Valley Mills Junior High School Student Handbook

2026-27 School Year

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Valley Mills Junior High School Student Handbook

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Chris.dowdy@vmisd.net

Assistant Superintendent: Josh Jones

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Junior High Principal: Julie Tidmore

Julie.tidmore@vmisd.net

Junior High Counselor: Wanda Riggs

Wanda.riggs@vmisd.net

Valley Mills Junior High School Student Handbook

Preface Parents and Students:

Welcome to the new school year!

Education is a team effort. Students, parents, teachers, and other staff members working together will make this a successful year.

The ***Valley Mills Junior High School*** Student Handbook is a general reference guide that is divided into two sections:

Section One: Parental Rights describes certain parental rights as specified in state or federal law.

Section Two: Other Important Information for Parents and Students is organized alphabetically by topic. Where applicable, the topics are further organized by grade level.

Note: Unless otherwise noted, the term "parent" refers to the parent, legal guardian, any person granted some other type of lawful control of a student, or any other person who has agreed to assume school-related responsibility for a student.

The Student Handbook is designed to align with law, board-adopted policy, and the Student Code of Conduct, a board-adopted document intended to promote school safety and an atmosphere for learning. The Student Handbook is not meant to be a complete statement of all policies, procedures, or rules in any given circumstance.

In case of conflicts between board policy (including the Student Code of Conduct) and any Student Handbook provision, the district will follow board policy and the Student Code of Conduct.

Therefore, parents and students should become familiar with the ***Valley Mills Junior High School*** Student Code of Conduct. To review the Code of Conduct, visit the district's website www.vmisd.net State law requires that the Code of Conduct be prominently displayed or made available for review at each campus.

The Student Handbook is updated annually. However, policy adoption and revisions may occur throughout the year. The district encourages parents to stay informed of proposed policy changes by attending board meetings and reviewing communications explaining changes in policy or other rules that affect Student Handbook provisions. The district reserves the right to modify the Student Handbook at any time. Notice of revisions will be provided as is reasonably practical.

Although the Student Handbook may refer to rights established through law or district policy, it does not create additional rights for parents and students. It does not, nor is it intended to, represent a contract between any parent or student and the district.

A hard copy of either the Student Code of Conduct or Student Handbook can be requested at ***the Valley Mills Junior High/High School front office***.

Note: References to board policy codes are included for ease of reference. The hard copy of the district's official policy manual is available for review in the district administration office, and an unofficial electronic copy is available at www.vmisd.net.

The policy manual includes:

- Legally referenced legal policies that contain provisions from federal and state laws and regulations, case law, and other legal authorities that provide the legal framework for school districts
- Board-adopted local policies that articulate the board's choices and values regarding district practices

For questions about the material in this handbook, please contact:

Julie Tidmore

Valley Mills Junior High Principal

1 Eagle Way, Valley Mills, TX, 76689

Julie.tidmore@vmisd.net

254-932-5251

Complete and return to the student's campus the following forms (provided in the forms packet distributed at the beginning of the year or upon enrollment):

- Acknowledgment of Electronic Distribution of Student Handbook
- Notice Regarding Directory Information and Parent's Response Regarding Release of Student Information
- Parent's Objection to the Release of Student Information to Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Education (if you choose to restrict the release of information to these entities)
- Consent/Opt-Out Form for participation in third-party surveys

[See Objecting to the Release of Directory Information and Consent Required Before Student Participation in a Federally Funded Survey for more information.]

Accessibility

If you have difficulty accessing this handbook because of a disability, please contact:

Josh Jones

Assistant Superintendent

1 Eagle Way, Valley Mills, TX, 76689

Josh.jones@vmisd.net

254-932-5210

Section One: Parental Rights

This section describes certain parental rights as specified in state or federal law.

Consent, Opt-Out, and Refusal Rights

Consent to Conduct a Psychological or Psychiatric Evaluation

Unless required under state or federal law, a district employee or contractor of the district will not conduct a psychological or psychiatric examination, test, or treatment without obtaining prior written parental consent.

Note: An evaluation may be legally required under special education rules or by the Texas Education Agency for child abuse investigations and reports.

Consent to Human Sexuality Instruction

Annual Notification

As a part of the district's curriculum, students receive instruction related to human sexuality. The School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) makes recommendations for curriculum materials, and the school board adopts the materials and determines the specific content of the instruction.

Per state law, here is a summary of the district's curriculum regarding human sexuality instruction: In compliance with Senate Bill 283 "Human Sexuality Instruction will be provided by the district at various grade levels throughout the district": The school nurse will provide gender-based human sexuality instruction by showing a gender-based video to the respective groups at the fifth grade level. A parent is entitled to review the curriculum materials. In addition, a parent may remove his or her child from any part of the human sexuality instruction without academic, disciplinary, or other penalties. A parent may also choose to become more involved with the development of this curriculum by becoming a member of the district's SHAC. (See the campus principal for details.) For more information, see the district's human sexuality instruction website at https://www.vmisd.net/page/required-postings

In accordance with state law, a parent may:

- Review, receive a copy of, or purchase a copy of curriculum materials depending on the copyright of the materials.
- Remove their child from any part of the human sexuality instruction without academic, disciplinary, or other penalties.
- Become involved in the development of this curriculum by becoming a member of the district's SHAC or attending SHAC meetings. See the campus principal for details.
- Use the district's grievance procedure concerning a complaint. [See Complaints and Concerns (All Grade Levels) and FNG(LOCAL).]

State law also requires that instruction related to human sexuality, sexually transmitted diseases, or human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) or acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS):

- Present abstinence from sexual activity as the preferred choice in relationship to all sexual activity for unmarried persons of school age

- Devote more attention to abstinence from sexual activity than to any other behavior
- Emphasize that abstinence, if used consistently and correctly, is the only method that is 100 percent effective in preventing pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, and the emotional trauma associated with adolescent sexual activity
- Direct adolescents to abstain from sexual activity before marriage as the most effective way to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases
- If included in the content of the curriculum, teach contraception and condom use in terms of human use reality rates instead of theoretical laboratory rates

[See Consent to Instruction on Prevention of Child Abuse, Family Violence, Dating Violence, and Sex Trafficking]

Consent Before Human Sexuality Instruction

Before a student receives human sexuality instruction, the parent must give written consent. Parents will be sent a request for written consent at least 14 days before the instruction will begin.

Consent to Instruction on Prevention of Child Abuse, Family Violence, Dating Violence, and Sex Trafficking

Before a student receives instruction on the prevention of child abuse, family violence, dating violence, and sex trafficking, the district must obtain written consent from the student's parent. Parents will be sent a request for written consent at least 14 days before the instruction will begin.

Annual Notification

Students receive instruction related to the prevention of child abuse, family violence, dating violence, and sex trafficking. The School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) makes recommendations for curriculum materials, and the school board adopts the materials and determines the specific content of the instruction.

The district has established a plan for addressing child sexual abuse, trafficking, and other maltreatment of children, which may be accessed at the district administration office. Trafficking includes both sex and labor trafficking. For more information, see the district's abuse prevention instruction website at ***http://www.vmisd.net***

In accordance with state law, a parent may:

- Review, receive a copy of, or purchase a copy of curriculum materials depending on the copyright of the materials. As required by law, any curriculum materials in the public domain used in this instruction will be posted on the district's website at the location indicated above.
- Remove their child from any part of this instruction without academic, disciplinary, or other penalties.
- Become involved in the development of this curriculum by becoming a member of the district's SHAC or attending SHAC meetings. See the campus principal for details.

- Use the district's grievance procedure concerning a complaint. [See Complaints and Concerns (All Grade Levels) and policy FNG for information on the grievance and appeals process.]

[See Consent Before Human Sexuality Instruction, Dating Violence, and Child Abuse, Neglect, School Staff Misconduct, Trafficking, and Other Maltreatment of Children (All Grade Levels)]

Consent to Provide a Mental Health Care Service

The district will not provide a mental health care service to a student or conduct a medical screening of a student as part of the district's intervention procedures except as permitted by law.

The district has established procedures for recommending to a parent an intervention for a student with early warning signs of mental health concerns, substance abuse, or suicide risk. The district's mental health liaison will notify the student's parent within a reasonable amount of time after the liaison learns that a student has displayed early warning signs and provide information about available counseling options.

The district has also established procedures for staff to notify the mental health liaison regarding a student who may need intervention.

The mental health liaison can be reached at:

Wanda Riggs

Junior High Counselor

Wanda.riggs@vmisd.net

254-932-5251

The mental health liaison can provide further information about these procedures as well as curriculum materials on identifying risk factors, accessing resources for treatment or support on and off campus, and accessing available student accommodations provided on campus.

[See Mental Health Support (All Grade Levels)]

Consent to Display a Student's Original Works and Personal Information

Teachers may display a student's work in classrooms or elsewhere on campus as recognition of student achievement without seeking prior parental consent. These displays may include personally identifiable student information. Student work includes:

- Artwork
- Special projects
- Photographs
- Original videos or voice recordings
- Other original works

However, the district will seek parental consent before displaying a student's work on the district's website, a website affiliated or sponsored by the district (such as a campus or classroom website), or in district publications, which may include printed materials, videos, or other methods of mass communication.

Consent to Receive Parenting and Paternity Awareness Instruction If a Student is Under Age 14

A student under age 14 must have parental permission to participate in the district's Parenting and Paternity Awareness Program (https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/child-support/programs-and-initiatives/parenting-and-paternity-awareness-papa/papa-educators/papa-curriculum). This program was developed by the Office of the Texas Attorney General and the State Board of Education (SBOE) to be incorporated into health education classes.

Consent to Video or Audio Record a Student When Not Already Permitted by Law

State law permits the school to make a video or voice recording without parental permission when the recording is to be used for:

- School safety
- Classroom instruction or a cocurricular or extracurricular activity
- Media coverage of the school
- Promotion of student safety, as provided by law for a student receiving special education services in certain settings

In other circumstances, the district will seek written parental consent before making a video or voice recording of a student.

Please note that parents and visitors to a classroom, both virtual and in-person, may not record video or audio or take photographs or other still images without permission from the teacher or other school official.

Opting Out of Advanced Mathematics in Grades 6-8

The district will automatically enroll a student in grade 6 in an advanced mathematics course if the student performed in the 60th percentile or higher on the grade 5 mathematics STAAR or in the top 40 percent on a local measure that demonstrates proficiency in the student's grade 5 mathematics course work.

Enrollment in an advanced mathematics course in grade 6 will enable students to enroll in Algebra I in grade 8 and advanced mathematics in grades 9-12.

The student's parent may opt the student out of automatic enrollment in an advanced mathematics course.

Prohibiting the Use of Corporal Punishment

Corporal punishment — spanking or paddling a student — may be used as a discipline management technique in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct and district policy FO(LOCAL).

However, in accordance with law, the district may not administer corporal punishment if a student's parent submits a signed, written statement prohibiting its use.

A parent who does not want corporal punishment administered to their child must return the form included in the forms packet. This signed statement must be submitted each school year. A parent may revoke this prohibition at any time during the school year by providing a signed statement to the campus principal.

Note:

- District personnel may use discipline methods other than corporal punishment if a parent requests that corporal punishment not be used.
- If the district knows that a student is in temporary or permanent custody of the state (through foster care, kinship care, or other arrangements), corporal punishment will not be administered, even when the student's caregiver or caseworker has not submitted a signed statement prohibiting its use.

Limiting Electronic Communications between Students and District Employees

The district permits teachers and other approved employees to use electronic communications with students within the scope of professional responsibilities, as described by district guidelines.

For example, a teacher may create a social networking page for the class to relay information about class work, homework, and tests. A parent is welcome to access such a page.

However, text messages sent to an individual student are only allowed if a district employee with responsibility for an extracurricular activity must communicate with a student participating in that activity.

The employee is required to include the student's parent as a recipient on all text messages.

[AND/OR]

The employee is required to include their immediate supervisor and the student's parent as recipients on all text messages.

[AND/OR]

The employee is required to send a copy of the text message to the employee's district email address.

A parent who does not want their child to receive one-to-one electronic communications from a district employee should contact the campus principal.

Objecting to the Release of Directory Information

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, or FERPA, permits the district to disclose appropriately designated "directory information" from a student's education records without written consent.

“Directory information” is information that, if released, is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy. Examples include:

- A student’s photograph (for publication in the school yearbook)
- A student’s name and grade level (for communicating class and teacher assignments)
- The name, weight, and height of an athlete (for publication in a school athletic program)
- A list of student birthdays (for generating schoolwide or classroom recognition)
- A student’s name and photograph (posted on a district-approved and-managed social media platform)
- The names and grade levels of students submitted by the district to a local newspaper or other community publication (to recognize the A/B honor roll for a specific grading period)

Directory information will be released to anyone who follows procedures for requesting it.

However, a parent or eligible student may object to the release of this information. Any objection must be made in writing to the within 10 school days of the student’s first day of instruction for this school year. [See Notice Regarding Directory Information and Parent’s Response Regarding Release of Student Information, included in the forms packet.]

The district requests that families living in a shelter for survivors of family violence or trafficking notify district personnel that the student currently resides in such a shelter. Families may want to opt out of the release of directory information so that the district does not release any information that might reveal the location of such a shelter.

As allowed by state law, the district has identified two directory information lists — one for school-sponsored purposes and a second for all other requests. For district publications and announcements, the district has designated the following as directory information: Student’s Name; Address; Telephone Listing; E-mail Address; Photograph; Date and Place of Birth; Major Field of Study; Degrees, Honors, Awards Received; Dates of Attendance; Grade Level; Most recent education institution attended; Participation in officially recognized activities and sports; and Weight and Height (if a member of an athletic team). If a parent does not object to the use of their child’s information for these school-sponsored purposes, the school will not ask permission each time the district wants to use the information for these purposes.

For all other purposes, the district has identified the following as directory information: student name. If a parent does not object to the use of the student’s information for these purposes, the school must release this information when requested by an outside entity or individual.

Note: Also see Authorized Inspection and Use of Student Records.

Objecting to the Release of Student Information to Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Education (Secondary Grade Levels Only)

Unless a parent has advised the district not to release their student's information, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires the district to comply with requests from military recruiters or institutions of higher education to provide the following information about students:

- Name
- Address
- Telephone listing

Military recruiters may also have access to a student's district-provided email address, unless a parent has advised the district not to release this information.

[See Parent's Objection to the Release of Student Information to Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Education, included in the forms packet.]

Participation in Third-Party Surveys

Consent Required Before Student Participation in a Federally Funded Survey

The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) provides parents certain rights regarding participation in surveys, the collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams.

A parent has the right to consent before a student is required to submit to a survey funded by the U.S. Department of Education that concerns any of the following protected areas:

- Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student's parent
- Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student's family
- Sex behavior or attitudes
- Illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior
- Critical appraisals of individuals with whom the student has a close family relationship
- Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, and ministers
- Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parent
- Income, except when the information is required by law and will be used to determine the student's eligibility for a program

A parent may inspect the survey or other instrument and any corresponding instructional materials used in connection with such a survey. [See policy EF(LEGAL) for more information.]

"Opting Out" of Participation in Other Types of Surveys or Screenings and the Disclosure of Personal Information

The PPRA gives parents the right to receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of:

- Activities involving the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information gathered from the child for the purpose of marketing, selling, or otherwise disclosing that information to others
- Any nonemergency, invasive physical examination or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of the student

Exceptions are hearing, vision, or spinal screenings, or any physical examination or screening permitted or required under state law. [See policies EF and FFAA for more information.]

A parent may inspect:

- Protected information surveys of students and surveys created by a third party
- Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes
- Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum

The ED provides extensive information about the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/resources/protection-pupil-rights-amendment-ppra-general-guidance), including a PPRA Complaint Form (https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/file-a-complaint).

Removing a Student from Instruction or Excusing a Student from a Required Component of Instruction

See Consent to Human Sexuality Instruction and Consent to Instruction on Prevention of Child Abuse, Family Violence, Dating Violence, and Sex Trafficking for information on a parent's right to remove a student from such instruction.

Reciting a Portion of the Declaration of Independence in Grades 3-12

State law designates the week of September 17 as Celebrate Freedom Week and requires all social studies classes to provide the following:

- Instruction concerning the intent, meaning, and importance of the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution
- A specific recitation from the Declaration of Independence for students in grades 3-12

Per state law, a student may be excused from recitation of a portion of the Declaration of Independence if any of the following apply:

- A parent provides a written statement requesting that their child be excused
- The district determines that the student has a conscientious objection to the recitation
- A parent is a representative of a foreign government to whom the U.S. government extends diplomatic immunity

[See policy EHBK(LEGAL) for more information.]

Reciting the Pledges to the U.S. and Texas Flags

A parent may request that their child be excused from participation in the daily recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance to the U.S. flag and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas flag. The request must be made in writing.

State law, however, requires that all students participate in one minute of silence following recitation of the pledges.

[See Pledges of Allegiance and a Minute of Silence (All Grade Levels) and policy EC(LEGAL) for more information.]

Religious or Moral Beliefs

A parent may remove their child temporarily from the classroom if a scheduled instructional activity conflicts with the parent's religious or moral beliefs.

The removal may not be used to avoid a test and may not extend for an entire semester. The student must also satisfy grade-level and graduation requirements as determined by the school and by state law.

Tutoring or Test Preparation

A teacher may determine that a student needs additional targeted assistance for the student to achieve mastery in state-developed essential knowledge and skills based on:

- Informal observations
- Evaluative data such as grades earned on assignments or tests
- Results from diagnostic assessments

The school will always attempt to provide tutoring and strategies for test-taking in ways that prevent removal from other instruction as much as possible.

In accordance with state law and policy EC, districts must obtain parental permission before removing a student from a regularly scheduled class for remedial tutoring or test preparation for more than 10 percent of the days the class is offered.

If a district offers tutorial services to students, state law requires a student with a grade below 70 for a reporting period to attend.

[For questions about school-provided tutoring programs, contact the student's teacher and see policies EC and EHBC. See **Error! Reference source not found.** for information regarding required accelerated instruction after a student fails to perform satisfactorily on certain state-mandated tests.]

Right of Access to Student Records, Instructional Materials, and District Records/Policies

Parent Review of Instructional Materials and Plan

A parent has the right to review teaching materials, textbooks, and other teaching aids and instructional materials used in the curriculum, and to examine tests that have been administered, whether instruction is delivered in-person, virtually, or remotely.

The district will make instructional materials available for parent review no later than 30 days before the school year begins and for at least 30 days after the school year ends. However, tests that have not yet been administered will not be made available for parent examination.

The district will provide login credentials to each student's parent for any learning management system or online learning portal used in instruction to facilitate parent access and review.

A parent is also entitled to request that the school allow the student to take home instructional materials the student uses. The school may ask the student to return the materials at the beginning of the next school day.

A school must provide printed versions of electronic instructional materials to a student if the student does not have reliable access to technology at home.

Teachers are required to provide a copy of the teacher's instructional plan or course syllabus for each class to the parent of each student enrolled in that class before the beginning of each semester. A parent may obtain additional copies of plan or syllabus by request.

[For information about parental access to any online library catalog and library materials, including records of their child's checked out library materials, see Library (All Grade Levels).]

District Review of Instructional Materials

A parent may request that the district conduct an instructional material review in a math, English Language Arts, science, or social studies class in which the parent's student is enrolled to determine alignment with state standards and the level of rigor for the grade level.

The district is not required to conduct an instructional material review for a specific subject area or grade level at a specific campus more than once per school year.

For more information about requesting an instructional material review, contact ***campus principal***. Notices of Certain Student Misconduct to Noncustodial Parent

A noncustodial parent may request in writing that the district provide for the remainder of the school year a copy of any written notice usually provided to a parent related to the child's misconduct that may involve placement in a disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP) or expulsion. [See the Student Code of Conduct and policy FO(LEGAL) for more information.]

Participation in Federally Required, State-Mandated, and District Assessments

In accordance with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), a parent may request information regarding any federal, state, or district policy related to their child's participation in required assessments.

