

***2017 – 2018***  
***Mount Vernon***  
***Middle School***  
***STUDENT***  
***HANDBOOK***



## ***INTRODUCTION***

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 MVMS staff. Its purpose is to promote a common understanding of the policies and procedures for Mount Vernon Middle School.

## ***ACADEMIC CLIMATE***

We are proud of each of our students at Mount Vernon Middle School. In order to provide the best education for all of our students, our staff expect 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 miss school only when absolutely necessary.
- GOOD STUDY HABITS - Students are expected to devote time to studying and homework completion daily during and outside of school hours.
- MUTUAL TRUST - The staff and students of Mount Vernon Middle School interact on the basis of trust and mutual respect. Students are expected to model responsible citizenship within our school and community.

## ***ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL TIMES***

**Morning Arrival Time.** The building opens at 7:30am for student access, unless a teacher or coach makes another arrangement with students. If students arrive at school before 8:00am during bad weather, they are to wait in the commons area until the 8:00am bell rings. If students have made arrangements with teachers ahead of time, they may proceed to that teacher's classroom before the 8:00am bell. A second bell will ring at 8:10am indicating that students have 5 minutes to get to their first period class.

**Dismissal.** School is dismissed for the day at 3:15pm. Students riding the bus home are expected to go immediately to the bus staging area. Students remaining at school for any reason are to be in the commons area, a classroom with a teacher, or in another *designated and supervised* area of the building. ***Students waiting for rides must go to***

***Kids Club at Washington Elementary after 3:30pm as students cannot be unsupervised in the building when waiting to be picked up after school.***

## **ATTENDANCE AND STUDENT DISMISSAL**

It is important that a student display regular and punctual attendance in order to be successful at the middle school and beyond. Because of this, the school has strong expectations for student attendance and timeliness.

**Absences.** When a student has been absent from school, they are to report to the office as soon as they return. It is the student's responsibility to check their grade level website and visit with each of their teachers to get assignments they missed during their absence. Failure to do this will result in missed assignments and crucial classroom information. **Students will be allowed twice the number of days missed to turn in make-up work for full credit.**

Assignments may be accessed on the grade level website or requested through the office. Requests should be made early in the morning in order to have them ready for after school pickup. Office Number: 319-895-6254

### **Excessive Absences:**

- After 5 absences per semester, excused or unexcused, a letter will be sent to the student's parents/guardians reminding about the importance of being in school.
- After 7 absences per semester, excused or unexcused, a phone call will be made to the student's parents/guardians regarding attendance.
- After 10 absences per semester, excused or unexcused, an administrator will address the issue through a conference with the student and his/her parents/guardians. Hospitalization or extended illness under doctor's care will be considered an exception to this conferencing requirement.

**Call-in Policy.** All schools in the Mount Vernon School District ask that a parent call the appropriate building as soon as it is known that a student will be unable to attend classes due to illness, appointment, or any other appropriate reason. If the school does not hear from a parent, reasonable attempts will be made to contact a parent to verify that parent's knowledge of the student's absence. ***The school will determine whether the absence is excused or unexcused.***

**Excused Absences:**

**Unexcused Absences:**

illness	babysitting
bereavement	haircut/pictures
school activities	missed bus
professional appointment	overslept
religious observance	skipping
others as determined by principal	others as determined by principal

If a student is absent from school, it is necessary that the parent or guardian call the school office before 8:05am that school day.

Calls may be made between 8:00am to 3:30pm to the attendance secretary at **319-895-6254**, or a message may be left at that number at any other time during the night or on weekends.

If a call has not been received, the parent may be contacted either at home or at work during the school day. The safety of your child is our first priority. Knowing the whereabouts of your child is deemed most important; we will use the contact information provided by the parent/guardian in our PowerSchool information system.

**Vacations.** The District strongly recommends that family vacations not be taken when school is in session during the school year. Completing work ahead of time or making up work after a trip can be very difficult, even for the best of students. In the event that a pre planned absence is unavoidable, parents are expected to contact the school office to make the school aware of the dates the student will be absent. If it is possible to get assignments ahead of time, it is the student's responsibility to talk with their teachers to obtain those assignments. If the assignments are unavailable, the student will follow the absence policy described above.

**Tardiness.** If a student is late arriving at school, they are to report to the office for an admit slip to class. If the student has a legitimate excuse for being late, it is the parent's responsibility to call the school or send a note with the student explaining the reason for the tardiness. If a student is late to class during the school day, they do not report to the office. If a teacher holds a student between classes, the student should get a pass from the teacher who detained them. **If the student does not have a pass from the detaining teacher, the teacher of the class that the student is late arriving to will determine when the student will make up the missed class time.**

**Students missing more than one period of class in either the morning or afternoon are considered absent for a half day as opposed to tardy.**

**Report cards will indicate the number of excused and unexcused tardies.**

**Dismissal During the School Day.** Students may be dismissed from school during the day only by direct parent permission. Parents must phone or send a signed note explaining the reason for the early dismissal and the time the student is to be dismissed. In order to assist families in keeping scheduled appointments, it is most helpful to have dismissal information to the office secretary by 8:10am so the student can pick up a pass to leave class at the designated dismissal time. Students should report to the office prior to their scheduled dismissal time to sign out. Students will then be released only to parents or legal guardians unless specific directions to the contrary have been given to the school office by the parent or legal guardian. Students must check in at the office when they return to school.

