

CODE OF CONDUCT

VERONA PUBLIC SCHOOLS PHILOSOPHY OF DISCIPLINE

In a democratic society, each individual must learn to work effectively with others and share the privileges and responsibilities of good citizenship. With the support and assistance of school personnel, parents, and guardians, all students regardless of age and ability, can behave in ways that enhance social relationships and facilitate learning. All students must follow the behavioral expectations of the school community.

Accountability in the form of our progressive K-12 discipline code allows teachers, counselors, and administrators at the elementary and middle schools a personalized approach to respond to a range of misbehaviors based on the age and developmental level of the child. By the time a student reaches VHS, he or she has the foundation from both home and school and is mature enough to make good decisions and to act as a responsible member of the school and community.

The majority of our students in Verona exhibit excellent behavior; however, there may be times when students fail to demonstrate appropriate behavior. Some of the consequences for failing to demonstrate appropriate and responsible behavior include but may not be limited to:

- Warnings or reprimands
- School Counseling referrals
- Student assistance coordinator referrals
- Parent conferences
- Special assignments addressing particular behaviors
- Detentions
- Referral to the principal or assistant principal's office
- Referral to the affirmative action officer
- Academic/social/athletic probation
- In-school suspensions
- Out-of-school suspensions
- Police referral
- Expulsion

DISCIPLINE LEVELS AND ACTIONS

It is impossible to foresee every situation that may arise. Any infraction not listed will be dealt with in a reasonable and fair manner by the appropriate administrator. Each student and parent/guardian has the right to a fair hearing. Appeals may be made to the Principal and then to the Superintendent of Schools. ***Nothing in the Code of Discipline should be interpreted as to preclude an administrator from exercising discretion in the administration of the code. Upon investigation of an offense, and in the determination of extenuating circumstances, the administrator may modify the punishment in the best interests of the school, the code, or the individual student.***

The administration and faculty are striving to maintain conditions conducive to mutual respect for student and teacher alike and to further the development of self-discipline on the part of the students. Students are expected to take responsibility for their own behavior. These rules and regulations have been developed so that all students have a fair chance of getting the best education they possibly can. The rules apply not only to classroom activities but also at school functions, on field trips, at athletic events, etc. Following these guidelines will help make a student's time at Verona High School an educationally profitable experience.

Consequences are generally progressive and will include positive behavioral supports. When a student violates a rule he or she is violating one of our Core Values. The type of infraction and/or the frequency of the infraction will determine both the remedial actions and the positive behavioral supports necessary to ensure a safe school and a healthy environment/climate for each student. Below are listed the different levels of infractions and offers a guideline as to how situations may be addressed.

Level I - This category includes misbehaviors which interfere with orderly classroom operation. ***These are directly handled by the teacher*** and include such things as:

- Lateness to class
- Unapproved cell phone use
- Class disruptions
- Displaying disrespectful behavior

Consequences may include:

- Formal Warning (Warnings will be recorded in Genesis)
- Teacher Detention(s) (Will be recorded in Genesis)

Remedial actions may include:

- Parent conference
- Meeting with School Counselor

CONTINUED LEVEL I INFRACTIONS COULD RESULT IN LEVEL II CONSEQUENCES.

Level II - Misbehaviors that fall into this category should be directly handled by the teacher, with **assistance of administration**. All actions will be recorded in Genesis. These misbehaviors can include such things as:

- Increased Level I behaviors

Consequences may include:

- Administrative Detention(s) (Lunch, Before School, After School)
- Saturday Detention(s)

Remedial actions may include:

- Parent conference
- Meeting with School Counselor
- Educational Programming

CONTINUED LEVEL II INFRACTIONS COULD RESULT IN LEVEL III CONSEQUENCES.