Student Records

Accessing Student Records

A parent may review their child's records, including:

- Attendance records
- Test scores
- Grades
- Disciplinary records
- Counseling records
- Psychological records
- Applications for admission
- Health and immunization information
- Other medical records
- Teacher and school counselor evaluations
- Reports of behavioral patterns
- Records relating to assistance provided for learning difficulties, including information collected regarding any intervention strategies used with the child, as the term "intervention strategy" is defined by law
- Records relating to school library materials the child obtains from a school library [See Library (All Grade Levels) for more information.]
- State assessment instruments that have been administered to the child
- Teaching materials and tests used in the child's classroom

Authorized Inspection and Use of Student Records

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and eligible students certain rights regarding student education records.

For purposes of student records, an "eligible" student is anyone age 18 or older or who attends a postsecondary educational institution. These rights, as discussed here and at Objecting to the Release of Directory Information, are the right to:

- Inspect and review student records within 45 days after the day the school receives a request for access
- Request an amendment to a student record the parent or eligible student believes is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of FERPA
- Provide written consent before the school discloses personally identifiable information from the student's records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent
- File a complaint (https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/file-a-complaint) with the U.S. Department of Education concerning failures by the school to comply with FERPA requirements

Both FERPA and state laws safeguard student records from unauthorized inspection or use and provide parents and eligible students certain rights of privacy.

Before disclosing personally identifiable information from a student's records, the district must verify the identity of the person, including a parent or the student, requesting the information.

Virtually all information about student performance, including grades, test results, and disciplinary records, is considered confidential educational records.

Inspection and release of student records is restricted to an eligible student or a student's parent unless the school receives a copy of a court order terminating parental rights or the right to access a student's education records. A parent's rights regarding access to student records are not affected by the parent's marital status.

Federal law requires that control of the records goes to the student as soon as the student meets at least one of the following criteria:

- Reaches the age of 18
- Is emancipated by a court
- Enrolls in a postsecondary educational institution

However, the parent may continue to have access to the records if the student is a dependent for tax purposes and, under limited circumstances, when there is a threat to the health and safety of the student or other individuals.

FERPA permits the disclosure of personally identifiable information from a student's education records without written consent of the parent or eligible student when school officials have what federal law refers to as a "legitimate educational interest" in a student's records.

Legitimate educational interest may include:

- Working with the student
- Considering disciplinary or academic actions, the student's case, or an individualized education program for a student with disabilities
- Compiling statistical data
- Reviewing an educational record to fulfill the official's professional responsibility
- Investigating or evaluating programs

School officials may include:

- Board members and employees, such as the superintendent, administrators, and principals
- Teachers, school counselors, diagnosticians, and support staff (including district health or medical staff)
- A person or company with whom the district has contracted or allowed to provide a specific institutional service or function (such as an attorney, consultant, third-party vendor that offers online programs or software, auditor, medical consultant, therapist, school resource officer, or volunteer)
- A person appointed to serve on a team to support the district's safe and supportive school program
- A parent or student serving on a school committee

- A parent or student assisting a school official perform their duties

FERPA also permits the disclosure of personally identifiable information without written consent:

- To authorized representatives of various governmental agencies, including juvenile service providers, the U.S. Comptroller General's office, the U.S. Attorney General's office, the U.S. Secretary of Education, the Texas Education Agency, the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture's office, and Child Protective Services (CPS) caseworkers or, in certain cases, other child welfare representatives
- To individuals or entities granted access in response to a subpoena or court order
- To another school, district/system, or postsecondary educational institution to which a student seeks or intends to enroll or in which the student already is enrolled
- In connection with financial aid for which a student has applied or has received
- To accrediting organizations to carry out accrediting functions
- To organizations conducting studies for, or on behalf of, the school to develop, validate, or administer predictive tests; administer student aid programs; or improve instruction
- To appropriate officials in connection with a health or safety emergency
- When the district discloses directory information-designated details. [See Objecting to the Release of Directory Information to prohibit this disclosure.]

Release of personally identifiable information to any other person or agency — such as a prospective employer or for a scholarship application — will occur only with parental or student permission as appropriate.

The ***superintendent*** is custodian of all records for currently enrolled students at the assigned school. The ***superintendent*** is the custodian of all records for students who have withdrawn or graduated.

A parent or eligible student who wants to inspect the student's records should submit a written request to the custodian of records identifying the records they want to inspect.

Records may be reviewed in person during regular school hours. The custodian of records or designee will be available to explain the record and to answer questions.

A parent or eligible student who submits a written request and pays copying costs of 10 cents per page may obtain copies. If circumstances prevent inspection during regular school hours and the student qualifies for free or reduced-price meals, the district will either provide a copy of the records requested or make other arrangements for the parent or student to review the records.

You may contact the custodian of records for currently enrolled students at:

Caroline Cook

PEIMS/District Services

Caroline.cook@vmisd.net

254-932-5210

You may contact the custodian of records for students who have withdrawn or graduated at:

Caroline Cook

PEIMS/District Services

Caroline.cook@vmisd.net

254-932-5210

A parent or eligible student may inspect the student's records and request a correction or amendment if the records are considered inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights.

A request to correct a student's record should be submitted to the appropriate custodian of records. The request must clearly identify the part of the record that should be corrected and include an explanation of how the information is inaccurate. If the district denies the request to amend the records, the parent or eligible student has the right to request a hearing. If after the hearing the records are not amended, the parent or eligible student has 30 school days to place a statement in the student's record.

Although improperly recorded grades may be challenged, contesting a student's grade in a course or on an examination is handled through the complaint process found in policy FNG(LOCAL). A grade issued by a teacher can be changed only if the board of trustees determines that the grade is arbitrary, erroneous, or inconsistent with the district's grading guidelines.

[See Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences (All Grade Levels), Complaints and Concerns (All Grade Levels), and Finality of Grades at policy FNG(LEGAL)]

The district's student records policy is found at policy FL(LEGAL) and FL(LOCAL) and is available at the principal's or superintendent's office or on the district's website at ***www.vmisd.net***

Note: The parent's or eligible student's right of access to and copies of student records does not extend to all records. Materials that are not considered educational records — such as a teacher's personal notes about a student shared only with a substitute teacher — do not have to be made available.

Teacher and Staff Professional Qualifications

A parent may request information about the professional qualifications of their child's teachers, including whether the teacher:

- Has met state qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction
- Has an emergency permit or other provisional status for which state requirements have been waived
- Is currently teaching in the field or discipline of their certification

The parent also has the right to request information about the qualifications of any paraprofessional who may provide services to the child.

A Student with Exceptionalities or Special Circumstances

Children of Military Families

The Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunities for Military Children (https://www.dodea.edu/education/partnership-and-resources/military-interstate-compact) entitles children of military families to flexibility regarding certain district and state requirements, including:

- Immunization requirements
- Grade level, course, or educational program placement
- Eligibility requirements for participation in extracurricular activities
- Enrollment in virtual or hybrid courses offered by the district or another district or school
- Graduation requirements

The district will excuse absences related to a student visiting a parent, including a stepparent or legal guardian, who is:

- Called to active duty
- On leave
- Returning from a deployment of at least four months

The district will permit **no more than five** excused absences per year for this purpose. For the absence to be excused, the absence must occur no earlier than the 60th day before deployment or no later than the 30th day after the parent's return from deployment.

More information is available at Military Family Resources at the Texas Education Agency (https://tea.texas.gov/about-tea/other-services/military-family-resources).

Parental Role in Certain Classroom and School Assignments

Multiple-Birth Siblings

State law permits a parent of multiple-birth siblings (for example, twins, triplets) assigned to the same grade and campus to request in writing that the children be placed in either the same classroom or separate classrooms.

Written requests must be submitted by the 14th day after the students' enrollment. [See policy FDB(LEGAL) for more information.]

Safety Transfers/Assignments

The board or its designee will honor a parent's request to transfer their child to another classroom or campus if the district has determined that the child has been a victim of bullying, including cyberbullying, as defined by Education Code 37.0832.

The board may transfer a student who has engaged in bullying to another classroom. The board will consult with the parent of a child who has engaged in bullying before deciding to transfer the child to another campus.

Transportation is not provided for a transfer to another campus. See principal for more information.

[See An awards ceremony will take place towards the end of the school year. Information will be sent out to all parents and students when it becomes available.

Bullying (All Grade Levels), and policies FDB and FFI for more information.]

The district will honor a parent's request for the transfer of their child to a safe public school in the district if the child attends a school identified by the Texas Education Agency as persistently dangerous or if the child has been a victim of a violent criminal offense while at school or on school grounds.

[See policy FDE for more information.]

The board will honor a parent's request for the transfer of their child to another district campus or a neighboring district if the child has been the victim of sexual assault by another student assigned to the same campus, whether the assault occurred on or off campus, and that student has been convicted of or placed on deferred adjudication for the assault. In accordance with policy FDE, if the victim does not wish to transfer, the board will transfer the assailant.

Student Use of a Service/Assistance Animal

A parent of a student who uses a service/assistance animal because of the student's disability must submit a written request to the principal before bringing the service/assistance animal on campus. The district will try to accommodate a request as soon as possible but will do so within 10 district business days.

A Student in the Conservatorship of the State (Foster Care)

In an effort to provide educational stability, the district will provide enrollment and registration assistance, as well as other educational services throughout the student's enrollment, to any student who is currently placed or newly placed in foster care (temporary or permanent custody of the state, sometimes referred to as substitute care).

A student in the conservatorship (custody) of the state who enrolls in the district after the beginning of the school year will be allowed credit-by-examination opportunities at any point during the year.

The district will assess the student's available records to determine transfer of credit for subjects and courses taken before the student's enrollment in the district.

The district will award partial course credit when the student only passes one half of a two-half course. [For provisions on partial course credit for students who are not in the conservatorship of the state, see EI(LOCAL).]

A student in the conservatorship of the state who is moved outside the district's or school's attendance boundaries — or who is initially placed in the conservatorship of the state and moved outside the district's or school's boundaries — is entitled to remain at the school the student was attending before the placement or move until the student reaches the highest grade level at that particular school.

If a student in grade 11 or 12 transfers to another district but does not meet the graduation requirements of the receiving district, the student can request a diploma from the previous district if the student meets its graduation criteria.

For a student in the conservatorship of the state who is eligible for a tuition and fee exemption under state law and likely to be in care on the day preceding the student's 18th birthday, the district will:

- Assist the student with the completion of applications for admission or financial aid
- Arrange for and accompany the student on campus visits
- Assist in researching and applying for private or institution-sponsored scholarships
- Identify whether the student is a candidate for appointment to a military academy
- Assist the student in registering and preparing for college entrance examinations, including (subject to the availability of funds) arranging for the payment of examination fees by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS)
- Coordinate contact between the student and a liaison officer for students formerly in the conservatorship of the state

If you have questions, please contact the district's foster care liaison:

Wanda Riggs

Counselor/Mental Health Liaison

Wanda.riggs@vmisd.net

254-932-5251

[See Credit by Examination for Advancement/Acceleration — If a Student Has Not Taken the Course/Subject and Course Credit (Secondary Grade Levels Only)]

A Student Who Is Homeless

A parent is encouraged to inform the district if their child is experiencing homelessness. District staff can share resources that may be able to assist families.

A student who is homeless will be provided flexibility regarding certain district provisions, including:

- Proof of residency requirements
- Immunization requirements

- Educational program placement (if the student is unable to provide previous academic records or misses an application deadline during a period of homelessness)
- Credit-by-examination opportunities at any point during the year (if the student enrolled in the district after the beginning of the school year), per State Board of Education (SBOE) rules
- Assessment of the student's available records to determine transfer of credit for subjects and courses taken before the student's enrollment in the district
- Awarding partial credit when a student passes only one half of a two-half course
- Eligibility requirements for participation in extracurricular activities
- Graduation requirements

Federal law allows a student who is homeless to remain enrolled in the "school of origin" or to enroll in a new school in the attendance area where the student is currently residing.

If a student who is homeless in grade 11 or 12 transfers to another district but does not meet the graduation requirements of the receiving district, state law allows the student to request a diploma from the previous district if the student meets the criteria to graduate from the previous district.

A student or parent who is dissatisfied by the district's eligibility, school selection, or enrollment decision may appeal through policy FNG(LOCAL). The district will expedite local timelines, when possible, for prompt dispute resolution.

For more information on services for students who are homeless, contact the district's homeless education liaison:

Josh Jones

Assistant Superintendent

Josh.jones@vmisd.net

254-932-5210

[See Credit by Examination for Advancement/Acceleration — If a Student Has Not Taken the Course/Subject and Course Credit (Secondary Grade Levels Only)]

A Student Who Has Learning Difficulties or Who Needs Special Education or Section 504 Services

For those students who are having difficulty in the regular classroom, all school districts must consider tutorial, compensatory, and other academic or behavior support services that are available to all students through the district's multi-tiered system of academic and behavioral supports (MTSS). The provision of these intervention and support services, which might include (RTI) process, can have an impact on the ability of district to meet the needs of all students.

If a student is experiencing learning difficulties, their parent may contact the individuals listed below to learn about the school's overall general education referral or screening system for support services.

This system links students to a variety of support options, including making a referral for a special education evaluation or for a Section 504 evaluation to determine whether the student needs specific aids, accommodations, or services. A parent may request an evaluation for special education or Section 504 services at any time.

Special Education Referrals

If a parent makes a written request for an initial evaluation for special education services to the director of special education services or to a district administrative employee of the school district, the district must respond no later than 15 school days after receiving the request. At that time, the district must give the parent prior written notice of whether it agrees or refuses to evaluate the student, along with a copy of the *Notice of Procedural Safeguards* (https://fw.escapps.net/Display_Portal/publications). If the district agrees to evaluate the student, it must also give the parent the opportunity to give written consent for the evaluation.

Note: A request for a special education evaluation may be made verbally; it does not need to be made in writing. Districts must still comply with all federal prior-written notices and procedural safeguard requirements as well as the requirements for identifying, locating, and evaluating children who are suspected of having a disability and in need of special education. However, a verbal request does not require the district to respond within the 15 school-day timeline.

If the district decides to evaluate the student, it must complete the student's initial evaluation and evaluation report no later than 45 school days from the day it receives a parent's written consent. However, if the student is absent from school during the evaluation period for three or more school days, the evaluation period will be extended by the number of school days equal to the number of school days that the student is absent.

There is an exception to the 45-school-day timeline. If the district receives a parent's consent for the initial evaluation at least 35 but less than 45 school days before the last instructional day of the school year, it must complete the written report and provide a copy of the report to the parent by June 30 of that year. However, if the student is absent from school for three or more days during the evaluation period, the June 30 due date no longer applies. Instead, the general timeline of 45 school days plus extensions for absences of three or more days will apply.

Upon completing the evaluation, the district must give the parent a copy of the evaluation report at no cost.

Additional information about special education is available from the school district in a companion document titled *Parent's Guide to the Admission, Review, and Dismissal Process* (https://fw.escapps.net/Display_Portal/publications).

Contact Person for Special Education Referrals

The designated contact person regarding options for a student experiencing learning

Julie Tidmore

Principal

Julie.tidmore@vmisd.net

254-932-5251

For questions about post-secondary transitions, including the transition from education to employment, for students receiving special education services, contact the district's transition and employment designee:

Julie Tidmore

Principal

Julie.tidmore@vmisd.net

254-932-5251

Section 504 Referrals

Each school district must have standards and procedures in place for the evaluation and placement of students in the district's Section 504 program. Districts must also implement a system of procedural safeguards that includes:

- Notice
- An opportunity for a parent or guardian to examine relevant records
- An impartial hearing with an opportunity for participation by the parent or guardian and representation by counsel
- A review procedure

Contact Person for Section 504 Referrals

The designated person to contact regarding options for a student experiencing learning difficulties or regarding a referral for evaluation for Section 504 services is:

Wanda Riggs

Counselor/Mental Health Liaison

Wanda.riggs@vmisd.net

254-932-5251

[See A Student with Physical or Mental Impairments Protected under Section 504]

Visit these websites for information regarding students with disabilities and the family:

- Legal Framework for the Child-Centered Special Education Process (https://fw.escapps.net/Display_Portal?destination=/)

- Partner Resource Network (http://prntexas.org/)
- SPEDTEX: Special Education Information Center (https://www.spedtex.org/)
- Texas First Project (http://www.texasprojectfirst.org/)
- TEA Special Education Parent and Family Resources (https://tea.texas.gov/academics/special-student-populations/special-education/parent-and-family-resources)

Notification to Parents of Intervention Strategies for Learning Difficulties Provided to Students in General Education

In accordance with state law, the district will annually notify parents if their child receives assistance for learning difficulties. Details of such assistance can include intervention strategies. This notice is not intended for those students already enrolled in a special education program.

Texas Driving with Disability Program

In accordance with state law, the district will provide notification of the Texas Driving with Disability Program to students who have a health condition or disability that may impede effective communication with a peace officer and receive special education or are covered by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. This notification will be provided annually to an eligible student aged 16 years or older until the student's graduation or 21st birthday and to the student's parents.

The Texas Driving with Disability Program focuses on improving the interaction between law enforcement and drivers with disabilities that have unique communication needs.

A Student Who Receives Special Education Services with Other School-Aged Children in the Home

If a student is receiving special education services at a campus outside their attendance zone, state law permits the parent or guardian to request that other students residing in the household be transferred to the same campus if the grade level for the transferring student is offered on that campus.

The student receiving special education services is entitled to transportation; however, the district is not required to provide transportation to other children in the household.

The parent or guardian should contact the school principal regarding transportation needs before requesting a transfer for other children in the home. [See policy FDB(LOCAL) for more information.]

A Student Who Speaks a Primary Language Other than English

A student may be eligible to receive specialized support if their primary language is not English and the student has difficulty performing ordinary class work in English.

If the student qualifies for these services, the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) will determine the types of services the student needs, including accommodations or modifications related to classroom instruction, local assessments, and state-mandated assessments.

[See Emergent Bilingual Students (All Grade Levels) and Special Programs (All Grade Levels)]

A Student with Physical or Mental Impairments Protected under Section 504

A student with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity, as defined by law — and who does not otherwise qualify for special education services — may qualify for protections under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

Section 504 is a federal law designed to prohibit discrimination against individuals with disabilities.

When an evaluation is requested, a committee will be formed to determine whether the student needs services and supports under Section 504 in order to receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE), as defined in federal law.

[See A Student Who Has Learning Difficulties or Who Needs Special Education or Section 504 Services and policy FB for more information.]

Section Two: Other Important Information for Parents and Students

This section contains important information on academics, school activities, and school operations and requirements.

It is organized alphabetically to serve as a quick-reference guide. Where applicable, the topics are further organized by grade level.

Parents and children should take a moment together to become familiar with the issues addressed in this section. For guidance on a particular topic, please contact ***the principal***.

Absences/Attendance

Regular school attendance is essential. Absences from class may result in serious disruption of a student's education. The student and parent should avoid unnecessary absences.

Two important state laws are discussed below — one dealing with compulsory attendance and the other with how attendance affects the award of a student's final grade or course credit.

Compulsory Attendance

Ages 6-18

State law requires that a student who is at least six years of age, or who is younger than six years of age and has previously been enrolled in first grade, and who has not yet reached their 19th birthday, shall attend school, as well as any applicable accelerated instruction program, extended-year program, or tutorial session, unless the student is otherwise excused from attendance or legally exempt.

A student will be required to attend any assigned accelerated instruction program before or after school or during the summer if the student does not meet the passing standards on an applicable subject area state assessment.

Age 19 and Older

A student who voluntarily attends or enrolls after their 19th birthday is required to attend each school day until the end of the school year. If the student incurs more than five unexcused absences in a semester, the district may revoke the student's enrollment. The student's presence on school property thereafter would be unauthorized and may be considered trespassing. [See policy FEA for more information.]