**DRESS CODE**

Students are expected to use ***common sense and good judgment in dress at school.*** Clothing that creates a distraction from the learning environment of the school, presents a safety hazard, promotes the use of alcohol, tobacco, drugs, hints at anything of a sexual nature, profanity, gangs, or any message that is disruptive to the educational process will not be allowed. There will be no muscle t-shirts or athletic tops that are sleeveless for gentlemen. Young ladies must have at least a ***1" strap on each shoulder and their midriff must be covered when arms are at their sides. Shoes must be worn at all times.*** The length of shorts or skirts should be an ***appropriate length—covering all parts of the body and minimizing the possibility of inappropriate exposure.*** Be sure to consider all activities throughout the school day when determining if a length is correct. ***No undergarments may be showing for either boys or girls. Pants/Shorts/Skirts: Must adequately cover appropriate areas of the body (good rule of thumb is garment equaling the length of student's fingertips when arms are held straight by the body.) Leggings, jeggings or any other form fitting athletic gear may ONLY be worn under skirts, shorts, or dresses that are dress code length.***

Students whose dress is deemed to be disruptive to the learning environment will be referred to the office. Students whose dress is deemed to be disruptive to the learning environment but is not specifically mentioned in the dress code above may still be counseled and warned about their dress. ***Violators may be warned, asked to change clothing, or sent home if the violation cannot be resolved. A call to a parent or guardian will take place at this time and a conference may be scheduled.***

In addition, hats, bandanas, hoods and do-rags are not to be worn in any area of the building. These items should be removed and stored in the student's locker upon their arrival at school and not taken out until dismissal time.

### **Homeschool and Dual Enrollment**

Students choosing to dual enroll or homeschool for certain classes will need to leave the school campus during any unscheduled periods. The school will not be responsible for students during unscheduled periods during the school day.

### **CAFETERIA**

Mount Vernon Middle School hot lunches are served between 11:08am and 12:52pm daily. Although students may bring their own lunches, the cafeteria is the designated place for students to eat their lunch. Lunchtime offers students a much-needed break in their day. While socialization and relaxation are encouraged, there are certain guidelines that must be followed to ensure the safety of the students and the efficiency and etiquette required for the cafeteria to run smoothly. The following procedures will be strictly enforced:

- Students will enter the cafeteria and sit down at the tables keeping their hands to themselves and keeping their voices at an appropriate indoor level.
- Students will clean up after themselves and leave the area in which they ate as it was when they arrived.
- Students will remain in the supervised area until the cafeteria supervisor dismisses students to return to class.
- Students are not to be in the hallways or at their lockers during the lunch period unless the student has made arrangements with a teacher to do so.

**Going home for lunch.** Students who live close enough to school may go home for lunch. ***Students must bring a note each time they intend to go home for lunch and must arrange to return to school in time for the beginning of their next class.*** Failure to do so will result in the forfeiture of the privilege of going home for lunch. All other students are to remain on the school grounds during the lunch period. ***Friends are not permitted to go home for lunch with other friends unless a note is received from both sets of parents acknowledging that fact.***

**Breakfast.** Breakfast is served every morning from 7:30am until 8:05am. The guidelines listed above for lunch also apply to student behavior at breakfast.

The consumption of food and drink is restricted to the cafeteria. Food may be consumed in the classroom at the discretion of the teacher or supervisor of that classroom for special events and purposes only. Students are asked to bring beverages that are in resealable containers. ***Students may carry water bottles to all classes unless, otherwise notified by the classroom teacher.***

### **BUS RULES**

The school bus is considered an extension of the school building and the same expectations for student behavior that apply in the building also apply to behavior while the student is on the bus. Whether riding the bus to and from school daily, on field trips, or to athletic events, the following rules shall be followed:

- be on time to your pickup location
- cross only upon the driver's signal
- remain in your seat while the bus is in motion
- keep your head and arms inside the bus
- keep the aisle clear at all times
- remain quiet and orderly
- do not throw objects either in or outside the bus
- be courteous at all times and follow the directions of the driver
- there will be no eating or drinking on the bus

***Repeated episodes of misconduct on the bus will result in the following:***

- ***First Violation: a conference between the bus driver and the student***
- ***Second Violation: a conference with the bus driver, student, parents, and principal***
- ***Third Violation: suspension of bus privileges for a specified period of time and a conference with the bus driver, student, parents, and principal***

