2026 – 2027
MVHS STUDENT HANDBOOK



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MOUNT VERNON HIGH SCHOOL QUICK FACTS

- School colors: maroon and white
- Team name: Mustangs
- Athletic Conference: WaMaC
- District website: www.mvcsd.org
- Contact numbers:
    - High School (Steve Brand, Principal): 895-8843
    - Attendance line: 895-8843, ext. 4021
    - Counseling office:
        Brett Karkosh, Counselor: 895-8843, ext. 4119
        Alexis Wauford: 895-8843, ext 4219
    - School nurse (Megan Krapfl, Nurse): 895-8843, ext. 4223
    - AP/AD (Matt Thede, Athletic Director) 895-8843, ext. 4005
- First Day of School: August 24, 2026
- Last Day of School: May 26, 2027

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Mount Vernon Community School District! Excellence in Academics, Arts and Athletics is our trademark, and we are proud of our tradition of excellence in all these areas. The Mount Vernon Community School District is a comprehensive school district that exists to serve its students, the community, the state, and our nation. Our district offers a varied instructional program serving a wide spectrum of student needs and abilities. Individual students will have a four-year plan designed to meet their learning, social, and emotional needs.

This handbook is a collaborative guide for students, parents, and MVHS staff. Its purpose is to promote a common understanding of the policies and procedures for Mount Vernon High School.

ACADEMIC CLIMATE

We are proud of each of our students at Mount Vernon High School. In order to provide the best education for all of our students, our staff expects the following:

- **RESPECT THE RIGHTS OF OTHERS.** Every student has a right to an education, including one free from harassment.
- **ORDERLY BEHAVIOR.** Students should conduct themselves in an orderly and mature manner while at school.
- **PROMPTNESS AND EXCELLENT ATTENDANCE.** Students are to be on time for class and to miss school only when absolutely necessary.
- **GOOD STUDY HABITS.** Students are expected to devote time daily during and outside of school hours to study and complete homework.
- **MUTUAL TRUST.** The staff and students of Mount Vernon High School interact on a basis

of trust and mutual respect. Students are expected to model responsible citizenship within our school and community.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Mount Vernon students' primary responsibilities are to learn and achieve to the best of their abilities. In order to meet the needs of each student and assess progress, teachers expect that assignments and tests represent a true picture of that student's own performance.
Administrators, faculty, students, and families are all important contributors to upholding academic integrity in our school community. These practices will provide a consistent framework to guide the learning process for staff and students.

PLAGIARISM
"Plagiarism" comes from the Greek root word "kidnapping" and is the theft of someone else's ideas, words, or other without clearly acknowledging the creator and using that material as one's own. Plagiarism includes an exact copying or rewording of another's work, paraphrasing, partial quotation or summarization of another's work without properly acknowledging the creator of the original work. Plagiarism includes copying any of the following without limitation: tests, homework, research, speeches, presentations, programs, class assignments, lab reports, graphs, charts, essays, compositions and term papers.

Plagiarism is a form of intellectual and academic dishonesty that can be done *intentionally* or *unintentionally*. *Intentional plagiarism* is the deliberate presentation of another's work or ideas as one's own. *Unintentional plagiarism* is the inadvertent presentation of another's work or ideas without proper acknowledgement because of poor or inadequate practices.

Unintentional plagiarism is a failure of *scholarship*; intentional plagiarism is an act of *deceit*. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Downloading information from the Internet or other source and submitting it as one's own work, and/or
- Submitting as one's own work that is copied or translated from another source, including Artificial Intelligence (AI).

All students receive training as a part of their middle and high school language arts curricula on issues of plagiarism. Students are shown examples of plagiarism and taught ways to avoid problems associated with it. Students are encouraged to check with their individual instructors for specific guidelines concerning what constitutes plagiarism as it relates to specific courses and/or disciplines.

CHEATING

Cheating is the deliberate or attempted use of unauthorized materials, information, technology,

study-aids as well as giving or receiving improper assistance. The student is responsible for consulting the teacher regarding whether group work is permissible on assignments, projects, tests, or other academic exercises.

Representing or attempting to represent oneself as another, or attempting to have oneself represented by another academic endeavor, constitutes cheating.

SCHOOL STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Use the Academic Integrity Practices to set classroom expectations.
2. Lead a discussion within the first week of each course identifying expectations with regard to academic honesty and include this information in the course syllabus.
3. Continue to educate students and offer guidance regarding acceptable and unacceptable behavior in areas that shall include but are not limited to: test taking, researching, writing, and using library and computer resources.
4. Promote circumstances in the classroom that reinforce academic honor and promote self-expression.
5. Enforce the Academic Integrity Practices in a fair and consistent manner.
6. Use and continually revise forms of assessment that require active and creative thought and that promote learning opportunities for students.
7. Evaluate the effectiveness of efforts and make necessary changes to promote academic integrity.

These practices will be implemented for students of all grade levels nine through twelve. Consequences will be cumulative for all high school courses.

CONSEQUENCES OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

1st incident:

1. The teacher will notify the student prior to contacting the parent.
2. The teacher will notify the school counselor and administrator.
3. The administration will record the incident in the school data system.
4. The administration and school counselor will review the student's eligibility for honor societies and academic awards as well as their eligibility for student privileges.
5. The student will complete the assignment/assessment/work OR an alternate assessment/assignment as assigned by the classroom teacher at a time arranged by the staff member.
6. The student may be administered at minimum an administrative detention yet allow for increases up to and including an in-school suspension dependent upon the severity of the situation.

2nd incident:

1. Steps 1 through 6 from the first incident will be followed (unless incident occurs in the

same course as first incident).
2. The student may be issued a suspension, and attend a meeting/conference conducted by an administrator with the teacher, school counselor, and student's parent/guardian.
3. The student may not be eligible for school-based scholarships.
4. The offense will be reported to the Activities Director as a violation of the MVHS Good Conduct Policy Violation.

3rd incident:

1. Steps 1 through 4 from the second incident will be followed.
2. Administration will notify the student and parent/guardian in writing that any future infraction in any class will result in a referral for a pre-expulsion conference as outlined in the 4th incident.

4th and any subsequent incidents:

1. Steps 1 and 2 of third incident will be followed.
2. Student will be referred for a pre-expulsion conference.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY APPEAL

The student and his/her parent/guardian have recourse in the event that the individual's right to due process may not have been upheld. Issues related to the appropriateness and levels of discipline imposed are not subject to appeal. All consequences for the alleged offense will remain in effect during the appeal process.

1. A student and/or his/her parent/guardian may formally appeal an alleged violation of due process related to an academic integrity violation in writing to the principal within five school days of their notification of the teacher's decision.

2. The principal will render a decision on the appeal in writing within five school days of receipt of the written appeal.

3. If a student/parent/guardian disagrees with the decision of the principal, that individual may appeal the decision in writing within five school days to an Appeals Board through the principal. The panel will consist of the school counselor, a current instructor of the student but not of the class in which the infraction occurred and another instructor who has not had the student in class. The Appeals Board will review the appeal within five school days of receiving the request and render a decision.

4. In the case of a second semester senior where the result of an appeal may affect the student's graduation from high school, the appeal will go directly to the Appeals Board and will be heard within one school day following receipt of the written appeal.

5. In order to change a consequence, all members of the Appeals Board must agree.

Without unanimous agreement, the consequence stands.

6. If the student/parent/guardian disagrees with the decision of the Appeals Board, one final appeal may be made in writing within five school days to the Superintendent through the Appeals Board. The Superintendent will review the appeal in conjunction with the TLC Instructional Specialist and come to a decision within five days of the written appeal. The decision of the Superintendent will be final.

ASBESTOS

School personnel are sensitive to the potential danger associated with the presence of asbestos within our school buildings. All district buildings are inspected on a regular basis. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) requires all students, staff, and parents to be informed of the presence of asbestos in our schools and what steps have been taken to eliminate any danger to humans.

A record of periodic inspections, a diagram of the locations of asbestos-containing materials, and a copy of relevant EPA regulations are available in each school's main office and the office of the Superintendent of Schools.

ASSEMBLIES

All students are expected to attend our school assemblies unless prior written approval to be excused has been granted by the principal. Students are expected to practice appropriate audience behaviors during assemblies. Students will be removed and disciplined for disruptive behaviors.

ATTENDANCE EXPECTATIONS AND PROCEDURES

Absences

Regular school attendance is one of the most important aspects of school success. Research confirms that regular attendance enhances student achievement and learning. Early intervention is suggested, thus an attendance team at the MS and HS aim to partner with high school staff and parents to encourage regular school attendance for all MVMS and MVHS students. The following attendance procedures are designed to promote regular school attendance for each class:

Reporting and Procedures

- All absences will be recorded by class period. Absences must be verified by a phone call from a parent or guardian within 24 hours of the date of the absence. It is best to phone the middle school (895-6254) or high school (895-8843) on the same day of the absence.

- Students will be responsible for completing missed assignments and expectations within a timely manner for any absences. Assignments assigned prior to the absence will be due upon the student's return to school. Example: If the student is absent on Monday, all the work that

was to be turned in on Monday will be due immediately upon the student's return to school. For work assigned on the day a student is absent, the student and teacher will work together to create a timeline to complete the work.

- School officials will determine whether a reported absence will be recorded as excused or unexcused.

Excessive absences

"Poor attendance in the first month of school predicts chronic absence for the year and middle and high school absenteeism predicts dropout." (Research) An attendance team will meet bi-weekly to discuss student absences throughout the school year.

Intervention

- Students who have missed 10% (5 in 45 days OR 9 in 90 days) or more days of class will receive a letter making parents aware of the number of days absent.

- Students who have missed 15% (7 in 45 days OR 14 in 90 days) or more of class will have a meeting set up to determine cause and to discuss further intervention to help the student with school attendance.

- Students who have missed 20% (9 in 45 days OR 18 in 90 days) or more of class will be referred to truancy court.

- Students who have missed more than 18 days (>25%) of class in a semester will be dropped from the class with an "F" letter grade.

- If students are considered unexcused for any class period, the consequence is to be at the discretion of the teacher. This may include an after school detention, making up missed time, etc.

- If students are unexcused from any class 4 times, a meeting with a designated school team and parents will be held to come up with a plan to get the student in class. If the student fails to adhere to the plan and reaches 6 unexcused absences, the student may be removed from that particular class.

- Students are expected to arrive to class on time. Teachers will take attendance within the first 5 minutes of class. If a student arrives after attendance has been recorded, the student may be sent to the office for an admit pass. Any tardy may be assigned a detention by administrators, teachers, or office staff.

BUS REGULATIONS

Students are responsible to the bus driver while on the vehicle, loading, unloading, or leaving the vehicle. The driver has the authority to discipline students who do not satisfactorily follow the bus expectations. If a student does not follow expectations after the bus driver gives the student a reminder, the bus driver will fill out a bus incident form. Copies of the form will be given to the principal and the student to take home within 24 hours. If a student receives multiple bus incident forms, parents may be asked to attend a meeting with the school principal, bus driver and student to create a plan for improved behavior. The driver, sponsors, and chaperones are to follow all school district policies, rules, and regulations for student violations, and the good conduct policy is in effect.