Compulsory Attendance — Exemptions

All Grade Levels

State law allows exemptions to the compulsory attendance requirements, as long as the student makes up all work, for the following activities and events:

- Religious holy days
- Required court appearances

- Appearing at a governmental office to obtain U.S. citizenship
- Taking part in a US naturalization oath ceremony
- Serving as an election clerk
- Health-care appointments for the student or a child of the student, including absences related to autism services and mental health appointments
- Absences resulting from a serious or life-threatening illness or related treatment that makes a student's attendance infeasible, with certification by a physician on the district's form
- Absences for attendance in a released time course in religious instruction
- For students in the conservatorship of the state:
    - An activity required under a court-ordered service plan
    - Any other court-ordered activity, provided it is not practicable to schedule the student's participation in the activity outside of school hours

For children of military families, absences of up to five days will be excused for a student to visit a parent, stepparent, or legal guardian going to, on leave from, or returning from certain deployments. [See Children of Military Families]

Note that documented health-care appointments may include telehealth appointments. Students who are physically on campus will not be allowed to participate in telehealth or other online appointments without specific authorization from an appropriate administrator. Students should not use district-issued technology, including Wi-Fi or internet, for telehealth appointments because use of district-owned equipment and its network systems is not private and may be monitored by the district. For more information, see Personal Communications and Other Electronic Devices (All Grade Levels).

Secondary Grade Levels

The district will allow a student who is 15 years of age or older to be absent for one day to obtain a learner license and one day to obtain a driver's license, provided that the board has authorized such excused absences under policy FEA(LOCAL). The student will be required to provide documentation of the visit to the driver's license office for each absence and must make up any work missed.

[See If a student is absent because of a serious or life-threatening illness or related treatment that makes a student's attendance infeasible, a parent must provide certification from a physician licensed to practice in Texas specifying the student's illness and the anticipated period of absence related to the illness or treatment.

Driver License Attendance Verification (Secondary Grade Levels Only)]

The district will allow junior and senior students to be absent for up to two days per year to visit a college or university if the following conditions are met:

- The board has authorized such excused absences under policy FEA(LOCAL)
- The principal has approved the student's absence
- The student follows campus procedures to verify the visit and makes up any work missed

The district will allow a student 17 years old or older to be absent for up to four days during the period the student is enrolled in high school to pursue enlistment in the U.S. armed services or Texas National Guard, provided the student verifies these activities to the district.

The district will allow a student to be absent for up to two days during the student's junior year and two days during the student's senior year for a career investigation day to visit a professional at that individual's workplace to determine the student's interest in pursuing a career in the professional's field, provided the student verifies these activities to the district.

The district will allow a student to be absent for up to two days per school year to serve as:

- An early voting clerk, if the district's board has authorized this in policy FEA(LOCAL), the student notifies their teachers, and the student receives approval from the principal prior to the absences
- An election clerk, if the student makes up any work missed

The district will allow a student in grades 6-12 to be absent for the purpose of sounding "Taps" at a military honors funeral for a deceased veteran.

Compulsory Attendance — Failure to Comply

All Grade Levels

School employees must investigate and report violations of the compulsory attendance law.

A student who is absent without permission from school, any class, any required special program, or any required tutorial will be considered in violation of the compulsory attendance law and subject to disciplinary action.

Students with Disabilities

If a student with a disability is experiencing attendance issues, the student's ARD or Section 504 committee will determine whether the attendance issues warrant an evaluation, a reevaluation, and/or modifications to the student's individualized education program or Section 504 plan, as appropriate.

Ages 6-18

When a student age 6-18 incurs three or more unexcused absences within a four-week period, the law requires the school to send notice to the parent.

The notice will:

- Remind the parent of their duty to monitor the student's attendance and require the student to attend school
- Request a conference between school administrators and the parent

- Inform the parent that the district will initiate truancy prevention measures, including a behavior improvement plan, school-based community service, referrals to counseling or other social services, or other appropriate measures

The truancy prevention facilitator for the district is:

Julie Tidmore

Principal

Julie.tidmore@vmisd.net

254-932-5251

For any questions about student absences, parents should contact the facilitator or any other campus administrator.

A court of law may impose penalties against the parent if a school-aged student is deliberately not attending school. The district may file a complaint against the parent if the student incurs 10 or more unexcused absences within a six-month period in the same school year.

If a student age 12-18 incurs 10 or more unexcused absences within a six-month period in the same school year, the district, in most circumstances, will refer the student to truancy court.

[See policies FEA(LEGAL) and FED(LEGAL) for more information.]

Age 19 and Older

After a student age 19 or older incurs a third unexcused absence, the district is required by law to send the student a letter explaining that the district may revoke the student's enrollment for the remainder of the school year if the student has more than five unexcused absences in a semester. As an alternative to revoking a student's enrollment, the district may implement a behavior improvement plan.

Attendance for Credit or Final Grade (All Grade Levels)

To receive credit or a final grade in a class, a student must attend the class at least 90 percent of the days it is offered. A student who attends at least 75 percent but fewer than 90 percent of the days may receive credit or a final grade if they complete a plan, approved by the principal, that allows the student to fulfill the class's instructional requirements. If a student is involved in a criminal or juvenile court proceeding, the judge presiding over the case must also approve the plan before the student receives credit or a final grade.

If a student attends fewer than 75 percent of the class days or does not complete the principal-approved plan, then the attendance review committee will determine whether there are extenuating circumstances for the absences and how the student can regain credit or a final grade. [See policy FEC for more information.]

Except for absences due to serious or life-threatening illness or related treatment, all absences, excused or unexcused, may be held against a student's attendance requirement. To determine whether there were extenuating circumstances for any absences, the principal or attendance committee will consider:

- Whether the student has mastered the essential knowledge and skills and maintained passing grades in the course or subject.
- Whether the student has completed makeup work satisfactorily. If the student completes makeup work, absences listed under Compulsory Attendance — Exemptions and absences for extracurricular activities will be considered extenuating circumstances.
- Whether the student or the student's parent had any control over the absences.
- Any information presented by the student or parent to the committee about the absences.

The student or parent may appeal the committee's decision to the board by following policy FNG(LOCAL).

Official Attendance-Taking Time (All Grade Levels)

The district will take official attendance every day at ***9:00 a.m***.

A student absent for any portion of the day should follow the procedures below to provide documentation of the absence.

Documentation After an Absence (All Grade Levels)

A parent must provide an explanation for any absence when the student arrives or returns to school. The student must submit a note signed by the parent. The campus may accept a phone call from the parent but reserves the right to require a written note.

A note signed by the student will not be accepted unless the student is age 18 or older or is an emancipated minor under state law.

The campus will document in its attendance records whether the absence is excused or unexcused.

Note: The district is not required to excuse any absence, even if the parent provides a note explaining the absence, unless the absence is an exemption under compulsory attendance laws.

Doctor's Note After an Absence for Illness (All Grade Levels)

Within ***5*** days of returning to school, a student who is absent for more than ***3 days*** consecutive days because of a personal illness must bring a statement from a doctor or health clinic verifying the illness or condition that caused the absence. Otherwise, the absence may be considered unexcused and in violation of compulsory attendance laws.

If the student develops a questionable pattern of absences, the principal or attendance committee may require a statement from a doctor or health clinic verifying the illness or condition that caused the absence to determine whether an absence will be excused or unexcused.

Certification of Absence Due to Severe Illness or Treatment

If a student is absent because of a serious or life-threatening illness or related treatment that makes a student's attendance infeasible, a parent must provide certification from a physician licensed to practice in Texas specifying the student's illness and the anticipated period of absence related to the illness or treatment.

Driver License Attendance Verification (Secondary Grade Levels Only)

A currently enrolled student seeking a driver's license shall submit the Texas Department of Public Safety Verification of Enrollment and Attendance Form (VOE), signed by the parent, to the campus central office at least 10 days before it is needed. The district will issue a VOE only if the student meets class credit or attendance requirements. The VOE form (https://www.tdlr.texas.gov/driver/forms/VOE.pdf) is available online.

More information is available on the Texas Department of Public Safety website (https://www.dps.texas.gov/section/driver-license/how-apply-texas-driver-license-teen).

[See Compulsory Attendance — Exemptions for Secondary Grade Levels for information on excused absences for obtaining a learner license or driver's license.]

Accountability under State and Federal Law (All Grade Levels)

Valley Mills ISD and each of its campuses are held to certain standards of accountability under state and federal law. A key component of accountability is the dissemination and publication of certain reports and information, including:

- The Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR) for the district, compiled by the Texas Education Agency (TEA), based on academic factors and ratings
- A School Report Card (SRC) for each campus in the district, compiled by TEA
- The district's financial management report, which includes the financial accountability rating assigned to the district by TEA
- Information compiled by TEA for the submission of a federal report card that is required by federal law

Accountability information can be found on the district's website at ***www.vmisd.net***. Hard copies of any reports are available upon request to the district's administration office.

TEA maintains additional accountability and accreditation information at TEA Performance Reporting Division (https://tea.texas.gov/texas-schools/accountability/academic-accountability/performance-reporting).

Awards and Honors (All Grade Levels)

An awards ceremony will take place towards the end of the school year. Information will be sent out to all parents and students when it becomes available.

Bullying (All Grade Levels)

The district strives to prevent bullying, in accordance with the district's policies, by promoting a positive school culture; building healthy relationships between students and staff; encouraging reporting of bullying incidents, including anonymous reporting; and investigating and addressing reported bullying incidents.

Bullying is defined in state law as a single significant act or a pattern of acts by one or more students directed at another student that exploits an imbalance of power and involves engaging in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic means, or physical conduct that:

- Has the effect or will have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or of damage to the student's property
- Is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student
- Materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of a classroom or school
- Infringes on the rights of the victim at school

Bullying includes cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is defined in state law as bullying that is done using any electronic communication device, including:

- A cellular or other type of telephone
- A computer
- A camera
- Electronic mail
- Instant messaging
- Text messaging
- A social media application
- An internet website
- Any other internet-based communication tool

Bullying is prohibited by the district and could include:

- Hazing
- Threats
- Taunting
- Teasing
- Confinement
- Assault
- Demands for money

- Destruction of property
- Theft of valued possessions
- Name-calling
- Rumor-spreading
- Ostracism

The district will integrate into instruction research-based content designed to reduce bullying that is appropriate for students' age groups.

Students in secondary grades will participate in:

- Instruction on the brain's ability to change and grow so the student recognizes bullying behavior can come from a developmental need to acquire more social skills, can change when the brain matures and learns better ways of coping, and is not an unchangeable trait
- Discussions that portray bullying as undesirable behavior and a means for attaining or maintaining social status at school, and that discourage students from using bullying as a tool for social status
- Instruction designed so that students recognize the role that reporting bullying behaviors plays in promoting a safe school community

The district will use an age-appropriate survey about school culture that includes relevant questions on bullying to identify and address student concerns.

Each campus has a committee that addresses bullying by focusing on prevention efforts and health and wellness initiatives. The committee will include parents and secondary students. For more information on this committee, including interest in serving on the committee, contact the campus principal.

If a student believes that they have experienced bullying or witnessed the bullying of another student, the student or parent should notify a teacher, school counselor, principal, or another district employee as soon as possible. Any district employee aware of a report of a bullying incident will relay the report to an appropriate administrator. Procedures for reporting allegations of bullying may be found on the district's website.

A student may anonymously report an alleged incident of bullying by ***going to the district website and using Stop It. The district website is; www.vmisd.net***

The administration will investigate any allegations of bullying and related misconduct. The district will also provide notice to the parent of the alleged victim and the parent of the student alleged to have engaged in bullying.

If an investigation determines that bullying occurred, the administration will take appropriate disciplinary action and may, in certain circumstances, notify law

enforcement. Disciplinary or other action may be taken even if the conduct did not meet the definition of bullying.

The district will provide research-based interventions, which may include counseling options, for students who engage in bullying behaviors, students who are targeted by bullying behaviors, and any student who witnessed bullying behaviors.

Any action taken in response to bullying will comply with state and federal law regarding students with disabilities.

Any retaliation against a student who reports an incident of bullying is prohibited.

Upon recommendation of the administration, the board may transfer a student found to have engaged in bullying to another classroom at the campus. In consultation with the student's parent, the board may transfer the student to another campus in the district.

The parent of a student who has been determined to be a victim of bullying may request that the student be transferred to another classroom or campus within the district. [See Safety Transfers/Assignments]

A copy of the district's bullying policy is available in the principal's office, superintendent's office, and on the district's website, and is included at the end of this handbook as an appendix.

A student or parent who is dissatisfied with the outcome of an investigation may appeal through policy FNG(LOCAL).

[See Safety Transfers/Assignments, Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation (All Grade Levels), Hazing (All Grade Levels), policy FFI, the district's Student Code of Conduct, and the district improvement plan, a copy of which can be viewed in the campus office.]

Celebrations (All Grade Levels)

Although a parent or grandparent may provide food to share for a school-designated function or for a student's birthday, please be aware that children in the school may have severe allergies to certain food products. Discuss any classroom allergies with the teacher before bringing food to share.

Occasionally, the school or a class may host functions or celebrations tied to the curriculum that involve food. The school or teacher will notify students and parents of any known food allergies when soliciting potential volunteers to provide food.

[See Food Allergies (All Grade Levels)]

Child Abuse, Neglect, School Staff Misconduct, Trafficking, and Other Maltreatment of Children (All Grade Levels)

The district has established a plan for addressing child abuse, neglect, school staff misconduct, trafficking, and other maltreatment of children, which may be initiated by contacting the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS)/Child Protective Services (CPS). The plan is available at ***www.vmisd.net***. Abuse includes physical

abuse, including sexual abuse, and mental and emotional abuse. Trafficking includes both sex and labor trafficking.

Duty to Report

Anyone who suspects that a child has been or may be abused or neglected has a legal responsibility, under state law, to report the suspected abuse or neglect to law enforcement or to Child Protective Services (CPS). See below for information about how to report and respond to allegations of child abuse or neglect.

Possible Warning Signs of Child Abuse, Neglect, Trafficking, and Other Maltreatment of Children

Physical abuse

Possible warning signs of physical abuse include:

- Frequent injuries such as bruises, cuts, black eyes, or burns without adequate explanations
- Frequent complaints of pain without apparent injury
- Burns or bruises in unusual patterns that may indicate the use of an instrument or human bite; cigarette burns on any part of the body
- Lack of reaction to pain
- Extreme fear of going home or seeing parents
- Injuries that appear after a child has not been seen for several days
- Unseasonable clothing that may hide injuries to arms or legs

Sexual Abuse

Possible warning signs of sexual abuse include:

- Physical signs of sexually transmitted diseases
- Evidence of injury to the genital area
- Pregnancy in a young girl
- Difficulty in sitting or walking
- Extreme fear of being alone with adults of a certain sex
- Sexual comments, behaviors, or play beyond what is considered age-appropriate behavior
- Knowledge of sexual relations beyond what is expected for a child’s age
- Sexual victimization of other children

Children and adolescents who have experienced dating violence may show similar physical, behavioral, and emotional warning signs. [See Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation (All Grade Levels) and Consent to Instruction on Prevention of Child Abuse, Family Violence, Dating Violence, and Sex Trafficking]

Emotional Abuse

Possible warning signs of emotional abuse include:

- Over-compliance or low self-esteem caused by scapegoating or verbal abuse by caregivers
- Severe depression, anxiety, or aggression
- Lag in physical, emotional, and intellectual development
- Indicators of a caregiver who belittles the child, withholds love, and seems unconcerned about the child's problems
- Significant changes to behavior, such as withdrawal or over-aggression
- Significant changes to weight, such as substantial weight gain or weight loss

Neglect

Possible warning signs of neglect include:

- Obvious malnourishment
- Consistent lack of personal hygiene that poses a health risk
- Stealing or begging for food
- Child unattended for long periods of time
- Unaddressed need for dental care or other medical attention

School Staff Misconduct

Possible warning signs of school staff misconduct include:

- Inappropriate boundaries or communications with a student, including inappropriate relationships
- Violating school or district communication policies, such as improper use of messaging apps or social media
- Showing favoritism toward certain students in a way that compromises fairness or student well-being
- Creating, using, or sharing inappropriate AI-generated images involving students or staff
- Neglecting, abusing, or physically harming a student
- Providing alcohol or drugs to a student
- Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs while on school property or during school activities
- Possessing a weapon on school property or during school activities
- Committing a felony
- Engaging in fraudulent or deceptive practices involving the school system or State Board of Education Certification (SBEC)

Description and Warning Signs of Trafficking

Child trafficking of any sort is prohibited by the Penal Code. Sex trafficking involves forcing a person, including a child, into sexual abuse, assault, indecency, prostitution, or pornography. Labor trafficking involves forcing a person, including a child, to engage in forced labor or services.

Traffickers are often trusted members of a child's community, such as friends, romantic partners, family members, mentors, and coaches. Some traffickers contact victims online.

Possible warning signs of sexual trafficking in children include:

- Changes in school attendance, habits, friend groups, vocabulary, demeanor, and attitude
- Sudden appearance of expensive items (for example, manicures, designer clothes, purses, technology)
- Tattoos or branding
- Refillable gift cards
- Frequent runaway episodes
- Multiple phones or social media accounts
- Provocative pictures posted online or stored on the phone
- Unexplained injuries
- Isolation from family, friends, and community
- Older romantic partners

Additional warning signs of labor trafficking in children include:

- Being unpaid, paid very little, or paid only through tips
- Being employed but not having a school-authorized work permit
- Being employed and having a work permit but clearly working outside the permitted hours for students
- Owing a large debt and being unable to pay it off
- Not being allowed breaks at work or being subjected to excessively long work hours
- Being overly concerned with pleasing an employer and/or deferring personal or educational decisions to a boss
- Not being in control of their own money
- Living with an employer or having an employer listed as a student's caregiver
- A desire to quit a job but not being allowed to do so

[See Consent to Instruction on Prevention of Child Abuse, Family Violence, Dating Violence, and Sex Trafficking]

Reporting and Responding to Child Abuse, Neglect, Trafficking, and Other Maltreatment of Children

A child who has experienced any type of abuse or neglect should be encouraged to seek out a parent or trusted adult. Children may be reluctant to disclose abuse and may only disclose sexual abuse indirectly. As a parent or trusted adult, it is important to be calm and comforting if your child or another child confides in you. Reassure the child that they did the right thing by telling you.

If your child is a victim of abuse, neglect, trafficking, or other maltreatment, the school counselor or principal will provide information on counseling options for you and your

child available in your area. Texas Health and Human Services also manages early intervention counseling programs.

To find out what services may be available in your county, see Texas Health and Human Services' Family Support Services Program Locator (https://fss.hhs.texas.gov/Programs_Available_In_Your_County/default.asp).

Reports of abuse, trafficking, or neglect may be made to the CPS division of the DFPS at 1 800-252-5400 or online at Texas Abuse Hotline Website (www.txabusehotline.org).

Further Resources on Sexual Abuse, Trafficking, and Other Maltreatment of Children

The following websites include resources to help increase awareness of child abuse and neglect, sexual abuse, trafficking, and other maltreatment of children:

- Child Welfare Information Gateway (https://www.childwelfare.gov/)
- KidsHealth, For Parents, Child Abuse (https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/child-abuse.html)
- Office of the Texas Governor's Child Sex Trafficking Team (https://gov.texas.gov/organization/cjd/childsextrafficking)
- Human Trafficking of School-aged Children (https://tea.texas.gov/about-tea/other-services/human-trafficking-of-school-aged-children)
- Child Sexual Abuse: A Parental Guide from the Texas Association Against Sexual Assault (https://www.nsvrc.org/publications/booklets/child-sexual-abuse-parental-guide)
- National Center of Safe Supportive Learning Environments: Human Trafficking in America's Schools (https://www.ed.gov/sites/ed/files/documents/human-trafficking/human-trafficking-americas-schools.pdf)

Class Schedules (Secondary Grade Levels Only)

All students are expected to attend school for the entire school day and maintain a full class schedule. Exceptions may be made occasionally by the campus principal for students in grades 9-12 who meet specific criteria and receive parental consent to enroll in less than a full-day schedule.

[See Schedule Changes (Middle/Junior High and High School Grade Levels) for information related to student requests to revise their course schedule.]

Communications (All Grade Levels)

Parent Contact Information

A parent is legally required to provide in writing the parent's contact information, including address, phone number, and email address.

A parent must provide the contact information to the district upon enrollment and again within two weeks after the beginning of each following school year while the student is enrolled in the district.

If the parent's contact information changes during the school year, the parent must update the information in writing no more than two weeks after the date the information changes.