***Administration reserves the right to assign different consequences based on the results of an investigation.***

### **CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

We encourage our students to participate in extra and/or co-curricular activities. We believe that athletics as well as other co-curricular activities can help our young people develop more fully. Being involved in these activities can provide opportunities for learning which may not be possible in a traditional classroom setting. Inappropriate behavior or the failure to maintain adequate progress in an academic area can create a

need to have a student declared ineligible to participate in these activities. This will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the principal with input from the appropriate grade level team and staff. **Students who have lost their eligibility can regain privileges based on a weekly evaluation of their progress.**

If a student is absent from school, they will not be allowed to participate in co-curricular activities on that day. If a student is absent for part of a day, they must attend more than half of their classes and those classes need to be afternoon classes. Exceptions to this guideline would include absences due to doctor's appointments, funerals, and other family emergencies. These exceptions require notification to the school office and principal's approval.

### **Athletics**

The following interscholastic athletic programs are available for students in grades 7 and 8:

<b><u>GIRLS</u></b>	<b><u>BOYS</u></b>
Cross Country	Cross Country
Volleyball	Football
Basketball	Wrestling
Track	Basketball
Softball	Track

**Physicals/Concussion Form.** Any student wishing to participate in any of the athletic extra-curricular activities offered by the school is required to have a physical examination and concussion form on file prior to beginning practice. **A record of the exam must be on file in the main office before the student will be allowed to participate.** Physicals are good for one calendar year from the date issued. Concussion forms are available in the main office.

**Non-athletic offerings** considered to be co-curricular in nature would include Jazz Band, Science Olympiad, Yearbook Committees, and other groups as determined by the administration/teachers.

### **CONTACTING STUDENTS AT SCHOOL**

**All contacts with students while they are at school during school hours must be made through the office. The use of cell phones and other communication devices during school hours is strictly prohibited, unless given permission by a MVCSD staff member.** Parents wishing to make contact with their child should contact



the middle school office at 319.895.6254. Under normal circumstances students will not be called out of class to answer the telephone unless it is an emergency.

**All visitors to Mount Vernon Middle School (including parents) are asked to report immediately to the main office.**

Student visitors, such as friends or relatives from other schools, are discouraged as this can be disruptive to the learning process. **Student visitors will not be allowed at school unless arrangements are made with the principal prior to the visit.**

Mount Vernon Middle School wishes to protect all students from illegal and/or unwanted contact while at school. The school will only release students to parents or legal guardians unless directed otherwise in writing or by phone via the parent or legal guardian. If necessary, phone calls will be made to the parent/legal guardian before a student is released to anyone other than a parent or guardian. In custody disputes the school district can deny a parent access to his or her child only if a copy of a court order or other legal document expressly denying access by a legal parent to his or her child is on file in the school office.

#### ***Telephones/ Cell Phones***

Telephones for student use are located in the main office. The office reserves the right to deny students the use of the telephone for non-emergency reasons. Cell phones are permitted only for before and after school use. Due to recent concerns about student and building security and the dramatic increase in the use and possibly inappropriate use of text messaging, students are encouraged to leave their cell phones at home or in their lockers. If a student's cell phone disrupts the learning environment the cell phone will be confiscated and taken to the office.

- ***First Offense: Cell phone will be confiscated and returned to the student at the end of the day.***
- ***Second Offense: Principal will meet with the student and contact parents informing them of the cell phone policy. The cell phone will be kept in the office until a parent/guardian can pick-up the phone.***
- ***Third Offense: The cell phone will be kept in the office until a parent/guardian meets with the principal to establish a plan to prevent future classroom disruptions.***

***Permission from a teacher or staff member may be granted to students to place a call from their cell phone or use another function to assist them with their schoolwork.***

## **DANCES/ACTIVITY NIGHTS**

School organizations sponsor dances and/or activity nights for all Mount Vernon Middle School students a minimum of two times per year. All dances/activities must be approved by the principal at least two weeks in advance. ***These dances/activities are for Mount Vernon Middle School students only, unless otherwise announced and approved by the principal.*** Adult chaperones will always be present. The expectation for students is that they stay the entire posted time of the dance/event. If they choose to leave before the event is over, they are not allowed back into the event. These dances/events are a privilege and will be scheduled only when the student body demonstrates their general ability to follow school rules and expectations during regular school days. Failure by an individual to follow behavioral expectations during the school day will result in them not being invited to attend a given dance/event.

## **COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES**

It is the goal of the school district to resolve students' complaints and grievances at the lowest level. Students are encouraged to address problems with the teacher or other licensed employee, other than the administration, for resolution of the complaint. If the teacher cannot resolve the complaint, the student may discuss this matter with the principal within 10 days of their initial meeting with the teacher. If the principal cannot resolve the matter, the student may discuss it with the superintendent within 10 days after speaking with the principal.

