



# **Student and Family Handbook 2025 - 2026**

# Student Handbook



## Mount Vernon School District

Welcome to Aspire. Bienvenidos a Aspire.

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## [MVSD Common Family Handbook 2025-26](#)

### School Information

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<b>Phone</b>	360-428-6216
<b>Address</b>	3302 Cedardale Road #B300 Mount Vernon, WA 98274
<b>Office Hours</b>	Monday - Friday 8:00 am - 3:30 pm

### Staff Directory

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<b>Assistant Principal</b>	Denelle Devries; <a href="mailto:ddevries@mvsd320.org">ddevries@mvsd320.org</a>
<b>Counselor</b>	Michal Wilson, <a href="mailto:michalwilson@mvsd320.org">michalwilson@mvsd320.org</a>
<b>Secretary/Registrar</b>	Denise Acosta; <a href="mailto:dacosta@mvsd320.org">dacosta@mvsd320.org</a>
<b>Program Lead/CTE Teacher</b>	Barb Tanis; <a href="mailto:btanis@mvsd320.org">btanis@mvsd320.org</a>
<b>English &amp; Social Studies Teacher</b>	Jennifer Vetter; <a href="mailto:jvetter@mvsd320.org">jvetter@mvsd320.org</a>

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<b>Social Worker</b>	Brad Edwards, <a href="mailto:bradedwards@mvsd320.org">bradedwards@mvsd320.org</a>
<b>Special Education Teacher</b>	Alex Brewer, <a href="mailto:abrewer@mvsd320.org">abrewer@mvsd320.org</a>
<b>School Psychologist</b>	Skye Bryant, <a href="mailto:sbryant@mvsd320.org">sbryant@mvsd320.org</a>
<b>Custodian</b>	Lorena Zazocotecco; <a href="mailto:lzazocotecco@mvsd320.org">lzazocotecco@mvsd320.org</a>
<b>Bilingual Family Liaison</b>	Mariana Carroll, <a href="mailto:mcarroll@mvsd320.org">mcarroll@mvsd320.org</a>
<b>Para Educator</b>	John Price

Welcome to the 2025-26 school year! The staff at Aspire Academy is excited for the start of a new school year. We are here to assist you in making this year productive and enjoyable. Your education is our top priority and this handbook will familiarize you with our rules and policies that govern Aspire Academy.

## Mount Vernon School District Mission

The Mount Vernon School District purposefully prepares every student for success by ensuring inclusion and belonging, providing high-quality instruction, and empowering learners with the skills and confidence to thrive in a diverse and dynamic world.

## Choice School

Aspire Academy is a Choice School in the Mount Vernon School District. We operate as an Alternative Learning Experience (ALE) school with a common mission, working with students, families, and the community of the Mount Vernon School District (MVSD) to provide a quality education that meets the unique needs of each student.

We operate with the direction and support of Mount Vernon School District and adherence to rules, policies and guidelines addressing [Alternative Learning Experience](#) through OSPI.

# Student Handbook

## Aspire Academy Mission and Vision

Vision: Aspire Academy is a learning community where students are supported to hone their skills, talents, and passions by challenging themselves at school and in their community.

Mission: At Aspire Academy, we create interdisciplinary pathways to students' best possible futures by investing in their passion and potential today.

**Welcome to the Aspire family.** We look forward to working with you and helping you achieve your academic goals. Please contact us if we can ever be of assistance.

Make it a fantastic year! *Aspire Academy Staff*

## Academics

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### Onsite Class Schedule

Morning Session	8:30 am - 11:30 am
Afternoon Session	12:00 pm - 3:00 pm

Students attend in person four days per week Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday.  
Students work independently for 6 hours each Wednesday.

Students are expected to work on their classwork 5-6 hours per day, five days a week in order to remain on track to graduate.

[Aspire Academy All Schedules 2025-26](#)



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## **Graduation Requirements**

English	4.0 credits
Social Studies	3.0 credits
Mathematics	3.0 credits
Science (2 Lab)	3.0 credits
Physical Ed/Health	2.0 credits
Fine Arts (1 can be PPR)	2.0 credits
Career/Technology	1.0 credits
Electives	4.0 credits
World Language (or PPR)	2.0 credits
<b>Total Credits</b>	<b>24.0 credits</b>

Non-credit requirements include: A High School & Beyond Plan, a Certificate of Academic Achievement or Individual Achievement awarded to students who pass the required assessments, and Washington State History & Government.

## **Attendance**

Daily student attendance is required and all Truancy laws are followed. Our attendance team supports students and families toward regular student attendance.

## **Grading**

To earn high school credits, students must earn 60% or higher in their courses. Teachers have the discretion to review academic concepts so students can demonstrate proficiency. The goal for students is to earn a minimum of 1.5 credits per quarter and 6 credits per school year. Students wishing to accelerate their learning or retrieve credits have the option to earn more credits each quarter by enrolling in additional courses.