A parent may update contact information by ***contacting the JH/HS secretary.***

Automated Emergency Communications

The district will rely on contact information on file with the district to communicate with parents in an emergency situation, which may include real-time or automated messages. An emergency situation may include early dismissal, delayed opening, or restricted access to the campus due to severe weather, another emergency, or a security threat. It is crucial to notify your child's school when a phone number changes.

[See Safety (All Grade Levels) for information about contact with parents during an emergency situation.]

Automated Nonemergency Communications

Your child's school periodically sends information by automated or pre-recorded messages, text messages, or real-time phone or email communications that are closely related to the school's mission and specific to your child, your child's school, or the district.

Standard messaging rates of your wireless phone carrier may apply.

If you do not wish to receive such communications, please contact your child's principal. [See Safety (All Grade Levels) for information about contact with parents during an emergency.]

Complaints and Concerns (All Grade Levels)

Usually, student or parent complaints or concerns can be addressed informally by a phone call or a conference with the teacher or principal.

For those complaints and concerns that cannot be resolved informally, the board has adopted a student and parent grievance policy at FNG(LOCAL) in accordance with Education Code Chapter 26A. This policy describing the grievance process in detail is available in the district's online policy manual at ***www.vmisd.net*** and is attached to this handbook as an appendix. A parent may file a grievance by submitting the district grievance form to the campus principal. The district's grievance forms are available on the district's website at ***www.vmisd.net*** and at the principal's or superintendent's office.

In general, the written grievance form should be completed and submitted to the campus principal in a timely manner.

If the concern is not resolved, a parent or student may appeal to the superintendent or superintendent's designee.

If the concern is still unresolved, the district provides a process for parents and students to appeal to the board of trustees.

Hearings at each level will be conducted in accordance with the timelines established by law described in the district's policy at FNG(LOCAL).

Conduct (All Grade Levels)

Applicability of School Rules

The board has adopted a Student Code of Conduct that defines standards of acceptable behavior — on and off campus, during remote and in-person instruction, and on district vehicles — and outlines consequences for violation of these standards. The district has disciplinary authority over a student in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Students and parents should be familiar with the standards set out in the Student Code of Conduct, as well as campus and classroom rules.

During summer instruction, the Student Handbook and Student Code of Conduct in place for the school year immediately before the summer period apply, unless the district amends either or both documents for summer instruction.

Campus Behavior Coordinator

Each campus has a campus behavior coordinator to apply discipline management techniques and administer consequences for certain student misconduct, as well as provide a point of contact for student misconduct. The contact information for each campus behavior coordinator is available on the district's website at www.vmisd.net and the coordinator for this campus is listed below:

Julie Tidmore

Principal

Julie.tidmore@vmisd.net

254-932-5251

Deliveries

Except in emergencies, delivery of messages or packages to students will not be allowed during instructional time. A parent may leave a message or a package, such as a forgotten lunch, for the student to pick up from the front office during a passing period or lunch.

Disruption of School Operations

Disruption of school operations is not tolerated and may constitute a misdemeanor offense. As identified by state law, disruptions include the following:

- Interference with the movement of people at an exit, entrance, or hallway of a district building without authorization from an administrator
- Interference with an authorized activity by seizing control of all or part of a building
- Use of force, violence, or threats in an attempt to prevent participation in an authorized assembly

- Use of force, violence, or threats to cause disruption during an assembly
- Interference with the movement of people at an exit or an entrance to district property
- Use of force, violence, or threats in an attempt to prevent people from entering or leaving district property without authorization from an administrator

Disruption of classes or other school activities while on or within 500 feet of district property includes:

- Making loud noises
- Trying to entice a student away from, or to prevent a student from attending, a required class or activity
- Entering a classroom without authorization and disrupting the activity with loud or profane language or any misconduct

Interference with the transportation of students in vehicles owned or operated by the district is also considered a disruption.

Social Events

School rules apply to all school social events. Guests attending these events are expected to observe the same rules as students, and a student inviting a guest will share responsibility for the conduct of the guest.

A student attending a social event will be asked to sign out when leaving before the end of the event and will not be readmitted.

A parent interested in serving as a chaperone for any school social events should contact the campus principal.

Counseling

The district has a comprehensive school counseling program that includes:

- A guidance curriculum to help students develop their full educational potential, including the student's interests and career objectives
- A responsive services component to intervene on behalf of any student whose immediate personal concerns or problems put the student's continued educational, career, personal, or social development at risk
- An individual planning system to guide a student as the student plans, monitors, and manages the student's own educational, career, personal, and social development
- Systems to support the efforts of teachers, staff, parents, and other members of the community in promoting the educational, career, personal, and social development of students

The district will make a preview of the program, including all materials and curriculum, available to parents to review during school hours.

Academic Counseling

Elementary and Middle/Junior High School Grade Levels

The school counselor will provide information to students and parents about college and university admissions and the importance of planning for postsecondary education, including appropriate coursework and financial aid availability and requirements.

In either grade 7 or 8, each student will receive instruction on how best to prepare for high school, college, and a career.

High School Grade Levels

High school students and their parents are encouraged to talk with a school counselor, teacher, or principal to learn more about course offerings, graduation requirements, and early graduation procedures.

Each year, high school students will be provided information on anticipated course offerings for the next school year, how to make the most of academic and career and technical education (CTE) opportunities, and the importance of postsecondary education.

The school counselor will also provide information each year a student is enrolled in high school about:

- The importance of postsecondary education
- The advantages of earning an endorsement and completing the foundation program with the distinguished level of achievement
- The disadvantages of pursuing a high school equivalency exam (GED) as opposed to earning a high school diploma
- Financial aid eligibility and how to apply for financial aid
- Automatic admission to state-funded Texas colleges and universities
- Eligibility requirements for the TEXAS Grant
- Availability of district programs that allow students to earn college credit
- Availability of tuition and fee assistance for postsecondary education for students in foster care
- Availability of college credit awarded by institutions of higher education to veterans and military service members for military experience, education, and training

Additionally, the school counselor can provide information about workforce opportunities after graduation or technical and trade school opportunities, including opportunities to earn industry-recognized certificates and licenses.

[See **Error! Reference source not found.** for more information.]

Personal Counseling (All Grade Levels)

The school counselor is available to assist students with a wide range of personal, social, and family concerns, including emotional or mental health issues and substance abuse. A student who wishes to meet with the school counselor ***contact Wanda Riggs***.

As a parent, if you are concerned about your child's mental or emotional health, please speak with the school counselor for a list of resources that may be of assistance.

If your child has experienced trauma, contact the school counselor for more information.

[See Mental Health Support (All Grade Levels), Child Abuse, Neglect, School Staff Misconduct, Trafficking, and Other Maltreatment of Children (All Grade Levels), and Dating Violence]

Course Credit (Secondary Grade Levels Only)

A student at any grade level enrolled in a high school course will earn credit for the course only if the final grade is 70 or above. For a two-part (two-semester, 1-credit course), the student's grades from both halves (semesters) will be averaged and credit will be awarded if the combined average is 70 or above. If the student's combined average is less than 70, the student will be awarded credit only for the half (semester) with the passing grade.

Credit by Examination — If a Student Has Taken the Course/Subject (Grades 6-12)

A student who has previously taken a course or subject but did not receive credit or a final grade for it may, in circumstances determined by the principal or attendance committee, be permitted to earn credit or a final grade by passing an examination approved by the district's board of trustees on the essential knowledge and skills defined for that course or subject.

Examples of prior instruction include incomplete coursework due to a failed course or excessive absences, homeschooling, or coursework by a student transferring from a nonaccredited school. The opportunity to earn credit by examination after the student has had prior instruction is sometimes referred to as "credit recovery."

The attendance review committee may also offer a student with excessive absences an opportunity to earn credit for a course by passing an examination. [See Attendance for Credit or Final Grade (All Grade Levels)]

If a student is granted approval to take an examination for credit, the student must score at least 70 on the examination to receive credit for the course or subject.

[See the school counselor and policy EHDB(LOCAL) for more information.]

Credit by Examination for Advancement/Acceleration — If a Student Has Not Taken the Course/Subject

A student will be permitted to earn credit by examination for an academic course or subject area for which the student had no prior instruction for advancement or to accelerate to the next grade level.

The examinations offered by the district are approved by the district's board of trustees. Testing windows for these examinations will be published in district publications and on the district's website. A student may take a specific examination only once per testing window.

The only exceptions to the published testing windows will be for examinations administered by another entity or to accommodate a student experiencing homelessness or a student involved in the foster care system.

When another entity administers an examination, the student and the district must comply with the testing schedule of the other entity.

If a student plans to take an examination, the student or parent must register with the school counselor no later than 30 days before the scheduled testing date. [See policy EHDC for more information.]

Students in Grades 6-12

A student in grade 6 or above is eligible to earn course credit if the student meets one of the following requirements:

- A passing score of at least 80 on an examination approved by the board
- A scaled score of 50 or higher on an examination administered through the College Level Examination Program (CLEP)
- A score of 3 or higher on an AP examination, as applicable

A student may take an examination to earn high school course credit no more than twice. If a student fails to achieve the designated score on the applicable exam before the beginning of the school year in which the student would need to enroll in the course according to the school's high school course sequence, the student must complete the course.

Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation (All Grade Levels)

Students learn best, and their welfare is best served, in a school environment that is free from dating violence, discrimination, harassment, and retaliation.

Students are expected to treat peers and district employees with courtesy and respect, avoid offensive behaviors, and stop those behaviors as directed. District employees are likewise expected to treat students with courtesy and respect.

The board has established policies and procedures to prohibit and promptly address inappropriate and offensive behaviors that are based on a person's race, color, religion, sex, gender, national origin, age, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law. A copy of the district's policy is available in the principal's office and in the superintendent's office or on the district's website at ***www.vmisd.net*** [See policy FFH for more information.]

Dating Violence

Dating violence will not be tolerated at school. To report dating violence, see Reporting Procedures.

Dating violence occurs when a person in a current or past dating relationship uses physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional abuse to harm, threaten, intimidate, or control the other person in the relationship or any of the person's past or subsequent partners. This

type of conduct is considered harassment if it is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it affects a student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity; creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment; or substantially interferes with the student's academic performance.

Examples of dating violence against a student may include, but are not limited to:

- Physical or sexual assaults
- Name-calling
- Put-downs
- Threats to hurt the student, the student's family members, or members of the student's household
- Destroying property belonging to the student
- Threats to die by suicide or homicide if the student ends the relationship
- Threats to harm a student's past or current dating partner
- Attempts to isolate the student from friends and family
- Stalking
- Encouraging others to engage in these behaviors

In accordance with law, when the district receives a report of dating violence, a district official will immediately notify the parent of the alleged victim and alleged perpetrator.

The counselor's office has information about the dangers of dating violence and resources for seeking help.

For more information on dating violence, see:

- Texas Attorney General's office recognizing and responding to dating violence flier (https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/sites/default/files/files/child-support/papa/session%2010/recognizing-relationship-violence-en.pdf)
- Preventing Teen Dating Violence (https://www.cdc.gov/intimate-partner-violence/about/about-teen-dating-violence.html)

[See Consent to Instruction on Prevention of Child Abuse, Family Violence, Dating Violence, and Sex Trafficking]

Discrimination

Discrimination is defined as any conduct directed at a student on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, gender, national origin, age, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law that negatively affects the student.

Harassment

Harassment, in general terms, is conduct so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it affects a student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity; creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment; or substantially interferes with the student's academic performance.

Examples of harassment may include, but are not limited to:

- Offensive or derogatory language directed at a person's religious beliefs or practices, accent, skin color, or need for accommodation
- Threatening, intimidating, or humiliating conduct
- Offensive jokes, name-calling, slurs, or rumors
- Physical aggression or assault
- Graffiti or printed material promoting racial, ethnic, or other negative stereotypes
- Other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property

Sexual Harassment and Sex-Based Harassment

Sexual harassment and sex-based harassment of a student by an employee, volunteer, or another student are prohibited.

Examples of sexual harassment may include, but are not limited to:

- Touching private body parts or coercing physical contact that is sexual in nature
- Sexual advances
- Jokes or conversations of a sexual nature
- Other sexually motivated conduct, communications, or contact

Sexual harassment of a student by an employee or volunteer does not include necessary or permissible physical contact that a reasonable person would not construe as sexual in nature, such as comforting a child with a hug or taking the child's hand. However, romantic, sexual, and other inappropriate social relationships between students and district employees are prohibited, even if consensual.

Pregnancy or Related Conditions

The district does not discriminate on the basis of pregnancy or a related condition.

Please contact school nurse or school counselor for pregnancy-related accommodations.

Retaliation

Retaliation against a person who makes a report or participates in an investigation of discrimination, harassment, or dating violence is prohibited.

Reporting Procedures

Any student who believes that they have experienced dating violence, discrimination, harassment, or retaliation should immediately report the problem to a teacher, school counselor, principal, or other district employee. The report may be made by the student's parent. [See policy FFH and FFH(EXHIBIT) for other appropriate district officials to whom to make a report.]

Upon receiving a report, the district will determine whether the allegations, if proven, constitute prohibited conduct as defined by policy FFH. If not, the district will refer to policy FFI to determine whether the allegations, if proven, constitute bullying, as defined by law and policy FFI. If the alleged prohibited conduct also meets the statutory and policy definitions for bullying, an investigation of bullying will also be

conducted. [See An awards ceremony will take place towards the end of the school year. Information will be sent out to all parents and students when it becomes available.

Bullying (All Grade Levels)]

The district will promptly notify the parent of any student alleged to have experienced prohibited conduct involving an adult associated with the district. In the event alleged prohibited conduct involves another student, the district will notify the parent of the student alleged to have experienced the prohibited conduct when the allegations, if proven, would constitute a violation as defined by policy FFH.

Investigation of Report

Allegations of prohibited conduct, which includes dating violence, discrimination, harassment, and retaliation, will be promptly investigated.

To the extent possible, the district will respect the privacy of the student. However, limited disclosures may be necessary to conduct a thorough investigation and comply with law.

If a law enforcement or other regulatory agency notifies the district that it is investigating the matter and requests that the district delay its investigation, the district will resume its investigation at the conclusion of the agency's investigation.

During an investigation and when appropriate, the district will take interim action to address the alleged prohibited conduct.

If the district's investigation indicates that prohibited conduct occurred, appropriate disciplinary action and, in some cases, corrective action will be taken to address the conduct. The district may take disciplinary and corrective action even if the conduct was not unlawful.

All involved parties will be notified of the outcome of the district investigation within the parameters and limits allowed under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

A student or parent who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal in accordance with policy FNG(LOCAL).

Discrimination

[See Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation (All Grade Levels)]

Distribution of Literature, Published Materials, or Other Documents (All Grade Levels)

School Materials

Publications prepared by and for the school may be posted or distributed, with the prior approval of the principal, sponsor, or teacher. Such items may include school posters, newspapers, yearbooks, brochures, flyers, and the like.

All school publications are under the supervision of a teacher, sponsor, and the principal.

Nonschool Materials

From Students

Students must obtain prior approval from the ***principal*** before selling, posting, circulating, or distributing more than ***1*** copy of written or printed materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, films, tapes, or other visual or auditory materials that were not developed under the oversight of the school. To be considered, any non-school material must include the name of the sponsoring person or organization. Approval will be granted or denied within two school days.

The ***superintendent*** has designated ***teacher*** as the location for approved non-school materials to be placed for voluntary viewing or collection by students. [See policy FNAA for more information.]

A student may appeal a decision in accordance with policy FNG(LOCAL). Any student who sells, posts, circulates, or distributes non-school material without prior approval will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Materials displayed without approval will be removed.

[See policy FNG(LOCAL) for student complaint procedures.]

From Others

No person or group will sell, circulate, distribute, or post on any district premises written or printed materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, films, tapes, or other visual or auditory materials that is not sponsored by the district or by a district-affiliated school-support organization, except as permitted by policy GKDA.

To be considered for distribution, any non-school material must meet the limitations on content established in the policy, include the name of the sponsoring person or organization, and be submitted to the ***principal*** for prior review. The ***principal*** will approve or reject the materials within two school days of the time the materials are received. The requestor may appeal a rejection in accordance with the appropriate district complaint policy. [See policies DGBA or GF for more information.]

The ***superintendent*** has designated ***teacher workroom*** as the location for approved non-school materials to be placed for voluntary viewing or collection.

Prior review will not be required for:

- Distribution of materials by an attendee to other attendees of a school-sponsored meeting intended for adults and held after school hours
- Distribution of materials by an attendee to other attendees of a community group meeting held after school hours in accordance with policy GKD(LOCAL) or a noncurriculum-related student group meeting held in accordance with policy FNAB(LOCAL)

- Distribution for electioneering purposes during the time a school facility is being used as a polling place, in accordance with state law

All nonschool materials distributed under these circumstances must be removed from district property immediately following the event at which the materials are distributed.

Dress and Grooming (All Grade Levels)

The district's dress code teaches grooming and hygiene, prevents disruption, and minimizes safety hazards. Students and parents may determine a student's personal dress and grooming standards, provided that they comply with the following:

CLOTHING

1. The District prohibits pictures, emblems or writing on clothing that: a. are lewd, offensive, vulgar, or obscene; b. advertise or depict tobacco products, alcoholic beverages, drugs, or any other substance prohibited under policy.

2. sheer or see-through garments may not be worn.

3. Appropriate undergarments must be worn and must be concealed by outer garments.

4. Pajama pants or similar garments may not be worn.

5. Pants or shorts be appropriately sized and securely fitted at the waist.

6. Shirts and blouses shall be appropriately sized. No skin shall be visible between the shirt/top and pants, shorts, or skirt while standing, sitting, or bending

7. Leggings, yoga pants or any similar articles of clothing may be worn appropriately. Spandex clothing must not show any undergarments, be see-through or excessively tight.

8. Shorts, dresses and skirts must be an appropriate length; visible when being worn and modest of length, extend to mid-thigh.

9. Slit dresses and skirts must not reveal any part of the leg above the length of fingers.

10. Low cut shirts, tops, dresses, and blouses are not permitted.

11. Halter tops, crop tops, backless tops, open back tops, tank tops, or strapless tops are not permitted.

12. Trench coats, dusters, or other similar fitting garments may not be worn.

13. Students will not wear blankets, flags, capes, or other non-clothing items during the school day.

14. Pants with holes may be worn, as long as holes are mid-thigh or below.

15. Footwear must be worn. Soft-soled house shoes are not acceptable.

16. Caps, hats, or other headgear (including hoodies) shall not be worn in the school building.

BODY & ACCESSORIES

17. Students should have no visible tattoos.

18. Earrings and clear (transparent) spacers are allowed. Earrings must be removed in environments where they are a hazard to students themselves or others, such as during extracurricular activities.

19. Facial jewelry; septum or barbell jewelry for noses; earlobe gauges; or other facial jewelry, such as on the bridge of the nose, eyebrow, lip connecting chains, etc., may not be worn.

20. Spikes, chains and dog collar type jewelry or accessories are prohibited.

HAIR & EYEBROWS

21. Lines or designs are not allowed in eyebrows.

22. Students' hair must be clean, groomed, and must not obstruct the student's vision or the view of the student's face. The student's hairstyle must not cause a disruption to the learning environment.

23. No distracting designs or symbols may be cut in the hair.

24. Hair color must be a natural color.

25. Mohawks or other similar distracting styles are not allowed.

26. Students may not wear extreme and distracting make-up.

27. Facial hair is not allowed. Sideburns may not come below the bottom of the ear and may not be wide-flared.

The student and parent may determine the student's personal dress and grooming standards, provided that they comply with the guidelines set forth above. If the principal determines that a student's grooming or clothing violates the school's dress code, the student will be given an opportunity to correct the problem at school and return to the classroom. If the problem cannot be corrected at school, the principal will work with the student and parent to obtain an acceptable change of clothing for the student in a way that minimizes loss of instructional time. Repeated or severe offenses may result in more serious disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

DRESS CODE EXEMPTIONS

1. The campus principal may make exceptions to the dress code for special events, such as spirit days, field days, dances, etc.

2. The campus principal, in cooperation with the sponsor, coach, or other person in charge of an extracurricular activity, may regulate the dress and grooming of students who participate in the activity.