## **DISCIPLINE AND CONSEQUENCES**

### **Jurisdictional Statement**

This handbook is an extension of the Mount Vernon School Board policies and is a reflection of the goals and objectives of the board. The Board, administration and employees expect students to conduct themselves in a manner fitting to their age level and maturity and with respect and consideration for the rights of others. Students are expected to treat teachers, other employees, students, visitors and guests with respect

and courtesy. Use of abusive language, profanity or vulgar gestures or language will not be tolerated.

This handbook and school district policies, rules and regulations are in effect while students are on school grounds, school district property or on property within the jurisdiction of the school district; while on school-owned and/or school-operated buses or vehicles or chartered buses; while attending or engaged in school activities; and while away from school grounds if the misconduct directly affects the good order, efficient management and welfare of the school district or involves students or staff. School district policies, rules and regulations are in effect 12 months a year. A violation of a school district policy, rule or regulation may result in disciplinary action and may affect a student's eligibility to participate in extracurricular activities whether the violation occurred while school was in session or while school was not in session.

Students are expected to comply with and abide by the school district's policies, rules and regulations. Students who fail to abide by the school district's policies, rules and regulations may be disciplined for conduct which disrupts or interferes with the education program; conduct which disrupts the orderly and efficient operation of the school district or school activity; conduct which disrupts the rights of other students to obtain their education or to participate in school activities; or conduct which interrupts the maintenance of a disciplined atmosphere. Disciplinary measures include, but are not limited to, removal from the classroom, detention, suspension, probation and expulsion. Discipline can also include prohibition from participating in extracurricular activities, including athletics. The discipline imposed is based upon the facts and circumstances surrounding the incident and the student's record.

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 the handbook. Students are expected to know the contents of the handbook and comply with it. Students or parents with questions or concerns may contact the middle school office for information about the current enforcement of the policies, rules or regulations of the school district.

Student disciplinary action will normally take one or more of the following forms:

1. Assignment of detention.
2. In-school suspension.
3. Out-of-school suspension.
4. Work restitution.
5. Expulsion from school.

## 6. Reporting to legal authorities.

**Removal from class.** Students sent to the office from a classroom for disciplinary reasons should expect the following:

- **1<sup>st</sup> occurrence:** student will be asked to make up class time and work missed in a detention with their teacher.
- **2<sup>nd</sup> occurrence:** a conference with the principal will result.
- **3<sup>rd</sup> occurrence:** conference with the principal, teacher, parent contact and a detention.

**Repeated occurrences: all of the above in addition to a possible suspension.**

**Detention.** Students given a detention by a teacher for behavior in the classroom will be expected to serve some time at the convenience of the teacher. Students will be allowed to make transportation arrangements.

**In-School Suspension.** Repeated or severe violations of school rules may result in an in-school suspension. Students serving an in-school suspension will spend at least 1 day in the office or designated area doing their schoolwork. Fighting will usually result in an automatic in/out of school suspension.

**Out-of-School Suspension.** For more serious or repetitive infractions of rules, district policy permits out-of-school suspensions for 1-10 days. In such cases, parents are notified immediately as is the Superintendent.

The following constitutes reasonable grounds for suspension:

- Students are prohibited from distributing, dispensing, manufacturing, possessing, using, and being under the influence of alcohol, drugs or ***look-a-like substances***; and possessing or using tobacco, tobacco products or ***look-a-like substances***. Any student possessing, using, selling, or distributing tobacco, alcohol, and/or illegal drugs in any form at school or in connection with any school sponsored activity will be subject to a ten day suspension from school and will be referred to the Mt. Vernon Police Department for possible legal charges and to the superintendent of schools for possible expulsion.
- Misuse of a controlled substance.
- Infringing on the rights of other students or teachers.

- Defacing school grounds or property.
- Truancy.
- Fighting.
- Vulgar language
- Possession or use of any type of explosive device, weapon, or look-a-like that could be dangerous to persons and personal/private property.
- Acts of behavior that tend to conflict with the educational program or which are antagonistic to the welfare of other students will not be tolerated. Insubordination and misbehavior are incompatible with a positive school climate.

**Expulsion.**

Only the Board of Education can expel a student. This may occur after repeated violations of school rules or when the presence of the student is determined to be detrimental to other students.

**WEAPONS POLICY.**

The board believes weapons and other dangerous objects on school district property cause material and substantial disruption to the school environment or presents 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 or dangerous objects. Weapons and other dangerous objects shall 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 districts.

Parents of students found to possess a weapon or dangerous object on school property shall be notified of the incident. Confiscation of weapons or dangerous objects may be reported to the law enforcement officials and the student will be subject to disciplinary action including suspension and expulsion. Students bringing firearms or look alike objects to school shall be expelled for not less than twelve months. The superintendent shall have the authority to recommend this expulsion requirement be modified for a student on a case-by-case basis. For purposes of this portion of this policy, the term "firearm" includes 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 shall be reported to the law enforcement officials.