Students riding in school district vehicles will adhere to the rules listed below:

- Enter the bus in a single file line
- Stay seated the entire bus ride
- Keep hands and feet to yourself
- Use appropriate language
- Exit the bus in a single file line

CAPTURING OF VIDEO/PHOTOS/AUDIO AT SCHOOL OR SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Smartphones and other technology devices capable of storing and/or transmitting and/or receiving images are banned from use for any purpose in locker rooms and restrooms at ALL times. Students will be disciplined for any use of technology devices in school locker rooms or restrooms. At no time are students or visitors authorized to video capture, photograph, or audio record others in the school building, on school property (to include school vehicles), or at school activities (unless recording a public performance, such as a game, honor assembly, concert, contest, etc.), without the permission of other parties captured in the video, audio, or photo.

School administrators, teachers, coaches, and other school officials may further restrict the capturing of video, audio, or photos, even if all individuals present have given consent.

Capturing of video, audio, or photos is not permitted if it violates copyright laws, or includes content that is disparaging toward others (either due to the content of the video, photo, or audio itself or how the content is disseminated) or encourages or depicts violation of other school policies or state or federal law. Students violating this policy shall be subject to reasonable discipline, and the device shall be confiscated and not returned until the end of the school day or after a parent/guardian conference has been held, if such a conference is determined necessary by a building administrator or the administrator's designee. Students violating this policy may be prohibited from possessing any smartphone or technology device following the incident on school property for a reasonable period of time, unless otherwise permitted by a school administrator or a student's IEP or 504 Plan.

CARE OF SCHOOL PROPERTY

The high school building and grounds reflect our pride in the Mount Vernon community. Every student is encouraged to assist our staff in maintaining a neat, clean school environment.

Students are not allowed to mark walls, lockers, or desks. Defacing, abusing, or destruction of school property or equipment will result in disciplinary action. Students will be charged for repair or replacement costs incurred by the school.

CELL PHONE USE AT SCHOOL

Students in these grade spans will be asked to store their personal electronic devices either in their backpacks or on their person when possessing them during non-instructional time. There will be pocket charts located in each classroom and any students with a personal electronic device will be required to place their device in the pocket chart during instructional time. Students that possess wearable devices must place these devices into "school or airplane mode" for the duration of the instructional period. Students will be allowed to maintain and view their devices during non-instructional time such as passing time and their lunch hour.

Responses to the Violation of Policy:

- First Offense– The personal electronic device will be taken away for the duration of the day by the classroom teacher. The student will be returned the device at the end of the school day by coming to pick it up from the school office.
- Second Offense– The personal electronic device will be taken away for the duration of the day by the classroom teacher and parents will be notified by the classroom teacher. The student will be returned the device at the end of the school day by coming to pick it up from the school office.
- Third Offense– The personal electronic device will be taken away for the duration of the day and taken to the school office. A parent/guardian will be notified and required to come and pick up the device.
- Fourth Offense– The personal electronic device will be taken away for the duration of the day and taken to the school office. A parent/guardian will be notified and required to come and pick up the device and the student is no longer permitted to bring the device to school.

Student-Specific Exceptions to Policy Petition by Parent or Guardian
A parent or guardian of a student may petition to allow their child to maintain access to a personal electronic device for a legitimate reason related to the student's physical or mental health, based on the unique facts of the student's case. The petition shall be addressed to the building principal. If not granted, a parent or guardian may appeal to the superintendent or designee, whose decision shall be final. A parent or guardian has the burden of providing a legitimate reason for allowing the child to maintain access to a personal electronic device contrary to the Mount Vernon CSD's policy.

Student Plans
A student who has a current Individualized Education Plan, a plan under section 504 of the federal

Rehabilitation Act, or health plan may maintain access to a personal device during an appropriate portion of the school day as documented in the plan. The device should be used solely in the manner necessary and documented.

CHANGE OF LEGAL STATUS

If a student's legal status (i.e. name change, custodial care change) should change during the school year, the parent or guardian must notify the high school office in order to keep current, accurate information on each of our students.

CHILD ABUSE

It is the policy of the Mount Vernon Schools that any employee who has reason to believe that a student has been abused, as defined by law, must report to the Department of Human Services. Legal reference: Chapter 235A, the Code of Iowa. The level one investigator for suspected abuse by a district employee is our school nurse.

COURSES – STUDENT DROP / ADD REQUESTS

At Mount Vernon High School, the staff believes all students can learn and need to be in challenging and rigorous classes. Students are responsible for determining and accepting the course of study for which they register. They must plan very deliberately, always keeping in mind high school graduation requirements, individual abilities and interests, and post high school plans. Schedule adjustments will be made for academic reasons only. In many cases, parent permission will be required, but does not guarantee a schedule adjustment. Students are to limit their visits to the counselor's office to make schedule changes to "one and done".

Students must request to drop or add courses within the first three (3) days of each semester. Dropping a class after the third day of a semester will result in a grade of "F" on the student's transcript. Drop / Add forms requiring parent and teacher signatures may be used to make any schedule change.

Schedule changes are limited and will be based on the following criteria:

1. Will be made during your free time only. You will not be excused from classes to make changes.
2. Only adds or drops allowed. Shuffling of classes to align free time or change teachers is not acceptable.
    a. No additions to sections that are full.
3. Changes can be made for legitimate educational reasons. If you have extenuating circumstances that you believe justify a schedule change, please see the counselor.

Unless there are unusual circumstances, the counselor will not allow changes such as:

- to change teachers
- to change lunch periods

- to change to a friend's class
- to change to a section with more students.

Administrative approval may be required for some schedule changes.

- MVHS will follow the Kirkwood policies for drops/adds for courses in which students are receiving Kirkwood dual credit, whether or not the course is taught onsite by a Mount Vernon High School instructor or online/onsite @ Kirkwood. The dropped course will be reflected on the Mount Vernon High School transcript in the same way it is reflected on Kirkwood's transcript.
- In rare circumstances, students may be dropped from a course with a Medical Withdrawal. Students will need the correct paperwork from a physical or mental health care provider. Documentation must be in writing describing the absences & the medical procedures taking place with the student.

Mount Vernon High School Time Schedules
2026-2027

STRAIGHT 7s (S7) SCHEDULE

Early Bird	7:05 – 8:00 (55 minutes - M/Th)
Period 1	8:15 – 9:07 (52 minutes)
Period 2	9:11 – 10:03
Period 3	10:07 – 10:59
Period 4	11:03 – 12:27
-A lunch:	**11:03–11:31 (28 minutes)**
-B class:	**11:35–12:27 (52 minutes)**
-A class	**11:03–11:55 (52 minutes)**
-B lunch:	**11:59–12:27 (28 minutes)**
Period 5	12:31 – 1:23
Period 6	1:27 – 2:19
Period 7	2:23 – 3:15

TUESDAY BLOCK SCHEDULE

Early Bird	7:05 – 8:00
Block 1	8:15 – 9:40 (85 minutes)
Block 3	9:46 – 11:11
Lunch/HR/Health 2:	**11:11 – 12:15**
-A Lunch:	**11:11-11:41 (30 minutes)**
-B HR 9:	**11:45-12:15 (30 minutes)**
-A Health 2:	**11:11-11:41 (30 minutes)**
-B Lunch:	**11:45-12:15 (30 minutes)**
Block 5	12:19 – 1:44
Block 7	1:50 – 3:15

WEDNESDAY BLOCK SCHEDULE

Early Bird	7:15 – 8:00
Block 2	8:15 – 9:40 (85 minutes)
WIN	**9:44 - 10:10 (26 minutes)**
Block 4	10:14 – 11:39
Lunch/HR/Health 1:	**11:43 – 12:57**
-A Lunch:	**11:43-12:18 (35 minutes)**
-B Health 1:	**12:22-12:57 (35 minutes)**
-A HR 10:	**11:43-12:18 (35 minutes)**
-B Lunch:	**12:22-12:57 (35 minutes)**
Block 6	1:01 – 2:26
Skinny 8	2:30 – 3:15 – Health 1 (45 minutes)

J-TERM SCHEDULE (January 5 – January 15)

AM Block	8:15 – 11:08
Lunch	**11:08 – 12:19**
PM Block	12:23 – 3:15

EARLY DISMISSAL DAYS:
8/24, 9/9, 9/23, 10/21, 11/4, 11/18, 12/9, 12/18, 2/3, 2/24, 3/10, 3/31, 4/14, 4/28, 5/12, 5/26 (Bold are Straight 7 early dismissals – the remainder are block early dismissals). **All afternoon Teacher PD except 8/24.**

TEACHER PD DAYS (NO STUDENTS): 8/17, 8/18, 8/19, 8/20, 8/21, 10/9, 1/4, 1/18, 2/15, 5/27, 5/28
NO SCHOOL DAYS: 9/7, 10/23, 11/25-27, 12/21-31, 1/1, 3/15-19, 4/23, 5/31

EARLY DISMISSAL WEDNESDAY BLOCK SCHEDULE

Early Bird	7:05 – 8:00
Block 2	8:15 – 9:40 (85 minutes)
Block 4	9:44 – 11:09
Block 6	11:13 – 12:38
Lunch	**12:40 - 1:15 (35 minutes)**
	(students may take lunch to-go)

TWO-HOUR DELAY S7 SCHEDULE

**** NO EARLY BIRD (see below)**

Period 1	10:15 – 10:50 (35 minutes)
Period 2	10:54 – 11:29
Period 3	11:33 – 12:39
-A Lunch	**11:33 – 12:00 (27 minutes)**
-B Class	**12:04 – 12:39**
-A Class	**11:33 – 12:08**
-B Lunch	**12:12 – 12:39 (27 minutes)**
Period 4	12:43 – 1:18
Period 5	1:22 – 1:57
Period 6	2:01 – 2:36
Period 7	2:40 – 3:15

TWO-HOUR DELAY BLOCK SCHEDULE

**** NO EARLY BIRD (see below)**

Block 1/2	10:15 – 11:10 (55 minutes)
Lunch/HR/Health:	**11:14 – 12:18**
-A Lunch:	**11:14-11:44 (30 minutes)**
-B HR 9/Health 1:	**11:48-12:18 (30 minutes)**
-A Health 2/HR 10:	**11:14-11:44 (30 minutes)**
-B Lunch:	**11:48-12:18 (30 minutes)**
Period 3/4	12:22 – 1:17
Period 5/6	1:21 – 2:16
Period 7/Sk. 8	2:20 – 3:15 (Wed. Health 1)

STRAIGHT 7 EARLY DISMISSAL *(8/24, 12/18 & 5/26)*

EB:	7:05 - 8:00 (55 minutes)
Period 1	8:15 - 8:50 (35 minutes)
Period 2	8:54 - 9:29
Period 3	9:33 -10:08
Period 4	10:12 - 10:47
Period 5	10:51 - 11:26
Period 6	11:30 - 12:05
Period 7	12:09 - 12:44
Lunch	**12:44 - 1:15pm (31 minutes)**
	(students may take lunch to-go)

**** EARLY BIRD CLASS PROCEDURE FOR LATE START OR FULL DAY CANCELLATION**

Please note that when a 2-Hour Delay is announced, there are NO EARLY BIRD CLASSES AND 1ST PERIOD WILL BEGIN AT 10:15am.