Students who violate dress and grooming standards established for such an activity may be removed or excluded from the activity for a period determined by the campus principal or sponsor and may be subject to other disciplinary action, as specified in the Student Code of Conduct.

If the principal determines that a student's grooming or clothing violates the school's dress code, the student will be given an opportunity to correct the problem at school and return to the classroom. If the problem cannot be corrected at school, the principal will work with the student and parent to obtain an acceptable change of clothing for the student in a way that minimizes loss of instructional time.

Repeated or severe offenses may result in more serious disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

If the principal determines that a student's grooming or clothing violates the school's dress code, the student will be given an opportunity to correct the problem at school and return to the classroom. If the problem cannot be corrected at school, the principal will work with the student and parent to obtain an acceptable change of clothing for the student in a way that minimizes loss of instructional time.

Repeated or severe offenses may result in more serious disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

Electronic Devices and Technology Resources (All Grade Levels)

Safe Use of Technology

The district is committed to ensuring that students use technology safely and will follow all federal and state requirements to protect students from excessive data collection or materials that are considered harmful to minors. The district considers parents as partners in cybersecurity and online safety.

In accordance with state and federal law, the district will:

- Install a filter that blocks and prohibits pornographic or obscene materials or applications, including from unsolicited pop-ups, installations, and downloads, before transferring an electronic device to a student to be used for an educational purpose
- Block or filter students' internet access to pictures that are obscene, contain child pornography, or have been determined to be harmful to minors in accordance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA)
- Require direct and informed parental consent for a student's use of software, other than software excluded from the consent requirement by law [See Required State Assessments and **Error! Reference source not found.**]
- Require direct and informed parental consent for a student's use of software that conducts mental health assessments or other assessments unrelated to education curricula that are intended to collect information about students [See Consent to Conduct a Psychological or Psychiatric Evaluation]

If you want to know more about partnering with the district regarding cybersecurity and online safety, or if you have complaints or concern about student use of electronic devices, please contact ***Dianna Richardson, Director of Technology.***

[See Textbooks, Electronic Textbooks, Technological Equipment, and Other Instructional Materials (All Grade Levels)]

Possession and Use of Personal Communication Devices, Including Cell Phones and Other Electronic Devices

In accordance with state law, the district prohibits the use of a personal communication device (such as cell phones, tablets, and smartwatches) while on school property during the school day. For more information about permitted use in certain circumstances and disciplinary measures that apply to this prohibition, see the Student Code of Conduct and policy FNCE(LOCAL).

The use of cell phones or any device capable of capturing images is strictly prohibited in locker rooms or restroom areas while at school or at a school-related or school-sponsored event.

If a student uses a personal communication device without authorization during the school day, the student will be disciplined in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

The parent may pick up the confiscated communication device from the principal's office.

Confiscated communication devices that are not retrieved by the student or the student's parent will be disposed of after the notice required by law. [See policy FNCE for more information.]

In limited circumstances and in accordance with law, a student's personal communication device may be searched by authorized personnel. [See Searches and Investigations and policy FNF for more information.]

The district is not responsible for damaged, lost, or stolen communications devices.

Instructional Use of Personal Electronic Devices

Students must obtain prior approval to use personal electronic devices allowed by law for instructional purposes while on campus. The district may not permit use of a prohibited personal communication device except as required by law. [See Possession and Use of Personal Communication Devices, Including Cell Phones and Other Electronic Devices] Students must also sign a user agreement that contains applicable rules for use (separate from this handbook).

All personal devices must be turned off during the instructional day when not in use for approved instructional purposes. Violations of the user agreement may result in withdrawal of privileges and other disciplinary action.

Acceptable Use of District Technology Resources

District-owned technology resources may be issued to individual students for instructional purposes. Use of the district's network systems and equipment is restricted to approved purposes only. Students and parents will be asked to sign a user agreement (separate from this handbook) regarding use of these district resources. Violations of the user agreement may result in withdrawal of privileges and other disciplinary action.

Unacceptable and Inappropriate Use of Technology Resources

Students are prohibited from possessing, sending, forwarding, posting, accessing, or displaying electronic messages that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation, or illegal. This prohibition also applies to conduct off school property, whether on district-owned or personally owned equipment, if it results in a substantial disruption to the educational environment.

Any person taking, disseminating, transferring, possessing, or sharing obscene, sexually oriented, lewd, or otherwise illegal images or other content — commonly referred to as "sexting" — will be disciplined in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct, may be required to complete an educational program related to the dangers of this type of behavior, and, in certain circumstances, may be reported to law enforcement.

This type of behavior may constitute bullying or harassment, as well as impede future endeavors of a student. We encourage parents to review with their child the "Before You Text" Bullying and Sexting Course (https://txssc.txstate.edu/tools/courses/before-you-text/), a state-developed program that addresses the consequences of sexting.

In accordance with state law, the district prohibits the installation or use of TikTok (or any successor application or service) on a district device, along with any other social media application or service determined by the governor.

Any student who engages in conduct that results in a breach of the district's computer security will be disciplined in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. In some cases, the consequence may be expulsion.

End-of-Course (EOC) Assessments

[See Graduation (Secondary Grade Levels Only) and **Error! Reference source not found.**]

Emergent Bilingual Students (All Grade Levels)

A student who is an emergent bilingual student is entitled to receive specialized services from the district. A Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC), consisting of both district personnel and at least one parent representative, will determine whether the student qualifies for services. The student's parent must consent to any services recommended by the LPAC. However, pending the receipt of parental consent or denial of services, an eligible student will receive the services to which the student is entitled and eligible.

To determine a student's level of proficiency in English, the LPAC will use information from a variety of assessments. If the student qualifies for services, and once a level of proficiency has been established, the LPAC will designate instructional accommodations or additional special programs that the student will require to eventually become proficient at grade level work in English. Ongoing assessments will be conducted to determine a student's continued eligibility for the program.

The LPAC will also determine whether certain accommodations are necessary for any state-mandated assessments. The STAAR Spanish, as mentioned at **Error! Reference source not found.**, may be administered to an emergent bilingual student up to grade 5. In limited circumstances, a student's LPAC may exempt the student from an otherwise required state-mandated assessment or may waive certain graduation requirements related to the English I end-of-course (EOC) assessment. The Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) will also be administered to emergent bilingual students who qualify for services.

If a student is considered an emergent bilingual student and receives special education services because of a qualifying disability, the student's ARD committee will make instructional and assessment decisions in conjunction with the LPAC.

Extracurricular Activities, Clubs, and Organizations (All Grade Levels)

Participation in school-sponsored activities is an excellent way for a student to develop talents, receive individual recognition, and build strong friendships.

State law requires the district to obtain written parental consent before a student may participate in a student club that is authorized or sponsored by the district. A parent may obtain consent forms for student clubs ***www.vmisd.net***

Some extracurricular activities may include off-campus events. Students are required to use transportation provided by the district to and from the events. Exceptions may only be made with the approval of the activity's coach or sponsor. [See Transportation (All Grade Levels)]

Eligibility for many of these activities is governed by state law and the rules of the University Interscholastic League (UIL), a statewide association overseeing interdistrict competition. If a student is involved in an academic, athletic, or music activity governed by UIL, the student and parent are expected to know and follow all rules of the UIL organization. Students and parents can access the UIL Parent Information Manual (https://www.uiltexas.org/athletics/manuals) online. A hard copy can be provided by the coach or sponsor of the activity on request.

To report alleged noncompliance with required safety training or an alleged violation of safety rules required by law and the UIL, please contact the curriculum division of TEA at (512) 463-9581 or curriculum@tea.texas.gov.

[See UIL Texas (https://www.uiltexas.org/) for additional information on all UIL-governed activities.]

Student safety in extracurricular activities is a priority of the district. Parents are entitled to review the district's records regarding the age of each football helmet used by the campus, including when a helmet has been reconditioned.

Generally, a student who receives a grade below 70 at the end of a grading period in any academic class may not participate in extracurricular activities for at least three school weeks.

However, if a student receives a grade below 70 at the end of a grading period in an Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB), honors, or dual credit course in English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, economics, or languages other than English, the student remains eligible for participation in all extracurricular activities.

If a student is enrolled in a state-approved course that requires demonstration of the mastery of an essential knowledge and skills in public performance and the student receives a grade below 70 in any course at the end of the grading period, the student may participate in a performance so long as the general public is invited.

If a student is enrolled in a state-approved music course that participates in UIL Concert and Sight-Reading Evaluation, and the student receives a grade below 70 in any course at the end of a grading period, the student may perform with the ensemble during the UIL evaluation performance but is ineligible for other extracurricular activities for at least three weeks.

In addition, the following applies to all extracurricular activities:

- A student who receives special education services and who fails to meet the standards in the individualized education program (IEP) may not participate for at least three school weeks.
- An ineligible student may practice or rehearse but may not participate in any competitive activity.
- A student is allowed in a school year up to ***10*** absences not related to post-district competition, a maximum of ***5*** absences for post-district competition prior to state, and a maximum of ***2*** absences for state competition. All extracurricular activities and public performances, whether UIL activities or other activities approved by the board, are subject to these restrictions.
- An absence for participation in an activity that has not been approved will be considered an unexcused absence.

Standards of Behavior

Sponsors of student clubs and performing groups such as the band, choir, and drill and athletic teams may establish standards of behavior — including consequences for misbehavior — that are stricter than those for students in general. If a violation is also a violation of school rules, the consequences specified by the Student Code of Conduct or by board policy will apply in addition to any consequences specified by the organization's standards of behavior.

Fees (All Grade Levels)

Basic educational program materials are provided at no charge to a student. However, a student is expected to provide their own supplies, such as pencils, paper, erasers, and notebooks. A student may also be required to pay certain other costs, fees, or deposits, including:

- Materials for a class project that the student will keep.
- Membership dues in voluntary clubs or student organizations.
- Admission fees to extracurricular activities.
- Security deposits.
- Personal physical education and athletic equipment and apparel.
- Voluntarily purchased pictures, publications, class rings, yearbooks, graduation announcements, and the like.
- Voluntarily purchased student health and accident insurance.
- Musical instrument rental and uniform maintenance when uniforms are provided by the district.
- Personal apparel used in extracurricular activities that becomes the property of the student.
- Parking fees and student identification cards.
- Fees for lost, damaged, or overdue library books.
- Fees for driver training courses.
- Fees for optional courses offered for credit that require use of facilities not available on district premises.
- Summer school for courses that are offered tuition-free during the regular school year.
- A reasonable fee for providing transportation to a student who lives within two miles of the school. [See Buses and Other School Vehicles]
- A maximum fee of $50 for an educational program outside of regular school hours for a student who has lost credit or has not been awarded a final grade because of absences and whose parent chooses the program for the student to meet the 90 percent attendance requirements. The fee will be charged only if the parent or guardian signs a district-provided request form.
- In some cases, a fee for a virtual or hybrid course.

Any required fee or deposit may be waived if the student and parent are unable to pay. Application for such a waiver may be made to the principal. [See policy FP for more information.]

Fundraising (All Grade Levels)

Student groups or classes and/or parent groups may be permitted to conduct fundraising drives for approved school purposes in accordance with administrative regulations. [See policies FJ and GE for more information.]

Gang-Free Zones (All Grade Levels)

Certain criminal offenses, including gang-related crimes, will be enhanced to the next-highest category of offense if they are committed in a gang-free zone. Gang-free zones

include a school bus and any location in, on, or within 1,000 feet of any district-owned or leased property or campus playground.

Grading Guidelines (All Grade Levels)

Approved grading guidelines for each grade level or course will be communicated to students and their parents by the classroom teacher. These guidelines establish:

- The minimum number of assignments, projects, and examinations required for each grading period
- How the student's mastery of concepts and achievement will be communicated (for example, letter grades, numerical averages, checklist of required skills, and the like)
- Circumstances under which a student will be allowed to redo an assignment or retake an examination the student originally failed
- Procedures for a student to follow after an absence
- Grading consequences for academic dishonesty, including cheating or copying the work of another student, plagiarism (including the unauthorized use of artificial intelligence (AI) such as ChatGPT), and unauthorized communication between students during an examination

[See Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences (All Grade Levels) for additional information on grading guidelines.]

Graduation (Secondary Grade Levels Only)

Requirements for a Diploma

A student must meet the following requirements to receive a high school diploma from the district:

- Achieve passing scores on certain end-of-course (EOC) assessments or approved substitute assessments, unless specifically waived as permitted by state law
- Complete the required number of credits established by the state and any additional credits required by the district
- Complete any locally required courses in addition to the courses mandated by the state
- Demonstrate proficiency, as determined by the district, in the specific communication skills required by the State Board of Education (SBOE)
- Complete and submit a free application for federal student aid (FAFSA) or a Texas application for state financial aid (TASFA)

Harassment

[See Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation (All Grade Levels)]

Hazing (All Grade Levels)

Hazing is defined as an intentional, knowing, or reckless act, on or off campus, by one person alone or acting with others, directed against a student for the purpose of

pledging, initiation into, affiliation with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in a student organization if the act meets the elements in Education Code 37.151, including:

- Any type of physical brutality
- An activity that subjects the student to an unreasonable risk of harm or that adversely affects the student's mental or physical health, such as sleep deprivation, exposure to the elements, confinement to small spaces, calisthenics, or consumption of food, liquids, drugs, or other substances
- An activity that induces, causes, or requires the student to perform a duty or task that violates the Penal Code
- Coercing a student to consume a drug or alcoholic beverage in an amount that would lead a reasonable person to believe the student is intoxicated

The district will not tolerate hazing. Disciplinary consequences for hazing will be in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. It is a criminal offense if a person engages in hazing; solicits, encourages, directs, aids, or attempts to aid another in hazing; or has firsthand knowledge of an incident of hazing being planned or having occurred and fails to report this to the principal, superintendent, or law enforcement official.

[See An awards ceremony will take place towards the end of the school year. Information will be sent out to all parents and students when it becomes available.

Bullying (All Grade Levels) and policies FFI and FNCC for more information.]

Health — Physical and Mental

Health-Related Services

The district is required to provide notice of each health-related service offered at a student's campus. A parent may withhold consent for or decline a health-related service.

For more information regarding the health related services which are offered at VMJHS, please contact sara.shipman@vmisd.net

Illness (All Grade Levels)

When your child is ill, please contact the school to let us know they will not be attending that day.

State rules require schools to exclude students with certain illnesses from school for certain periods of time. For example, a child with a fever over 100 degrees must stay out of school until fever-free for 24 hours without use of fever-reducing medications. Students with diarrheal illnesses must stay home until they are diarrhea-free without use of diarrhea-suppressing medications for 24 hours.

A full list of conditions for which the school must exclude children can be obtained from the school nurse.

If a student becomes ill during the school day and the school nurse determines that the child should go home, the nurse will contact the parent.

The district is required to report certain contagious (communicable) diseases or illnesses to the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) or our local/regional health authority. The school nurse can provide information from DSHS on these notifiable conditions.

The school nurse is available to answer any questions for parents who are concerned about whether or not their child should stay home.

Immunization (All Grade Levels)

A student must be fully immunized against certain diseases or must present a certificate or statement that, for medical reasons or reasons of conscience, including a religious belief, the student will not be immunized.

For exemptions based on reasons of conscience, only official forms issued by the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), Immunization Branch, can be honored by the district. You may access the DSHS exemption form (https://www.dshs.texas.gov/immunization-unit/texas-school-child-care-facility-immunization/texas-immunization-exemptions) online or by writing to this address:

Texas Department of State Health Services
Immunization Section, Mail Code 1946
P.O. Box 149347
Austin, Texas 78714-9347

The form must be notarized and submitted to the principal or school nurse within 90 days of notarization. If the parent is seeking an exemption for more than one student in the family, a separate form must be provided for each student.

The immunizations required are:

- Diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis
- Polio
- Measles, mumps, and rubella
- Hepatitis B
- Varicella (chicken pox)
- Meningococcal
- Hepatitis A

The school nurse can provide information on immunization requirements. Proof of immunization may be established by personal records from a licensed physician or public health clinic with a signature or rubber-stamp validation.

If a student should not be immunized for medical reasons, the student or parent must present a certificate signed by a U.S. registered and licensed physician stating that, in the doctor's opinion, the immunization required is medically contraindicated or poses a significant risk to the health and well-being of the student or a member of the student's

family or household. This certificate must be renewed yearly unless the physician specifies a lifelong condition.

For information on immunization against bacterial meningitis and college enrollment and attendance, see Bacterial Meningitis (All Grade Levels).

[See the DSHS's School and Childcare Vaccine Requirements (https://www.dshs.texas.gov/immunizations/school) and policy FFAB(LEGAL) for more information.]

Lice (All Grade Levels)

Head lice is very common among children. Although not an illness or a disease, head lice spread through head-to-head contact during play, sports, nap time, and when children share things like brushes, combs, hats, and headphones.

The district does not require or recommend that students be removed from school because of lice or nits.

If careful observation indicates that a student has head lice, the school nurse will contact the student's parent to discuss a treatment plan using an FDA-approved medicated shampoo or cream rinse that may be purchased from any drug or grocery store. After the student undergoes one treatment, the parent should contact the school nurse to discuss the treatment used. The nurse can also offer additional recommendations, including subsequent treatments, how best to get rid of lice, and how to prevent lice from returning.

The district will provide notice to parents of elementary school students in an affected classroom without identifying the student with lice.

More information on head lice is available on the DSHS website Managing Head Lice in School Settings and at Home (https://www.dshs.texas.gov/texas-school-health/skilled-procedures-texas-school-health/managing-head-lice-school) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's website About Head Lice (https://www.cdc.gov/lice/about/head-lice.html).

[See policy FFAA for more information.]

Medicine at School (All Grade Levels)

If a student must take medication during school hours, the student's parent must provide the medication. All medication, whether prescription or nonprescription, must be kept in the nurse's office and be administered by the nurse or another authorized district employee. A student may be authorized to possess their own medication because of asthma or a severe allergy as described below or as otherwise allowed by law.

The district will not purchase nonprescription medication to give to a student.

In accordance with policy FFAC, authorized employees may administer:

- Prescription medication in the original, properly labeled container, provided by the parent along with a written request.

- Prescription medication from a properly labeled unit dosage container filled by a registered nurse or another qualified district employee from the original, properly labeled container provided by the parent along with a written request.
- Nonprescription medication in the original, properly labeled container, provided by the parent along with a written request. **Note:** Insect repellant is considered nonprescription medication.
- Herbal or dietary supplements provided by the parent only if required by the student's individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 plan for a student with disabilities.

An elementary or secondary student may possess and self-apply sunscreen to avoid overexposure to the sun. An elementary student's teacher or other district personnel will apply sunscreen to the student's exposed skin if the student brings the sunscreen to school and asks for help applying it. If a secondary student needs assistance with sunscreen application, please address the need with the school nurse.

Whether a student is at the elementary or secondary level, if sunscreen needs to be administered to treat any type of medical condition, this should be handled through communication with the school nurse so that the district is made aware of any safety and medical issues.

Asthma and Severe Allergic Reactions

A student with asthma or severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) may possess and use prescribed asthma or anaphylaxis medication at school or school-related events only if they have written authorization from a parent and a physician or other licensed health-care provider. The student must also demonstrate to their health-care provider and the school nurse the ability to use the prescribed medication, including any device required to administer the medication.

If the student has been prescribed asthma or anaphylaxis medication for use during the school day, the student and parents should discuss this with the school nurse or principal.

[See also Food Allergies (All Grade Levels)]

Unassigned Epinephrine Delivery Systems

In accordance with Chapter 38, Subchapter E of the Education Code, the board has adopted a policy to allow authorized ***[align with policy at FFAC:*** school personnel and/or school volunteers***]*** who have been adequately trained to administer an unassigned epinephrine delivery system to a person who is reasonably believed to be experiencing a severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis).

An "unassigned epinephrine delivery system" is an epinephrine delivery system, including an auto-injector or nasal spray, prescribed by an authorized health-care provider in the name of the school issued with a non-patient-specific standing delegation order for the administration of an epinephrine delivery system.

Epinephrine delivery systems include brand-name devices such as EpiPens® and Neffy®.