Level III - Misbehavior that falls under this category is more severe and may occur both in and out of the classroom. ***In all cases, the Principal or Assistant Principal will be informed, and a formal referral report is filled out by the teacher.*** These misbehaviors can include such things as:

- Theft
- Using inappropriate language (verbal, written, or electronic)
- Refusing to report for teacher-assigned detention
- Destruction of school property or the property of others
- Harassment, Intimidation, & Bullying
- Graffiti

- Leaving the school building and/or grounds without permission
- Violation of the district's technology policy
- Trespassing (being in the building or anywhere on school grounds unlawfully or while on suspension.)
- Continued and willful disobedience
- Anything significantly violating school policies or school regulations

Consequences may include:

- Administrative Detention(s) (Lunch, Before School, After School)
- Saturday Detention(s)
- In School Suspension(s)
- Out of School Suspension(s)
- Possible Police Notification

Remedial actions may include:

- Parent conference
- Meeting with School Counselor
- Educational Programming

Level IV - Behaviors which are illegal in nature and/or directly affect the safety or well-being of staff or their students, fall into this category and can be found in detail in the Board of Education Policy. These misbehaviors can include such things as:

- Increased or more egregious Level 3 offenses
- Fighting or Assault
- Possession, sale, distribution and/or use of alcoholic beverages, drugs, tobacco,
- Weapons
- Egregious Verbal or physical disrespect toward a staff member
- Bomb threats
- Setting of a fire
- Threatening telephone calls to the school or to the home of a staff member (evacuations)
- Bringing fireworks or any explosive devices into the building
- Major vandalism
- Causing false fire alarms (evacuations)

Consequences may include:

- Administrative Detention(s) (Lunch, Before School, After School)

- Saturday Detention(s)
- In School Suspension(s)
- Out of School Suspension(s)
- Police Notification
- Severe cases may require preliminary inquiry by the Building Administration resulting in a recommendation to the Board of Education for a long term suspension from school (greater than 10 days).

Remedial actions may include:

- Parent conference
- Counseling
- Education
- Referral to outside agencies and/or care
- Meeting with Building and/or District Administration

DISCIPLINE TYPES OF DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

COURT ACTION - Children under 16 years are required to attend school (N.J.S.A. 18A:38-25). Students under 16 years of age who are consistently truant will be referred to court action. Court action will be instituted for other violations such as trespassing, assault, inducing a person(s) to use narcotic drugs(s), malicious destruction or damage to property, carrying concealed weapons and any other violation of New Jersey Statutes.

TEACHER ASSIGNED DETENTION – a detention held in the classroom of the teacher assigning the detention. When detention is assigned, the date and time the detention is to be served should be specified. Unless unusual circumstances warrant it, the teacher assigned detention should not begin before **7:30 AM** (7:30 AM - 8:10 AM) and should not extend past **3:30 PM** (2:50 PM - 3:30 PM). Teacher assigned lunch detentions to be served with the teacher in the classroom (11:16 PM - 11:56 PM).

IN SCHOOL DETENTION – a school-wide specified detention area. Students may be assigned this detention by an administrator only. Students are to remain quiet and do school work during this time. It is the

student's responsibility to contact the teacher prior to in school detention and arrange for school work to be provided.

ADMINISTRATIVE LUNCH DETENTION – Students may be assigned to this detention by an administrator only. Detention will be during the lunch period. Students must report to lunch detention directly from class or lab. Students may not use phones during lunch detention. The detention begins at **11:06 am and concludes at 11:50 am**. Students are expected to bring lunch to lunch detention. Any student who arrives late to detention because he or she chose to go to the cafeteria to buy food will be assigned an additional consequence. Students who need assistance obtaining lunch should notify the assistant principal before 10:15 am or notify the lunch detention teacher at 11:00 am.

SATURDAY DETENTION – Students may be assigned this detention by an administrator. **The detention will begin at 8 am on the assigned Saturday and conclude at 11 am**. Students may use the time for school assignments, but they cannot use a phone during the detention. Additional consequences will be assigned to students who neglect to report for an assigned Saturday detention. Students can enter in through either the Sampson Drive entrance or the Fairview Avenue entrance. Saturday detention locations will be provided prior to Saturday detention.

SUSPENSION - A suspension refers to the temporary denial of the student's right to attend school (classes). The infractions contained in this document which lead to suspension are within the law (N.J.S.A. 18A:37-2). Students may not participate in any school activities during the length of their suspension. **If a suspension continues from a Friday to the following Monday, the student may not participate in any school activities over that weekend.**

- **OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSION** – Serious violations of the Discipline Rules and Regulations will result in Out-of-School Suspension. Depending upon the infraction, the suspension may be from one to nine days. Students are prohibited from participating or attending school activities during their suspension. Parents are telephoned and sent a letter informing them of this action. In all cases, a parent-student conference with the administrator is required.

