Vestaburg Community School



Staff Handbook 2026-2027

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FOREWORD

This handbook was developed to answer many of the commonly asked questions that staff members may have during the course of an academic year. The handbook contains information about staff rights and responsibilities. Each staff member is responsible for knowing its contents. Please take the time to become familiar with the following information and keep the handbook available for your reference. It can be a valuable resource during the academic year and a means to avoid confusion and misunderstanding when questions arise. Should you have any questions that are not addressed in this handbook, contact your building Principal. This handbook supersedes all prior handbooks and other written or oral statements regarding any item in this handbook.

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION - WHO WE ARE

WELCOME

On behalf of the entire Vestaburg Community School family, we extend a warm welcome to you. Whether you are a new member joining our team or a returning colleague, we are incredibly grateful for your dedication and commitment to our students and community. This Staff Handbook is designed to be a comprehensive and accessible resource, providing you with essential information, guidelines, and policies that underpin our daily operations and shared values. It serves as a guide to help you navigate your role effectively, understand our expectations, and access the support available to you. We believe that a well-informed and supported staff is key to fostering an exceptional learning environment, and we are excited to embark on this journey of collaboration and success with you. Thank you for being an integral part of Vestaburg Community School's mission to inspire and empower every student

1.1 Our Vision and Mission

The Vision of Vestaburg Community School is to empower all to create and achieve their goals and dreams.

The Mission of Vestaburg Community School is to build a foundation and prepare students for their future.

1.2 The team

Board of Education

Mr. Lynn Van Sickler	President
Mrs. Joann Spry-Virgo	Vice President
Mrs. Renae Caudill	Secretary
Mr. Brian Zinn	Treasurer
Mr. Larry Koutz	Trustee
Mrs. Carol Herman	Trustee
Mr. Daryl DeVerney	Trustee

Board of Education meetings are normally scheduled the second Monday of each month at 6 p.m. in the Wolverine Den.

BOARD POLICIES:

Vestaburg Community School is a NEOLA Policy District. All Board of Education policies can be found on the school website at **www.vcs-k12.net** under the Board of Education tab. Staff is expected to follow all board policies.

TITLE IX

It is the policy of this District is to not discriminate on the basis of sex (including sexual orientation or gender identity), in its education programs or activities, and is required by Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, and its implementing regulations, not to discriminate in such a manner. The requirement not to discriminate in its education program or activity extends to admission and employment. The Board is committed to maintaining an education and work environment that is free from discrimination based on sex, including sexual harassment.

The Board prohibits Sexual Harassment that occurs within its education programs and activities. When the District has actual knowledge of Sexual Harassment in its education program or activity against a person in the United States, it shall promptly respond in a manner that is not deliberately indifferent.

Pursuant to its Title IX obligations, the Board is committed to eliminating Sexual Harassment and will take appropriate action when an individual is determined responsible for violating this

policy. Board employees, students, third-party vendors and contractors, guests, and other members of the School District community who commit Sexual Harassment are subject to the full range of disciplinary sanctions set forth in this policy. The Board will provide persons who have experienced Sexual Harassment ongoing remedies as reasonably necessary to restore or preserve access to the District's education programs and activities.

The Board of Education designates and authorizes the following individual(s) to oversee and coordinate its efforts to comply with Title IX and its implementing regulations:

Ms. Kristine Lance
Vestaburg MS/HS Principal
989-268-5343
7188 Avenue B.
Vestaburg, MI 48891
klance@vcs-k12.net

Mr. Ty Warczinsky
Vestaburg MS/HS Dean of Students/Athletic Director
989-268-5343
7188 Avenue B.
Vestaburg, MI 48891
twarczinsky@vcs-k12.net

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Staff	Position	Ext.	Email
Brandon Hubbard	Superintendent/Alternative Education Director	2152	bhubbard@vcs-k12.net
Kristine Lance	K-12 Principal	2169	klance@vcs-k12.net
Ty Warczinsky	K-12 Assistant Principal	2153	twarczinsky@vcs-k12.net
Katie Bissell	Special Ed Coordinator and Elementary Program Director	2259	kbissell@vcs-k12.net
Zach Bissell	Curriculum/Athletic Director		zbissell@vcs-k12.net
Ken Tiesworth	Technology Director	2168	ktiesworth@vcs-k12.net
Ken Carll	Director of Operations	4150	kcarll@vcs-k12.net
Laura Kimball	Food Service Director	2195	lkimball@vcs-k12.net
MAISD	Business Management	3152	ckaufman@-maisd.net
Karen Grover	Central Office Administrative Assistant	3150	kgrover@vcs-k12.net

Christina Hartman	Payroll Assistant	1153	chartman@vcs-k12.net
Megan Latham	Accounts Payroll	3151	mlatham@vcs-k12.net
Gretchen Verhaar	6-12 Administrative Assistant	2150	gverhaar@vcs-k12.net
Ashley Artnz	PreK-5 Administrative Assistant	1151	arrntz@vcs-k12.net

HOURS OF OPERATION		Phone	Fax
Bus Garage	6:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.	989-268-5255	989-268-5246
Central Office	7:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.	989-268-5353	989-268-5246
Elementary Office	7:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.	989-268-5284	989-268-5898
Kitchen	6:45 a.m. - 1:45 p.m.	989-268-5353	989-268-5246
MS/High School Office	7:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.	989-268-5343	989-268-5898
Success VCS -Vestaburg Alt. Ed.	7:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.	989-268-6000	
Success VCS- Godwin Heights Alt Ed	7:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.	616-226-3812	

SECTION 2: EMPLOYMENT FORMS/ONBOARDING TASKLIST

2.1 New Employees

All new employees are required to complete and submit the following forms and training. Be advised that employees will be expected to use the onboarding system located in Frontline. New Employees need to work with Mrs. Karen Grover.