Authorized and trained individuals may administer an epinephrine delivery system at any time to a person experiencing anaphylaxis on a school campus.

The district will ensure that at each campus a sufficient number of ***[align with policy at FFAC:*** school personnel and/or school volunteers***]*** are trained to administer epinephrine so that at least one trained individual is present on campus during regular on-campus school hours and when school personnel are physically on site for school-sponsored activities.

Unassigned Medication for Respiratory Distress

In accordance with Chapter 38, Subchapter E of the Education Code, the board has adopted a policy to allow authorized and trained ***[align with policy at FFAC:*** school personnel and/or school volunteers***]*** to administer a medication for respiratory distress on a school campus or at a school-related activity to a person reasonably believed to be experiencing symptoms of respiratory distress.

The district will provide at each campus ***[align with policy at FFAC:*** school personnel and/or school volunteers***]*** who are trained to administer prescription medication for respiratory distress during regular school hours.

“Unassigned medication for respiratory distress” means albuterol, levalbuterol, or another medication designated by the executive commission of the Health and Human Services Commission for treatment of respiratory distress, prescribed by an authorized health-care provider in the name of the district with a non-patient-specific standing delegation order for the administration of a medication for respiratory distress, and issued by an authorized health-care provider.

For additional information, see FFAC(LOCAL).

Unassigned Opioid Antagonists

In accordance with Chapter 38, Subchapter E of the Education Code, the board has adopted a policy to allow authorized and trained ***[align with policy at FFAC:*** school personnel and/or school volunteers***]*** at each campus to administer an opioid antagonist, such as Narcan or Naloxone, to an individual who is reasonably believed to be experiencing an opioid-related drug overdose.

One or more authorized and trained individuals will be present on each campus subject to this policy during regular school hours.

Steroids (Secondary Grade Levels Only)

State law prohibits students from possessing, dispensing, delivering, or administering an anabolic steroid. Anabolic steroids are for physician-prescribed medical use only.

Body building, muscle enhancement, or the increase of muscle bulk or strength through the use of an anabolic steroid or human growth hormone by a healthy student is not a valid medical use and is a criminal offense.

Mental Health Support (All Grade Levels)

The district has implemented programs to address the following mental health, behavioral health, and substance abuse concerns:

- Mental health promotion and early intervention
- Building skills to manage emotions, establish and maintain positive relationships, and engage in responsible decision-making
- Substance abuse prevention and intervention
- Suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention (interventions after a suicide in a community)
- Grief, trauma, and trauma-informed care
- Positive behavior interventions and supports
- Positive youth development
- Safe, supportive, and positive school climates

If a student has been hospitalized or placed in residential treatment for a mental health condition or substance abuse, the district has procedures to support the student's return to school. Please contact the district's mental health liaison for further information.

Teachers and other district employees may discuss a student's academic progress or behavior with the student's parents or another employee as appropriate; however, they are not permitted to recommend use of psychotropic drugs. A psychotropic drug is a substance used in the diagnosis, treatment, or prevention of a disease or as a component of a medication that is intended to alter perception, emotion, mood, or behavior.

A district employee who is a registered nurse, an advanced nurse practitioner, a physician, or a certified or credentialed mental health professional can recommend that a student be evaluated by an appropriate medical practitioner, if appropriate. [See policy FFEB for more information.]

For related information, see:

- Consent to Conduct a Psychological or Psychiatric Evaluation and Consent to Provide a Mental Health Care Service for the district's procedures for recommending a mental health intervention and the mental health liaison's contact information
- Counseling for the district's comprehensive school counseling program
- Physical and Mental Health Resources (All Grade Levels) for campus and community mental and physical health resources
- Policies and Procedures that Promote Student Physical and Mental Health (All Grade Levels) for board-adopted policies and administrative procedures that promote student health

Physical Activity Requirements

Junior High/Middle School

The district will ensure that students in middle or junior high school will engage in 30 minutes of moderate or vigorous physical activity per day for at least four semesters, in accordance with policies at EHAB, EHAC, EHBG, and FFA.

For additional information on the district's junior high and middle school student physical activity programs and requirements, please see the principal.

Temporary Restriction from Participation in Physical Education

Students who are temporarily restricted from participation in physical education will not actively participate in skill demonstration but will remain in class to learn the concepts of the lessons.

Physical Fitness Assessment (Grades 3-12)

Annually, the district will conduct a physical fitness assessment of students in grades 3-12 who are enrolled in a physical education course or a course for which physical education credit is awarded. At the end of the school year, a parent may submit a written request to obtain the results of their child's physical fitness assessment conducted during the school year by contacting:

Bob Featherston

Athletic Director

Bob.featherston@vmisd.net

254-932-5251

Physical Health Screenings/Examinations

Athletics Participation (Secondary Grade Levels Only)

For certain extracurricular activities, a student must submit certification from an authorized health-care provider. The certification must state that the student has been examined and is physically able to participate in the relevant program, including:

- A district athletics program
- District marching band
- Any district extracurricular program identified by the superintendent

This examination is required to be submitted annually to the district.

Students should be aware of the rare possibility of sudden cardiac arrest, which in athletes is usually caused by a previously unsuspected heart disease or disorder. A student may request an electrocardiogram (ECG or EKG) to screen for such disorders, in addition to the required physical examination.

See the UIL's explanation of sudden cardiac arrest (https://www.uiltexas.org/health/info/sudden-cardiac-death) for more information.

Spinal Screening Program

School-based spinal screening helps identify adolescents with abnormal spinal curvature at an early stage when the curve is mild and may go unnoticed. Early detection is key to controlling spinal deformities. Spinal screening is non-invasive and conducted in accordance with the most recent nationally accepted and peer-reviewed standards.

All students who meet the Texas Department of State Health Services criteria will be screened for abnormal spinal curvature before the end of the school year. As appropriate, students will be referred for follow-up with their physician.

For information on spinal screening by an outside professional or exemption from spinal screening based on religious beliefs, contact the superintendent or see policy FFAA(LEGAL).

Other Examinations and Screenings (All Grade Levels)

[See policy FFAA for more information.]

Special Health Concerns (All Grade Levels)

Bacterial Meningitis (All Grade Levels)

Please see the district's website at ***www.vmisd.net*** for information regarding meningitis.

Note: Entering college students must show, with limited exception, evidence of receiving a bacterial meningitis vaccination within the five-year period prior to enrolling in and taking courses at an institution of higher education. Please see the school nurse for more information, as this may affect a student who wishes to enroll in a dual credit course taken off campus.

[See Immunization (All Grade Levels)]

Diabetes

In accordance with a student's individual health plan for management of diabetes, a student with diabetes will be permitted to possess and use monitoring and treatment supplies and equipment while at school or at a school-related activity. See the school nurse or principal for information. [See policy FFAF(LEGAL) for more information.]

Food Allergies (All Grade Levels)

Parents should notify the district when a student has been diagnosed with a food allergy, especially an allergy that could result in dangerous or life-threatening reactions either by breathing, eating, or touching the particular food. It is important to disclose the food to which the student is allergic as well as the nature of the allergic reaction. Please contact the school nurse or campus principal if your child has a known food allergy or as soon as possible after any diagnosis of a food allergy.

The district has developed and annually reviews a food allergy management plan, based on the Texas Department of State Health Services' (DSHS) *Guidelines for the Care of Students with Food Allergies at Risk for Anaphylaxis found* on the DSHS

Allergies and Anaphylaxis website (https://www.dshs.texas.gov/texas-school-health/resource-library/asthma-allergies-and-anaphylaxis)

When the district receives information that a student has a food allergy that puts the student at risk for anaphylaxis, an individual care plan will be developed to assist the student in safely accessing the school environment. The district's food allergy management plan can be accessed at ***www.vmisd.net*** [See Celebrations (All Grade Levels) and policy FFAF for more information.]

Seizures (All Grade Levels)

To address the care of a student with a seizure disorder while at school or participating in a school activity, a parent may submit a seizure management and treatment plan to the district before the beginning of the school year, upon enrollment of the student, or as soon as practicable following diagnosis of a seizure disorder. A parent who submits a plan must use the Seizure Management and Treatment Plan Form (https://tea.texas.gov/academics/tea-seizure-management-form.pdf) developed by the Texas Education Agency.

[See A Student with Physical or Mental Impairments Protected under Section 504 and contact the school nurse for more information.]

Tobacco, E-Cigarettes, and Nicotine Products Prohibited (All Grade Levels)

Students are prohibited from possessing or using any type of tobacco product, electronic cigarette (e-cigarette), or any other electronic vaporizing device while on school property or while attending an off-campus school-related activity. With limited exceptions for medication, [see Medicine at School (All Grade Levels)] students are also prohibited from possessing or using any type of nicotine product, including nicotine pouches, regardless of whether the product contains tobacco, while on school property or while attending an off-campus school-related activity.

The district and its staff strictly enforce prohibitions against the use of all tobacco products, e-cigarettes, or any other electronic vaporizing device by students and all others on school property and at school-sponsored and school-related activities. [See the Student Code of Conduct and policies FNCD and GKA for more information.]

Health-Related Resources, Policies, and Procedures

Physical and Mental Health Resources (All Grade Levels)

Parents and students in need of assistance with physical and mental health concerns may contact the following campus and community resources:

- The campus full-time nurse:

  Sara Shipman

  Secondary Campus Nurse

  Sara.shipman@vmisd.net

254-932-5254

- The campus part-time school counselor:

  Wanda Riggs

  Counselor

  Wanda.riggs@vmisd.net

  254-932-5251

Policies and Procedures that Promote Student Physical and Mental Health (All Grade Levels)

The district has adopted board policies that promote student physical and mental health. Local policies on the topics below can be found in the district's policy manual, available at the central administration office and online at ***www.vmisd.net***

- Food and nutrition management: CO, COA, COB
- Wellness and Health Services: FFA
- Physical Examinations: FFAA
- Immunizations: FFAB
- Medical Treatment: FFAC
- Communicable Diseases: FFAD
- School-Based Health Centers: FFAE
- Care Plans: FFAF
- Crisis Intervention: FFB
- Trauma-informed Care: FFBA
- Student Support Services: FFC
- Student Safety: FFF
- Child Abuse and Neglect: FFG
- Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation: FFH
- Freedom from Bullying: FFI

In addition, the District Improvement Plan details the district's strategies to improve student performance through evidence-based practices that address physical and mental health.

The district has developed administrative procedures as necessary to implement the above policies and plans.

For more information about these procedures and access to the District Improvement Plan, please contact:

Julie Tidmore

Principal

Julie.tidmore@vmisd.net

254-932-5251

School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) (All Grade Levels)

During the preceding school year, the district's School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) held ***2*** meetings. Additional information about the district's SHAC is available from the ***Assistant Superintendent of Acadmics***

Notification of upcoming SHAC meetings will be posted at each campus administrative office at least 72 hours before the meeting. Notification of upcoming SHAC meetings, meeting minutes, and a recording of each meeting will be posted on the district website at ***www.vmisd.net]***.

[See Consent to Human Sexuality Instruction, Consent to Instruction on Prevention of Child Abuse, Family Violence, Dating Violence, and Sex Trafficking, and policies BDF and EHAA for more information.]

Student Wellness Policy/Wellness Plan (All Grade Levels)

To encourage healthy habits in our students, the district has developed a board-adopted wellness policy at FFA(LOCAL) and corresponding plans and procedures to implement it. For questions about the content or implementation of the district's wellness policy and plan, please contact:

Julie Tidmore

Principal

Julie.tidmore@vmisd.net

254-932-5251

Homework (All Grade Levels)

Homework is an expectation if students are to master required grade-level skills and is identified as a part of a student's overall grade. Missed assignments could result in a lower subject grade and subsequently lower scores on state assessments. In order for students to gain the most from the curriculum provided, all homework must be complete.

Law Enforcement Agencies (All Grade Levels)

Questioning of Students

When law enforcement officers or other lawful authorities wish to question or interview a student at school, the principal will cooperate fully regarding the conditions of the interview, including without parental consent, if necessary, if it is part of a child abuse investigation. In other circumstances, the principal will:

- Verify and record the identity of the officer or other authority and ask for an explanation of the need to question the student at school
- Ordinarily make reasonable efforts to notify the parents, unless the interviewer raises what the principal considers to be a valid objection
- Ordinarily be present for the questioning or interview, unless the interviewer raises what the principal considers to be a valid objection

Students Taken into Custody

State law requires the district to permit a student to be taken into legal custody:

- To comply with an order of the juvenile court
- To comply with the laws of arrest
- By a law enforcement officer if there is probable cause to believe the student has engaged in delinquent conduct or conduct in need of supervision
- By a law enforcement officer to obtain fingerprints or photographs for comparison in an investigation
- By a law enforcement officer to obtain fingerprints or photographs to establish a student's identity where the child may have engaged in conduct indicating a need for supervision, such as running away
- By a probation officer if there is probable cause to believe the student has violated a condition of probation imposed by the juvenile court
- By an authorized representative of Child Protective Services (CPS), Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), a law enforcement officer, or a juvenile probation officer, without a court order, under the conditions set out in the Family Code relating to the student's physical health or safety
- To comply with a properly issued directive from a juvenile court to take a student into custody

Before a student is released to a legally authorized person, the principal will verify the person's identity and, to the best of their ability, will verify the person's authority to take custody of the student.

The principal will immediately notify the superintendent and will attempt to notify the parent, unless the legally authorized person raises what the principal considers to be a valid objection to notifying the parents. Because the principal does not have the authority to prevent or delay a student's release to a legally authorized person, any notification will most likely be after the fact.

Notification of Law Violations

The district is required by state law to notify:

- All instructional and support personnel who have responsibility for supervising a student who has been taken into custody, arrested, or referred to the juvenile court for any felony offense or for certain misdemeanors.
- All instructional and support personnel who have regular contact with a student who has been convicted, received deferred prosecution, received deferred adjudication, or was adjudicated for delinquent conduct for any felony offense or certain misdemeanors that occur in school, on school property, or at a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property. These personnel will also be notified if the principal has reasonable grounds to believe the student has engaged in certain conduct.
- All appropriate district personnel regarding a student who is required to register as a sex offender.

[See policy GRAA(LEGAL) for more information.]

Leaving Campus (All Grade Levels)

Student attendance is crucial. Appointments should be scheduled outside of school hours if possible. Except for extenuating circumstances, students will not regularly be released before the end of the school day.

Parental consent is required before any student leaves campus for any part of the school day.

For students in elementary and middle school, a parent or authorized adult must come to the office and show identification to sign the student out. A campus representative will ask the student to report to the office. For safety purposes and stability of the learning environment, we cannot allow any unescorted adult to go to the classroom or other area to pick up the student. If the student returns to campus the same day, the parent or authorized adult must sign the student back in through the main office upon the student's return. Documentation regarding the reason for the absence will also be required.

The same process applies to students in high school if a parent picks the student up from campus. If the student's parent authorizes the student to leave campus unaccompanied, the parent must submit a note to the main office at least two hours before the student needs to leave campus. A phone call from the parent may be accepted, but the school may ultimately require a note for documentation purposes. The student must sign out through the main office and sign in upon return if the student returns the same day.

If a student becomes ill during the school day and the school nurse or other district personnel determines that the student should go home, the nurse will contact the student's parent and document the parent's wishes regarding release from school.

Unless the parent directs district personnel to release the student unaccompanied, the parent or other authorized adult must follow the sign-out procedures listed above. If a student is permitted by their parent to leave campus unaccompanied, the nurse will document the time of day the student was released. Under no circumstances will a student in elementary or middle school be released unaccompanied.

If a student is 18 years of age or is an emancipated minor, the student may sign out of school. Documentation regarding the reason for the absence will be required.

During Lunch

Valley Mills Jr High/High School has a closed campus for the entire day. Students are expected to eat lunch on campus during their assigned lunch period.

At Any Other Time During the School Day

Students are not authorized to leave campus during regular school hours for any other reason, except with the permission of the principal.

Students who leave campus in violation of these rules will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

Lost and Found (All Grade Levels)

A lost and found collection box is located in the campus office. A student who loses an item should check the lost and found box. The district discourages bringing personal items of high monetary value to school, as the district is not responsible for lost or stolen items. The campus will dispose of lost and found items at the end of each semester.

Makeup Work

Makeup Work Because of Absence (All Grade Levels)

A teacher may assign makeup work to a student who misses class based on instructional objectives and the needs of the student in mastering the essential knowledge and skills or meeting subject or course requirements.

The student will be responsible for obtaining and completing the makeup work within the time specified by the teacher. A student who does not make up assigned work within the time allotted by the teacher will receive a grade of zero for the assignment.

The student is encouraged to speak with the teacher if the student knows of an absence ahead of time so that the teacher and student may plan any makeup work. Please remember the importance of student attendance at school. With limited exceptions, all absences count for the 90 percent threshold set in state law regarding attendance for credit or final grade. [See Attendance for Credit or Final Grade (All Grade Levels)]

A student involved in an extracurricular activity must notify teachers ahead of time about any absences.

A student will be permitted to make up tests and turn in projects due in any class missed because of absence. Teachers may assign a late penalty to any long-term project in accordance with timelines approved by the principal and previously communicated to students.

DAEP Makeup Work

Elementary and Middle/Junior High School Grade Levels

While a student is in DAEP, the district will provide the student with all course work for the student's foundation curriculum classes that the student misses as a result of the alternative placement.

In-School Suspension (ISS) and Out-of-School Suspension (OSS) Makeup Work (All Grade Levels)

Alternative Means to Receive Coursework

While a student is in ISS or OSS, the district will provide the student with all course work for the student's foundation curriculum classes that the student misses as a result of the suspension.

Opportunity to Complete Courses

A student removed from the regular classroom to ISS or another setting, other than a DAEP, will have an opportunity to complete before the beginning of the next school year each course the student was enrolled in at the time of removal from the regular classroom. The district may provide the opportunity by any method available, including a correspondence course, another distance learning option, or summer school. The district will not charge the student for any method of completion provided by the district. [See policy FO(LEGAL) for more information.]

Nondiscrimination Statement (All Grade Levels)

In its efforts to promote nondiscrimination and as required by law, the district does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, gender, sex, age, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law in providing education services, activities, and programs, including Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs. The district provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups.

In accordance with Title IX, the district does not and is required not to discriminate on the basis of sex and prohibits sex discrimination in its educational programs or activities. The requirement not to discriminate extends to employment. Inquiries about the application of Title IX may be referred to the district's Title IX Coordinator (see below), to the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, or both.

Other federal laws that prohibit discrimination include Title VI, Section 504, the Age Discrimination Act, the Boy Scouts Act, and Title II.

The district's nondiscrimination policy and grievance procedures are in policy FFH in the district's policy manual, available at ***www.vmisd.net***

The district has designated and authorized the following employee as the Title IX Coordinator to address concerns or inquiries regarding discrimination on the basis of sex, including sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, or sex-based harassment:

Chris Dowdy

Superintendent

Chris.dowdy@vmisd.net

254-932-5251

Reports can be made at any time and by any person, including during non-business hours, by mail, phone, or email. During district business hours, reports may also be made in person. Upon the district receiving notice or an allegation of sex-based harassment, the Title IX Coordinator will promptly respond in accordance with the process described in policy FFH.

The following district representatives have been designated to address concerns or inquiries about other kinds of discrimination:

- For concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of disability, see the ADA/Section 504 Coordinator:

  Wanda Riggs

  Counselor/504 Coordinator

  Wanda.riggs@vmisd.net

  254-932-5251

- For all other concerns regarding discrimination, see:

  Chris Dowdy

  Superintendent

  Chris.Dowdy@vmisd.net

  254-932-5210

[See policies at FB, FFH, and GKD for more information.]

Parent and Family Engagement (All Grade Levels)

Parental Rights and Options

State law provides that a parent has the right to direct the moral and religious training of the parent's child, make decisions concerning the child's education, and consent to medical, psychiatric, and psychological treatment of the child without obstruction or interference from a governmental entity of Texas, including a school district.