Weapons under the control of law enforcement officials shall be exempt from this policy. The principal may allow authorized persons to display weapons or other dangerous objects for educational purposes. Such a display shall also be exempt from this policy. It shall be the responsibility of the superintendent, in conjunction with the principal, to develop administrative regulations regarding this policy.

Reference: Mt. Vernon School Board Policy 502.5

### **DROPPING AND ADDING CLASSES**

As a general rule, the dropping and adding of classes is not permitted at the middle school. It is possible to drop or add band, orchestra, or chorus, but ONLY at the end of the semester and ONLY with written parental permission.

### **FEES**

Students are required to pay various fees upon registering and throughout the school year. It is expected that most of these fees will be paid at the time of registration. No student will be denied opportunities offered through the school due to lack of sufficient funds. Families unable to pay the fees should contact the middle school office at 319.895.6254 to seek a fee waiver form.

### **EMERGENCY DRILLS**

Evacuation procedures in the event of a fire or tornado are posted in each classroom. The warning sound for a fire is a constant wailing from the alarm system. Periodic drills are held to ensure that the evacuation plan is efficient and practical.

A tornado warning is signaled by the activation of the emergency alarm system. Teachers will direct students to their designated interior locations.

In case of, fire or tornado, students are expected to comply with directions in an orderly and quiet manner.

### **GRADE REPORTS AND CONFERENCES**

Grade reports are finalized and made available at the end of each quarter. The grade report consists of three types of information:

**Academic letter grades.** The academic letter grades for achievement are the traditional A, B, C, D, and F.

**Effort grades.** Effort grades are indicated by E (excellent), S (satisfactory), or U (unsatisfactory).

**Comments.** Teachers may also provide additional comments to further explain grades.

**Conferences.** Formal Parent/Student/Teacher Conferences are held twice each year (once in the fall and once in the spring). These conferences are held in various classrooms throughout the middle school. Students are encouraged to attend these conferences in an attempt to have them begin to accept ownership of their education. Formal conferences for the middle school are generally held with two of the grade level core class teachers. More information about conferences is included in the district newsletter and on the district and middle school websites prior to fall and spring conferences.

***Informal conferences at other times of the year can be arranged with a specific teacher or grade level teacher teams by either calling the middle school at 319.895.6254 or by e-mailing your child's teacher.***

## **LOCKERS AND BOOK BAGS**

Each student is assigned a hall locker for use throughout the school year. These lockers, while used by students, remain the property of the school district. Students are expected to use their locker and keep it orderly to ensure efficient operation. There is to be no writing on lockers, inside or out. Students may bring and use a padlock for their individual locker. It is recommended to provide the office a copy of the combination. Students **SHOULD NOT** share your combination with anyone.

**Locker Searches.** School administrators and/or designated representatives have the authority to conduct a reasonable search of student lockers. (Iowa Code 279.8, 280.14, 808A (1991); 281 I.A.C. 21.8)

### **Electronic and personal items:**

Electronic and personal items including games, toys, radios, cell phones, tape and CD players, iPods and MP3 players, camera phones, digital cameras, and hats of any size or kind are not allowed in classrooms, hallways, or at lunch during the school day. Students are encouraged to leave these items at home. If such items must be brought to school they must be placed in the student's locker and may not be removed until the

end of the school day. Items found out of the locker during the day will be confiscated and returned to the student at the end of the day. Upon a second offense the item will be confiscated and not returned until a parent/guardian comes to school and picks up the item.

Students are allowed to carry backpacks and bags to school intended to hold their personal belongings as long as the bag meets the following criteria:

- Does not advertise or promote alcohol, tobacco, drugs, or offensive materials.
- Is small enough in size to fit completely in the student's locker so that the door closes properly.

**Bags must be stored in the student's locker and not taken to class. Bags left or stored in the aisles of a classroom, in hallways, or in the auditorium will be removed.**

### **LOST & FOUND**

Personal items that are left around the building are taken to the Lost & Found area located in the Middle School commons where these items are readily accessible to students or anyone looking for lost items. Small electronics, jewelry and cellphones are generally turned into the office and stored there. Anyone looking for a lost item is directed to the Lost & Found areas. Due to space constraints, items that are taken to the Lost & Found area cannot be stored for an extended length of time and are generally packed up at the end of each quarter but may be removed more often as deemed necessary. Students are given ample notice via intercom and email announcements to check the Lost & Found for missing items before these items are removed and donated to a worthy cause.

### **MEDIA CENTER/INTERNET & TECHNOLOGY**

We are proud to have various forms of technology and access to the Internet at Mount Vernon Middle School. Our goal in providing these services to teachers and students is to promote educational excellence in our school. The vast resources of the Internet can provide students with useful information applicable in a variety of classes. In order to promote technology literacy, all middle school students and parents will be asked to sign the Mount Vernon School District Student Acceptable Use Policy in order to use technology in the school.