- ☐ Complete VCS Employee Paperwork
  - ☐ 403 Availability and Vendors
  - ☐ Basic Enrollment
  - ☐ Blue Cross Blue Shield Enrollment - Administrators only
  - ☐ Civil or Criminal Offense
  - ☐ Criminal Check/Conviction
  - ☐ Direct Deposit
  - ☐ Directory Information

- ☐ Electronic Use/Acceptable Use
- ☐ Foundation
- ☐ I-9 Employment Eligibility Verification
- ☐ Live Scan
- ☐ Past Employer Misconduct Release
- ☐ Fingerprinting release
- ☐ Annuity Information
- ☐ Waiver of Health Insurance
- ☐ Complete the Background Check/
- ☐ W-4
- ☐ State of Michigan New Hire
- ☐ ORS Retirement
- ☐ ORS Beneficiary
- ☐ 403 Availability and Vendors
- ☐ Copy of Driver's License
- ☐ Copy of Social Security
- ☐ REP Authorization
- ☐ Staff Emergency Medical Authorization
- ☐ I-9 Employment Eligibility Verification Form
- ☐ Concussion Awareness

- ☐ Be approved by the VCS Board of Education
- ☐ Set Training Schedule with Center Director.
- ☐ Complete Vector Training - (bloodborne, sexual harassment, concussion, etc)

☐ Sign Contract

☐ **Certified Staff:**

- ☐ Highly Qualified (Teachers)
- ☐ Teaching Certificate
- ☐ Transcripts
- ☐ Retirement Enrollment Form
- ☐ Retirement Beneficiary Form
- ☐ Payroll Disbursement/Salary Options Form
- ☐ Medical Opt Out Form

2.2 All Employees Need

- ☐ Email Addresses
- ☐ Frontline Account
- ☐ Edgenuity Account

- PowerSchool* Login
- NWEA Access
- Laptop/Chromebook
- Keys to Room/Assigned Area
- School Safety Training

SECTION 3: TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

3.1 Probationary and Tenure

Probationary Period

Typically, teachers hired on or after July 19, 2011, must serve an initial five-year probationary period and receive an "effective" or "highly effective" evaluation rating on their three most recent performance evaluations to acquire tenure. This five-year probationary period may be reduced to four years if a teacher is rated "highly effective" on three consecutive annual year-end performance evaluations. If a teacher previously acquired tenure with another Michigan public school district, the probationary period is two years, unless reduced in duration or waived to allow immediate tenure.

School officials must accurately compute the probationary period and apply the correct timelines for nonrenewal. Different timelines apply depending on a teacher's hire date or if a lengthy leave of absence or layoff interrupts the probationary period. We recommend that school officials create and monitor a chart that identifies each teacher's hire date, status as a previously tenured teacher, annual performance evaluation ratings, and expected date for acquiring tenure.

The Teachers' Tenure Act states that "before the end of each school year, the controlling board shall provide the probationary teacher with a definite written statement as to whether or not his or her work has been effective." The Michigan Supreme Court has established June 30 as the uniform date for the end of the school year for Tenure Act purposes. But for a teacher hired after the start of a school year, the teacher's hire date (known as the "anniversary date") defines the end of the probationary period, which is measured in "full school years."

For a probationary teacher who previously acquired tenure in another Michigan public school district and is on the two-year probationary cycle, the teacher must receive a nonrenewal notice at least 60 days before the end of the probationary period (i.e., May 1 or 60 days before the anniversary date). The board must authorize the nonrenewal, and the nonrenewal notice must come from the board. For all other probationary teachers, the teacher must receive the nonrenewal notice at least 15 days before the end of the school year (i.e., June 15 or 15 days before the anniversary date).

Tenure

The legal definition is simple: tenure provides those teachers who have demonstrated competence after a probationary period with due process rights before being fired. It is not, as critics contend, a guaranteed job for life.

Support Staff

Staff that is not eligible for tenure. Typically, hourly or non-certified staff. Groups and classifications recognized by VESPA:

1. Bus Drivers
2. Food Service
3. Maintenance
4. Paraprofessionals
5. Administrative Assistants
6. Alternative Education Employees
7. Transportation Dispatcher
8. Academic/Behavioral Interventionist
9. Preschool Associate Teacher (with CDA)

EXCLUDING: Not part of the VESPA bargaining unit.

1. All Administrative and supervisory personnel
2. Executive Administrative Assistants
3. Bookkeeper
4. Substitutes
5. All other personnel employed by the Board including students.

All Staff should become familiar with their bargaining unit agreements and contracts. Teachers are under the Vestaburg Education Association Agreement (VEA) and support staff is under the Vestaburg Education Support Personnel Agreement (VESPA)

SECTION 4: PAYROLL

4.1 Payment Schedule

Employees are paid twice a month, generally on the 7th and 22nd (or the Monday/Friday closest to these dates)

4.2 Wages

Wages vary from employee to employee and are based on the level of skill, experience, and position. Please refer to your bargaining unit agreement for salary scales.