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## High School and Beyond Plan

The High School and Beyond Plan is a formal process designed to help students think about their future and select coursework that will best prepare them for their post high school goals. Students create their High School and Beyond Plans in cooperation with parents/guardians and school staff. Students write their plans in middle school and then continue to revise throughout high school to accommodate changing interests or goals.

Students should be encouraged to include the following elements in their plan:

- Their personal story – what experiences, interests and goals are shaping who they are now and who they want to become
- Their learning style
- Their goals for high school – what their four years of high school look like, including classes, extracurricular activities, sports, a job, etc.
- Their goals for immediately after high school – a student's plan should include the classes needed in preparation for a 2- to 4- year college, vocational or technical school, certificate program or the workforce.

The High School and Beyond Plan is central to the graduation requirements. The Washington State Board of Education has approved adding the following elements to the High School and Beyond Plan to make the requirements more consistent across districts and more relevant to students:

- Personal interests, abilities, and relationship to current career goals.
- Four-year plan for course-taking that is related to graduation requirements and the student's interests and goals, including consideration of dual credit opportunities within such a plan.
- Research on postsecondary training and education related to one's career goals, including comparative information on the benefits and costs of the available choices.
- Budget for postsecondary education or training and life, based on potential education and training choices.
- Participation in a postsecondary site visit(s).
- Completion of a resume.
- Identify assessments that may assist in planning or are required to achieve educational/career goals and relate to the student's Culminating Project.

The Washington State Board of Education established the High School and Beyond Plan as a graduation requirement in 2000. The requirement is effective for students in the graduating class of 2008 and beyond, through [WAC 180-51-061](#), [WAC 180-51-066](#), and [WAC 180-51-067](#).

## Project-Based Learning



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In Project Based Learning, teachers make learning come alive for students.

Students work on a project over an extended period of time – from a week up to a semester – that engages them in solving a real-world problem or answering a complex question. They demonstrate their knowledge and skills by creating a public product or presentation for a real audience.

Project Based Learning allows students to develop deep content knowledge as well as critical thinking and communication skills by working for an extended period of time to investigate and respond to an authentic, engaging, and complex question, problem, or challenge.

## **Basecamp**

Basecamp is our Advisory program led by teacher Advisors. During Basecamp students work on:

- High School and Beyond Plans to prepare for this graduation requirement
- Social and emotional learning curriculum
- Advisors review students' Written Learning Plans, monthly progress, and possible interventions with students
- Basecamp is a time to build school and classroom community

## **Edgenuity**

Edgenuity is our digital curriculum that may be used for students to work on classes that earn credit toward a high school diploma.

## **Assessments**

Students participate in state required testing in English Language Arts, Math, and Science. Students also participate in STAR testing along with all students in the Mount Vernon School District. Some students take the WIDA language test annually. Testing helps schools and teachers know the necessary support and instruction best suited to students.

# Student Handbook

## Attendance and Truancy - More Information

### DID YOU KNOW?

- Missing 10 percent (or about 18 days) increases the chance that your student will not read or master math at the same level as their peers.
- Students can still fall behind if they miss just a day or two days every few weeks.
- Being late to school may lead to poor attendance.
- By 6th grade, absenteeism is one of three signs that a student may drop out of high school.
- By 9th grade, regular and high attendance is a better predictor of graduation rates than 8th grade test scores.

### WHAT WE NEED FROM YOU

We would like you to help ensure that your student attends regularly and is successful in school. If your student is going to be absent, please contact our secretary to excuse the absence and have our student contact their teachers.

### Leaving School Early

Leaving school for appointments or illness during the school day requires that the student's parent/guardian submit a written or verbal excuse prior to the absence or it will be considered unexcused.

### School Policies and State Laws

It is important that you understand our school policies and procedures, as well as Washington State Law, to ensure your child is successful in school. State law for mandatory attendance, called the Becca Bill, requires children from age 8 to 17 to attend school, or a district-approved home school program.

We, the school, are required to take daily attendance and notify you when your student has an unexcused absence.

The district is obligated to develop a plan that requires an assessment to determine how to best meet the needs of your student and reduce absenteeism if they are in middle or high school.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Set a regular bedtime and morning routine.

# Student Handbook

- Prepare for school the night before, finishing homework and getting a good night's sleep.
- Find out what day school starts and make sure your child has the required immunizations.
- Don't let your student stay home unless they are truly sick with a temperature of 100.4 . Keep in mind complaints of a stomach ache or headache can be a sign of anxiety and not a reason to stay home. During COVID, please follow current protocols.
- Avoid appointments and extended trips when school is in session.
- Develop back-up plans for getting to school if something comes up.
- Keep track of your student's attendance. Missing more than 9 days could put your student at risk of falling behind.
- Talk to your student about the importance of attendance.