There are no longer EB courses scheduled on Fridays, therefore NO SCHEDULE adjustments for EB courses due to late starts or cancellations. EB will simply pick up on the rotation day previously scheduled:

M/W = A Day
T/Th = B Day
F = C Day (NO EB)

DUAL CREDIT OPPORTUNITIES

High school students in grades 11 and 12 may earn dual credit (both high school and college) for successfully completing eligible courses through area colleges under Senior Year Plus legislation. Senior Year Plus serves as an umbrella for a variety of programs including Alternative Concurrent Enrollment (Community College), Concurrent Enrollment / Career Academy, and Post-Secondary Enrollment Option (PSEO, 4-year). The school district will pay the predetermined cost of enrolling in post-secondary courses that are not offered at MVHS and meet the Senior Year Plus guidelines.

High school graduation credit for eligible Alternative Concurrent Enrollment courses (Kirkwood) will be awarded in the following manner:

- Courses earning less than 3 Kirkwood credits will earn .25 MVHS credit with each passing grade
- Courses earning 3 or more Kirkwood credits will earn .5 MVHS credit with each passing grade
- MVHS will follow the Kirkwood policies for drops/adds for courses in which students are receiving Kirkwood dual credit, whether or not the course is taught onsite by a Mount Vernon High School instructor or online/onsite @ Kirkwood. The dropped course will be reflected on the Mount Vernon High School transcript in the same way it is reflected on Kirkwood's transcript.

High school graduation credit for eligible Post Secondary Enrollment Option classes will be awarded in the following manner:

- Semester-long courses earn 0.5 credit with a passing grade
- Year-long courses earn 1.0 credit with a passing grade

Students who wish to enroll in a Senior Year Plus course should contact the counselor for a list of courses available, the application form, and to confirm that prerequisites for the course(s) have been met. Transportation is the responsibility of the student.

COLLEGE ENTRANCE TESTS

Each year the test dates and registration of college entrance tests are posted at school. Please contact the school counselor or the ACT website www.actstudent.org for updated testing information.

The Mount Vernon school code is: 163065

COLLEGE INTERVIEWS

A number of college recruiters visit Mount Vernon High School to promote their schools to prospective students throughout the school year. Dates and times of these recruiter visits will be posted on the school counselor calendar. Students must sign up in advance to visit these

recruiters and obtain a pass from the counseling office. Students should use discretion when signing up to avoid missing too much class time.

COLLEGE RECOMMENDATIONS

Many colleges or universities will request a written recommendation from a teacher, counselor, or administrator when a student applies for admission to a school. The high school staff is willing and pleased to assist with this very important part of the college admission process.
College recommendation forms are available on the school website under students/forms. It is imperative that students give staff adequate time to write these recommendations.

COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES

The goal of the District is to resolve all student complaints at the appropriate level and with the appropriate person. Students are encouraged to address problems with the classroom teacher, sponsor, or coach for possible resolution before addressing the issue with administration. If the complaint cannot be resolved at this first level, the student should discuss the matter with MVHS Administration. If the complaint is still unresolved, the student may discuss the problem with the superintendent.

DANCES AND OTHER SCHOOL-SPONSORED EVENTS

All school-sponsored dances must be pre-approved by the principal. All school district policies, rules, and regulations apply to students and their guests attending our dances. Students and/or guests must be enrolled as at least a ninth grade student and under the age of twenty-one in order to attend any high school dances. All guests must sign-in (listing their name, resident school district/school building, and phone number) before they will be admitted to a school-sponsored dances.

Students and their guests who violate school district policies, rules, or regulations will be asked to leave the dance and school grounds, and will be prohibited from attending future school dances for an extended time period. Students who are suspected of being under the influence of alcohol or other controlled substances will have their parents and law enforcement officers contacted and may be tested with a breathalyzer. Students who test positive for any level of alcohol will only be released from the dance in the custody of a parent or a law enforcement officer.

Students may not re-enter a dance after leaving the building without an adult chaperone escort. All dances will end by midnight.

Our junior/senior prom is only open to juniors and seniors and their dates. Dates must be enrolled in at least the ninth grade and be under the age of twenty-one in order to attend prom.

Students are encouraged to attend all school-sponsored events (i.e. athletic, fine arts, academic

recognition, etc.). Students must be in attendance at school by 12:30pm on the day of these events in order to participate either as a spectator or a participant.

MOUNT VERNON COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT DISCIPLINE GUIDELINES

The discipline guidelines for the Mount Vernon Community School District are rooted in the following principles of respect . . .

- Respect for Learning
- Respect for Staff
- Respect for the School
- Respect for Self
- Respect for Others

While not all encompassing, the discipline guidelines provided below provide a framework of expectations for Mount Vernon Community School District students while at school, while participating in or attending school events, while on school grounds, and while representing the school district in any function outside of the Mount Vernon community. Any behavior that the District deems to be prejudicial to the good order and discipline of the District may also be addressed through disciplinary consequences. Any discipline violation may also be considered a violation of the Good Conduct policy of the District.

The school reserves and retains the right to modify, eliminate, or establish school district policies, rules, and regulations as circumstances warrant, including those contained in this handbook. Students are expected to know the contents of this handbook and to comply with it. Students or parents with questions or concerns about the current enforcement of the policies, rules, and regulations should contact the high school principal.

Level 1

Examples of Level 1 discipline infractions include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Failure to exhibit honesty and integrity in the classroom environment
2. Plagiarism and/or cheating in class; presenting another's ideas, research or writing as your own or cheating on an exam or assignment
3. Attendance issues including tardiness to class and unexcused absence from class
4. Use of offensive and inappropriate language
5. Minor disruption of class
6. Refusal to follow directions
7. Being unprepared for class
8. Inappropriate physical contact that is minor in nature
9. Dress code violations
10. Inappropriate displays of affection

Consequences for Level 1 Offenses: Consequences for Level 1 offenses may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Conference with teacher
- Verbal Reprimand
- Contact with parent
- Loss of privileges
- Time Out from class
- Behavior Contract
- Assignment of Detention

Level 2

Examples of Level 2 discipline infractions include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Insubordination, blatant disrespect toward an adult
2. Truancy from school
3. Smoking, use of tobacco, nicotine (vaping) products and imitation substances
4. Fighting, inappropriate physical contact more serious in nature
5. Stealing, theft of items valued at less than $100
6. Sexual Misconduct
7. Inappropriate use of technology
8. Committing forgery or fraud in use of school documents
9. Repeated inappropriate behavior that have not been remedied through intervention by the school, including repeated violations of Level 1 behaviors
10. Or other acts as determined by administration to be level 2 in nature.

Consequences for Level 2 Offenses: Consequences for Level 2 offenses may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Referral to administrator
- Contact with parent
- Loss of privileges
- Time Out from class
- Behavior Contract
- Assignment of Detention
- In school or out of school suspension up to ten days
- Referral to outside agency
- Change of class schedule (possible drop from class with an “F”)
- Contact with law enforcement

Level 3

Examples of Level 3 discipline infractions include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Violent behavior toward another student or adult that is assaultive in nature
2. Sexual Harassment including use of inappropriate and suggestive sexual language
3. Sexual Assault
4. Vandalism involving significant damage to school property or the property of others
5. Stealing, theft of items valued at more than $100
6. Use or possession of alcohol, illegal drugs, controlled substances or imitation items represented to be illegal in nature
7. Distribution of alcohol, illegal drugs, controlled substances or imitation items represented to be illegal in nature
8. Possession or use of a weapon
9. Bullying or hazing of another student or students
10. Racism
11. Chronic disciplinary concerns of a serious nature or repeated level 2 violations
12. Possession of materials that are of a violent or vulgar nature including pornography
13. Engaging in sexting or other inappropriate use of technology including, but not limited to, the use of computers and cell phones to record or share inappropriate and/or pornographic materials
14. Inappropriate use of school provided equipment whether in or out of school
15. Possession or use of fireworks or other dangerous items
16. Threatening actions directed toward students or the school district with the intent to cause fear or a major disruption to the school environment
17. Or other acts as determined by administration to be level 3 in nature.

Consequences for Level 3 Offenses: Consequences for Level 3 offenses may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Referral to administrator
- Contact with parent
- Loss of privileges
- Time Out from class
- Behavior Contract
- Assignment of Detention
- In school or out of school suspension up to ten days
- Recommendation for out of school suspension longer than ten days
- Recommendation to the Board of Education for expulsion
- Referral to outside agency
- Change of class schedule (possible drop from class or in-person learning)
- Contact with law enforcement

STUDENT DRESS CODE POLICY

Students are expected to adhere to reasonable levels of cleanliness and modesty in the way they dress for school. These standards are compatible with the requirements of a good learning environment and will be those generally acceptable to the community as appropriate in a school setting. When, in the judgment of staff and/or administration, a student's appearance or mode of dress disrupts the educational process or constitutes a threat to health or safety, the student may be required to make modifications. Students who fail to comply with these requests may be subject to discipline as outlined in the student handbook according to the nature of the offense, the circumstances surrounding the offense, and the frequency of the offense.

Students should adhere to the following guidelines when dressing for school:

- No clothing that may be considered offensive to other students, such as gender, race, sexual orientation and/or religious reasons.
- No clothing containing slogans and/or designs that advertise or promote illegal or controlled substances
- No midriffs exposed. When standing/walking upright, shirts must touch the waist of the pants.
- T-shirts with cutoff sleeves and tank tops must be tight around the shoulder and armpit.
- Clothing must not reveal underwear or buttocks.
- Some type of shoe must be worn when in the hallways, office, or cafeteria.
- No tube tops.

Additionally:

- Shoes with spikes or cleats may not be worn in the high school building
- Loose clothing or jewelry worn near school equipment (i.e. in shop or art classrooms)
- The wearing of hats is at the discretion of the teachers.
- Clothing worn at practices/rehearsals will be at the discretion of the coach/director.

It is the desire of MVHS students and administration to not restrict the 1st Amendment in what students can and cannot wear, but to provide clear expectations for students (with little gray area) in an educational setting, while maintaining objectivity in enforcement.

The dress code will be reviewed on a yearly basis by administration.

Ultimately, appropriate clothing to be worn at school is left up to administrative discretion.

DUAL ENROLLMENT / HOMESCHOOL

Home school or home school assistance students enrolled in classes or who participate in school activities in the district are subject to the same policies, rules, and regulations as other students. Home school or home school assistance program students are subject to the same disciplinary consequences as other students. Dual enrolled students who are interested in participating in

school activities or enrolling in courses taught at the high school should contact the principal.

To learn more about Dual enrollment or Homeschool options please visit this website: https://educate.iowa.gov/pk-12/educational-choice/home-schooling

Mount Vernon High School does not accept homeschool credits. Families desiring a district diploma for their children are urged to contact MVHS Administration during their child's 8th grade year to coordinate credits.

EARLY GRADUATION

Students may qualify for early graduation if they have completed the minimum high school requirements prior to the end of their senior year. Students must apply to the high school principal at least one semester prior to the completion of the required graduation requirements. Students must receive the approval of both the high school principal and superintendent of schools in order to graduate early. Students who graduate early immediately become alumni of the school district. As alumni, early graduates may not participate in any extracurricular activities, athletics, or clubs. Early graduates are eligible for scholarships presented at the Senior Awards Night and may participate in commencement ceremonies.