4.4 Unemployment:

Employees rendered unemployed through no fault of their own or due to circumstances prescribed by law, and who meet the State eligibility requirements for time worked or wages earned, may receive unemployment insurance (also called unemployment benefits or compensation). State agencies directly administer this insurance and determine benefit eligibility, amount (if any), and duration.

4.5 Workers' Compensation

Workers' Compensation laws compensate for accidental injuries, death, and occupational disabilities suffered in the course of employment. The Employer provides Workers' Compensation Insurance for all employees. Generally, this includes lost wages, disability payments, and hospital, medica,l and surgical expenses (paid directly to hospital/physician) and assistance for injured employees in returning to suitable employment.

4.6 Social Security Benefits (FICA)

Both employees and the Employer contribute funds to the federal Social Security Program as prescribed by law, providing retirees with benefit payments and medical coverage where applicable.

4.4 Deductions & Garnishment

Deductions: Federal and state law require that we deduct the following from every paycheck:

· Social Security

· Income tax (federal and state)

· Medicare

· State Disability Insurance & Family Temporary Disability Insurance · Other deductions required by law or requested by the employee

A Wage and Tax Statement (W-2) recording the previous year's wages and deductions will be provided at the beginning of each calendar year. If at any time you wish to adjust your income tax withholding, please fill out the designated form and submit it to HR.

Human Resource Contact:

Karen Grover

kgrover@vcs-k12.net

989-268-5353

Payroll Contact:

Christina Hartman

chartman@vcs-k12.net

989-268-5353

Paystubs & W2 Information can be found under *Staff Links* on our district website: vcs-k12.net

HR can provide login information when requested.

SECTION 5: RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 Equal Opportunity Employment Policy

The Employer provides equal employment opportunities to all applicants, without regard to unlawful considerations of or discrimination against race, religion, creed, color, nationality, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, ancestry, physical or mental disability, medical condition or characteristics, marital status, or any other classification prohibited by applicable local, state or federal laws. This policy is applicable to hiring, termination, and promotion; compensation; schedules and job assignments; discipline; training; working conditions, and all other aspects of employment. As an employee, you are expected to honor this policy and to take an active role in keeping harassment and discrimination out of the workplace.

5.2 Accommodation for Disabled Employees

We are happy to work with otherwise qualified disabled employees in order to accommodate limitations, in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). It is up to the employee to approach his or her supervisor with this request and to provide medical proof of his or her needs upon the Employer's request. We are also happy to accommodate employees diagnosed with life-threatening illnesses. Such employees are welcome to maintain a normal work schedule if they so desire, provided that we receive medical papers proving their work cannot harm themselves or others and their work remains at acceptable standards.

5.3 Employment of Relatives

The employment of relatives can prove problematic, particularly in situations where relatives share a department or a hierarchical relationship. The Employer will not hire relatives to work in any potentially disruptive situation. An employee must inform us if he or she becomes a co-worker's relative. If at any time we perceive the situation to be dysfunctional, we may have to reassign or ask for one relative's resignation in order to remedy the situation.

5.4 Religion & Politics

Vestaburg Community School is respectful of all employees' religious affiliations and political views. We ask that if you choose to participate in political action, you do not associate with the District in any way. Our primary duty as educators is to provide a balanced and impartial education to our students. It's crucial that we create a space where all students feel safe and respected, regardless of their personal beliefs or backgrounds. Therefore, I want to underscore the importance of maintaining neutrality on political matters during our interactions with students.

Please keep the following points in mind:

1. **Focus on Curriculum**: Our discussions and teachings should revolve around the curriculum and educational standards. While encouraging critical thinking and open dialogue is essential, we must ensure that our personal political views do not influence the content or direction of these conversations.
2. **Respect for Diversity**: Our classrooms are diverse, with students from various cultural, social, and political backgrounds. By refraining from sharing our personal political views, we respect this diversity and avoid creating an environment where students might feel alienated or judged.
3. **Encouraging Independent Thought**: One of our key objectives is to help students develop their own informed opinions. By not disclosing our political views, we allow students to explore different perspectives and form their own conclusions based on evidence and critical analysis.
4. **Professionalism**: As educators, we serve as role models for our students. Professionalism involves maintaining a clear boundary between our personal beliefs and our professional responsibilities. This approach helps preserve the integrity of our educational mission.

Mayer v Monroe County Schools (CA7, 2007)

- ***Teachers have no constitutional right to express personal views in the classroom.***

If you have any doubts about whether you should be saying something, then DON'T DO IT!

5.5 Private Information/Confidentiality

Employee information is considered to be private and is only accessed on a need-to-know basis. Your healthcare information is completely confidential unless you choose to share it. Personnel files and payroll records are confidential and may only be accessed for legitimate reasons. If you wish to view your files, you must set up an appointment in advance with Human Resources. You may only make photocopies of documents bearing your signature, and written authorization is

needed to remove a file from the Employer's premises. You may not alter your files, although you may add comments to items of dispute.

5.A. Confidentiality: Very Important!! Different issues arise regarding students. Information should be kept confidential and only disclosed to individuals who are directly connected to a student's situation. Please keep in mind and trust that if the Administration has not shared something with you that there is a reason, and that it most likely cannot be shared! **Staff must have permission to post or use photos of any student prior to posting or using the image.** As a staff member, it is important that you are reminded of the importance of the following two Federal Laws:

5.A.1. Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) - Federal Law protects the privacy of student education records. Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. Education Records include any information that is specific to that student that cannot be found or considered directory information.