Excessive absences will result in an intervention plan and an attendance contract. A student may be referred for Truancy court if attendance issues continue.

## **Racial Equity School District Policy**

Mount Vernon School District defines equity as providing every student what they need to be successful. When students engage in meaningful cross-cultural exchanges, when race is no longer a predictor of student performance, and when each student and family feel a sense of community within the Mount Vernon Schools, we are closer to this goal.

Mount Vernon School District (MVSD) seeks to graduate inspired critical thinkers who honor diversity and are committed to the betterment of their own lives and the lives of others. When coupled with our strategic goal of 100% of our students graduating with the knowledge and skills necessary to be successful in post- secondary education, careers and life, we become accountable for the achievement of each student's fullest potential.

We believe every student can achieve this goal; and yet, longstanding inequitable practices have hindered some students from attaining academic parity with their peers, leading to disproportionate student outcomes. In order to ensure race, ethnicity and culture cease to be a predictor of student performance in MVSD, we must eliminate systems, structures, practices and behaviors contributing to discrepancies in student learning and graduation outcomes. Therefore, MVSD commits to eliminate all forms of discrimination and inequity in order to provide safe, inclusive, and productive learning opportunities for every student.

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## **Alternative Learning**

Students must demonstrate adequate monthly progress. If a student does not earn a passing grade in each course in a month, an intervention plan will be developed within 5 school days, with the student and teacher to address concerns.

Interventions may include:

- Increase in frequency/duration of contact with a certificated teacher for the purposes of enhancing the ability of the certificated teacher to improve student learning
- Modifying the manner in which contact with a teacher is accomplished
- Modifying the student's learning goals or performance objectives
- Modifying the number or scope of courses or the content included in the learning plan

## **Satisfactory Monthly Progress**

- Passing at least two classes at 60%
- Basecamp is not included
- After two terms with only passing one class, consideration needs to be given to progress towards graduation and a program change may be needed

## **Student Support Services**

The Mount Vernon School District website offers many Support Programs. Students who qualify for special education services will be provided with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Specially designed instruction (SDI) is arranged through our special education teacher.

Students who qualify will be provided with a 504 plan designed to meet individual needs, providing accommodations to access their education. Please contact the school counselor for more information.

## **Translation and Interpretation Support for Parents/Guardians**

Our school district offers translation and interpretation services for families. Our office can assist with scheduling this service.

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## **Counseling and Guidance**

Our full time school counselor offers academic counseling, post high school planning and guidance, social emotional health support, and referrals for additional counseling.

## **General Information**

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### **Transportation**

Mount Vernon School District students may sign up to receive transportation services. Please contact the MVSD transportation office to request this.

### **School Boundaries**

Although our unique school is located in a non-traditional setting, our school boundaries are defined as the interior of the building and surrounding areas, including the business park property.

### **Aspire Academy Commencement Ceremony**

Our Commencement ceremony is an opportunity for students, parents, relatives and friends to recognize our students' successful completion of Aspire Academy's High School graduation requirements. Only those students who are in good standing, and have fulfilled the graduation requirements by the specified date (to be determined) will be allowed to participate in the ceremony.

Participation in graduation is not a requirement for receiving a diploma. A student graduates when they have met all district and State requirements.

Commencement is a celebration of meeting those requirements. Students who are unable to participate in the commencement ceremony will receive their diplomas through another means. Graduates must be cleared of all fines and fees.

### **Athletics and Activities**

Aspire Academy students are encouraged to participate in the many athletic and extracurricular programs available at Mount Vernon High School. Eligibility is determined by the Washington Interscholastic Activities Association (WIAA) and the Mount Vernon High School Athletic Department.

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## **Change of Address / Contact Information**

It is the student's and parent's responsibility to advise our secretary of a change in address or contact information. We would like to have e-mail addresses for the student and parents whenever possible.

## **Closed Campus**

Aspire Academy is a closed campus. Student visitors are not allowed without staff/administrative approval. Students should not remain on campus grounds before or after their assigned time of study unless they are in a supervised activity. Students shall remain on school grounds from time of arrival until the end of their school day, unless officially excused.

## **Out of Bounds Areas**

Shared areas for students include classrooms, the front foyer, and the student restrooms. Students may be in common outdoor areas only with staff approval.

Other areas are for *staff use only*. This includes the staff restroom, the kitchen, and the utility room.

## **Bathrooms**

Our bathrooms are on a septic system. Please dispose feminine hygiene products, disposable wipes, and paper towels in the garbage.

The hallway should be clear of students. To support this policy, one student at a time may leave class to use the bathroom. Limit bathroom use to ensure you maximize learning time. If you have additional needs, please talk to your teacher or counselor.