ELIGIBILITY RULES – ACTIVITIES / ATHLETICS

The Mount Vernon Schools offer a wide range of activities and athletic programs to our students. Our staff and community are very proud of the activities and athletic accomplishments of our students. It is a privilege for students to represent Mount Vernon Schools by participating in one or more of our school's activities or athletic programs.

The Mount Vernon Board of Education policy book states that "Students may participate in interscholastic athletic, music, speech, and other contests/events approved by the Administration. Any such event must be directed or guided by professional school personnel. No student will participate in an athletic practice or contest without filing a doctor's certificate of good health." (Board policy 503.6)

Additionally, the Mount Vernon School district follows the requirements set forth by the Iowa High School Athletic Association, Iowa High School Music Association, Iowa Speech Association, and the Iowa High School Girls Athletic Union for participation in extracurricular activities (See *Academic Standards below)*. If a student fails a J-Term course, s/he becomes ineligible to compete in extra-curricular events as soon as the J-Term grades are finalized (this is typically 3-4 days after the last day of J-Term).

Students must be in attendance by 12:30pm on the day of a scheduled practice or competition in order to participate. If the absence prior to 12:30pm is considered unexcused, the student is not able to participate in the after school activity. Exceptions to this policy (which may include:

emergencies, unavoidable circumstances, etc.) require approval of the Principal or Activities Director.

Academic Standards
A student must earn passing grades in all courses in the previous semester (*including J-Term) to be eligible for participation in any and all extra-curricular activities or athletic competitions. If a student does not participate in any activities for two consecutive semesters (*not including J-Term), that student becomes eligible without penalty during the third semester. All freshmen are eligible at the time of completion of eighth grade.

*J-Term is considered a grading period, but not considered a semester.

Scholarship Rule

Athletics: Iowa High School Athletic Association and the Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union.

"If at the end of any grading period a contestant is given a failing grade in any course for which credit is awarded, the contestant is ineligible to dress for and compete in the next occurring interscholastic athletic contests and competitions in which the contestant is a contestant for 20 consecutive calendar days."

Any withdrawal (W) or Incomplete (I) on a transcript will not result in ineligibility. Please note after a determined time (as defined by administration), if the Incomplete turns into an F, the student is subject to the 20 day ineligibility period.

The 20 days will start at the date of the 1st eligible competition date for that sport/activity OR immediately at the end of the grading period if competitions for the sport/activity have already occurred. Each year, MVHS will follow the state's directives on eligible start dates.

The Mount Vernon Community School District will enforce this policy for all state-sponsored interscholastic athletic contests per Iowa law, regardless if any additional consequences are given by extracurricular activities, clubs, etc.

Speech: Iowa High School Speech Association
"If at the end of any grading period a participant receives a failing grade in any course for which credit is awarded, the participant is ineligible to participate in any event sanctioned by the Iowa High School Speech Association or IHSSA sponsored event within a period of 20 calendar days. The period of ineligibility will begin the first school day following the day grades are issued by the school district."

Any withdrawal (W) or Incomplete (I) on a transcript will not result in ineligibility. Please note after a determined time (as defined by administration), if the Incomplete turns into an F, the student is subject

to the 20 day ineligibility period.

Music/Choir: Iowa High School Music Association
"If at the end of any grading period a participant receives a failing grade in any course for which credit is awarded, the participant is ineligible to participate in any competitive event sanctioned by the IHSMA or any IHSMA sponsored event that is nongraded (event doesn't affect course GPA) within a period of 20 consecutive calendar days. The period of ineligibility will begin with the first school day following the day grades are issued by the school district."

In addition, all contestants shall be enrolled students of the school in good standing. They shall receive credit in at least four subjects, at all times, to be considered eligible for extra-curricular activities. Each contestant shall be passing all coursework for which credit is given and shall be making adequate progress toward graduation requirements at the end of each grading period. Please see the Department of Education and IAHSAA handbook for further information on the "Scholarship Rule."

Ineligible students may continue to practice only with the approval of their coach/director/sponsor.

ELIGIBILITY – GOOD CONDUCT RULES AND REGULATIONS

Good Conduct Policy

Philosophy

Extracurricular activities are an integral part of the total educational opportunity for all students. The right to participate is open to all students. However, once students make a commitment to participate in an extracurricular activity, the right becomes a privilege. When the students are granted this privilege, they accept the responsibility of following behavior guidelines outlined in policies and rules established for administration of the extracurricular programs. Because the participants represent the school community of Mount Vernon in extracurricular activities, they are expected to adhere to even more stringent and demanding behavior codes than non-participating students.
These Good Conduct rules and regulations specifically apply 365 days per year while in school, out of school (any location), or at school events (either home or away).

Eligibility

- To be eligible to participate in extracurricular activities, a student must meet the requirements of the Iowa High School Athletic Association, Iowa High School Music Association, Iowa High School Speech Association, Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union, and the Iowa Department of Education.
- In addition, students must follow these administrative rules and procedures and corresponding school district guidelines as listed in the student handbook (listed in the Student Handbook under "Eligibility - Good Conduct Rules and Regulations").

Good Conduct Policy Violation

A student who is participating in extracurricular interscholastic athletics and/or other activities will be in violation of this policy under the following conditions:

1. Any student who admits to or is found by the administration to have violated the policy for consumption, use, possession, acquiring, delivering or transporting alcoholic beverages or items recognized as “look-alikes”.

2. Any student who admits to or is found by the administration to have violated the policy for consumption, use, possession, acquiring, selling, delivering or transporting drugs, drug paraphernalia or items recognized as “look-alikes”. The term “drug” would include controlled substances as well. This would exclude prescription medications - which need to be stored and taken in the nurse’s office (not including inhalers and/or other such medications needed on site for immediate use approved by the school).

*Mere Presence (this applies to #1 and #2) – If a student attends a function where alcohol or a controlled substance as defined by Iowa law is being consumed or used and does not leave immediately or if police arrive prior to student leaving, the student is in violation of the Good Conduct Rules and Regulations.

3. Any student who admits to or is found by the administration to have violated the policy for consumption, use, possession, acquiring, delivering, or transporting tobacco, tobacco products, nicotine, nicotine products, and items recognized as “look-alikes” (electronic cigarettes, vape pens) regardless of the student’s age. This would include, but is not limited to, chew pouches, nicotine pouches, Zyn pouches, etc.

4. Any student who engages in any act(s) that would be in violation of local law (excludes minor traffic offenses) regardless of whether the student was cited, arrested, charged, convicted, or adjudicated for the act(s). This may include the following, but is not limited to:

- Possession, use or threatening to use any instrument that is generally considered a weapon or an imitation weapon or an explosive.
- Physical or sexual assault or abuse
- Vandalism or destruction of property
- Theft

5. In light of each student’s role as a representative of the school both on and off campus, evidence obtained through the use of technology may result in a violation of the Good Conduct Rules and Regulations. Such violations may include, but are not limited to: the inappropriate use of computers, cell phones, texting, emails, social networking sites (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, etc.) to transmit, post or otherwise communicate speech and/or photos that the school deems as harassing, threatening, lewd, or obscene. This may also include a student’s personal or

physical actions, not just those involving technology.

6. Any student who admits to or is found by faculty and/or administration to have committed a violation of the academic dishonesty policy for the third time.

Categories of Activities Governed by the Good Conduct for Rules and Regulations

1. Athletics (including cheerleading and programs sponsored by the MVCSD)
2. Any fine arts programs that are extracurricular in nature (non-graded)
3. Speech, drama, plays, and musicals, etc.
4. Academic Competitions
5. Any extra-curricular social activities

*If a student is involved in multiple activities, consequences will be applied to each category (for example, if a student is involved in a fall sport and vocal music, consequences will be applied to both of those activities since those are in different categories).

Consequences for Violation of the Good Conduct Rules and Regulations (non-felonious act)

FIRST OFFENSE

Loss of ⅓ of events for the identified activity. This may be reduced to 10% of the events if admitting to the violation in a timely manner (within 2 days) as outlined in the "Self-Reporting Provision" below.

The Self-Reporting Provision applies to students who violate "The Good Conduct Rules and Regulations" and supporting rules and regulations and report such violations within 2 school days (if during the summer, 2 calendar days) to the Activities Director or Principal. If the individual does not self-report in the required time frame and a member of the school staff or administration becomes aware of a violation of the Good Conduct Rules and Regulations and the supporting rules and regulations, the Honesty Provision does not apply. If administration is made aware of the offense and starts an investigation before the 2 school days passes, the Self-Reporting Provision is null.

a. If the Self-Reporting Provision applies, the student shall be ineligible to participate in the next 10% of in-season activities and shall be required to complete 10 hours of community service as determined by school administration. A plan needs to be in place for the community service hours prior to resuming eligibility.

b. If the Self-Reporting Provision does not apply, the student shall be ineligible to participate in the next ⅓ of in-season activities.

SECOND OFFENSE – Self-Reporting Provision does not apply after the 1st offense

1. Loss of ½ of events for the identified activity.
2. This may be reduced to ⅓ of events if engaging successfully in a restorative conference with

anyone harmed by the behavior, or engaging in an educational/treatment plan if the behavior is related to tobacco or substance possession or use.

3. The student may be required to participate in counseling offered by the Mount Vernon CSD or pursue counseling through a provider of their choice at their own expense.

THIRD OFFENSE

- Loss of a full season of events for the identified activity (i.e. - season of 1 sport or activity such as a volleyball season, etc.).
- This may be reduced to ½ of the season if engaging successfully in a restorative conference with anyone harmed by the behavior, or engaging in an educational/treatment plan if the behavior is related to tobacco or substance possession or use.
- The student may be required to participate in counseling offered by the Mount Vernon CSD or pursue counseling through a provider of their choice at their own expense.

ANY ADDITIONAL OFFENSE

If a student commits an offense or offenses beyond a third offense, a review team will meet with the student and parents to determine the appropriate course of action including possible exclusion from extracurricular activities. This review team will consist of the principal, assistant principal, counselor and superintendent.

Consequences for Violation of Good Conduct Rules and Regulations (felonious act)

If charges have been filed against a student for a felonious act and the school administration deems the act in violation of the Good Conduct Rules and Regulations, the athletic director, school principal and superintendent will meet and confer to determine the student's eligibility to participate in extracurricular activities until the court process has been concluded or finalized.

General Points Relation to a Suspension

- Coaches and activity advisors may establish more restrictive regulations for their respective students beyond the rules and regulations of the Good Conduct Rules and Regulations. Such rules and regulations will be approved in advance by the Activities Director and/or Principal in consultation with the Superintendent and will be communicated to all participants both in writing and/or verbally at the beginning of the activity period or season.
- Students must continue to participate in the activity from which they have been suspended for the length of the season or activity. Failure to do so will result in the suspension being carried over to the next activity.
- Students must continue to practice with the team and meet expectations of the coach/sponsor relative to all other participants during the suspension.
- Students unable to serve their suspension completely in one activity due to the end of that activity will have their suspension prorated in a consistent manner with the next activity.