5.A.2. Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPAA) - Prohibits covered entities from disclosing protected health information (PHI) to any third parties, unless the individual who is the subject of the information (or the individual's personal representative) authorizes it in writing or the rule otherwise permits the disclosure.

*For more information visit: Understanding HIPPA-FERPA

5.6 Teacher Certification Update:

Teachers are responsible for continued certification, a highly qualified status, and ensuring that their certification is up to date. All courses and copies of certificates are to be turned into the Central Office and kept in employee personnel files.

5.7 Classroom Presence / Liability

Do not leave your classroom or assigned area unattended for any reason. If there is an emergency, call the office, have a student come to the office for help, and/or have a neighboring teacher cover both classes. It is critical and expected that staff will inform the office of the need to be out of the classroom. If you leave your classroom at any time, please remember to lock your door. Failure to follow this expectation will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

5.8 Staff E-Mail

Staff are asked to check their Vestaburg Community School e-mail a minimum of once before and after school. A lot of information is shared via email, and it is your responsibility to stay up on your email and ensure that you know what is communicated. Also, email is for school business, and staff needs to refrain from posting/sending emails regarding personal information.

Please keep in mind that under the Freedom of Information Act, most emails are considered public information and can be requested at any time by anyone. General Rule: Do not put anything in an email that you do not want everyone to see or read!

5.9 Child Abuse and/or Neglect:

Each professional staff member employed by this District who has reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or neglect shall be responsible for reporting immediately every case, whether ascertained or suspected, of abuse or neglect resulting in physical or mental injury to a student by other than accidental means. The person who suspects abuse is the "First Reporter" and is required by law to file the complaint.

The professional staff member ("First Reporter") or appropriate administrator in the presence of the staff member shall immediately call the local office of the Department of Social Services, ***including filing a DHS-3200 form.*** She/he shall also notify the appropriate administrator according to the District's Reporting Procedure for Student Abuse or Neglect. Any support staff member who has reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or neglect shall immediately report any such case to the building administrator, who shall, in turn, immediately notify the Department of Social Services.

The identity of the reporting person shall be confidential, subject only to disclosure by consent or court order. A reporting staff member shall not be dismissed or otherwise penalized for making a report of child abuse or neglect. Information concerning alleged child abuse is confidential. Any unauthorized disclosure by an official or employee of the District is a violation of the law and subjects the disseminator to civil liability for resulting damages.

5.10 Teacher Chromebooks/Devices:

Each staff member will be provided with a Chromebook or other alternative computer equipment to be used for school-related tasks. Staff is responsible for the care and appropriate use of the assigned devices. Staff is expected to integrate the use of these Chromebooks/Devices with student use and student devices. Meeting and professional development materials may be shared electronically. Staff members are required to sign and follow the Acceptable Use Policy.

5.11 Google Documents:

As we continue to become "greener" and paperless, it is expected that staff will be able to use technology in an appropriate and efficient manner. For example, the staff is expected to be able to access and share information using programs such as Google Docs and Google Drive. It is the staff member's responsibility to stay up to date on procedures and policies that are shared electronically.

5.11 Annual Training:

All staff members are required to complete annual training at the beginning of each school year. Training includes but is not limited to: Homeless, Bullying, FERPA, HIPAA, Sexual Harassment, Bloodborne Pathogens, and Concussions. Staff members are responsible for knowing the information and implementing all standards as presented in the training. Failure to implement or follow the outlined procedures may lead to disciplinary action. Additional training may be required based on the needs of your students.

5.12 CPR/AED/First Aid:

Staff are expected to be certified in CPR at all times. Professional development and training will be provided; however, if a staff member misses or is unable to participate in the provided training, they will be required to become certified on their own time and at their own expense. In addition, staff will be expected to know where the AEDs are located and will receive training on how to use them.

SECTION 6: POLICIES/RULES OF CONDUCT

*ALL BOARD POLICIES CAN BE FOUND AT **VCS-K12.NET**

****In case of any conflicts, Board Policy will take precedence and supersede anything listed in this handbook.**

6.1 Reporting for Work/Staff Attendance and Absences

Employees are expected to begin and end each shift at the time and on the day appointed. Should your absences or tardiness exceed a reasonable limit, you will be subject to disciplinary action and possible termination.

Teacher Day:

According to the contract, staff members are to arrive 15 minutes prior to the start of the school day and are dismissed 5 minutes after the end of the school day, on days when meetings or professional development are not occurring.

Staff attendance has a direct impact on both the behavior and academic performance of our students. It is understood that illnesses, conflicts, and professional development opportunities will arise and require staff to be absent. Teachers and staff will be using the AESOP substitute program. When you have a leave request, please enter your request into the Frontline website and Munis website as soon as possible, and have a detailed schedule and lesson plans available for the sub.

Leave of Absence: *Please refer to the Vestaburg Education Association or Vestaburg Education Support Staff Bargaining Agreements. If you are not a member of either bargaining unit you should refer to board policies and contact your administrator.*

Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA): The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) provides an entitlement of up to 12 weeks of job-protected, unpaid leave during any 12-month period to eligible, covered employees for the following reasons: 1) birth and care of the eligible employee's child, or placement for adoption or foster care of a child with the employee; 2) care of an immediate family member (spouse, child, parent) who has a serious health condition; or 3) care of the employee's own serious health condition. It also requires that employees' group health

benefits be maintained during the leave. The FMLA is administered by the Employment Standards Administration's Wage and Hour Division within the U.S. Department of Labor.

