectations govern student use of IT resources as apply to other student conduct and communications, including but not limited to VSNB’s harassment and bullying policies.

We expect that all students learn to use electronic resources in an acceptable manner and to use them in appropriate ways to enhance their learning. Students shall be held accountable for any misuse or damage of the school’s electronic equipment or resources.

Communication over the school network shall not be considered private. The Head of School and our staff shall periodically review and inspect electronic files and e-mail messages, and, in cases where there is reasonable suspicion of wrongdoing or misuse of the system, may forward records to the Head of School for review and possible disciplinary action.

The school shall cooperate fully with local, state, or federal officials in any investigation relating to illegal activities conducted through the school’s electronic system. Disciplinary action will focus on helping students learn how to use the electronic network in a responsible manner.

VSNB's computer and network resources are the property of VSNB. Users shall have no expectation of privacy in anything they create, store, send, receive or display on or over VSNB's computers or network resources, including personal files and electronic communications.

The Head of School is responsible for establishing procedures governing the use of IT resources consistent with the provisions of this policy. These procedures must include:

1. An annual process for educating students about responsible digital citizenship. As defined in this policy, a responsible digital citizen is one who:
 - **Respects One's Self.** Users will maintain appropriate standards of language and behavior when sharing information and images on social networking websites and elsewhere online. Users refrain from distributing personally identifiable information about themselves and others.
 - **Respects Others.** Users refrain from using technologies to bully, tease or harass other people. Users will report incidents of cyberbullying and harassment in accordance with VSNB's policies on bullying and harassment. Users will also refrain from using another person's system account or password or from presenting themselves as another person.
 - **Protects One's Self and Others.** Users protect themselves and others by reporting abuse and not forwarding inappropriate materials and communications. They are responsible at all times for the proper use of their account by not sharing their system account password.
 - **Respects Intellectual Property.** Users suitably cite any and all use of websites, books, media, etc.
 - **Protects Intellectual Property.** Users request to use the software and media others produce.
2. Provisions necessary to ensure that Internet service providers and other contractors comply with applicable restrictions on the collection and disclosure of student data and any other confidential information stored in district electronic resources.
3. Technology protection measures that provide for the monitoring and filtering of online activities by all users of district IT, including measures that protect against access to content that is obscene, child pornography, or harmful to minors.
4. Methods to address the following:
 - Control of access by minors to sites on the Internet that include inappropriate content, such as content that is:
 - Lewd, vulgar, or profane
 - Threatening
 - Harassing or discriminatory
 - Bullying
 - Terroristic
 - Obscene or pornographic
 - The safety and security of minors when using electronic mail, social media sites, and other forms of direct electronic communications.

- Prevention of unauthorized online access by minors, including “hacking” and other unlawful activities.
- Unauthorized disclosure, use, dissemination of personal information regarding minors.
- Restriction of minors’ access to materials harmful to them.

Policy Application

This policy applies to anyone who accesses VSNB’s network, collaboration and communication tools, and/or student information systems either on-site or via a remote location, and anyone who uses VSNB’s IT devices either on or off-site.

Limitation/Disclaimer of Liability

VSNB is not liable for unacceptable use or violations of copyright restrictions or other laws, user mistakes or negligence, and costs incurred by users. VSNB is not responsible for ensuring the accuracy, age appropriateness, or usability of any information found on the VSNB electronic resources network including the Internet. VSNB is not responsible for any damage experienced, including, but not limited to, loss of data or interruptions of service. VSNB is not responsible for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through or stored on the electronic resources system including the Internet, or for financial obligations arising through their unauthorized use.

Enforcement

VSNB reserves the right to revoke access privileges and/or administer appropriate disciplinary action for misuse of its IT resources. In the event there is an allegation that a user has violated this policy, the school will handle the allegation consistent with the student disciplinary policy.

Allegations of staff member violations of this policy will be processed in accord with contractual agreements and legal requirements.

17 U.S.C. §§101-120 (Federal Copyright Act of 1976 as amended)

20 U.S.C. § 6777 et seq. (Enhancing Education Through Technology Act)

18 U.S.C. §2251 (Federal Child Pornography Law—Sexual Exploitation and Other Abuse of Children)

47 U.S.C. §254 (Children’s Internet Protection Act)

47 CFR §54.520 (CIPA Certifications)

13 V.S.A. §§2802 et seq. (Obscenity, minors)

13 V.S.A. § 1027 (Disturbing Peace by Use of...Electronic Means)

13 V.S.A. §2605 (Voyeurism)

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ONLINE LEARNING

VSNB is using these primary remote learning platforms: Google, Zoom, and Seesaw. Students and families are expected to use these tools appropriately, as follows:

- Parents/guardians should be mindful about what family activities would potentially be heard/seen

during the students' use of video conferencing. This is a great tool to keep students connected, but please have your students use these tools somewhere near enough you can monitor, yet private enough to concentrate on their work.