## **Driving and Parking**

Students are encouraged to carpool or use alternative methods of transportation whenever possible. Students who drive to school and park on school grounds are expected to enter the building or they will be marked absent. The school board regards the use of motor vehicles and bicycles for travel to and from school as an assumption of responsibility and risk by students and their parents/guardians. Parking on or near school property is AT YOUR OWN RISK.

Student usage of school/district parking facilities is a privilege, not a right. Students are expected to comply with the procedures developed for usage of all transportation vehicles on and near school district grounds and traveling to and from school sponsored events. Failure to comply may result in loss of parking

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privileges and the towing of your vehicle.

Students who drive to school will need to submit a parking form that provides information about vehicles driven, insurance and driver's license.

## **Other Forms of Personal Transportation**

Bicycles, skateboards, scooters etc. should be operated in a safe and responsible manner. Aspire and Mount Vernon School District cannot be responsible for loss, damage or theft.

## **Eighteen Year Old Students**

Students who are 18 years of age or older who are self-supporting and independent may take responsibility for their own education. Administration will verify information prior to approval.

## **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) Statement**

*The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.* One exception which permits disclosure without consent is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the District as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement personnel); a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom the District has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. Upon request, the District discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.

If a parent or adult student does not wish, information such as student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, degrees and awards received, and other similar information, to be released, they should advise the principal of their school by September year old students.



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## Student Rights and Responsibilities

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### **Students are expected to:**

- Follow reasonable standards of socially acceptable behavior
- Respect the rights, person and property of others
- Pursue the required course of study
- Maintain the degree of order necessary for a positive climate for learning
- Comply with school and district behavior expectations and rules
- Comply with the lawful authority of staff and reasonable corrective action imposed by school employees.

### **Being a Good Neighbor**

At the request of our neighbors and at the encouragement of representatives of the community, Aspire Academy will enforce school rules not only on campus but also in areas around the campus.

### **Electronic Devices**

Computers, along with the Mount Vernon School District network, are to be used for coursework only. The use of district technology for anything other than coursework during the school day may result in loss of technology privileges. Instant messaging, the streaming of audio/video, accessing unapproved internet sites are not allowed as they interfere with classroom work time. These behaviors may result in the loss of classroom and computer privileges. Since our curriculum relies upon the use of computers, this will result in limiting your ability to earn credit at Aspire.

To protect yourself and maintain computer privileges, we recommend the following:

- Follow the school district technology use policy.
- If you accidentally go to a website that contains questionable or inappropriate content, leave the site immediately and inform school staff.
- Keep your district log-in and password protected at all times. Log off when you leave the computer at the end of the day.

[Mount Vernon School District Technology Agreement](#)

# Student Handbook

## Personal electronic devices

It is important to manage your time and attention so you have the best opportunity to be successful at school. Restricting use of cell phones while students are at school will help you be successful, happy, and healthy. Aspire is a cell phone free school. Here is our [Yondr Cell Phone Policy and Guidelines](#).

## Academic Honesty

Students are responsible for their own work, created and intended for the particular class in which the student is enrolled and from which the assignment is given. Academic Dishonesty is defined as cheating, plagiarism, collusion, etc. and is contrary to the principles of personal responsibility and integrity.

Students who have been academically dishonest will be subject to the following:

- The first incident results in a 0 for the assignment and a warning in Skyward.
- The second incident will be documented online in Skyward as Forgery/Cheating/Plagiarism. The student will receive no credit on the assignment and a student/parent conference with school staff will take place. This will likely result in the Counseling Department reporting the offense to college admissions. Teachers may have additional consequences and requirements.
- The third incident results in the above consequences as well as a student/parent/administration conference, denial of credit, or removal from the course with a failing grade. This will automatically result in the counseling office reporting the academic misconduct to college admissions.
- This policy applies for the entire time a student is enrolled at Aspire Academy

## Students are entitled to a positive and productive learning environment.

The following actions can disrupt and interfere with learning:

- Defiance
- Disruption in the classroom
- Forgery
- Harassment, intimidation and/or bullying of others
- Vandalism, destruction, damage, or theft of school property or property of others
- Inappropriate display of public affection
- Skipping Class
- Gum may be chewed, but not seen or heard
- Gambling
- Inappropriate exchange of class materials/information
- Littering/Cafeteria mess

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- Misuse of internet and/or electronic policy violation

**Consequences** may include, but are not limited to:

- First Offense—Counseling, parent contact, loss of privileges
- Second Offense—Additional counseling, student and parent conference, loss of privileges, and/or behavior/attendance contracts.
- Repeat Offenses- Additional counseling, student and parent conference, loss of privileges, and/or behavior/attendance contracts, lack of school success.