An eligible employee must have been employed with the District for a year and they must have worked 1,250 hours in the previous 12 months prior to the commencement of the beginning of FMLA leave. An eligible employee shall be entitled to a total of 12 workweeks of family and medical leave during any 12-month period

Cell Phone Use

Cell phones are a vital part of our technology and communication with students. We do ask that all phones and messaging be delayed during staff meetings. The use of cell phones for personal use during the school day should ***be extremely limited and strongly discouraged.***

6.2 Staff Meetings

Teaching staff should plan on making themselves available a minimum of twice (per contract) a month for teacher meetings and professional development sessions. The district has implemented early release dates with professional development taking place from 1:15-4:10 **All teachers are expected to be present except teachers participating in interscholastic competitions or performances and/or have their absence approved by an administrator. ALL STAFF MEMBERS PERSONAL CHILDREN ARE NOT ALLOWED AT ANY STAFF MEETINGS, IT IS THE STAFF'S RESPONSIBILITY TO FIND CHILD CARE.**

6.3 Drug and Alcohol-Free Zone



Vestaburg Community School is committed to providing its employees with a working environment that is free from the problems associated with the use and abuse of illegal substances. Non-compliance with this will carry serious penalties. Good performance on the part of our employees is crucial to our mission. For this reason, we strictly forbid employees to do the following while at work or on district grounds or property of any kind:

- Drinking alcohol and selling, purchasing, or using illegal drugs at work. An "illegal drug" is any drug that has not been obtained by legal means. This includes prescription drugs being used for non-prescribed purposes.
- Possession of any non-prescribed controlled substance, including alcohol and legal but illegally obtained prescription drugs.
- Reporting for work intoxicated, even while working remotely. We reserve the right to test employees for substance abuse. Illegal drugs, illegal drug metabolites, or excessive alcohol in your system will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

The Vestaburg Community School Disctrict cares about the overall health and well-being of its employees. Any employee who feels that he/she is developing a substance abuse problem is

urged to seek help. The Employer may grant time off (within reason) for rehabilitation. Be advised, however, that this will not excuse a substance-related offense.

*Including any part of the Employers property, Employer's vehicles, and during work hours.

6.3 Tobacco-Free Zone

The use of all tobacco products, including but not limited to snuff, dip, chewing tobacco, cigarettes, cigars, and pipe tobacco, vapes, shall be prohibited on District property at all times and at functions sponsored by the District. Staff members in violation of this prohibition shall be subject to progressive disciplinary consequences and shall be afforded opportunities to participate in smoking cessation activities. Repeated violations may result in dismissal.

6.4 Discrimination and Harassment

It is the policy of the District to maintain an education and work environment that is free from all forms of unlawful harassment, including sexual harassment. This commitment applies to all School District operations, programs, and activities. All students, administrators, teachers, staff, and all other school personnel share responsibility for avoiding, discouraging, and reporting any form of unlawful harassment. This policy applies to unlawful conduct occurring on school property, or at another location if such conduct occurs during an activity sponsored by the Board.

The District will vigorously enforce its prohibition against harassment based on race, color, national origin, sex (including sexual orientation and gender identity), disability, age (except as authorized by law), religion, height, weight, marital or family status, military status, ancestry, or genetic information (collectively, "Protected Classes") that are protected by Federal civil rights laws (hereinafter referred to as unlawful harassment), and encourages those within the School District community as well as Third Parties, who feel aggrieved to seek assistance to rectify such problems. The Board will investigate all allegations of harassment and in those cases where unlawful harassment is substantiated, the District will take immediate steps to end the harassment, prevent its recurrence, and remedy its effects. Individuals who are found to have engaged in unlawful harassment will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

Sexual Harassment:

It is the official policy of this school district that students and employees should be treated honorably and with respect at all times. The Board of Education recognizes that all persons should be free from unwelcome, offensive, or otherwise inappropriate sexual advances and activities. Sexual advances, sexual remarks, or sexual conduct are not appropriate in an educational environment, and the Board of Education will not tolerate sexual harassment or sexual abuse of students or employees.

All complaints of sexual harassment will be handled promptly and thoroughly. The privacy of the charging party and the person(s) accused of sexual harassment will be kept strictly confidential. The District will retain confidential documentation of all allegations.

If an administrator learns of inappropriate sexual behavior by either students or employees toward others and such behavior is school-related, the administrator shall take appropriate action. Employees who sexually harass students or other employees are subject to appropriate disciplinary measures, including termination from employment.

6.5 Dress Code

Professionals should dress in a manner that garners respect due to the person and the profession. Individual dress impacts the perception of our students, their parents, and the community of our School District. For this reason, unprofessional attire will not be worn to school, unless special circumstances warrant as determined and approved by the administration. Guidelines regarding appropriateness will be determined by the building administration. Staff may pay $1.00 to the Wolverine Fund to wear jeans on "Wolverine Fridays". However, it is encouraged that staff wears a Vestaburg/Wolverine Shirt. Staff is reminded that professional dress is still required during so-called "casual days".