- Please have students dress appropriately when video conferencing and make sure that there are no distracting materials or backgrounds. Be mindful of what is visible behind and in front of the student and ensure that it is appropriate.
- Recording conference sessions: We encourage teachers to record non-confidential video conferencing sessions and post them for students who cannot attend the live session. There may be some sessions a faculty member may want to record about specific instructional group activities. We want and need our faculty to be efficient and effective when covering material or providing reinforcement. Therefore, here are some guidelines about recordings:
 - These recordings will not be publicly available.
 - Faculty will announce their intention to record the session giving students/parents/guardians the opportunity to turn off their camera and/or microphone if privacy is of concern.
 - Students/parents/guardians, should not take photos, screenshots, record any video, audio, or online interaction from these conference sessions. You do not have permissions to do so and it is a violation of our Responsible Use Guidelines.

In school or online for distance learning, the VSNB Constitution should always be followed: Be Safe, Be Kind, Be Respectful, and Have Fun!

Academic Integrity

The Village School expects a full commitment to academic integrity from each student. Academic integrity means:

- Your work on each assignment will be completely your own
- Your collaboration with another classmate on any assignment will be in accordance with your teacher
- You will not practice plagiarism in any form. Plagiarism is defined as follows: Copying or using ideas or words from another online classmate, or an Internet or print source and presenting them as your own.

Harassment

If you feel you are being harassed in your class environment, it is important to report it immediately to your teacher or the Head of School. Harassment comes in many forms, including Spam (unsolicited e-mails not pertaining to the class), threatening communications; offensive ecommunications or any other kind of communication that makes you feel uncomfortable. Tell your teachers about any message you receive that is inappropriate or makes you feel uncomfortable. Never give out personal information—including your full name (first names are best), home phone number, home address or other data—anywhere on the Internet, including your e-mail.

Being Respectful Online

A high sense of personal honor and integrity is expected for students in school, and the same holds true online. All students participating in online distance learning are expected to conduct their communications in a respectful manner. Students and parents/guardians will make sure that their communication in the online learning environment is always supportive of the student's learning and the learning and wellbeing of others. Communication should be courteous at all times to teachers and fellow students, and the use of proper Internet etiquette is expected at all times. Inappropriate language or behavior will result in disciplinary action. Procedures outlined in the VSNB's Acceptable

Use Policy will apply to all online classes.

COVID-19 ADDENDUM

Stay Home When Sick:

School health personnel will use the [COVID-19 in Pediatric Patients Flow Chart \(Pre-K – Grade 12\) Triage, Evaluation, Testing, and Return to School](#) in partnership with pediatric providers and families to guide medical decision-making.

All students and staff should stay home if they:

- Show symptoms of COVID-19;
- Have a fever (temperature greater than 100.4°F); or
- Are currently in quarantine due to close contact with an individual with COVID-19 or in isolation due to testing positive for COVID-19.

If symptoms begin while at school, the student or staff member will be sent home as soon as possible, and the individual will be isolated from other staff and students until they can go home.

Masks:

Students and staff will be required to wear a face mask every day within the school building.

Acceptable masks include:

- Multilayer masks made of washable, breathable fabric (the CDC recommends masks with two or more layers)
- Disposable surgical masks (multilayer are best)

Unacceptable masks:

- Bandanas
- Neck gaiters (cloth tubes that wrap around the face)
- Masks with valves (these only protect the wearer)
- Knitted or fleece masks

[>> Click here](#) to read the CDC's flier on "How to Select, Wear, and Clean Your Mask"

Cases of COVID-19 in School:

- If COVID-19 is confirmed in a student or staff member, the person diagnosed with COVID-19 will need to isolate according to guidelines set forth by the VDOH.
 - Any staff or student member that has been identified as a close contact will need to quarantine.
 - VSNB will follow the AOE's health guidance, procedural guidelines, and cleaning protocols for any case of COVID-19 in school.
 - VSNB will participate in contact tracing as requested by the Health Department.
 - The school will communicate with staff and parents/caregivers with information while maintaining patient confidentiality.
 - If COVID-19 is confirmed in a student or staff member, VSNB will work with the Department of Health to determine next steps.
 - The decision to close school or certain classrooms for in-person instruction will be made by the HoS after consulting with the Department of Health.
 - If the level of community transmission increases in our school's region, the HoS may use this as an indicator for closing the school for in-person instruction. The school has distance learning plans in place to be able to pivot to this modality at any time.
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In summary, the purpose of our student and parent handbook is to provide guidance and direction for all members of our school community to have a productive, positive school experience.

HAVE A GREAT SCHOOL YEAR!