**More Serious Misconduct includes, but is not limited to:**

- Drugs and Alcohol (possession, use, sale, or under the influence of)
- Possession of drug paraphernalia including, but not limited to, vaporizers and e-cigarettes
- Arson
- Burglary
- Commission of any criminal act while under school jurisdiction
- Continued Forgery
- Explosive devices and weapons (use or possession)
- Extortion
- Failure, in an active or intimidating manner, to follow reasonable direction, corrective action or punishment imposed by a school employee, such as refusing to reveal name, follow to office, etc.
- False alarms
- Fighting/Assault
- Continued electronics policy violations or technology user violations
- Vandalism, destruction, damage, or theft of school property or property of others that is greater than \$50.
- The possession, handling or transmission of any object which can reasonably be considered a weapon.
- Any lewd, indecent, obscene conduct or expression which interferes with the educational process.
- Tobacco possession, sale, or use
- Malicious mischief
- A student shall not repeatedly fail to comply with school district policies or school rules or with the lawful directions of school personnel acting in the performance of their duties.

**Consequences** may include, but are not limited to:

- Student/parent conference
- In school suspension
- Out of school suspension
- Referral to another school or support program

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## Display of Physical Affection

School is a work-site for students and staff. Therefore, inappropriate displays of physical affection are not acceptable and may contribute to a “hostile environment.” We ask for student cooperation and self control in this area. Multiple offenses may result in disciplinary measures.

## Dress and Appearance

The School District along with parents/guardians and community are responsible for encouraging all students to develop habits of proper dress. These standards are based on respect for one another and the need to establish a safe, orderly, caring, and work-like learning environment.

We strive to develop students and graduates who are respectful and compassionate humans. We want students to respect themselves and others. While we encourage individuality, the district's dress code aims to foster a positive and healthy environment. Students should dress comfortably for school, while wearing clothing that is well-suited for a school environment. Clothing must cover areas from one armpit to the other armpit, down to mid-thigh. Tops must have shoulder straps and be long enough to adequately cover the waistline and not expose the midriff.

- Clothing, drawings, tattoos and accessories that display or promote negative or harmful messages are not permitted. These could include drug, gang, weapon, alcohol or tobacco-related information, obscenities, put-downs, stereotypes, sexual innuendo, prejudiced or offensive words or graphics.

A violation of the dress code will require a change of clothing. Special circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis.



### ALL STUDENTS

Clothing must cover areas from one armpit to the other armpit, down to the mid-thigh. Tops must have shoulder straps and be long enough to adequately cover the waistline and not expose the midriff.

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## Fighting or Assault

Students who physically assault one another will be suspended from school. This applies whether you hit first or hit back. We will solve problems and end conflicts with our minds not our fists. If someone strikes out at you, YOU are expected to first block then leave the scene, then report directly to an adult for intervention. Altercations that occur off campus and/or not during school hours still may cause disruption to the educational environment which then may be cause for action by Administration.

## Non-Discrimination

Mount Vernon School District does not discriminate in any programs or activities on the basis of sex, race, creed, religion, color, national origin, age, veteran or military status, sexual orientation, gender expression, gender identity, disability, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following employee(s) has been designated to handle questions and complaints of alleged discrimination:

**Jon Ronngren, Executive Director of Personnel and Human Resources,  
360-428-6110, 124 E Lawrence St, Mount Vernon, WA**

**Clint Carton, Executive Director/Student Support Services, 360-428-6141,  
920 S Second Street, Mount Vernon WA**

**You can report discrimination and discriminatory harassment** to any school staff member or to the district's Civil Rights Coordinator, listed above. You also have the right to file a complaint (see below). For a copy of your district's nondiscrimination policy and procedure, contact your school or district office or view it online here: [Policy 3210](#)

Our Schools Protect Students from Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying (HIB) Schools are meant to be safe and inclusive environments where all students are protected from Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying (HIB), including in the classroom, on the school bus, in school sports, and during other school activities. This section defines HIB, explains what to do when you see or experience it, and our school's process for responding to it.

## What is HIB?

State law defines HIB in RCW 28A.600.477(5)(b)(i) as "any intentional electronic, written, verbal, or physical act including, but not limited to, one shown to be motivated by any characteristic in RCW 28A.640.010 and 28A.642.010 (discrimination based on a protected class) or other distinguishing characteristics, when the intentional electronic, written, verbal, or physical act:

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(A) Physically harms a student or damages the student's property;  
(B) Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's education;  
(C) Is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating or threatening educational environment; or  
(D) Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school"

HIB may involve an observed or perceived power imbalance and is repeated multiple times or is highly likely to be repeated.

## **HIB is not allowed, by law, in our schools. How can I make a report or complaint about HIB?**

Talk to any school staff member (consider starting with whoever you are most comfortable with!). You may use our district's reporting form to share concerns about HIB (HIB Reporting Form) but reports about HIB can be made in writing or verbally. Your report can be made anonymously, if you are uncomfortable revealing your identity, or confidentially if you prefer it not be shared with other students involved with the report. No disciplinary action will be taken against another student based solely on an anonymous or confidential report.