6.6 TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

Staff will be required to sign and have an updated Acceptable Use Agreement at the beginning of each school year (**Acceptable Use Form**). As board policy 7540.04 states, "It is important that users have no right or expectation to privacy when using the Ed-Tech (including, but not limited to, privacy in the content of their personal files, e-mails, and records of their online activity while on the network and Internet)".

Social Media Use (Board Policy 7540): Social media shall be defined as internet-based applications (such as Facebook, My Space, Twitter, et cetera) that turn communication into interactive dialogue between users. The Board authorizes the instructional staff to access social media from the District's network, provided such access has an educational purpose for which the instructional staff member has the prior approval of the Principal.
However, personal access and use of social media, blogs, or chat rooms from the District's network is expressly prohibited and shall subject students and staff members to discipline in accordance with Board policy. In addition, Board Policy (7540.04) also states, "An employee's personal or private use of social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, blogs, etc., may have unintended consequences. While the Board respects its employees' First Amendment rights, those rights do not include permission to post inflammatory comments that could compromise the District's mission, undermine staff relationships, or cause a substantial disruption to the school environment. This warning includes staff members' online conduct that occurs off school property including from the employee's private computer. Postings to social media should be done in a manner sensitive to the staff member's professional responsibilities".

6.7 Disciplinary Action

A. Employees are expected to comply with rules, regulations, and directions of the Employer which are not inconsistent with Board Policy, or reasonable.
B. No employee shall be disciplined without following the bargainin agreements and/or state law. Discipline shall be defined as any written reprimand, suspension without pay, or discharge.
C. Disciplinary action may consist of anything from verbal/written warnings and counseling, to demotion, transfer, suspension, or termination. The Employer will handle each matter individually to ensure fairness to all involved.

Possible Reasons for Discharge: The following is a ***non-exhaustive*** list of actions that may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination...

1. Is convicted of any felony.

2. Is convicted of any misdemeanor involving moral turpitude or theft, conversion, embezzlement, moving violation while transporting students, intentional destruction or damage to property of the Employer.

3. Excessive lateness and/or absence.

4. Does not return from leave and leaves of absence.

5. Is under the influence of intoxicants or drugs while on the job.

6. Consumes or sells intoxicants or drugs on Board property.

7. Steals Board property.

8. Duplicate School District issued keys without authorization.

9. Intentionally falsifies records.

10. Has or accepts another position or responsibility which conflicts with scheduled work time.

11. Fails to meet State requirements.

The above is meant to be representative of reasons for discharge but are not to be limitations upon the Board for taking discharge actions.

6.8 District Transportation/Transporting Students

The district provides school vans for staff to use for school business. Staff is encouraged to reserve the use of these vehicles as far in advance as possible. If the school vehicles are available and the staff chooses to use their personal vehicle the school will not reimburse mileage. Furthermore, the District does not assume liability for damage to personal automobiles used on the District business and does not assume liability for deductibles of any other uninsured loss to the vehicle. In cases where the school vehicles are unavailable, the district will reimburse the staff member for the mileage as it relates to school business in accordance with the IRS-prescribed mileage rate.

A. Staff is prohibited from transporting students unless in the case of an emergency or approved per District Policy as outlined in letter B.

B. TRANSPORTATION BY PRIVATE VEHICLE

The Board of Education authorizes the transportation by a private vehicle of students of the District. Any such transportation must be approved in advance and in writing by the Superintendent. The writing must set forth:

A. the date, time, and reason for the transportation;

B. the places from and to which students will be transported; the name and address of the driver;

C. the number of the driver's license to operate a motor vehicle in the State of Michigan;

D. the names of the students to be transported;

E. a brief description of the transportation vehicle;

F. the signature of the driver;

G. the name of the insurance carrier for the vehicle.

The parent of the participating student will be given, on request, the name of the driver and the description of the vehicle.

No person shall be approved for the transportation of students in a private vehicle who is not an employee of this Board, a student of this District, or the parent of a student enrolled in this District, and the holder of a currently valid license to operate a motor vehicle in the State of Michigan.

No person shall be permitted to transport students who are not the holder of automobile liability insurance in the amount of at least $10,000 and personal injury insurance in the amount of at least $20,000. The Board may withdraw the authorization of any private vehicle driver.

Any private vehicle used for the transportation of students must be owned by the approved driver or the spouse of the approved driver; have the capacity to hold not more than four (4) persons, and must conform to the registration requirements of the State.

The responsibility of professional staff members for the discipline and control of students will extend to their transportation of students in a private vehicle. Drivers who are not professional staff members are requested to report student misconduct to the Center Director.

6.9 Emergency Procedures

Vestaburg Community School is committed to the safety of all students and staff. As such, we have proudly implemented The Lockout Co. SmartBoot System. The LockOut Co. SmartBoot System is a truly unique and effective school lockdown and building security system. Designed to protect students and staff, deter potential threats, and assist law enforcement when a lockdown event occurs, the SmartBoot System is a merger of physical and technological deterrents as yet unseen in the world of school safety. To view more information on this system visit https://lockoutusa.com/products/smartboot-system/

Each new employee will meet with the Security/Safety Director to review the **EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN.** Each staff member will be issued an emergency procedure document at the beginning of the year that will be kept in his or her classroom. Staff members are expected to stay up to date with the emergency procedures at all times. Staff will be assigned another staff member that will act as the go-to person/Teacher Leader for Emergency Policies and concerns. This staff member will then take the concerns to the Emergency Operation Team for further evaluation and resolution.