The middle school provides the student with a comprehensive library which students are expected to use responsibly and appropriately. Books must be checked out and computers may be used only with the permission of and in the presence of a teacher, librarian, associate, or other supervisor. Failure to abide by the rules in this facility will



result in the loss of privileges. Students are responsible to pay for lost or damaged materials or books.

**PLAGIARISM.** Plagiarism is the act of presenting another's ideas, research, or writing as your own. Plagiarism is a serious offense and a form of stealing. Examples of plagiarism may include:

- Copying another person's actual words without use of quotations and/or footnotes to give credit to the source
- Presenting another's ideas or theories without citing the source
- Using information that is not common knowledge without citing the source
- Copying and pasting information from the Internet into a paper/assignment and portraying it as your own work

Mount Vernon Middle School staff expects students to complete all work in an honest and forthright manner. If a student copies information without citing the original source, the student is plagiarizing and will face serious academic consequences. The consequences for plagiarizing are listed below:

- Student behavior reported to principal and parent.
- Student will earn a failing grade on the plagiarized assignment.
- Record of offense will be added to student's school record (2<sup>nd</sup> offense)

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.

## HEALTH SERVICES

**School Nurse.** Two full time nurses are on duty in the district throughout the school day. S/he will be in the middle school building at some point each day. In the event of an accident or illness, **A student who becomes ill or is injured at school must notify his or her teacher or another employee as soon as possible. In the case of a serious illness or injury, the school shall attempt to notify the parents according to the emergency information provided. If the student is too ill to remain in school, the student will be released to the student's parents or, with parental permission, to another person directed by the parents. While the school district is not responsible for treating medical emergencies, employees may administer emergency or minor first aid if possible. The school will contact emergency medical personnel, if necessary, and attempt to notify the parents where the student has been transported for treatment. Parents are responsible for any additional care needed.**

**Medications.** When students are required to take medication during the day it will be administered by the school nurse or by a person who has completed an administration

of medication course and is certified by the Board of Pharmacy Examiners. Medication will not be administered at school without written authorization from the parent/guardian. All medication must be delivered to the school by the parent/guardian and must be in the original bottle from the pharmacy and/or the manufacturer, labeled with the student's name, name of the medication, the time of day it is to be given, the dosage and frequency.

Tylenol or other over-the-counter medications that are supplied by parents may be dispersed at the discretion of the nurse with written permission from parents. Students frequently ask for medication at the first sign of discomfort. Please discuss healthier methods of treating headaches with your child and discourage the use of medication except when absolutely necessary.

### **The WOW Cure for Headaches**

- Water – Ten gulps of water at a fountain is about 8 ounces of water.
- Oxygen – Take ten deep breaths.
- Wait – Give it about 30 minutes and see if your headache is gone.

### **Health screenings:**

**Vision:** Routine vision screening will be conducted every fall for all middle school students by Grant Wood Area Education Agency.

**Hearing:** Hearing screening is only conducted for students with a known history of ear problems or if the student is new to the district.

**Scoliosis Screening:** All middle school students will have their backs check during May by the school nurse during physical education class. We will be looking for a sideways curvature of the spine called "scoliosis". The purpose of this exam is to recognize a problem at its earliest stages.

**Parents who do not want their children to participate in these three screening will need to indicate so in writing to the middle school principal or school nurse.**

**Health curriculum.** The district provides students with instruction in human growth and development. This is done through the sixth and seventh grade guidance classes and with eighth grade small groups. Parents may preview any and all materials in the health curriculum. Please contact your child's health teacher with any questions or to set up an appointment to review material.

## **GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING**

Our guidance curriculum provides students with opportunities to learn how to take care of their physical and mental needs. Students take courses throughout their middle school experience that teach them proper nutrition and exercise, how to build and

promote self-esteem, managing conflict resolution, building and maintaining positive relationships, and goal setting.

In addition, the Guidance Counselor is available for individual counseling as the need arises. Group counseling is also available when needed.

## **HARASSMENT**

Harassment and bullying of students and employees are against federal, state and local policy, and are not tolerated by the board. The board is committed to providing all students with a safe and civil school environment in which all members of the school community are treated with dignity and respect. To that end, the board has in place policies, procedures, and practices that are designed to reduce and eliminate bullying and harassment as well as processes and procedures to deal with incidents of bullying and harassment. Bullying and harassment of students by other students, by school employees, and by volunteers who have direct contact with students will not be tolerated in the school or school district.

The board prohibits harassment, bullying, hazing, or any other victimization, of students, based on any of the following actual or perceived traits or characteristics, including but not limited to, age, color, creed, national origin, race, religion, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical attributes, physical or mental ability or disability, ancestry, political party preference, political belief, socioeconomic status, or familial status. Harassment against employees based upon the employee's race, color, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, religion, age or disability is also prohibited.