If a staff member is notified of, observes, overhears, or otherwise witnesses HIB, they must take prompt and appropriate action to stop the HIB behavior and to prevent it from happening again. Our district also has a HIB Compliance Officer (Jon Ronngren, Executive Director of Personnel and Human Resources) that supports prevention and response to HIB.

**What happens after I make a report about HIB?** If you report HIB, school staff must attempt to resolve the concerns. If the concerns are resolved, then no further action may be necessary. However, if you feel that you or someone you know is the victim of unresolved, severe, or persistent HIB that requires further investigation and action, then you should request an official HIB investigation.

Also, the school must take actions to ensure that those who report HIB don't experience retaliation.

## **What is the investigation process?**

When you report a complaint, the HIB Compliance Officer or staff member leading the investigation must notify the families of the students involved with the complaint and must make sure a prompt and thorough investigation takes place. The investigation must be completed within 5 school days, unless you agree on a different timeline. If your complaint involves circumstances that require a longer investigation, the district will notify you with the anticipated date for their response. When the investigation is complete, the HIB Compliance Officer or the staff member leading the investigation must provide you with the outcomes of the investigation within 2 school days. This response should include:

- A summary of the results of the investigation

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- A determination of whether the HIB is substantiated
- Any corrective measures or remedies needed
- Clear information about how you can appeal the decision

## **What are the next steps if I disagree with the outcome?**

For the student designated as the “targeted student” in a complaint: If you do not agree with the school district’s decision, you may appeal the decision and include any additional information regarding the complaint to the superintendent, or the person assigned to lead the appeal, and then to the school board.

For the student designated as the “aggressor” in a complaint: A student found to be an “aggressor” in a HIB complaint may not appeal the decision of a HIB investigation. They can, however, appeal corrective actions that result from the findings of the HIB investigation.

For more information about the HIB complaint process, including important timelines, please see the district’s HIB webpage or the district’s HIB Policy [3207] and Procedure [3207P].

## **Our School Stands Against Discrimination**

Discrimination can happen when someone is treated differently or unfairly because they are part of a protected class, including their race, color, national origin, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, religion, creed, disability, use of a service animal, or veteran or military status.

## **What is discriminatory harassment?**

Discriminatory harassment can include teasing and name-calling; graphic and written statements; or other conduct that may be physically threatening, harmful, or humiliating. Discriminatory harassment happens when the conduct is based on a student’s protected class and is serious enough to create a hostile environment. A hostile environment is created when conduct is so severe, pervasive, or persistent that it limits a student’s ability to participate in, or benefit from, the school’s services, activities, or opportunities. To review the district’s Nondiscrimination Policy 3210 and Procedure 3210P, or visit MVSD.

## **What is sexual harassment?**

Sexual harassment is any unwelcome conduct or communication that is sexual in nature and substantially interferes with a student’s educational performance or creates an intimidating or hostile environment. Sexual harassment can also occur when a student is led to believe they must submit to unwelcome sexual conduct or communication to gain something in return, such as a grade or a place on a sports Team.



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Examples of sexual harassment can include pressuring a person for sexual actions or favors; unwelcome touching of a sexual nature; graphic or written statements of a sexual nature; distributing sexually explicit texts, e-mails, or pictures; making sexual jokes, rumors, or suggestive remarks; and physical violence, including rape and sexual assault. Our schools do not discriminate based on sex and prohibit sex discrimination in all of our education programs and employment, as required by Title IX and state law.

To review the district's Sexual Harassment Policy 3206 and Procedure 3206P, or visit MVSD.

## **What should my school do about discriminatory and sexual harassment?**

When a school becomes aware of possible discriminatory or sexual harassment, it must investigate and stop the harassment. The school must address any effects the harassment had on the student at school, including eliminating the hostile environment, and make sure that the harassment does not happen again.

## **What can I do if I'm concerned about discrimination or harassment?**

Talk to a Coordinator or submit a written complaint. You may contact the following school district staff members to report your concerns, ask questions, or learn more about how to resolve your concerns.