- Students found in violation of the Good Conduct Rules and Regulations may not register for a new activity after the state mandated/district-defined start date to avoid a penalty at a later time from another activity.
- To be considered a participant in an activity, the student must begin and end the activity in good standing.
- Any student who has been declared ineligible under a prior school district's Good Conduct Policy and then without having completed the full period of ineligibility at that school transfers to the Mount Vernon CSD, will not be eligible for extracurricular competition until a period of ineligibility equitable with Mount Vernon CSD policies has been completed.
- If a student is in violation of the Good Conduct Rules and Regulations in 7th or 8th grade, the student's violations will not carry over to 9th grade (student will begin with a clean Good Conduct record).
- Good Conduct Policy violations obtained while in HS are cumulative in nature and add up during their entire 4 years in HS. This starts as soon as students finish 8th grade and includes the summer playing baseball after 8th grade.
- In athletics, the length of the season and number of events during that season will be used to calculate the number of events impacted by the Good Conduct Rules and Regulations violation.
- In non-athletic activities, the number of activities will be used. Directors may assign additional consequences as determined by the student course handbook. As part of the consequences, students will be expected to attend the event and assist with the performance. In graded activities, students will be expected to complete an alternative graded activity as determined by the director/sponsor.

Notification and Appeal Process

Whenever a student is deemed by the school administration to have violated this policy, the student will be notified in person with a summary of the violation in writing. Parents will be notified immediately and a copy of the violation will be sent home to parents. The student in violation and the parents will be asked to sign the violation form and return it to the school to put in the student's records.

A student may contest the determination of a violation and/or penalty imposed for a violation of the Good Conduct policy. To file an appeal, the student must submit a written request to the superintendent within five days of the determination of the violation. The superintendent shall then consider the evidence and all circumstances and make his/her findings in writing to the student and parent/guardian within five days.

The student and/or parent/guardian may appeal the Superintendent's findings with the School Board within five days. A student may be represented by legal counsel in any hearing before the District's Board of Education. The appeal shall be heard at the earliest opportunity. The School Board will either affirm or refute that the procedures and processes outlined in the Good Conduct Policy were followed. The Board's decision shall be in writing and final. During the appeal process, the student shall remain ineligible pending a decision on the student's appeal.

ELIGIBILITY – TRAINING RULES

Training rules may be established for each activity or athletic team by the individual coach/sponsor. These rules will be reviewed and approved by the activities director. These rules will be communicated to participants prior to enforcement. These rules may include, but are not limited to:

- Absences from required practices, contests, or events, etc.
- Tardiness to practices, contests, or events, etc.
- Lack of sportsmanship and/or cooperation with teammates
- Lack of appropriate care of school district equipment or facilities

EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

The Mount Vernon Community School District will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status (for programs), socioeconomic status (for programs), disability, religion, and creed. Students, parents, employees and others doing business with or performing services with the district who feel that they have experienced discrimination are encouraged to contact Matt Thede, Equity Coordinator, Mount Vernon Community High School, 731 Palisades Road SW, Mount Vernon, IA 52314, telephone: 319-895-8843 x4005, where our district has a grievance procedure for processing complaints of discrimination. Inquiries may also be directed in writing to the Director of Civil Rights – Region VII, US Department of Education,; 310 W. Wisconsin Ave.; Suite 800; Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53203-2292 (phone: 414-291-1111) or to the Iowa Department of Education; Grimes State Office Building; Des Moines, Iowa, 50319-0146 (phone: 515-281-5294).

EXPULSION

The Mount Vernon Board of Education has the sole authority to expel any student for a violation of rules or regulations approved by the Board, or when the student's presence is considered to be detrimental to other students within the educational setting. The building principal will make a written recommendation for expulsion to the Board. The principal will have the authority to suspend the student from attending school until such time as a special meeting of the Board can be convened. This hearing will be held within a reasonable time, no later than five (5) days following the decision to suspend the student pending a hearing date. The student will be afforded an opportunity for an alternative education so that they may continue to complete schoolwork while they are awaiting a hearing date. If it is impossible to schedule the hearing within five days, the student may be granted provisional re-admittance to classes until a hearing date is scheduled.

The superintendent or designee will notify the student, and parents/guardians of the date, time, and location for the hearing with the Board. This notice will be oral and in writing, and will include a

summary of the specific reason(s) for the recommendation of expulsion. In addition, the student and parents/guardians will be made aware of their right to be represented by legal counsel; to present a defense against the charges; and to provide oral testimony, written affidavits, or witnesses on the student's behalf. All written statements to be considered at the hearing will be available at the hearing and accessible for examination by the student, parents/guardians, or representative of the student.

If a student is expelled by the Board, the student may only be readmitted by the Board. The decision to expel may be appealed in writing by the student, parents/guardians, or their legal representative to the State Board of Education.

EXTENDED LEARNING PROGRAM (ELP)

Students who have been identified as Tier 3 within ELP may choose to request the following accommodations through Susannah Maddock:

- Substitute a general course with an AP course
- Pretest out of a select required course in order to take a related AP course.
- Take an AP course as a freshman and/or sophomore

For more information on the Extended Learning Program, including objective and subjective qualifying measures, contact Susannah Maddock at smaddock@mvcsd.org.

FEES

The Mount Vernon Board of Education recognizes that school fees and charges are necessary and appropriate for students and their families. However, certain students and their families may not financially be able to pay these authorized school fees and charges. The Mount Vernon Community School District will consider granting full, partial, or temporary waivers of school fees and charges depending upon the circumstances and the student's or parent's/guardian's ability to meet the financial criteria as outlined below.

Waivers:

1. Full waivers – Full waivers of fees charged by the school district will be granted if the parents/guardians meet the financial eligibility criteria for free school lunch under the Child Nutrition program, Family Investment program, Supplemental Security Income guidelines, or Transportation Assistance through open enrollment.
2. Partial waivers – Partial waivers of fees charged by the school district will be granted if the parents/guardians meet the financial eligibility for reduced price school lunch under the Child Nutrition program. A partial waiver will be based on the same percentage as the reduced price meals.
3. Temporary waivers – Temporary waivers of fees charged by the school district may be granted in the event that the student's parents/guardians are facing a financial difficulty.

Applications for temporary waivers are available throughout the school year

Application forms for these waivers are available on the district website. Parents/guardians or students may apply at any time. All waiver applications must be renewed annually so parents/guardians or students must re-apply each school year by completing a new application form. The school district will treat the information on waiver application forms and the application process in accordance with student confidentiality and access provisions.

All appeals for denials of applications for waivers should be directed to the Superintendent of Schools.

FIRE, SEVERE WEATHER, AND INTRUDER DRILLS

Fire, weather alerts, and outside intruders are considered serious matters. Students and staff will participate in two fire drills, two severe weather drills, and 1 intruder drill each semester to prepare for these events.

FREE /REDUCED LUNCH

The Mount Vernon Community School District serves nutritious meals. Application forms for free/reduced lunch are available in the office and on the district website. This form must be completed by the student's parent/guardian and returned to the office. All information recorded on this application form is confidential.

GRADING SYSTEM

The letter system of grading is used at our high school. Each letter grade represents a point value that is employed when calculating a student's grade point average (GPA).

GRADE	VALUE	GRADE	VALUE
A	4.00	C-	1.67
A-	3.67	D+	1.33
B+	3.33	D	1.00
B	3.00	D-	0.67
B-	2.67	F	0.00
C+	2.33	INC	0.00
C	2.00	PASS	no value
		W	no value

An honor roll will be published at the conclusion of each grading period. Students must earn a grade point average (GPA) of 3.00 or better to be included on the honor roll list.

Evidence-Based Reporting (EBR)
ALL high school classes will use a Standards Based system called Evidence-Based Reporting (EBR). At the end of the course, students will still receive a letter grade, which will hold the same value as all other courses at MVHS.

Repeating a Course
A student who passes a course may not repeat that course for credit, unless indicated or approved by administration, but may repeat t**he same course** to earn a higher grade. If a student chooses to take an APEX course to earn credit for a previously failed course, the student may earn credit, but the APEX grade **will not** replace the grade of the failed course. The previously failed course's grade will remain on the transcript. A student may not replace an MVHS course grade with an APEX grade.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Physical Education	**2.0 credits (0.5 / year)**
Health 1	**0.5 credit**
Mathematics	**3.0 credits**
Science – must include:	**3.0 credits**
Earth 1	**0.5 credit**
Chemistry 1	**0.5 credit**
Biology	**1.0 credit**
Physics 1	**0.5 credit**
Science Elective	**0.5 credit**
Social Studies - must include:	**3.0 credits**
US History	**1.0 credit**
World History	**1.0 credit**
Political Science (Grade 12)	**0.5 credit**
Psychology or Sociology (Gr. 11 or 12)	**0.5 credit**
Language Arts – must include:	**4.0 credits**
English I	**1.0 credit**
English II	**0.5 credit**
English Electives	**2.5 credit**
Financial Literacy (Grade 11 or 12)	**0.5 credit**
Electives – must include:	**9.0 credits**

(1.0 of this elective credit must come from Fine Arts, Practical Arts or Vocational Education)

CPR Instruction

No credit awarded, but must have to graduate – usually taught during Health 1

Civics Exam (new in 2026-27)

No credit awarded, but must receive at least 60% on multiple choice civics exam to graduate

J-Term **2.0 credits (0.5 credit/year)**

All students must successfully participate every academic school year in the MVHS J-Term, when offered. The only exception is a senior who is graduating at the end of the 1st semester and not returning for 2nd semester.

Total Credits **27.0 credits**

SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED COURSES THAT MEET DAILY EARN .5 CREDIT / SEMESTER. All students are required to comply with the attendance policies set forth by the Board of Education. Failure to comply with this policy may affect a student's graduation status. Students will be allowed to participate in the graduation ceremony and in all senior activities if they are in good standing and have met or exceeded the graduation requirements set by the Board. Students are not required to participate in the graduation ceremony. Graduation requirements are subject to review for students who transfer from other school districts.

SCHOOL COUNSELING SERVICES

School counseling services are available to students in grades 9-12. The school counselor is available to help students with personal, social, academic, and career interests, including but not limited to:

- Enrollment/orientation of new students
- Class schedule changes
- Career/vocational information
- College information and admission procedures
- Financial aid information
- College entrance testing information
- Interpretation of standardized test results
- College scholarship information
- Counseling for personal issues

School counselors, Brett Karkosh & Alexis Wauford, are available from 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. daily. Phone: (319) 895-8843 or by email: bkarkosh@mvcsd.org or awauford@mvcsd.org

HATCH AMENDMENT

No student will be required, as part of any applicable program, to submit to a survey or evaluation that reveals information concerning political affiliations; mental or psychological problems potentially embarrassing to the student or family; sex behavior attitudes; illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior; critical appraisals of other family members; legally recognized privileged and analogous relationships; or income (other than that required to determine eligibility for a program) without prior consent of the student (if an adult or emancipated) or if not emancipated, without prior written consent of the parent/guardian.

HARASSMENT OR HAZING

High school policies protect staff and students from harassment under three circumstances:

- student to student harassment
- student to staff harassment
- staff to student harassment

Forms of harassment may include harassment on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, age, marital status, disability, physical appearance, political party, or sexual orientation. Harassment includes conduct of a verbal or physical nature that is designed to embarrass, distress, agitate, disturb, or trouble persons when:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of the student's participation in school programs or activities;
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by a student is used as a basis for decisions affecting

the student; or

- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with a student's performance or creating an intimidating or hostile working or learning environment. Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to:
  - Verbal, physical, or written harassment or abuse;
  - Pressure for sexual activity;
  - Repeated remarks to a person with sexual or demeaning implications; and
  - Suggesting or demanding sexual involvement, accompanied by implied or explicit threats.