This policy is in effect while students or employees are on property within the jurisdiction of the board; while on school-owned or school-operated vehicles; while attending or engaging in school-sponsored activities; and while away from school grounds if the misconduct directly affects the good order, efficient management and welfare of the school or school district.

When looking at the totality of the circumstances, harassment and bullying mean any electronic, written, verbal, or physical act or conduct toward a student which is based on any actual or perceived trait or characteristic of the student and which creates an

objectively hostile school environment that meets one or more of the following conditions:

- Places the student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or property;
- Has a substantially detrimental effect on the student's physical or mental health;
- Has the effect of substantially interfering with the student's academic performance; or
- Has the effect of substantially interfering with the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

Students whose behavior is found to be in violation of this policy will be subject to the investigation procedure which may result in discipline, up to and including, suspension and expulsion.

**Electronic** means any communication involving the transmission of information by wire, radio, optical cable, electromagnetic, or other similar means. Electronic includes but is not limited to communication via electronic mail, internet-based communications, pager service, cell phones, electronic text messaging or similar technologies.

Harassment and bullying may include, but are not limited to, the following behaviors and circumstances:

- Repeated remarks of a demeaning nature;
- Implied or explicit threats concerning one's grades, achievements, property, etc.;
- Demeaning jokes, stories, or activities directed at the student; and/or,
- Unreasonable interference with a student's performance.

Sexual harassment of a student by an employee means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to the conduct is made either implicitly or explicitly a term or condition of the student's education or benefits;
- Submission to or rejection of the conduct is used as the basis for academic decisions affecting that student; or,
- The conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with the student's academic performance by creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive education environment.

In situations between students and school officials, faculty, staff, or volunteers who have direct contact with students, bullying and harassment may also include the following behaviors:

- Requiring that a student submit to bullying or harassment by another student, either explicitly or implicitly, as a term or condition of the targeted student's education or participation in school programs or activities; and/or,
- Requiring submission to or rejection of such conduct as a basis for decisions affecting the student.

Any person who promptly, reasonably, and in good faith reports an incident of bullying or harassment under this policy to a school official, shall be immune from civil or criminal liability relating to such report and to the person's participation in any administrative, judicial, or other proceeding relating to the report. Individuals who knowingly file a false complaint may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

Retaliation against any person, because the person has filed a bullying or harassment complaint or assisted or participated in a harassment investigation or proceeding, is also prohibited. Individuals who knowingly file false harassment complaints and any person who gives false statements in an investigation shall be subject to discipline by appropriate measures, as shall any person who is found to have retaliated against another in violation of this policy. Any student found to have retaliated in violation of this policy shall be subject to measures up to, and including, suspension and expulsion. Any school employee found to have retaliated in violation of this policy shall be subject to measures up to, and including, termination of employment. Any school volunteer found to have retaliated in violation of this policy shall be subject to measures up to, and including, exclusion from school grounds.

### **STUDENT-TO-STUDENT HARASSMENT INVESTIGATION PROCEDURES**

Harassment as set forth above may include, but is not limited to the following:

- verbal, physical or written harassment or abuse;
- repeated remarks of a demeaning nature;
- implied or explicit threats concerning one's grades, achievements, etc.;
- demeaning jokes, stories, or activities directed at the student.

Harassment and abuse are violations of school district policies, rules and regulations and, in some cases, may also be a violation of criminal or other laws. The school district has the authority to report students violating this rule to law enforcement officials.

Students who feel that they have been harassed should:

- Communicate to the harasser that the student expects the behavior to stop, if the student is comfortable doing so. If the student needs assistance communicating with the harasser, the student should ask a teacher, counselor or principal to help.
- If the harassment does not stop, or the student does not feel comfortable confronting the harasser, the student should:

- tell a teacher, counselor or principal; and write down exactly what happened, keep a copy and give another copy to the teacher, counselor or principal including;
  - what, when and where it happened;
  - who was involved;
  - exactly what was said or what the harasser did;
  - witnesses to the harassment;
  - what the student said or did, either at the time or later;
  - how the student felt; and
  - how the harasser responded.

### **COMPLAINT PROCEDURE**

A student who believes that the student has been harassed will notify the middle school counselor or the middle school principal. The investigator may request that the student complete the \*Harassment Complaint form and turn over evidence of the harassment, including, but not limited to, letters, tapes, or pictures. Information received during the investigation is kept confidential to the extent possible.

The investigator has the authority to initiate a harassment investigation in the absence of a written complaint.

\*Forms are located in the Appendix of this Handbook.

### **INVESTIGATION PROCEDURE**

The investigator will reasonably and promptly commence the investigation upon receipt of the complaint. The investigator will interview the complainant and the alleged harasser. The alleged harasser may file a written statement refuting or explaining the behavior outlined in the complaint. The investigator may also interview witnesses as deemed appropriate.