Concerns about discrimination:

Civil Rights Coordinator: Jon Ronngren, Executive Director of Personnel and Human Resources, 124 E. Lawrence Street, Mount Vernon, WA 98273, [jronngren@mvsd320.org](mailto:jronngren@mvsd320.org), (360) 428-6110

Concerns about sex discrimination, including sexual harassment:

Title IX Coordinator: Jon Ronngren, Executive Director of Personnel and Human Resources, 124 E. Lawrence Street, Mount Vernon, WA 98273, [jronngren@mvsd320.org](mailto:jronngren@mvsd320.org), (360) 428-6110

Concerns about disability discrimination:

Section 504 Coordinator: Clint Carlton, Executive Director of Student Support Services, 1005 S 11 th Street, Mount Vernon, WA 98274, [ccarlton@mvsd320.org](mailto:ccarlton@mvsd320.org), (360) 428-6141

Concerns about discrimination based on gender identity:

Gender-Inclusive Schools Coordinator: Jon Ronngren, Executive Director of Personnel and Human Resources, 124 E. Lawrence Street, Mount Vernon, WA 98273, [jronngren@mvsd320.org](mailto:jronngren@mvsd320.org), (360) 428-6110

To submit a written complaint, describe the conduct or incident that may be discriminatory and send it by mail, fax, email, or hand delivery to the school principal,

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district superintendent, or civil rights coordinator. Submit the complaint as soon as possible for a prompt investigation, and within one year of the conduct or incident.

## **What happens after I file a discrimination complaint?**

The Civil Rights Coordinator will give you a copy of the school district's discrimination complaint procedure. The Civil Rights Coordinator must make sure a prompt and thorough investigation takes place. The investigation must be completed within 30 calendar days unless you agree to a different timeline. If your complaint involves exceptional circumstances that require a longer investigation, the Civil Rights Coordinator will notify you in writing with the anticipated date for their response. When the investigation is complete, the school district superintendent or the staff member leading the investigation will send you a written response. This response will include:

- A summary of the results of the investigation
- A determination of whether the school district failed to comply with civil rights laws
- Any corrective measures or remedies needed
- Notice about how you can appeal the decision

## **What are the next steps if I disagree with the outcome?**

If you do not agree with the outcome of your complaint, you may appeal the decision to the Mount Vernon School Board and then to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). More information about this process, including important timelines, is included in the district's Nondiscrimination Procedure 3210P and Sexual Harassment Procedure 3206P.

## **I already submitted an HIB complaint – what will my school do?**

Harassment, intimidation, or bullying (HIB) can also be discrimination if it & is related to a protected class. If you give your school a written report of HIB that involves discrimination or sexual harassment, your school will notify the Civil Rights Coordinator. The school district will investigate the complaint using both the Nondiscrimination Procedure 3210P and the HIB Procedure 3207P to fully resolve your complaint.

## **Who else can help with HIB or Discrimination Concerns?**

Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). All reports must start locally at the school or district level. However, OSPI can assist students, families, communities, and school staff with questions about state law, the HIB complaint process, and the discrimination and sexual harassment complaint processes.

OSPI School Safety Center (For questions about harassment, intimidation, and bullying)

Website: [ospi.k12.wa.us/student-success/health-safety/school-safety-center](https://ospi.k12.wa.us/student-success/health-safety/school-safety-center)

Email: [schoolsafety@k12.wa.us](mailto:schoolsafety@k12.wa.us)

Phone: 360-725-6068

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OSPI Equity and Civil Rights Office (For questions about discrimination and sexual harassment)

Website: <https://ospi.k12.wa.us/policy-funding/equity-and-civil-rights>

Email: [equity@k12.wa.us](mailto:equity@k12.wa.us)

Phone: 360-725-6162

Washington State Governor's Office of the Education Ombuds (OEO)

The Washington State Governor's Office of the Education Ombuds works with families, communities, and schools to address problems together so every student can fully participate and thrive in Washington's K-12 public schools. OEO provides informal conflict resolution tools, coaching, facilitation, and training about family, community engagement, and systems advocacy.

Website: [www.oeo.wa.gov](http://www.oeo.wa.gov)

Email: [oeoinfo@gov.wa.gov](mailto:oeoinfo@gov.wa.gov)

Phone: 1-866-297-2597

U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR)

The U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) enforces federal nondiscrimination laws in public schools, including those that prohibit discrimination based on sex, race, color, national origin, disability, and age. OCR also has a discrimination complaint process.

Website: <https://www.ed.gov/>

Email: [ocr@ed.gov](mailto:ocr@ed.gov)

Phone: 800-421-3481

## **Our School is Gender-Inclusive**

In Washington, all students have the right to be treated consistent with their gender identity at school. Our school will:

- Address students by their requested name and pronouns, with or without a legal name change
- Change a student's gender designation and have their gender accurately reflected in school records
- Allow students to use restrooms and locker rooms that align with their gender identity
- Allow students to participate in sports, physical education courses, field trips, and overnight trips in accordance with their gender identity
- Keep health and education information confidential and private
- Allow students to wear clothing that reflects their gender identity and apply dress codes without regard to a student's gender or perceived gender
- Protect students from teasing, bullying, or harassment based on their gender or gender identity

To review the district's Gender-Inclusive Schools Policy 3211 and Procedure 3211P, or visit MVSD. If you have questions or concerns, please contact the Gender-Inclusive Schools Coordinator:

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**Jon Ronngren, Executive Director of Personnel and Human Resources, Title IX Officer & HIB Coordinator, 360-428-6110, 124 E Lawrence St, Mount Vernon, WA 98273.**

**Mayra Gomez, Director of Equity and Family Engagement, Civil Rights Coordinator, 360-428-6100, 124 E Lawrence St. Mount Vernon, WA 98273,**

**Clint Carlton, Executive Director of Student Support Services, Section 504 Coordinator, 360-428-6141, 1005 S 11th Street, Mount Vernon, WA 98274**

## **Aspire Academy Principal**

Kecia Fox, Principal of Choice Schools  
[kfox@mvsd320.org](mailto:kfox@mvsd320.org)  
(360) 428-6216

## **Aspire Academy Assistant Principal**

Denelle DeVries  
[ddevries@mvsd320.org](mailto:ddevries@mvsd320.org)  
(360) 428-6216

## **Searches of Student and Personal Property**

Personal privacy is a fundamental aspect of individual liberty. All students possess the constitutional right to be secure in their persons, papers, and effects against unreasonable searches and seizures. Staff shall take particular care to respect students' privacy. School officials have authority to maintain order and discipline in the schools and to protect students from exposure to illegal drugs, weapons, and contraband. The superintendent, the principal, and other staff designated by the superintendent shall have the authority to conduct reasonable searches on school property as provided by board policy (Policy 3230).

## **Substance Use Policy**

School and district policy prohibits the use, possession, and/or sale of alcohol, other drugs or drug paraphernalia **on or near the campus** and at school sponsored events. Students found to be violating the substance use policy near the school are subject to discipline. This includes:

- Any controlled substance as defined by WA state statute (RCW 69.50).
- Any drug (applicable to federal or state law) that must be obtained by prescription.
- Any drug not properly labeled for use by the person in possession of the drug (including “baggies” of vitamins or over the counter medication). See **Medication at School** for proper permission procedures.
- Any “look alike” drug or substance believed or represented as being a drug or controlled substance.
- Alcohol or other intoxicants of any kind.

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## **Consequences may include:**

Conference with students and staff, suspension or expulsion from school, behavior agreements, and other consequences related to the offense and maintaining educational continuity. Sale or Distribution of substances can result in referral to law enforcement.

## **Tobacco Policy**

Possession or use of any tobacco products is prohibited on or near school district property. This shall include district buildings, grounds, etc. Student's use of tobacco products is not permitted within sight of school property. For example, students found to be smoking across the street or down the alley from the school are subject to discipline.

## **Weapons**

State law and school district policy prohibits any student from possessing a weapon or weapon look-alike on school district property or at any school related event. Violating this policy will result in immediate referral to legal authorities, parent notification, and emergency expulsion from school. The expulsion terms may be modified by District Superintendent or designee. Parents have the right to appeal.

## **School Safety and Health**

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### **Accident / Injury**

- Report the incident immediately to an Aspire school staff member.
- Student(s) and staff will fill out an incident report the day of the accident or injury and parents will be notified.

### **Emergency Information**

- Fire/Earthquake/Lockdown Drills at regular intervals are required by law and are an important safety precaution. It is essential that when the first signal is given, everyone obeys orders promptly and when directed clears the building by the prescribed route as quickly as possible. If we evacuate, students are to follow school staff in an orderly fashion.
- Emergency Conditions/Cancellations: Weather conditions may require a change in school schedules or the cancellation of school. Notice will be

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given to local radio stations for such announcements and posted on our website. Anyone turning in a false alarm is in violation of Washington state law and is subject to criminal charges.

## Medication at School

Every effort should be made to assure that all medication, prescribed or non-prescribed, be administered before and/or after school hours under the supervision of a parent/guardian. If medication is to be given at school, the following procedures must be followed: *This procedure covers prescription and nonprescription medications given at school.*

- An [Authorization for Administration of Medication at School](#) form is to be completed for each medication. See school nurse for form, details and/or questions.
- Parent/guardian and physician, through the form, will provide the District with a written request for the dispensing of medication during the school day.
- The medication must be furnished in an original container from the pharmacy with the student's name, name of medication, and amount to be given. Non-prescription medication must be furnished in the original container from the manufacturer.
- It should be indicated on the Authorization for Administration of Medication at School form if a student is to self-medicate. This needs to be discussed on an individual basis with the school nurse.

Complete details of the procedure can be found in School Board Policy. Any student found with medication who fails to complete the form and/or follow the Board Policy regarding medication may be subject to the school substance use policy.

## Video Security

School district grounds, buildings, and property, including buses used for district purposes may be equipped with video security cameras. Equipment may be placed in areas where there is not a reasonable expectation of privacy, such as parking lots, entrances, exits, hallways, offices, gymnasiums, cafeterias, libraries, and other public shared or common spaces.