In addition to referring to the rights of parents, including the right to withhold consent for or exempt the parent's child from certain activities and instruction specified throughout this handbook, parents may access additional information regarding parental rights at the district's website at: ***www.vmisd.net***

Working Together

Experience and research tell us that a child succeeds in education with good communication and a strong partnership between home and school. A parent's involvement and engagement in this partnership may include:

- Encouraging your child to put a high priority on education and working with your child every day to make the most of the educational opportunities the school provides.
- Ensuring that your child completes all homework assignments and special projects and comes to school each day prepared, rested, and ready to learn.
- Becoming familiar with all your child's school activities and with the academic programs, including special programs, offered in the district.
- Discussing with the school counselor or principal any questions you may have about the options and opportunities available to your child.

- Reviewing the requirements and options for graduation with your child in middle school and again while your child is enrolled in high school.
- Monitoring your child's academic progress and contacting teachers as needed. [See Academic Counseling]
- Attending scheduled conferences and requesting additional conferences as needed. The district will provide at least two opportunities for in-person conferences during each school year for each parent of a child enrolled in the district with the child's teachers. To schedule a telephone or in-person conference with a teacher, school counselor, or principal, please call the school office at ***254-932-5251*** for an appointment. The teacher will usually return your call or meet with you during their conference period or before or after school. [See Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences (All Grade Levels)]

Becoming a school volunteer. [See The district may invite representatives from colleges and universities and other higher education institutions, prospective employers, and military recruiters to present information to interested students.

- Volunteers (All Grade Levels) and policy GKG for more information.]
- Participating in campus parent organizations. Parent organizations include: ***Booster Clubs***
- Serving as a parent representative on the district-level or campus-level planning committees that develop educational goals and plans to improve student achievement. For more information, see policies BQA and BQB and contact:

Julie Tidmore

Principal

Julie.tidmore@vmisd.net

254-932-5251

Serving on the School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) and assisting the district in aligning local community values with health education instruction, human sexuality instruction, instruction on prevention of child abuse, family violence, dating violence, and sex trafficking, and other wellness issues. [See ***Julie Tidmore***

Principal

Julie.tidmore@vmisd.net

254-932-5251

- School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) (All Grade Levels) and policies BDF, EHAA, FFA for more information.]
- Being aware of the school's ongoing bullying and harassment prevention efforts.
- Contacting school officials if you are concerned with your child's emotional or mental well-being.
- Attending board meetings to learn more about district operations. Regular board meetings are held on the ***third Wednesday*** of each month at ***6:00***p.m. at ***Valley***

Mills High JH/HS Library. An agenda for a regular or special meeting is posted no later than 3 business days before each meeting at ***1 Eagle Way*** and online at ***www.vmisd.net*** [See policies BE and BED for more information.]

Pledges of Allegiance and a Minute of Silence (All Grade Levels)

Each school day, students will recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the U.S. flag and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas flag. Parents may submit a written request to the principal to excuse their child from reciting a pledge. [See Reciting the Pledges to the U.S. and Texas Flags]

State law requires that one minute of silence follow recitation of the pledges. Each student may choose to reflect, pray, meditate, or engage in any other silent activity during that minute so long as the silent activity does not interfere with or distract others.

In addition, state law requires that each campus provide for the observance of one minute of silence in remembrance of those who lost their lives on September 11, 2001, at the beginning of the first class period when September 11 falls on a regular school day.

[See policy EC for more information.]

Prayer (All Grade Levels)

Each student has a right to pray individually, voluntarily, and silently or to meditate in school in a manner that does not disrupt school activities. The school will not require or coerce a student to engage in or refrain from such prayer or meditation during any school activity.

Private Spaces

In accordance with law, the district shall designate each multiple-occupancy private space in a building the district owns, operates, or controls for use only by individuals of one sex.

Multiple-occupancy private space means a facility designed or designated for simultaneous use by more than one individual and in which an individual may be in a state of undress in the presence of another individual, regardless of whether the facility provides curtains or partial walls for privacy. The term includes a restroom, locker room, changing room, or shower room.

Promotion and Retention

A student will be promoted only on the basis of academic achievement or proficiency. In making promotion decisions, the district will consider the following:

- Teacher recommendation
- Grades
- Scores on criterion-referenced or state-mandated assessments
- Any other necessary academic information as determined by the district

Elementary and Middle/Junior High Grade Levels

In grades 7-8, promotion is based on an overall average of 70 on a scale of 100 based on course-level, grade-level standards for all subject areas and a grade of 70 or above in three of the following areas: language arts, mathematics, and either science or social studies.

To be promoted to grade 6, students enrolled in grade 5 must perform satisfactorily on the mathematics and reading sections of the grade 5 assessment in English or Spanish. To be promoted to grade 9, students enrolled in grade 8 must perform satisfactorily on the mathematics and reading sections of the grade 8 assessment in English**.**

Repeating *Kindergarten*-Grade 8 at Parent Request

A parent may request in writing that a student repeat kindergarten, or any grade in grade 1-8. Before granting the request, the district may convene a retention committee to meet and discuss the request and will invite the parent to participate.

High School Grade Levels

To earn credit in a course, a student must receive a grade of at least 70 based on course-level standards.

A student in grades 9-12 will be advanced a grade level based on the number of course credits earned. [See **Error! Reference source not found.**]

Repeating a High-School Credit Course

A parent may request in writing that a student repeat a high-school credit course in which the student was enrolled during the previous school year unless the district determines that the student has met all requirements for graduation.

Before granting the request, the district may convene a retention committee to meet and discuss the request and will invite the parent to participate.

Release of Students from School

[See Leaving Campus (All Grade Levels)]

Remote Instruction

The district may offer remote instruction in accordance with TEA guidelines.

All district policies, procedures, guidelines, rules, and other expectations of student behavior will be enforced as applicable in a remote or virtual learning environment.

Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences (All Grade Levels)

Report cards with each student's performance and absences in each class or subject are issued at least once every ***9*** weeks.

Teachers follow grading guidelines that have been approved by the principal pursuant to the board-adopted policy. Grading guidelines are designed to reflect each student's relative mastery of each assignment. State law provides that a test or course grade issued by a teacher cannot be changed unless the board determines that the grade was arbitrary or contains an error, or that the teacher did not follow the district's grading policy. [See Grading Guidelines (All Grade Levels) and policy EIA(LOCAL) for more information.]

Questions about grade calculation should first be discussed with the teacher. If the question is not resolved, the student or parent may request a conference with the principal in accordance with FNG(LOCAL).

The report card or unsatisfactory progress report will state whether tutorials are required for a student who receives a grade lower than 70.

The district may communicate academic information about a student electronically, including for progress reporting purposes. An electronic signature will be accepted by the district, but parents are entitled to request a handwritten signature of acknowledgment instead.

Retaliation

[See Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation (All Grade Levels)]

Required State Assessments

STAAR (State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness) for Grades 3-8

In addition to routine tests and other measures of achievement, students at certain grade levels are required to take the state assessment, called STAAR, in the following subjects:

- Mathematics, annually in grades 3-8
- Reading, annually in grades 3-8
- Science in grades 5 and 8
- Social Studies in grade 8

Standardized Testing for a Student Enrolled Above Grade Level

If a student in grades 3-8 is enrolled in a class or course intended for students above the current grade level in which the student will be administered a state-mandated assessment, the student will be required to take an applicable state-mandated assessment only for the course in which they are enrolled, unless otherwise required to do so by federal law.

A student in grades 3-8 shall be assessed at least once in high school with the ACT or the SAT if the student completes the high school end-of-course assessments in mathematics, reading/language arts, or science before high school.

High School Courses End-of-Course (EOC) Assessments

STAAR end-of-course (EOC) assessments are administered for the following courses:

- Algebra I
- English I and English II
- Biology
- U.S. History

Satisfactory performance on the applicable assessments is required for graduation, unless waived or substituted as allowed by state law and rules.

There are three testing windows during the year in which a student may take an EOC assessment. The windows occur in the fall, spring, and summer months. If a student does not meet satisfactory performance, the student will have opportunities to retake the assessment.

Requesting Administration of STAAR/EOC in Paper Format (All Grade Levels)

STAAR and EOC assessments are administered electronically.

A parent or teacher may request that a STAAR or EOC be administered to a student in paper format. The district may grant this request for any single administration for up to three percent of the number of students enrolled in the district. Requests will be granted in the order in which they are received.

Requests for paper format for a fall administration of a STAAR or EOC must be submitted no later than September 15 each school year.

Requests for paper format for a spring administration of a STAAR or EOC must be submitted no later than December 1 each school year.

Standardized Testing for a Student in Special Programs

Certain students — some with disabilities and some classified as emergent bilingual students — may be eligible for exemptions, accommodations, or deferred testing.

STAAR Alternate 2 is available for eligible students receiving special education services who meet certain state-established criteria as determined by the student's ARD committee.

An admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee for a student in grades 9-12 receiving special education services will determine whether successful performance on the EOC assessments will be required for graduation within the parameters identified in state rules and the student's personal graduation plan (PGP). [See Graduation (Secondary Grade Levels Only)]

STAAR Spanish is available for eligible students for whom a Spanish version of STAAR is the most appropriate measure of their academic progress.

For more information, see the principal, school counselor, or special education director.

Failure to Perform Satisfactorily on a STAAR or EOC Assessment

If a student does not perform satisfactorily on a required state assessment in any subject, the district will provide accelerated instruction for the student in the next school year through one of the following:

- Assigning the student to a teacher who is certified as a master, exemplary, or recognized teacher if one is available in the grade and subject matter of the state assessment on which the student did not perform satisfactorily
- Providing supplemental instruction

A student may be required to attend any assigned supplemental instruction program before or after school or during the summer.

When a student fails to perform satisfactorily on a required state assessment in the same subject area for two or more years, the district shall develop an accelerated education plan. Parents are encouraged to participate in developing this plan.

Personal Graduation Plan —Junior High School Students

For a junior high-school student who does not perform satisfactorily on a state-mandated examination, a school official will prepare a personal graduation plan (PGP).

School officials will also develop a PGP for a junior high-school student who is determined by the district to be unlikely to earn a high school diploma within five years of high school enrollment.

The plan will, among other items:

- Identify the student's educational goals
- Address the parent's educational expectations for the student
- Outline an intensive instruction program for the student

[See the school counselor and policy EIF(LEGAL) for more information.]

For a student receiving special education services, the student's IEP may serve as the student's PGP and would therefore be developed by the student's ARD committee.

[See **Error! Reference source not found.** for information related to the development of personal graduation plans for high school students.]

Safe Storage of Firearms

A firearm should be stored unloaded in a safe or locked container, with ammunition stored elsewhere.

It is unlawful to store, transport, or abandon an unsecured firearm in a place where children are likely to be and can obtain access to the firearm. Under the Penal Code, a person commits the offense of making a firearm accessible to a child if the child gains access to a readily dischargeable firearm, and the person with criminal negligence:

- Failed to secure the firearm; or
- Left the firearm in a place to which the person knew or should have known the child would gain access

The penalty for allowing a child access to a firearm can range from a Class C misdemeanor (punishable by a $500 fine) to a Class A misdemeanor (punishable by a $4000 fine, a year in jail, or a combination of the two).

Safety (All Grade Levels)

Student safety on campus, at school-related events, and in district vehicles is a high priority of the district. The cooperation of students is essential to ensuring school safety. A student is expected to:

- Avoid conduct that is likely to put the student or others at risk.
- Follow all behavioral standards in this handbook and the Student Code of Conduct or set by district employees.
- Help secure the campus by keeping all exterior doors closed, latched, and locked unless the door is actively monitored by a district employee.
- Follow instructions from teachers and other district employees regarding classroom doors.
- Remain alert to any safety hazards, such as intruders on campus or threats made by any person toward a student or staff member, and promptly report any incidents to a district employee. A student may make anonymous reports about safety concerns via **STOP IT.**
- Know emergency evacuation routes and signals.
- Follow immediately the instructions of teachers, bus drivers, and other district employees who are overseeing the welfare of students.

Accident Insurance

Soon after the school year begins, parents will have the opportunity to purchase low-cost accident insurance that would help meet medical expenses in the event of injury to their child.

Insurance for Career and Technical Education (CTE) Programs

The district may purchase accident, liability, or automobile insurance coverage for students and businesses involved in the district's CTE programs.

Preparedness Drills: Evacuation, Severe Weather, and Other Emergencies

Periodically, the school will conduct preparedness drills of emergency procedures. When the command is given or alarm is sounded, students need to follow the direction of teachers or others in charge quickly, quietly, and in an orderly manner.

Preparedness Training: CPR and Stop the Bleed

The district will offer instruction in CPR and the use of an automated external defibrillator (AED) at least once to students enrolled in in grades 7-12. The instruction can be provided as part of any course and is not required to result in CPR or AED certification.

The district will annually offer students in grades 7-12 instruction on the use of bleeding control stations to respond to traumatic injury. For more information, see Stop the Bleed Texas (https://stopthebleedtexas.org/).

Emergency Medical Treatment and Information

All parents are asked each year to complete a medical care authorization form, providing written parental consent to obtain emergency treatment and information about allergies to medications or drugs. Parents should contact the school nurse to update emergency care information (name of doctor, emergency phone numbers, allergies, and the like).

The district may consent to medical treatment, including dental treatment, if necessary, for a student if all of the following requirements are met:

- The district has received written authorization from a person having the right to consent
- That person cannot be contacted
- That person has not given the district actual notice to the contrary

The emergency care authorization form will be used by the district when a student's parent or authorized designee cannot be contacted. A student may provide consent if authorized by law or court order.

Regardless of parental authorization for the district to consent to medical treatment, district employees will contact emergency medical services to provide emergency care when required by law or when deemed necessary, such as to avoid a life-threatening situation.

Emergency School Closing Information

Each year, parents are asked to complete an emergency release form to provide contact information if the district needs to notify parents of early dismissal, delayed opening, or restricted access to a campus because of severe weather, a security threat, or another emergency cause.

The district will rely on contact information on file with the district to communicate with parents in an emergency situation, which may include real-time or automated messages. It is crucial to notify your child's school when a phone number changes. State law requires parents to update contact information within two weeks after the date the information changes.

If the campus must close, delay opening, or restrict access to the building because of an emergency, the district will also alert the community in the following ways:

District website

School messenger notification system

School Social Media account

[See Parent Contact Information and ***contacting the JH/HS secretary.***

Automated Emergency Communications]

[See Parent Contact Information and ***contacting the JH/HS secretary.***

Automated Emergency Communications]

Schedule Changes (Middle/Junior High and High School Grade Levels)

Schedules will only be changed on a limited basis. Contact school counselor.

School Facilities

Asbestos Management Plan (All Grade Levels)

The district works diligently to maintain compliance with federal and state law governing asbestos in school buildings. A copy of the district's asbestos management plan is available in the central administrative office. If you have any questions or would like to examine the district's plan in more detail, please contact the district's designated asbestos coordinator:

Charles Brown

Maintenance

Charles.brown@vmisd.net

254-932-5210

Food and Nutrition Services (All Grade Levels)

The district participates in the School Breakfast Program and National School Lunch Program and offers students nutritionally balanced meals daily in accordance with standards set forth in state and federal law.

Some students are eligible for free and reduced-price meals based on financial need. Information about a student's participation is confidential. The district may share information such as a student's name and eligibility status to help enroll eligible children in Medicaid or the state children's health insurance program (CHIP) unless the student's parent requests the student's information not be disclosed.

Participating students will be offered the same meal options as their peers and will not be treated differently from their peers.

To apply for free or reduced-price meal services, contact:

Sara Martinez

District Services Coordinator

Sara.martinez@vmisd.net

254-932-5210

[See policy COB for more information.]

Parents should continually monitor their child's meal account balance. When a student's meal account is exhausted or insufficient, the district will notify the parent. The student may continue to purchase meals according to the grace period set by the school board. The district will present the parent with a schedule of repayment for any outstanding

account balance and an application for free or reduced meals. [See policy CO for more information.]

If the district is unable to work out an agreement with the student's parent on replenishment of the meal account and payment of any outstanding balance, the student will receive a meal. The district will make every effort to avoid bringing attention to the student.

The following information is published as required by the USDA for participation in the National School Lunch Program:

> "In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.
>
> "Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.
>
> "To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted 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; or
>
> 2. **fax:**
> (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
>
> 3. **email:**
> Program.Intake@usda.gov
>
> "This institution is an equal opportunity provider."

The responsible state agency that administers the program is the Texas Department of Agriculture (https://www.texasagriculture.gov/Home/Contact-Us), which can be reached at (800) TELL-TDA (835-5832) or (800) 735-2989 (TTY).

The local agency that administers the program is the district. [See Nondiscrimination Statement (All Grade Levels) for the name and contact information for the Title IX coordinator, ADA/Section 504 coordinator, and superintendent for other concerns about discrimination.]

[See policy COB for more information.]

Vending Machines (All Grade Levels)

The district has adopted and implemented the state and federal policies for food service, including guidelines to restrict student access to vending machines. For more information about these policies and guidelines, see the ***principal***. [See policy FFA for more information.]

Pest Management Plan (All Grade Levels)

The district is required to follow integrated pest management (IPM) procedures to control pests on school grounds. Although the district strives to use the safest and most effective methods to manage pests, including a variety of non-chemical control measures, periodic indoor and outdoor pesticide use is sometimes necessary to ensure a safe, pest-free school environment.

All pesticides used are registered for their intended use by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and are applied only by certified pesticide applicators. Except in an emergency, signs will be posted 48 hours before indoor application. All outdoor applications will be posted at the time of treatment, and signs will remain until it is safe to enter the area.

Parents who have questions or who want to be notified of the times and types of applications prior to pesticide application inside their child's school assignment area may contact the district's IPM coordinator:

Chris Dowdy

Superintendent

Chris.dowdy@vmisd.net

254-932-5210

Conduct Before and After School (All Grade Levels)

Teachers and administrators have full authority over student conduct at before- or after-school activities. Whether a school activity is on or off district premises, students must follow the same rules of conduct that apply during the instructional day. Misbehavior will be subject to consequences established by the Student Code of Conduct or any stricter standards of behavior established by the sponsor for extracurricular participants.

Library (All Grade Levels)

The library is open for independent student use during the following times with a teacher permit:

Monday-Friday: 7:30-3:35

The district provides a wide range of library materials for students and faculty that support student achievement and present varying levels of difficulty, diversity of appeal, and a variety of points of view. The district follows the Texas State Library and Archive Commission's standards for school library collection development.

Parents are the primary decision makers regarding their student's access to library material. The district encourages parental involvement in library acquisition, maintenance, and campus activities. Parents are encouraged to communicate with *the campus librarian* and their child's teacher about special considerations regarding library materials self-selected by their student. A parent may submit to the district a list of library materials that their child may not be allowed to check out or otherwise access for use outside of the school library by submitting the list to the campus librarian.

The district will provide to parents a record of each time the parent's child checks out a library material that includes the title, author, genre, and return date of the library material through the district's online learning portal.

A parent may access to the school's library or any available online catalog by submitting a request to the principal.

The district welcomes student and parent feedback on library materials and services. Parents may contact campus librarian questions or comments about their child's campus library. A district employee, parent, or person residing in the district may submit a written challenge to the inclusion of any library material in the catalog of the school library by submitting the form available on the district's website.

Use of Hallways during Class Time (All Grade Levels)

During class times, loitering or standing in the halls is not permitted, and a student must have a hall pass to be outside the classroom for any purpose. Failure to obtain a pass will result in disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

Use by Students Before and After School (All Grade Levels)

Certain areas of the school will be accessible to students before and after school for specific purposes. Students are required to remain in the area where their activity is scheduled to take place.

The following areas are open to students before school, beginning at ***7:30*** a.m.

JH Classrooms and Cafeteria

Unless the teacher or sponsor overseeing an activity gives permission, a student will not be permitted to go to another area of the building or campus.

Students must leave campus immediately after dismissal of school in the afternoon, unless the student is involved in an activity under the supervision of a teacher or other authorized employee or adult.

Meetings of Noncurriculum-Related Groups (Secondary Grade Levels Only)

Student-organized, student-led noncurriculum-related groups are permitted to meet during the hours designated by the principal before and after school. These groups

must comply with the requirements of policy FNAB(LOCAL). A list of these groups is available in the principal's office.