Upon completion of the investigation, the investigator will make written findings and conclusions as to each allegation of harassment and report the findings and conclusions to the principal. The investigator will outline the findings of the investigation to the principal.

### **RESOLUTION OF THE COMPLAINT**

Following receipt of the investigator's report, the principal may investigate further, if deemed necessary, and making a determination of the appropriate next step which may include discipline, up to and including, suspension and expulsion.

Prior to the determination of the appropriate remedial action, the principal may, at the principal's discretion, interview the complainant and the alleged harasser. The principal will file a written report closing the case and documenting any disciplinary action taken or any other action taken in response to the complaint. The complainant, the alleged harasser and the investigator will receive notice as to the conclusion of the investigation.

### **POINTS TO REMEMBER IN THE INVESTIGATION**

- Evidence uncovered in the investigation is confidential.
- Complaints must be taken seriously and investigated.
- No retaliation will be taken against individuals involved in the investigation process.

- Retaliators will be disciplined up to and including suspension and expulsion.

### **P.R.I.D.E.**

PRIDE (Personal **R**espect for Individual **D**ifferences throughout the middle school **E**xperience) is a parent group at the middle school which supports the school through a program of volunteerism, raising funds for school projects, providing a parent perspective on school issues and offering help in a variety of other areas. To become involved in PRIDE, look for information in the district newsletter or call the middle school office at 319.895.6254.

### **EQUAL EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY**

The Mount Vernon School District does not discriminate in its educational programs or activities on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, national origin, religion, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability. Students are educated in programs, which foster knowledge of, as well as respect for, the historical and contemporary contributions of diverse cultural groups.

#### **Mount Vernon Middle School Quick Facts:**

- **School colors: Maroon and White**
- **Team name: Mustangs**
- **Athletic Conference: WaMaC**
- **District website: [www.mountvernon.k12.ia.us](http://www.mountvernon.k12.ia.us)**
- **Phone numbers:**

<b>Middle School School:</b>	<b>895-6254</b>
<b>Counseling office:</b>	<b>895-6254, ext. 3006</b>
<b>School nurse:</b>	<b>895-8843, ext. 3003</b>
<b>Secretary:</b>	<b>895-8843, ext. 3129</b>

**Go Stangs!**

**Appendix**

**ANTI\_BULLYING?HARASSMENT COMPLAINT FORM**

Name of complainant: \_\_\_\_\_

Position of complainant: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Students or employee target: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of complaint: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of alleged harasser or bully: \_\_\_\_\_

Date and place of incident or incidents: \_\_\_\_\_

Nature of Discrimination or Harassment Alleged ( Check all that apply )

<input type="checkbox"/>	Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	Physical Attribute	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sex
<input type="checkbox"/>	Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	Physical/Mental Ability	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sexual Orientation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gender Identity	<input type="checkbox"/>	Political Belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	Socio-Economic Background
<input type="checkbox"/>	Marital Status	<input type="checkbox"/>	Religion/Creed	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other
<input type="checkbox"/>	National Origin/Ethnic Background/Ancestry	<input type="checkbox"/>	Race/Color	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Familial Status	<input type="checkbox"/>	Political Party Preference	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Description of misconduct: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



Name of witnesses (if any): \_\_\_\_\_

Evidence of harassment or bullying, i.e., letters, photos, chats messages, text messages, emails, etc. (attach evidence if possible)

I agree that all information on this form is accurate and true to the best of my knowledge.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Code No. 104.E2

### ANTI-BULLYING/HARASSMENT WITNESS DISCLOSURE FORM

Name or witness: \_\_\_\_\_

Position of witness: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of testimony, interview: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of incident witnessed: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Any other information: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

I agree that all the information on this form is accurate and true to the best of my knowledge.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**DISPOSITION OF ANTI-BULLYING/HARASSMENT COMPLAINT FORM**

Name of complainant: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Students or employee target: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade and building of student or employee: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name and position or grade of alleged perpetrator/respondent:

\_\_\_\_\_

Date and place of incident or incidents: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Nature of Discrimination or Harassment Alleged ( Check all that apply )

<input type="checkbox"/>	Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	Physical Attribute	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sex
<input type="checkbox"/>	Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	Physical/Mental Ability	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sexual Orientation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gender Identity	<input type="checkbox"/>	Political Belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	Socio-Economic Background
<input type="checkbox"/>	Marital Status	<input type="checkbox"/>	Religion/Creed	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other
<input type="checkbox"/>	National Origin/Ethnic Background/Ancestry	<input type="checkbox"/>	Race/Color	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Familial Status	<input type="checkbox"/>	Political Party Preference	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Summary of investigation: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I agree that all information on this form is accurate and true to the best of my knowledge.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_