EXPULSION - Expulsion refers to the permanent denial of the student's right to attend school (N.J.S.A. 18A:27-2,5).

INFRACTIONS

CHEATING – Cheating is strictly forbidden including, but not limited to tests, homework and projects. Any student found cheating will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

CLASS CUTTING - On the occasion of the first-class cut, up to 4 detentions will be issued and parents notified. Every cut thereafter may result in a Saturday detention. Three cuts in a class may result in loss of credit from that class. Truancy will be considered a cut in all classes. A “zero” will be averaged in for any classwork missed as a result of class cutting.

CURSING AND OBSCENITIES – Any student using language or gestures, which are obscene or improper, will be referred to an administrator for appropriate action. Any profanities directed at a staff member will result in suspension.

DESTRUCTION OF SCHOOL PROPERTY – Disciplinary action will be taken against students who destroy school property. In addition, parents will be held liable for the damages (N.J.S.A. 8A:37-3).

SUBSTANCE ABUSE - The Board of Education recognizes that a pupil's abuse of harmful substances seriously impedes the pupil's education and threatens the welfare of the entire school community. The Board is committed to the prevention of substance abuse and the rehabilitation of substance abusers by educational means but will take the necessary and appropriate steps to protect the school community from harm and from exposure to harmful substances. Accordingly, the Board will establish and maintain a comprehensive substance abuse intervention, prevention, and treatment referral program in the schools of this district. The complete substance abuse policy may be found on the district website.

Students are encouraged to seek assistance through our student assistance counseling program. Information shared in regards to substance

abuse will not result in penalty and all information between the SAC/Counselor and student will remain confidential.

TOBACCO—Tobacco (including Smokeless/Vape) In accordance with New Jersey Law and Board of Education Policy, smoking is strictly prohibited on school property. The tobacco policy includes both tobacco-based items (i.e., cigarettes, cigars, etc.) and smokeless tobacco (i.e., chewing tobacco, snuff, vaporized cigarettes, electronic cigarettes, etc.).

FALSE PUBLIC ALARM – Any student causing a false public alarm (i.e. bomb threats, pulling fire alarm) will be suspended and formal charges will be filed with the authorities.

FIGHTING – Any student involved in fighting will be suspended. Where the evidence shows that a student has attempted to defend him or herself, administrative discretion will be exercised.

FORGERY – Students found forging passes, notes, letters, etc. will be assigned a disciplinary action.

GAMBLING – Gambling is strictly forbidden. Any student found gambling will be subject to disciplinary action.

INAPPROPRIATE CONDUCT – Students may be referred to the administration for disciplinary action.

INSUBORDINATION – Students who fail to cooperate with staff members by being directly defiant of specific instructions will be referred to the appropriate administrator.

LEAVING SCHOOL GROUNDS – Any student who leaves school grounds during school hours without permission will be disciplined. The first violation will result in a Saturday detention and possible loss of privileges.

MASKS DURING COVID - Students are expected to follow district masking procedures during the COVID-19 pandemic. Any student who willfully violates COVID safety procedures may be subject to disciplinary action.

STEALING – A student who has taken property that is not rightfully his/hers will be suspended from school and formal charges will be filed with the authorities when appropriate.

THREATENING ANOTHER WITH BODILY HARM – Threatening another with bodily harm, intimidation of students, school personnel, etc. will result in strict disciplinary action which may include a report filed with the Verona Police Department.

TRUANCY – Students who are illegally absent from school for the entire day will be assigned In-School Suspension. Habitual truancy may result in legal action.

WEAPONS – All students have the right to a safe educational environment. The Board of Education prohibits the possession of weapons on school property before, during, or after school, on school buses or at any school activity. A “weapon” is defined as:

*Inherently dangerous, capable of causing harm or bodily injury and for which the student cannot demonstrate an educational, instructional or legitimate purpose for its possession in the educational environment.

*Displayed, threatened to be used, or used against persons or property.

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

Any act which results in violence to a person or property or which threatens the safety of others in the school, on school property, on school buses, or at any school activity is extremely serious and will result in administrative actions, including an immediate informal hearing and up to expulsion from school. Parent/guardian notification is required. All violations shall be reported in writing to the Verona Police Department, and a formal criminal complaint shall be filed by the administration as appropriate. The foregoing is not meant to preclude any criminal or civil action taken by the student victim or his/her parents/guardians.