Harassment based upon factors other than sex includes, but it is not limited to:

- Verbal, physical, or written harassment or abuse;
- Repeated remarks of a demeaning nature;
- Relational aggression including rumor spreading, alliance building (ganging up), secret telling, non-verbal aggression (body language, gesturing, silent treatment)
- Implied or explicit threats concerning one's grades, job, etc; and
- Demeaning jokes, stories, or activities.

Student consequences for alleged harassment will be conducted in accordance with due process procedures. If a harassment complaint is founded, common student disciplinary consequences may include:

- Verbal warning plus parental notification
- Detention
- In-school suspension
- Out-of-school suspension
- Referral to legal and/or counseling authorities
- Expulsion from school

Staff consequences for alleged harassment will be conducted in accordance with due process procedures and the district's contractual agreement. If a harassment complaint is founded, common staff consequences may include:

- Temporary suspension from teaching duties
- Required successful completion of remedial action plan
- Documentation of harassment in employee's personnel file
- Recommendation for termination of employment

HARASSMENT REPORTING PROCEDURES

A student or staff member who feels that they have been harassed at school should:

1. Communicate directly to the harasser that they expect the harassing behavior(s) to stop. If the victim of harassment is uncomfortable confronting the harasser alone, the victim should ask a teacher, counselor, or the principal for assistance.
2. If the harassment continues after step #1, give a written record of the harassment

incident to a staff member, counselor, or the principal. This documentation must include the following information:

- What, where, and when the harassment incident happened
- The name of the person alleged to have harassed someone
- The names of any witnesses to the incident
- What the harasser said and did during this incident and afterwards
- What the alleged victim said and did at the time of the harassment and afterwards
- How the harasser responded to the words or actions
- How the student felt during and after the harassment incident.

Harassment Complaint forms are available in the office and on the district website for students and staff when reporting alleged harassment incidents.

HEALTH FORMS AND IMMUNIZATION CERTIFICATES

There is no requirement for students to complete a physical to attend high school. However, to participate in athletic programs, students must have a valid Iowa Athletic Pre-Participation Physical Exam form on file with the Activities Director. This form is valid for one calendar year and must be completed by a doctor, osteopath, nurse practitioner, physician's assistant, or a chiropractor. The physical form is available on the district website and in the high school office.

Students enrolling for the first time in the district must also provide a current certificate of immunization. Exemptions from this immunization requirement are allowed by the state of Iowa for medical or religious reasons. Please consult the school nurse for more information about immunization exemptions or for any immunization questions.

STUDENTS WITH SHORT AND LONG TERM HEALTH CONDITIONS

The school nurse can provide nursing services for those students with health conditions and need medication and/or treatments during the school day. This can include asthma treatments, diabetes management, dressing changes, severe allergy management, medication administration, and other care as ordered by a doctor. Please consult the nurse for assistance with any health care needs for either a short or long term condition.

STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES

MVCSD recognizes that good health supports education. Our school health program strives to promote healthy habits, provide preventative health education, care for ill and injured students, and provide nursing services for those students needing medication and/or treatments during the school day. The school nurse also serves as a resource for any health-related information for students, families, classrooms, and the community.

It is essential that current health information is on file with the school to best assist students. This

information is provided through the registration process and can be updated with the school nurse during the school year.

School nurse, Megan Krapfl, works at both the middle and high schools and is available from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. daily. She can be contacted at: (319) 895-8843, ext. 4223, or by email: mkrapfl@mvcsd.org

ILLNESS AND INJURY

Students who become ill or injured during the school day are to come to the office to be assessed by the school nurse. If it is determined that the student is too sick to stay in school, a parent/guardian will be contacted prior to the student being allowed to leave campus. Over-the-counter medications are available in the school nurse office and may be administered with parental permission.

Every year parents/guardians are asked to provide up-to-date contact information through registration. The information provided is used to contact parents/guardians for injuries, illnesses, and in emergency situations. It is essential that parent contact information is updated with the school as it changes.

The school will contact emergency medical personnel when situations warrant. School district employees will administer emergency or minor first aid until emergency medical personnel arrive. Serious injuries will be reported to the office and an accident report will be filed.

INSURANCE

Student athletes are required to have health insurance in order to participate in extracurricular or co-curricular activities. Written proof of insurance is to be provided prior to the start of the athletic activity through the registration process on PowerSchool. Students who do not have or cannot afford insurance should contact the activities director to make arrangements for participation.

IOWA BILITERACY SEAL

Mount Vernon High School has implemented the Iowa Biliteracy Award. This honor is awarded to graduating seniors who demonstrate proficiency in English as well as another language. Many students of German and Spanish will take the online STAMP 4 Skill Assessment. This assessment tests their skills in reading, listening, writing and speaking. Students must achieve the level of Intermediate-Mid in ALL four skill levels in order to receive the award. In the past we have had a few students demonstrate their proficiency in ASL (American Sign Language) with the SLPI (Sign Language Proficiency Interview) given by the Iowa School for the Deaf (ISD). Seniors will be asked to sign up in the Spring. These assessments will typically take place during the same time that Iowa Assessments are given to 9-11th grade students in April. The cost will be determined each year. These seniors will be recognized for their outstanding achievement at the MVHS graduation and Senior Awards. Each of the seniors will wear a special cord at the graduation

ceremony and receive the Iowa Seal of Biliteracy on their transcript. Students may use this special achievement to demonstrate their proficiency to future employers or educational institutions for placement in special programs.

LIBRARY TESTING POLICY

The high school strongly recommends that all students be present for tests during regular class time. Occasionally students need to make up tests due to illness or an academic or extracurricular activity. The library is happy to offer a quiet environment for making up tests but students will be asked to follow the guidelines below:

- Students must check all smart devices at the circulation desk prior to beginning a test.
- Tests must be completed in one sitting unless otherwise specified by the teacher.
- All tests remain in the library.
    - If a teacher chooses to send a student to the library with test in hand, teacher will provide a pass with a timestamp indicating when the student left the classroom
    - Students will not be allowed to leave the library during testing to ask teachers questions. Students should complete as much of their tests as possible. If a student has questions they may place sticky notes on the test with those questions and then submit the tests to library staff. The classroom teachers will follow up with students about questions. The teacher and student will then make arrangements to complete the remainder of the test.
- Students will submit tests to the library staff.

LOCKERS

Student lockers are the property of the school district. Students are assigned lockers with combination padlocks to store their school materials and personal items needed for school. It is the responsibility of the student to keep their locker clean and undamaged. Any expenses to repair damage and/or to clean a student's locker will be charged to the student.

A student's locker may be searched whenever an administrator or staff member feels that there is a reasonable suspicion that a criminal offense or violation of a school policy, rule, or regulation had occurred and that the locker search may produce evidence of such violation.
Items found inside lockers in violation of school district policies, rules, and regulations will be confiscated. Illegal items will be turned over to law enforcement officials.

Locker inspections are conducted periodically throughout the school year. These inspections are conducted for the purpose of maintaining clean, well-kept lockers and to retrieve overdue library materials. From time to time, police dogs will be used to search for drugs, gun powder, or other contraband inside locker areas. These searches will be unannounced.

Students should report any thefts of personal items to the principal immediately. Forms are available in the office for reporting thefts at school.

LOCKER ROOMS

MVHS locker rooms are designated for students and teams to use when needed for class or an event. Locker rooms will remain locked throughout the day and are not for loitering students. Students are not allowed to eat lunch in the locker rooms. Students found in the locker room without cause will be asked to leave and are subject to administrative search and discipline.

LOST AND FOUND

A lost and found box is located in the office. Students who find items should bring them to the office. Students who lose personal items may check in the office to determine whether or not their items have been turned in. All unclaimed items will be donated.

MEDICATION

Students are not allowed to carry medication at school, including over-the-counter medication such as ibuprofen or Tylenol. Exceptions to this include asthma inhalers or Epi-Pens with parent permission on a *Self-Medication at School* Form.

Over-the-counter medication is available in the school nurse office. Parents can provide permission for the school to administer over-the-counter medications during the registration process. Students without signed parental permission will not be given medication until permission is given.

If your child requires prescription medication during the school day, the following guidelines apply:

- The medicine must be prescribed by a licensed medical provider or dentist.
- A Medication at School form is to be completed and signed by a parent/guardian and will be kept on file in the school nurse office. Forms are available in the office and online through the district website.
- The medication must be brought to school in its original container and will be labeled with the following information (pharmacies will provide an extra medication bottle labeled with the prescription information to be kept at school):
    4. Name of student
    5. Name of medication
    6. Directions for use
    7. Name of physician or dentist
    8. Name and address of pharmacy
    9. Date of prescription

- The medication, while at school, will be in a locked drawer or cabinet. When required, refrigeration will be provided.
- Students who use inhalers and/or Epi-pens for severe allergies are allowed to either carry them at school or have them kept in the school nurse office. A Self-Medication at School form must be completed and signed by the student's parent/guardian and kept on file in the school nurse

office. Forms are available in the office and online through the district website.

- Access to all medications will be under the authority of the school nurse/office personnel.
- A written record will be kept for all medications dispensed at school. This record will include: the student's name, the name of the medication, the amount of medication given, and the time it was dispensed. The person who dispenses the medication will initial the medication list form.
- All medication that is not dispensed by the end of the school year will be returned to the student's parents/guardians or destroyed. No medication will be stored at school through the summer months. If the medication is destroyed, a notation will be made on the student's health record.

OPEN ENROLLMENT

Parents who wish to transfer students from other school districts to the Mount Vernon Community School District or who wish to transfer out of our school district to another district under open enrollment provisions must contact the Superintendent's office at (319) 895-8845. Further guidance may be found at the Iowa Department of Education website: https://educate.iowa.gov/pk-12/educational-choice/open-enrollment

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Fall Semester:	Winter Semester:
October	Feb/March

PARKING/DRIVING POLICIES

Students may park in open spots designated for student parking. If the parking lot is full, students may park at the LBC in the west parking lot. Students may not park in the front circle driveway or along yellow/red curb areas or in areas designated for visitors.

Vehicles are not to be moved during the school day unless off-campus privileges have been approved. Students are not allowed to loiter in vehicles or in the truck beds of vehicles during the school day or during school-sponsored events.

Permission to drive a vehicle to school may be revoked if the safety of students is endangered or if a student repeatedly parks inappropriately.

STUDENT/STAFF PARKING PENALTIES

Violation of parking policies within the Mount Vernon High School parking lot may result in a loss of parking privileges on district property. Depending on the severity and number of violations, the discipline may result in a warning up to a permanent ban on parking privileges on district property.

Violations - A possible loss of parking privileges will be assessed for but not limited to the following:

1. Parking in the No Parking areas that are clearly marked with yellow paint on curbs, or yellow posts. This includes the driveways behind the industrial tech classrooms.