Doors should be locked at all times. Door windows should be left uncovered unless during an emergency procedure or situation. Teachers are required to have a system of covering windows and doors during an emergency situation.

6.10 Professional Development:

Professional development is a critical part of ensuring that staff stays current with the Best Practices associated with their job duties. Professional Development may come in many different forms and may be either in and/or out of the district. Staff is expected to participate in all professional development provided by the district. Directors and support staff are also expected to attend annual professional development. This is part of being a professional and the district will work with staff to cover any additional expenses that may arise as a result of participation in professional development. The Principal will deal with professional development funds on a case-by-case basis. Requests should be made to the Principal with proper paperwork included. Proper paperwork includes

- Professional Meeting / Visitation Request Form
- Leave Request
- Report of Absence
- School Vehicle Request (if necessary)
- Registration form or brochure for a conference or professional meeting
- After attending the session fill out a post-development report

The district will provide the required professional development training hours each school year. However, it is the responsibility of teachers to track their professional development and hours toward certification renewal. Contact ***District Coordinator,*** with questions.

6.11 Staff Evaluations

All teachers will have their performance evaluated as designated by state law using district-approved evaluation tools. Staff may be asked to provide feedback and or documentation. Evaluations will be used in determining the employee's employment retention.

6.12 Copy Machine

The copy machine should be used by teachers before school, during conference hours, during lunch, and after school. Students are not allowed to use the copy machine unless they have received training and permission from the office. Copy machines are to be used for school business only. Staff and students are to only make colors if absolutely necessary.

6.13 Faculty Responsibilities

All staff members be held responsible by the Principal and/or Superintendent for carrying out the policies outlined by the school board. The policies relate to the function of the school and to the immediate contact with students and parents. This is for all staff including administrators, directors, teachers, and support staff.

6.14 School Office Information

The following records of each employee will be maintained in the school office and are available for teacher review upon request:

- Records of all leave and vacation
- Personnel information sheet
- Personnel records
- Copy of teacher certificate
- Confidential Emergency Data Information Sheet

SECTION 7: Teacher Responsibilities

7.1 The responsibilities of the classroom teacher are (however, not limited to):

- Direct and evaluate the learning experiences of students.
- Provide students with guidance that will promote their proper educational welfare.
- Supervise students on the school grounds as designated by the Principal.
- Cooperate and participate in the planning and evaluation of the school program.
- Follow the school district curriculum guides and state mandates for curriculum.
- Maintain cordial relationships with colleagues.
- Follow the ethics of the profession.
- Enforce policies and regulations established by the board and administrative staff.
- Academic Integrity Policy:

STAFF INFORMATION & ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES

Staff Responsibility in Maintaining Academic Integrity

Staff members play a crucial role in upholding academic integrity within our educational community. It is the responsibility of all staff to create an environment that promotes honesty, trust, and respect. This includes:

- Clearly communicating the expectations and importance of academic integrity to students.
- Providing guidance and resources to help students understand and adhere to these standards.
- Vigilantly monitoring for any signs of academic dishonesty and addressing them promptly and fairly.
- Reporting violations to the appropriate authorities and following established procedures for handling breaches of academic integrity.

By fostering a culture of integrity, staff members help ensure that all students can achieve their academic potential in an honest and ethical manner.

Tips for monitoring:

In a traditional setting, monitoring academic integrity can be more straightforward than in a virtual environment. Below are some indicators that a student might be struggling to maintain academic integrity.

1. Work not completed on the Chromebook
2. Abnormal amount of work being done
3. Strange hours of completed work
4. Finishing a class in less than a week
5. Sudden change in “work habits”

Staff Action Steps in Academic Integrity Investigation (Secondary Level):

1. Complete PowerSchool log or Google form describing the situation:
    - Teacher Statement
    - Student Name / Date
    - Screenshot illustrating suspected actions and upload to Google form
    - Contact your building Administrator.
2. Google Form recipient :
    a. Contact parent/student: Initial Meeting (Due Process)
    b. Send a letter from Kristine Lance, Secondary Principal to Edgenuity requesting the IP addresses where student login was used

c. Send any information to Edgenuity and Ken Tiesworth (Technology Coordinator) for blocking website(s) or origination of the "cheating" source
d. Receive log information from Edgenuity to complete a digital forensic review
e. Staff review IP Address log and cross reference with Pulse Communications
f. Issue consequences and communicate to the student, parent/gaurdian relationship manager, and Teacher of Record.

7.2 Teacher Work-day:

According to the contract, staff members are to arrive 15 minutes prior to the start of the school day and are dismissed 5 minutes after the end of the school day, on days where meetings or professional development is not occurring. STAFF PERSONNEL CHILDREN MUST REMAIN WITH THE STAFF MEMBER UNTIL THE BELL RINGS, ONCE THE BELL RINGS STAFF CHILDREN NEED TO GO WHERE THE STUDENTS LINE UP. AFTER-HOURS STAFF CHILDREN MUST REMAIN WITH THEM AT ALL TIMES, CHILDREN ARE NOT ALLOWED TO RUN UP AND DOWN THE HALL AND DISRUPT OTHERS.

7.3 Student Discipline

Each teacher is responsible for maintaining discipline within the classroom. Teachers are encouraged to use a variety of classroom management techniques before referring a student to the office. The teacher is the key to good discipline. The best discipline occurs when the teacher is prepared and the instruction is continuous. Teachers will be supported in their efforts to maintain a good education. Teachers should be sure that the consequence fits or is a logical consequence of the student's specific misbehavior.