Parental consent is required before a student may participate in a student club that is authorized or sponsored by the district. [See Extracurricular Activities, Clubs, and Organizations (All Grade Levels)]

School-Sponsored Field Trips (All Grade Levels)

The district periodically takes students on field trips for educational purposes.

A parent must provide permission for a student to participate in a field trip.

The district may ask the parent to provide information about a student's medical provider and insurance coverage and may also ask the parent to sign a waiver allowing for emergency medical treatment in the case of a student accident or illness during the field trip.

The district may require a fee for student participation in a field trip that is not required as part of a basic educational program or course to cover expenses such as transportation, admission, and meals; however, a student will not be denied participation because of financial need. [See Fees (All Grade Levels) for more information.]

The district is not responsible for refunding fees paid directly to a third-party vendor.

Searches and Investigations

Searches in General (All Grade Levels)

In the interest of promoting student safety and drug-free schools, district officials may occasionally conduct searches and investigations.

District officials may conduct investigations in accordance with law and district policy and may question students regarding a student's own conduct or the conduct of others. [For questioning of students by law enforcement officials, see Homework is an expectation if students are to master required grade-level skills and is identified as a part of a student's overall grade. Missed assignments could result in a lower subject grade and subsequently lower scores on state assessments. In order for students to gain the most from the curriculum provided, all homework must be complete.

Law Enforcement Agencies (All Grade Levels).]

District officials may search students, their belongings, and their vehicles in accordance with law and district policy. Searches of students will be conducted without discrimination, based on, for example, reasonable suspicion or voluntary consent or pursuant to district policy providing for suspicionless security procedures, including the use of metal detectors.

In accordance with the Student Code of Conduct, students are responsible for prohibited items found in their possession, including items in their personal belongings or in vehicles parked on district property.

If there is reasonable suspicion to believe that searching a student's person, belongings, or vehicle will reveal evidence of a violation of the Student Code of Conduct, a district official may conduct a search in accordance with law and district regulations.

District Property (All Grade Levels)

Desks, lockers, district-provided technology, and similar items are the property of the district and are provided for student use as a matter of convenience. District property is subject to search or inspection at any time without notice. Students have no expectation of privacy in district property.

Students are responsible for any item found in district property provided to the student that is prohibited by law, district policy, or the Student Code of Conduct.

Metal Detectors (All Grade Levels)

To maintain a safe and disciplined learning environment, the district reserves the right to subject students to metal detector searches when entering a district campus and at off-campus, school-sponsored activities.

Personal Communications and Other Electronic Devices (All Grade Levels)

Use of district-owned equipment and its network systems is not private and will be monitored by the district. [See policy CQ for more information.]

Any searches of personal electronic devices will be conducted in accordance with law, and the device may be confiscated to perform a lawful search. A confiscated device may be turned over to law enforcement to determine whether a crime has been committed.

[See Electronic Devices and Technology Resources (All Grade Levels) and policy FNF(LEGAL) for more information.]

Trained Dogs (All Grade Levels)

The district may use trained dogs to screen for concealed, prohibited items, including drugs and alcohol. Screenings conducted by trained dogs will not be announced in advance. The dogs will not be used with students, but students may be asked to leave personal belongings in an area that is going to be screened, such as a classroom, a locker, or a vehicle. If a dog alerts to an item or an area, it may be searched by district officials.

Drug Testing (Secondary Grade Levels Only)

The district's policy FNF(LOCAL) addresses board authorization for drug testing of students as described in the policy, but specifics of the drug-testing program should be addressed in administrative regulations, such as this handbook or your extracurricular conduct guide.

[See Steroids (Secondary Grade Levels Only)]

Vehicles on Campus (Secondary Grade Levels Only)

If a vehicle subject to search is locked, the student will be asked to unlock the vehicle. If the student refuses, the district will contact the student's parents. If the parents also refuse to permit the vehicle to be searched, the district may turn the matter over to law enforcement. The district may contact law enforcement even if permission to search is granted.

Sexual Harassment

[See Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation (All Grade Levels)]

Special Programs (All Grade Levels)

The district provides special programs for gifted and talented students, students who are homeless, students in foster care, bilingual students, migrant students, emergent bilingual students, students diagnosed with dyslexia, and students with disabilities. The coordinator of each program can answer questions about eligibility requirements, as well as programs and services offered in the district or by other organizations. A student or parent with questions about these programs should contact:

Julie Tidmore

Principal

Julie.tidmore@vmisd.net

254-932-5251

The Texas State Library and Archives Commission's Talking Book Program (https://www.tsl.texas.gov/tbp) provides audiobooks free of charge to qualifying Texans, including students with visual, physical, or reading disabilities such as dyslexia.

Summer School (All Grade Levels)

Students that failed any core course, STAAR test, attendance make-up, may be recommended to attend summer school.

Tardies (All Grade Levels)

A student who is more than ***10*** minutes tardy to class may be assigned to detention hall or given another appropriate consequence.

Textbooks, Electronic Textbooks, Technological Equipment, and Other Instructional Materials (All Grade Levels)

Instructional materials are any resources used in classroom instruction as part of the required curriculum, such as textbooks, workbooks, computer software, or online services.

The district selects instructional materials in accordance with state law and policy EFA.

The district provides approved instructional materials to students free of charge for each subject or class. Students must treat instructional materials with care, as directed by the teacher.

If a student needs a graphing calculator for a course and the district does not provide one, the student may use a calculator application with graphing capabilities on a phone, laptop, tablet, or other computing device.

A student who is issued a damaged item should report the damage to the teacher.

Any student who does not return an item or returns an item in an unacceptable condition loses the right to free textbooks and technological equipment until the item is returned or the damage is paid for by the parent. However, the student will be provided the necessary instructional resources and equipment for use at school during the school day.

For information on library books and other resources students may access voluntarily, see Library (All Grade Levels).

Transfers (All Grade Levels)

The principal is authorized to transfer a student from one classroom to another.

The superintendent is authorized to investigate and approve transfers between schools.

[See Safety Transfers/Assignments, An awards ceremony will take place towards the end of the school year. Information will be sent out to all parents and students when it becomes available.

Bullying (All Grade Levels), and A Student with Physical or Mental Impairments Protected under Section 504, for other transfer options.]

Transportation (All Grade Levels)

School-Sponsored Trips

Students who participate in school-sponsored trips are required to use school-provided transportation to and from the event. However, in accordance with campus procedures, a parent may provide written consent for their child to ride with or be released after the event to the parent or another adult designated by the parent. [See School-Sponsored Field Trips (All Grade Levels)]

Buses and Other School Vehicles

The district makes school bus transportation available to all students living two or more miles from school and to any eligible students who are experiencing homelessness. This service is provided at no cost to students.

Bus routes and stops will be designated annually. Any changes will be posted at the school and on the district's website. For the safety of the driver and all passengers, students must board district vehicles only at authorized stops and drivers must unload passengers only at authorized stops.

Students are expected to assist district staff in ensuring that buses and other district vehicles are clean and safe. When riding in district vehicles, students are held to behavioral standards established in this handbook and the Student Code of Conduct. Students must:

- Observe all usual classroom rules
- Follow the driver's directions at all times
- Enter and leave the vehicle in an orderly manner at the designated stop
- Keep feet, books, instrument cases, and other objects out of the aisle
- Not deface the vehicle or its equipment
- Not put head, hands, arms, or legs out of the window, hold any object out of the window, or throw objects within or out of the vehicle
- Not possess or use any form of tobacco or e-cigarettes in any district vehicle
- Be seated while the vehicle is moving
- Fasten their seat belts, if available
- Wait for the driver's signal upon leaving the vehicle and before crossing in front of the vehicle
- Follow any other rules established by the operator of the vehicle

Misconduct will be punished in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct, including loss of the privilege to ride in a district vehicle.

[See the Student Code of Conduct for provisions regarding transportation to the DAEP.]

A parent may designate a child-care facility or grandparent's residence as the regular pickup and drop-off location for their child. The designated location must be an approved stop on an approved route. For information on bus routes and stops or to designate an alternate pickup or drop-off location, contact ***254-932-5210***

Students are expected to assist district staff in ensuring that buses and other district vehicles are clean and safe. When riding in district vehicles, students are held to behavioral standards established in this handbook and the Student Code of Conduct. Students must:

- Observe all usual classroom rules
- Follow the driver's directions at all times
- Enter and leave the vehicle in an orderly manner at the designated stop
- Keep feet, books, instrument cases, and other objects out of the aisle
- Not deface the vehicle or its equipment
- Not put head, hands, arms, or legs out of the window, hold any object out of the window, or throw objects within or out of the vehicle
- Not possess or use any form of tobacco or e-cigarettes in any district vehicle
- Be seated while the vehicle is moving
- Fasten their seat belts, if available
- Wait for the driver's signal upon leaving the vehicle and before crossing in front of the vehicle
- Follow any other rules established by the operator of the vehicle

Misconduct will be punished in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct, including loss of the privilege to ride in a district vehicle.

[See the Student Code of Conduct for provisions regarding transportation to the DAEP.]

Vandalism (All Grade Levels)

Littering, defacing, or damaging school property is not tolerated. Students will be required to pay for damages they cause and will be subject to criminal proceedings as well as disciplinary consequences in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

Video Cameras (All Grade Levels)

For safety purposes, the district uses video and audio recording equipment to monitor student behavior, including on buses and in common areas on campus. Students will not be told when the equipment is being used.

The principal will review the video and audio recordings as needed and document student misconduct. Discipline will be in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

In accordance with state law, a parent of a student who receives special education services, a staff member (as this term is defined by law), a principal or assistant principal, or the board may make a written request for the district to place video and audio recording equipment in certain special education classrooms. The district will provide notice before placing a video camera in a classroom or other setting in which a child receives special education services. For more information or to request the installation and operation of this equipment, contact the principal that the district has designated to coordinate the implementation of and compliance with this law.

[See policy EHBAF(LOCAL) for more information.]

[See Consent to Video or Audio Record a Student When Not Already Permitted by Law for video and other recording by parents or visitors to virtual or in-person classrooms.]

Visitors to the School (All Grade Levels)

General Visitors

Parents and others are welcome to visit district schools. For the safety of those within the school and to avoid disruption of instructional time, all visitors must:

- Request entry to the school at the primary entrance unless otherwise directed by a district employee
- Report to the main office
- Be prepared to show identification
- Exit the school at the primary entrance and leave all exterior doors closed, latched, and locked unless actively monitored by a district employee
- Comply with all applicable district policies and procedures

If requested by a district employee, a visitor must provide identification such as a driver’s license, other picture identification issued by a government entity, or employee or student identification issued by the district. A person who refuses to provide

identification and who reasonably appears to have no legitimate reason to be on district property may be ejected from district property.

Individuals may visit classrooms or observe virtual instruction during instructional time only with approval of the principal and teacher. Visitors may not interfere with instruction or disrupt the normal school environment.

All visitors are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of courtesy and conduct. Disruptive behavior or violations of student privacy will not be permitted.

[See Consent to Video or Audio Record a Student When Not Already Permitted by Law for video and other recording by parents or visitors to virtual or in-person classrooms.]

Unauthorized Persons

In accordance with Education Code 37.105, a school administrator, school resource officer (SRO), or district police officer has the authority to refuse entry to or eject a person from district property if the person refuses to leave peaceably on request and either of the following applies:

- The person poses a substantial risk of harm to any person
- The person behaves in a manner that is inappropriate for a school setting and persists in the behavior after being given a verbal warning that the behavior is inappropriate and may result in refusal of entry or ejection

A verbal warning and persistent inappropriate behavior are not required for a person serving as a referee, judge, or other official of an extracurricular athletic activity or competition sponsored or sanctioned by the school district or UIL to eject a spectator.

Appeals regarding refusal of entry or ejection from district property may be filed in accordance with policies FNG(LOCAL) or GF(LOCAL).

[See the Student Code of Conduct]

Visitors Participating in Special Programs for Students

Business, Civic, and Youth Groups

The district may invite representatives from patriotic societies listed in Title 36 of the United States Code to present information to interested students about membership in the society.

Career Day

The district may invite representatives from colleges and universities and other higher education institutions, prospective employers, and military recruiters to present information to interested students.

Volunteers (All Grade Levels)

The district invites and appreciates the efforts of volunteers who are willing to serve our district and students.

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact:

Julie Tidmore

Principal

Julie.tidmore@vmisd.net

254-932-5251

The district does not require state criminal history background checks for volunteers who are parents, guardians, or grandparents of a child enrolled in the district.

Subject to exceptions in accordance with state law and district procedures, other volunteers will be subject to a state criminal history background check, and the volunteer must pay all costs for the background check.

Voter Registration (Secondary Grade Levels Only)

A student who is eligible to vote in any local, state, or federal election may obtain a voter registration application at the main campus office.

Withdrawing from School (All Grade Levels)

To withdraw a student under age 18 from school, the parent or guardian must submit a written request to the principal specifying the reasons for withdrawal and the final day the student will be in attendance. Withdrawal forms are available from the principal's office.

A student who is age 18 or older, who is married, or who has been declared by a court to be an emancipated minor may withdraw without parental signature.

Please provide the school at least three days' notice of withdrawal so that records and documents may be prepared.

Glossary

Accelerated instruction, including supplemental instruction, is an intensive educational program designed to help an individual student acquire the knowledge and skills required at their grade level. It is required when a student does not meet the passing standard on a state-mandated assessment. Accelerated instruction may be provided by assigning a student to a classroom teacher who is certified as a master, exemplary, or recognized teacher or by providing supplemental instruction in addition to regular instruction.

ACT, or the American College Test, is one of the two most frequently used college or university admissions examinations. The test may be required for admission to certain colleges or universities.

ACT-Aspire is designed as a preparatory and readiness assessment for the ACT. This is usually taken by students in grade 10.

ARD stands for admission, review, and dismissal. The ARD committee convenes for each student who is identified as needing a full and individual evaluation for special education services. The eligible student and their parents are members of the committee.

Attendance review committee is responsible for reviewing a student's absences when the student's attendance drops below 90 percent, or in some cases 75 percent, of the days the class is offered. Under guidelines adopted by the board, the committee will determine whether there were extenuating circumstances for the absences and whether the student needs to complete certain conditions to master the course and regain credit or a final grade lost because of absences.

CPS stands for Child Protective Services.

DAEP stands for disciplinary alternative education program, a placement for students who have violated certain provisions of the Student Code of Conduct.

DFPS stands for the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.

DPS stands for the Texas Department of Public Safety.

DSHS stands for the Texas Department of State Health Services.

ED stands for the U.S. Department of Education.

Emergent bilingual student refers to a student of limited English proficiency. Other related terms include English learner, English language learner, and limited English proficient student.

EOC (end-of-course) assessments are state-mandated and are part of the STAAR program. Successful performance on EOC assessments is required for graduation. These examinations will be given in English I, English II, Algebra I, Biology, and U.S. History.

ESSA is the federal Every Student Succeeds Act.

FERPA refers to the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, which grants specific privacy protections to student records. The law contains certain exceptions, such as for directory information, unless a student's parent or a student 18 years of age or older directs the school not to release directory information.

IEP stands for individualized education program and is the written record prepared by the ARD committee for a student with disabilities who is eligible for special education services.

IGC is the individual graduation committee, formed in accordance with state law, to determine a student's eligibility to graduate when the student has failed to demonstrate satisfactory performance on no more than two of the required state assessments.

ISS refers to in-school suspension, a disciplinary technique for misconduct found in the Student Code of Conduct. Although different from out-of-school suspension and placement in a DAEP, ISS removes the student from the regular classroom.

PGP stands for personal graduation plan, which is required for high school students and for any student in middle school who fails a section on a state-mandated test or is identified by the district as not likely to earn a high school diploma before the fifth school year after beginning grade 9.

PSAT is the preparatory and readiness assessment for the SAT. It also serves as the basis for the awarding of National Merit Scholarships.

Safe and Supportive School Team is a team established at each campus that is responsible for conducting a threat assessment regarding individuals who make threats of violence or exhibit harmful, threatening, or violent behavior and determining appropriate intervention, and providing guidance to students and school employees on recognizing harmful, threatening, or violent behavior that may pose a threat to the community, school, or individual.

SAT refers to the Scholastic Aptitude Test, one of the two most frequently used college or university admissions examinations. The test may be required for admissions to certain colleges or universities.

SHAC stands for School Health Advisory Council, a group of at least five members, a majority of whom must be parents, appointed by the school board to help ensure that local community values and health issues are reflected in the district's health education instruction, as well as assist with other student and employee wellness issues.

Section 504 is the federal law that prohibits discrimination against a student with a disability, requiring schools to provide opportunities for equal services, programs, and participation in activities. Unless the student is determined to be eligible for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), general education with appropriate instructional accommodations will be provided.

STAAR is the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness, the state's system of standardized academic achievement assessments.

STAAR Alternate 2 is an alternative state-mandated assessment designed for students with severe cognitive disabilities receiving special education services who meet the participation requirements, as determined by the student's ARD committee.

STAAR Spanish is an alternative state-mandated assessment administered to eligible students for whom a Spanish version of STAAR is the most appropriate measure of their academic progress.

State-mandated assessments are required of students at certain grade levels and in specified subjects. Except under limited circumstances, students must pass the STAAR EOC assessments to graduate. Students have multiple opportunities to take the tests, if necessary, for graduation.

Student Code of Conduct is developed with the advice of the district-level committee and adopted by the board and identifies the circumstances, consistent with law, when a student may be removed from a classroom, campus, or district vehicle; sets out the conditions that authorize or require the principal or another administrator to place the student in a DAEP; and outlines conditions for out-of-school suspension and for expulsion. The Student Code of Conduct also addresses notice to the parent regarding a student's violation of one of its provisions.

TAC stands for the Texas Administrative Code.

TEA stands for the Texas Education Agency, which oversees primary and secondary public education in Texas.

TELPAS stands for the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System, which assesses the progress that emergent bilingual students make in learning the English language and is administered for those who meet the participation requirements in kindergarten-grade 12.

TSI stands for the Texas Success Initiative, an assessment designed to measure the reading, mathematics, and writing skills that entering college-level freshmen students should have if they are to be successful in undergraduate programs in Texas public colleges and universities.

UIL refers to the University Interscholastic League, the statewide, voluntary nonprofit organization that oversees educational extracurricular academic, athletic, and music contests.

Appendix: Freedom from Bullying Policy

Note to Student Handbook developer: State law requires that the district's policy on bullying be distributed in its Student Handbook(s).

On April 6, 2023, TEA publicized minimum standards for bullying prevention policies and procedures in accordance with state law. Districts should update the appendix to the student handbook containing FFI(LOCAL) as soon as the board adopts revisions to the policy.

The following has been formatted for the district to more easily insert its FFI(LOCAL) policy here rather than in the body of the handbook.

Note: School board policies may be revised at any time. For legal context and the most current copy of the local policy, visit www.vmisd.net . Below is the text Valley Mills Independent School District's policy FFI(LOCAL) as of the date this handbook was finalized for this school year.

Student Welfare: Freedom from Bullying

Policy FFI(LOCAL) adopted on ***6/14/2023***

https://pol.tasb.org/PolicyOnline/PolicyDetails?key=194&code=FFI#localTabContent

Appendix: Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy

Note to Student Handbook developer: State law requires that the district's policy on student rights and responsibilities be distributed in its Student Handbook(s).

State law added Education Code Chapter 26A, which requires a board-adopted policy for addressing a grievance to meet specific requirements. Include the text of your current FNG(LOCAL) below. TASB Policy Service recommended revisions to FNG(LOCAL) in Update 126. After board action on recommended revisions, changes to this section may be required to align with policy.

The following has been formatted for the district to more easily insert its FNG(LOCAL) policy here rather than in the body of the handbook.

Note: School board policies may be revised at any time. For legal context and the most current copy of the local policy, visit ***www.vmisd.net*** . Below is the text of *Valley Mills Independent School District*'s policy FNG(LOCAL) as of the date this handbook was finalized for this school year.

Student Rights and Responsibilities: Student and Parent Complaints/Grievances

Policy FNG(LOCAL) adopted on ***06/26/2024***

https://pol.tasb.org/PolicyOnline/PolicyDetails?key=194&code=FNG#localTabContent