2. Parking in a designated staff parking area.
3. Parking on any grass areas.
4. Parking in the visitor spots.
5. Double parking

PAY IT FORWARD

Purpose:

- The 4 Foundations of Mustang Nation: Service Above Self
- To promote volunteerism and community service
- When it comes time for students to apply for jobs, scholarships and colleges, they will have access to a list of volunteer activities and hours.
- To be recognized at high school graduation for community service

Guidelines for Senior recognition program:

- Students will be recognized at high school graduation for reaching a goal of 160 hours
- Fill out a Pay It Forward form when volunteer hours are completed
- Hours need to be turned in within a month of the activity, summer hours by **Sep. 23.**
- No compensation or course credit can be received for the volunteer hours submitted
- Students cannot miss a scheduled class in order to earn volunteer hours (unless previously approved)
- Be sure that the form is signed by a supervising adult
- Seniors with at least 160 hours over the four years will be recognized at Senior Recognition night and given a blue cord to wear at the graduation ceremony
- Pick up forms in the high school office or print off MVHS page
- Return forms to the high school office
- Any questions? Ask Mr. Karkosh (Rm 133) or Miss Wauford (Rm 128)

Possible places to volunteer:

- Faith communities
- School
- Park and Recreation
- Humane Society
- Hospitals, Nursing homes, Free clinics
- Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts

PHYSICAL EDUCATION WAIVER

Grade 9-12 - I am requesting an exemption from PE for the following reason:

- I am enrolled in a cooperative, work-study, or other educational program authorized by the school which requires the student's absence from the school campus during the school day & have a full academic schedule both semesters. ***(Only for Seniors)***
-

- I am enrolled in the Mount Vernon High School's Marching Band which requires at least as much time of participation as 900 minutes of PE. **(9-12)**
- I am enrolled in a supervised and organized extracurricular activity sponsored by MVHS which requires at least as much time of participation as 900 minutes of PE. **(9-12)**

- *Extracurricular Activity (Sport): _____*
- ~~*I understand that to meet the Athletic Department's requirement to participate in sports I will still have to complete 2 strength & speed training sessions per week during my season outside of the school day (before school or after school). Initial here:_____*~~

Physical Education Statement/Philosophy

At Mount Vernon High School we believe physical education is just as important as any other course. We have two distinct physical education programs in place to prepare the whole person for their post secondary experiences. Helping students learn how their body works and functions is every bit as important as learning academic content. We want our students to be confident in their body while staying healthy in the workforce. While extracurriculars and other physical activities are helping students stay fit in the present, they are not teaching students the strategies to maintain physical fitness in the future. By choosing the PE waiver over MVHS programs, we believe students will be missing out on a large part of our educational programming.

I understand no credit will be earned if the waiver from PE is approved. If a PE waiver is utilized and the student does not participate and finish the season in good standing (quits or drops), I understand the PE requirement must be made up to fulfill graduation requirements.

- PE cannot be added after the drop/add deadline.
- A waiver cannot be put into place after the drop period.
- If a student wants to drop PE after the drop period, the student will receive an F.

POSTERS

Students who wish to post or distribute information must receive prior permission from the principal. This policy applies whether or not the posted and/or distributed information deals with school-sponsored or non-school-sponsored activities.

SCHOLARSHIPS AND STUDENT RECOGNITION

Mount Vernon High School has many ways to recognize its students who excel academically. The following recognition opportunities are available to all high school students:

- Honor Roll - lists all students by grade level with a 3.0 GPA or better at the end of each semester
- Graduating with Distinction (3.50-3.69) - Maroon & White Cord
- Graduating with Honors (3.7-3.89) - Gold Cord
- Graduation with Highest Honors (3.9-4.0) - Medal

Senior Scholarships: Multiple local scholarships were awarded during the 2026 Senior Awards Ceremony and may be available for the Class of 2027. Individual recipients are determined either by the local organization's membership or by a scholarship committee composed of high school staff and the principal.

Honor Society: Mount Vernon High School honors students by following the National Honor Society Standards. The National Honor Society is intended to honor only the top students from every class. Students are eligible based on their first four semesters of high school. Applications will be accepted from MVHS juniors and seniors. The following qualifications must be included on the Mustang Chapter of the National Honor Society application:

- Eligibility will first be determined by students who have a minimum of a 3.5 GPA and 35 documented community-impact volunteer hours.
- Students who meet the "3.5/35" qualification will be required to submit a Mustang Chapter of the National Honor Society application. Students must show documentation in all four of the Foundations of Mustang Nation.
    - **Just Be Here**: Get Involved: Students will list their participation in all MVHS extra-curricular/co-curricular activities and clubs.
    - **Excellence in the Arena:** Students will list all awards, recognitions, and honors. Students must also document all leadership experiences while at MVHS.
    - **Service above Self:** Students will list all volunteer and community service experiences within 30 days of completing the service activity. Summer volunteer hours need to be turned in by Sep 23.
        - While all hours may be listed, the student must find volunteer opportunities to directly impact the greater good of society. We encourage students to move out of their comfort zone and impact the community rather than just a neighbor or a friend. Before setting up volunteer experiences, it is suggested the students check with the counselor or administration to see if the volunteer experience will be considered as a community impact volunteer hour. We would like 21 out of the 35 hours to be community impact hours (60%).
    - **Champions in Life**: Students will submit a minimum of a 500 word essay describing in detail how their extracurricular/co-curricular activities and volunteerism have shaped their character. Students will also describe characteristics about themselves and other activities for the selection committee to consider.
- The applications will be submitted to a five member Honor Society Board by **Sep. 25, 2026**. The five member board will compile the information and distribute it to MVHS faculty. All members of the MVHS faculty will have the opportunity to comment regarding each applicant's integrity, professionalism, work ethic, treatment of others, attendance, and classroom behavior.
- Based on the application and faculty comments, the five member board will vote on induction into the Mustang Chapter of the National Honor Society. Applicants will be notified via mail no later than **Oct. 30, 2026.**
- If an applicant does not meet qualifications or isn't inducted during the junior year, he/she will be eligible to reapply during his/her senior year.

SEARCHES

School officials reserve the right to search an individual, his/her vehicle, personal belongings, and

anything located on school grounds or at school events, including but not limited to personal electronic devices, whenever the search is reasonably necessary to maintain order, discipline, health or safety. All such searches shall be based upon reasonable individualized suspicion that the individual subject to search has violated or is violating either the law or the rules of the school, and shall be conducted when school officials are in possession of concrete, objective and clearly expressed facts which may be based upon reliable information or personal observation. All searches shall be conducted in the most minimally intrusive manner possible, shall be limited to the objectives of the search and not be excessively intrusive in the light of the age and sex of the student and the nature of the infraction.

SELECTIVE SERVICE REGISTRATION

All male citizens of the United States and aliens residing within the United States or its territories must register with the Selective Service office within a period starting thirty (30) days before and ending thirty (30) days after their eighteenth (18^{th}) birthday. Students may register at the post office, by mail, or on-line.

STUDENT COUNCIL

The purposes of the Mount Vernon Student Council are to promote better relations between administration, staff, and the student body and to foster better citizenship and school spirit throughout our school. Student Council provides an effective method through which students may communicate with administration and staff. The following Student Council officers are elected each year:

- Senior class representatives (number of representatives is TBD each year)
- Junior class representatives (number of representatives is TBD each year)
- Sophomore class representatives (number of representatives is TBD each year)
- Freshman class representatives (number of representatives is TBD each year)

STUDENT RECORDS

The Mount Vernon Community School District will release school information in accordance with the Iowa Code 622.10. In order to facilitate educational planning, educational records are kept on each student attending the high school. The custodian of these records is the Board secretary and building principal. Questions regarding student records should be directed to the principal's office. These records include information about the student and the student's education and may include but are not limited to the following types of records:

- identification data
- attendance data
- records of achievement
- family background information
- aptitude assessments
- achievement tests

- educational and vocational plans
- honors and school activities
- discipline data
- objective counselor/staff ratings and observations
- outside agency reports

The Board recognizes the importance of maintaining records and preserving their confidentiality. Student records containing personally identifiable information will be handled confidentially at the collection, storage, disclosure, and destruction stages.

Directory-type information from a student's educational records may be released without the consent of the parents. Parents will have an opportunity at the beginning of the school year to request that directory-type information remain confidential. Parents can make this request by completing and signing a confidentiality request form in the office. Directory-type information includes, but is not limited to:

- student's name and address
- student's home telephone number
- student's date and place of birth
- student's participation in sports and activities
- student's dates of school attendance
- awards received by the student
- name of previous schools and/or institutions attended

Student records are periodically reviewed and outdated information is removed. These record reviews will occur whenever a student moves from elementary school to middle school, from middle school to high school, or transfers from our district. Student records that are not of permanent importance are destroyed within three (3) years of high school graduation or the last date of school attendance.

Parents/guardians and eligible students will have access to the student's records during the regular business hours of the school district. An eligible student is a student who is eighteen years of age or is attending a post-secondary school as a full-time student. Parents/guardians of an eligible student may only review the student's school records with the written permission of the eligible student. Parents/guardians of an eligible student who is a dependent as defined by the Internal Revenue Code, will be granted access to school records without written permission of the eligible student. A representative of the parents or eligible student, who has received written permission from parents or the eligible student may inspect and review the records of a special education student. Parents may only be denied access to a student's records with a court order or when the district has been advised under law that the parents may not access the student's records.

A student record may contain information on more than one student. Parents/guardians have the right to access the information related to their student or to be informed of the information.

Eligible students also retain these same rights.

Parents/guardians and eligible students have the right to access the student's records upon request without unnecessary delay and in no instance, more than forty-five (45) days after the initial request for a records review has been made. Parents/guardians, the eligible student, or an authorized representative will have the right to access the student's records prior to an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) meeting or hearing.

Upon the request of parents/guardians or an eligible student, the school district will provide an explanation and interpretation of the student record and a list or types and locations of student records collected, maintained, or used.

If the parents/guardians or eligible student believes that the information contained within the student records is inaccurate, misleading, or violates the privacy or other rights of the student any of these parties may request that the school district amend the student records. If the school district agrees to make the amendment, the district will make the amendment and inform the parents/guardians or eligible student of this decision in writing. If the school district refuses to make the requested amendment, the district will inform the parents/guardians or the eligible student of their right to a hearing. If the parent's/guardian's or eligible student's amendment is further denied, any of these parties will have the opportunity to place an explanatory letter inside the student record commenting on the school district's decision and setting forth the reasoning for disagreeing with the school district. Additions to the student's record will become a part of the student's educational records and will be maintained as all other school records. If the school district discloses the student's school records, this letter of explanation by parents/guardians will also be disclosed.

Student records may be disclosed in limited circumstances without parent's/guardian's or eligible student's written permission. This disclosure is made on the condition that the student record information will not be shared with a third party without written permission of the parents/guardians or eligible student. This type of limited disclosure may be made to the following individuals or under the circumstances listed below:

- to school officials within the school district whom the superintendent has determined have a legitimate educational interest;
- to school officials from another school district in which the student wishes to enroll, provided the other district notifies the parents/guardians the records are being sent and that the parents/guardians have an opportunity to receive a copy of the records and to challenge the contents of the records;
- to the U.S. Comptroller General, the U.S. Secretary of Education, or state/local educational authorities;
- in connection with financial aid for which the student has applied or received if this information is necessary;
- to organizations conducting educational studies and the study does not release personally identifiable information;

- to accrediting organizations;
- to parents/guardians of a dependent student as defined in the Internal Revenue Code;
- to comply with a court order or judicially issued subpoena, only if the district makes reasonable effort to notify the parent/guardian or eligible student of the order or subpoena in advance of compliance;
- in connection with a health or safety emergency or as directory information.