Students who are sent to the office should have a referral when they get to the office unless the behavior is of such a nature that the students must be removed immediately. In this case, a referral must be written as soon as possible to provide adequate documentation of the misconduct. If a referral cannot be sent with the student, please email or call the office so they are informed a student is on the way, additionally work is to be sent down for the student.

Administration and staff will work together in a team process to evaluate, create, and implement discipline and behavior policies and expectations. All staff is expected to follow the strategies and expectations established through the team process. In cases of extreme behavior, staff need to contact the office and the KIP (Key Identified Personnel) will be employed.

7.4 Corporal Punishment

While recognizing that students may require disciplinary action in various forms, the Board of Education will not condone the use of unreasonable force and fear as an appropriate procedure in student discipline.

In accordance with State law, corporal punishment shall not be permitted. If any staff member deliberately inflicts or causes to be inflicted, physical pain by hitting, paddling, spanking, slapping, or makes use of any other kind of physical force as a means of disciplining a student, he/she may be subject to discipline by the Board and possible criminal charges as well.

7.5 Seclusion and Restraint

Staff is expected to be aware of and follow the Board of Education Policy 5630.01 regarding Seclusion and Restraint. Teachers will be trained on de-escalation and blocking techniques only. Therefore, teachers should not seclude or restrain as a means of disciplinary action. Seclusion or Restraint should only be used only in an emergency and as a last resort. Seclusion or restraint should only be conducted by those who are trained to do so (the KIP, Key Identified Personal, team). Teachers are expected to follow the Board Policy, and State Law at all times. In an emergency situation, staff should call for help and have another adult/staff member present as soon as possible.

7.6 Dismissing Students from Class

Before a student can leave school grounds, he/she must have permission from a parent or guardian. The exception is made for emancipated students. When leaving school property, the student must sign out in the office.

Students who are ill should report to the office/nurse..

Students should not be using the school phone during class time unless an emergency arises.

A teacher may remove a pupil from his/her class for up to one hour when the grossness of the offense, the persistence of the misbehavior, or the disruptive effect of the violation makes the continued presence of the student in the classroom intolerable. A meeting will be held between the administrator in charge and the teacher if the teacher or administrator requests such a meeting in order to work out a solution before the student can be returned to class.

7.7 Teacher Evaluations

All teacher evaluations will be performed in accordance with the Michigan Tenure Act and Revised School Code section 1249. The district will use the Charlotte Danielson Framework for Learning as its identified evaluation tool. Each teacher shall receive a copy of his/her evaluations by the Vestaburg administration no later than the last day of school or June 15th whichever is earlier. A copy of the evaluation shall be included in the personnel file.

The annual performance evaluation system will assign a year-end rating of "effective", "developing," or "needing support". The year-end evaluation determination and form shall be delivered at a meeting with the observing administrator and the teacher by the last day of the school year or June 15 whichever is earlier.

7.8 Lesson Plans:

All Lesson plans should be completed and updated weekly using the PlanBook program at the elementary level and at the secondary level. Teachers are expected to follow the expectations as set forth by their Principal including, standards, and benchmarks. Teachers should be able to provide lesson plans immediately if asked by the Principal.

Sub Plans:

Teachers should have at least 1 day of emergency sub plans prepared. These need to be filed in the office or readily available in their classrooms. Teachers' lesson plans for a substitute should be well organized, easy to follow, and include extra work in case the work you provide does not fill in the entire time. Teaching partners should know where they are located.

7.9 Gradebook/PowerSchool

Each teacher is required to keep an accurate, up-to-date, clearly labeled grade book. It is expected that teachers have their grade books up to date ***each Thursday before they leave school***. These grades will be used for Athletic and Academic team eligibility. In addition, Parents have the ability to view their child's grades online so each grade should be clearly marked and include a due date. It is imperative that the grading procedures be clear because the school receives numerous calls concerning grades**.**

***Staff is also expected to complete hourly, and daily attendance records accurately and timely.**

7.10 Hall Supervision:

All teachers are expected to be out and visible in the hallways before school, between classes, and after school.

7.11 Open House

It is expected that all teachers attend the open house at the beginning of the school year. This is a time for students and parents in the district to meet the teachers and discuss expectations.

7.12 Awards Night

It is encouraged that all teachers attend the senior awards night in the spring and the award acknowledgment during assemblies for the other secondary (6th-11th) grades in the fall. This is a time for teachers to acknowledge students who are deserving of recognition.

7.13 Parent-Teacher Conferences

One of the best ways to get to know people and increase communication is at parent-teacher conferences. The following suggestions should be helpful in planning parent-teacher conferences;

- Have the pupil's records and samples of his work to show to the parents.
- Ask questions of the parents concerning the pupil's interests.
- Be objective in attitude when expressing the pupil's strengths and weaknesses.
- Ask the parents for suggestions and give constructive suggestions of your own to help in the pupil's development.
- Be aware of the importance of the parent leaving the conference with a positive attitude about his/her child's needs and development.

8: RESOURCES

8.1 VEA Agreement

VEA 2024-2027

8.2 VESPA Agreement

VESPA 2024-2027

8.3 District Calendar

2026-2027 Calendar

2025-26 Academic Calendar

APPENDIX: PROCEDURES AND PROCESSES

***This list is not exhaustive and is subject to change**