The superintendent will maintain a list of the individuals and their positions who are authorized to view a special education student's records without the permission of the parents/guardians or eligible student. This list will be updated annually and be available for public inspection. Permanent student records, including a student's name, address, phone number, grades, attendance record, classes attended, grade level completed, and year completed will be maintained without time limit. Permanent student records must be kept in a fire safe vault.

When personally identifiable information, other than permanent student records, no longer needs to be maintained by the school district to provide educational services to the special education student, the parents/guardian or eligible student will be notified. If the parents/guardians or eligible student request that the records be destroyed, the school district must destroy the records. Prior to the destruction of the records, the school district must inform the parents/guardians or eligible student of the reasons for which they may want the records maintained. In the absence of parent's/guardian's or eligible student's request to destroy the records, the school district may maintain the records indefinitely.

It will be the responsibility of the superintendent to inform employees about parents'/guardians' or eligible student's rights under this policy. Employees will also be informed about the procedures for carrying out this policy. It is the responsibility of the superintendent to annually notify parents/guardians or eligible students of their rights to view the student's records. The notice will be provided in the parent's/guardian's or eligible student's native language.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Mount Vernon High School and the Mount Vernon Community School District participate in the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act. This act provides funding to schools and communities to provide substance abuse programs. It is the policy of the Mount Vernon Schools to be tobacco, drug and alcohol free. Our district supports a non-use policy for tobacco, drugs, or alcohol. No student in the Mount Vernon Schools may unlawfully manufacture, distribute, dispense, possess, or use in school or at a school-sponsored activity any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana, alcohol, tobacco, vape/imitation substance, or any other controlled substance as defined by federal or state law.

When students are referred to the office for suspected use/possession of tobacco, other nicotine products, non-nicotine vaping products/devices, alcohol, and/or a controlled substance or imitation controlled substance at school, on school grounds, and/or during school sponsored events (both on

and off our campus), the following procedures will be followed:

1. The student will be interviewed about the observations leading to the suspicions about tobacco, alcohol, and/or drug use or possession.

2. Assessments of physical condition (i.e. redness of eyes, pupil size, alertness), coordination, odor, and short term memory will be conducted by the assistant principal or other trained personnel.

3. If these assessments (or other factors/evidences) point to suspected use/possession of tobacco, alcohol or controlled substance use/possession, a search of the student's person and their belongings (i.e. bookbag, locker, vehicle, etc.) for items related to tobacco, alcohol, and/ or drug use/possession (i.e. bottles, pipes, lighters, baggies, etc.) will be conducted.

4. If the results of this search show convincingly that tobacco, alcohol, and/or drugs were used/possessed or the student voluntarily admits to use/possession, parents will be contacted and advised of the matter and requested to come to the school. If police involvement is appropriate, parents will be advised at this time.

5. If items related to possible alcohol use/possession are found during this search or if the student fails the assessments in step #2 above, the police may be contacted to conduct assessments which may include but not be limited to an intoximeter (breathalyzer) exam. The results of the intoximeter assessment will be used to enforce school disciplinary and good conduct consequences. Legal consequences may also result from the intoximeter results. If items related to possible controlled substance use/possession are found during this search or if the student fails the assessments in step #2 above, the police will be contacted and the school disciplinary and good conduct consequences will be applied. Legal charges may be filed based upon the results of the police investigation.

A student may be reinstated in classes immediately if an independent drug screening (i.e. urine analysis) is completed at the student's expense within 24 hours. The student may remain in class for up to five (5) school days while waiting for a written copy of the screening results to be submitted to the principal. If no written results are submitted within five (5) school days, the student's previous school consequences will immediately resume.

If the screening results are submitted in writing within five (5) school days and the results are negative for substance use, the student will be permanently reinstated, the school record will be corrected, and the parents will be reimbursed for the cost of the drug screening, if requested. If the results are positive for an illegal substance, the balance of school consequences will be immediately enforced and the student will be required to satisfactorily participate in an approved substance abuse education/treatment program prior to returning to school.

The Mount Vernon Community School District is committed to assisting students who may have an issue with substance abuse. In addition to disciplinary actions that may accompany the use, possession, or transfer of illegal substances on school grounds or during any school related activities, the District may take the following steps to address the concern:

First Offense

1. After the student is found to not be in compliance with substance use policy the student will:

- Meet with either school counselor or school nurse and complete the SBIRT assessment.
- School staff will also engage in conversation with the students about substance use using motivational interviewing tools
- Results of assessment will be shared with the student and students' parents/guardian.

2. The student will be suspended from school for a period of up to ten days, with a possible recommendation for expulsion depending on the details of the situation.

3. The student will be required to attend a four hour Prime for Life Training (PRI), facilitated by the staff of the Drug Free Coalition. If the student refuses to engage in the PRI session, the student may face additional disciplinary consequences up to a recommendation for expulsion, and will not be eligible for a reduction of any consequences related to the Good Conduct policy.

4. Depending on staff availability, the student may attend the PRI training during the suspension period.

- If the staff is unavailable to provide training during the suspension, the student will complete the training during school hours within five days of the offenses.

5. The Student will be suspended from extracurricular activities as outlined in the Good Conduct policy that is part of this student handbook. However, the student may be eligible for possible reductions in the length of consequences related to the Good Conduct policy if partaking fully in treatment and prevention interventions.

Second Offense

1. After the student is found to not be in compliance with substance use policy the student will:

- Meet with either the school counselor or school nurse and complete the SBIRT assessment (2nd SBIRT needed only if violations are several months apart)
- School staff will also engage in conversation about substance use using motivational interviewing tools.
- Results of the assessment will be shared with the student and the students' parent/guardian.

2. The student will be suspended from school for a period of up to ten days, with a possible recommendation for expulsion depending on the details of the situation.

3. The Student will be suspended from extracurricular activities as outlined in the Good Conduct policy that is part of this student handbook.

If the student completes a substance abuse evaluation from a licensed Chemical Abuse Dependence Counselor (CADC), and completes the recommend counseling from CADC evaluation, the District will consider lessening the length of the school and extracurricular suspensions as long as the student and parent/guardian actively engage in the process, and are genuinely committed to engaging in the counseling process.

Offenses Beyond A Second Offense

Any substance abuse related offense beyond a second offense may result in the assignment of significant disciplinary consequences, while the district administrative team will work with the student and family to determine what level of counseling intervention may be appropriate to address the concern.

MESSAGES / TELEPHONE USE – OFFICE

Emergency telephone messages will be delivered immediately to students. Non-emergency messages will be delivered to students between classes. The telephone in the office is a business line and may be used by students only with permission of office staff.

THEFT

MVHS provides lockers with padlocks for academic use. The P.E. department provides locks for each student currently enrolled in P.E. To prevent theft, it is highly recommended that students place valuables in a locked locker. Unfortunately, theft does happen & the best prevention is keeping valuables locked. If you have something stolen, fill out the theft report found in the main office. You also have the option of reporting the incident to local law enforcement. Administration is committed to working with MVHS students to minimize theft incidents.

TRANSCRIPTS

Students who wish to have transcripts sent to colleges for admissions purposes should contact the office. Students must give permission before a transcript may be released. It is the responsibility of seniors to notify the registrar prior to the graduation ceremony where their final transcript should be sent.

USE OF THE BUILDING

School groups wishing to reserve a room at the high school should contact the Activities Director at least one week in advance of the intended meeting date. Use of district buildings/rooms will be considered for only non-profit, non-school groups as space allows.

Students are not permitted to use rooms in the high school after 4:00 p.m. without faculty supervision. Keys to our building are never issued to students.

The coordination of school events (i.e. dances, athletic contests, concerts, etc.) and the approval for room reservations will be determined so that potential conflicts are anticipated and eliminated. School facilities may also be rented to non-school organizations through the Activities Director.

VENDING MACHINES

Vending machines are available for student use in the north hallway of the high school outside the gymnasium.

VISITORS

Mount Vernon High School welcomes our alumni and guests of our students. All visitors must check-in at the office on arrival, notify office personnel of their presence, and wear a visitor name tag during their visit.

High school-aged guests of our students *must have prior approval* before visiting and must sign in, listing their name and host student's name. Guests must follow their host student throughout their school day and may not transfer to shadow other students without permission from the principal. Student guests will not be permitted during the last two weeks of either semester or during final exam days.

Parents/guardians are always welcome to visit our school. Parents should check-in at the office prior to visiting a classroom.

WEAPONS POLICY

The board believes weapons, other dangerous objects and look-alikes in school district facilities cause material and substantial disruption to the school environment or present a threat to the health and safety of students, employees and visitors on the school district premises or property within the jurisdiction of the school district.

School district facilities are not an appropriate place for weapons, dangerous objects and look-alikes. Weapons and other dangerous objects and look-alikes will be taken from students and others who bring them onto the school district property or onto property within the jurisdiction of the

school district or from students who are within the control of the school district.

Parents of students found to possess weapons, dangerous objects or look-a-likes on school property are notified of the incident. Possession or confiscation of weapons or dangerous objects may be reported to law enforcement officials, and students may be subject to additional disciplinary consequences including out-of-school suspension and expulsion.

Students bringing firearms to school or knowingly possessing firearms at school will be expelled for not less than one year. The superintendent has the authority to recommend this expulsion requirement be modified for students on a case-by-case basis. For purposes of this portion of this policy, the term "firearm" includes, but is not limited to, any weapon which is designed to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive, the frame or receiver of any such weapon, a muffler or silencer for such a weapon, or any explosive, incendiary or poison gas. Confiscation of a firearm will be reported to law enforcement officials.

Weapons under the control of law enforcement officials are exempt from this policy. The principal may allow authorized persons to display weapons, other dangerous objects or look-alikes for educational purposes. Such a display will also be exempt from this policy. Upon request by an administrator, the weapons used as a part of an educational presentation will be stored in the office when the weapons are not being displayed.

WITHDRAWAL FROM SCHOOL

The school district will transfer a student's educational records to a new school district upon receipt of a written request for the student's records from the new school. Parental consent is not necessary to forward student records to a new school or for our school district to request records from a new student's previous school.

If a student wishes to withdraw from our school district, the parent/guardian should inform their student's counselor or principal. The student must return their textbooks and other school materials (i.e. library books, athletic uniforms, etc.) prior to leaving our school. Staff will record grades in progress on the student's check-out form at the time that textbooks are returned by the student. This check-out form will be filed in the office as written documentation of the student's proper withdrawal from the Mount Vernon Community School District.

The Mount Vernon Community School District will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status (for programs), socioeconomic status (for programs), disability, religion, and creed. Students, parents, employees and others doing business with or performing services with the district who feel that they have experienced discrimination are encouraged to contact Matt Thede, Equity Coordinator, Mount Vernon Community High School, 731 Palisades Road SW, Mount Vernon, IA 52314, telephone: 319-895-8843 x4005, where our district has a grievance procedure for processing complaints of discrimination. Inquiries may also be directed in writing to the Director of Civil Rights – Region VII, US Department of Education,; 310 W. Wisconsin Ave.; Suite 800; Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53203-2292 (phone: 414-291-1111) or to the Iowa Department of Education; Grimes State Office Building; Des Moines, Iowa, 50319-0146 (phone: 515-281-5294).