

2018 – 2019
Mount Vernon
Middle School
STUDENT
HANDBOOK



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SCHOOL QUICK FACTS

Mount Vernon Middle School

District website: www.mountvernon.k12.ia.us

First Day of School: August 23, 2018

Last Day of School: May 30, 2019

Phone numbers:

- School (Bob Haugse, Principal): 895-6254
- Attendance line: 895-6254
- Counseling office (Jennifer Tischer, Counselor): 895-6254, Ext. 3006
- School nurse (Linda See, Nurse): 895-6254, Ext 3003
- Secretary: 895-6254, ext. 3129

INTRODUCTION

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

This handbook is a collaborative guide for students, parents, and Mount Vernon Middle School 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.***

ASBESTOS

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

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

ATTENDANCE EXPECTATIONS AND PROCEDURES

Absences

Regular school attendance is one of the most important aspects of school success. Research confirms that regular attendance enhances student achievement and learning. The following attendance procedures are designed to promote regular school attendance for each class:

- Absences must be verified by a phone call from a parent or guardian within 48 hours of the date of the absence. It is best to phone the school (895-6254) on the same day of the absence.
- School officials will determine whether a reported absence will be recorded as *excused* or *unexcused*.

Excessive Absences

- After 5 absences per semester, excused or unexcused, a letter will be sent to the student's parents/guardians reminding about the attendance policy.
- 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.

Excessive Absences Physical Education

If students are required to miss more than two class periods of physical education due to injury a doctor's note must be provided to the physical education teacher, school nurse and the main office. The school nurse may also evaluate a student and excuse them from physical education for an extended period of time.

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:

illness
bereavement
school activities
professional appointment
religious observance
others as determined by principal

Unexcused Absences:

babysitting
haircut/pictures
missed bus
overslept
skipping
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.

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 8:10 am 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.

Book Bags

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.

BUS REGULATIONS

Students are responsible to the bus driver while on the vehicle, loading, unloading, or leaving the vehicle. The driver has the authority to discipline students who do not satisfactorily follow all bus regulations. The driver may also notify the school principal of inappropriate student behavior. The driver, sponsors, and chaperones are to follow all school district policies, rules, and regulations for student violations.

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

Be at the designated loading location before the scheduled arrival time.

Wait for the vehicle to come to a complete stop before entering or exiting.

Exit buses using the front door except in emergencies as directed.

Depart only at your designated location unless written permission to get off at an alternative location is given to the driver.

Stay at least ten (10) feet away from the front of the vehicle when walking in front of the vehicle to cross a roadway. Exit the bus, look in both directions, and wait for the driver's signal before starting across the roadway.

Do not extend arms, heads, or personal items out of the vehicle's window.

Do not throw any object inside or outside the vehicle.

Obtain permission of driver before opening windows.

Sit in an assigned seat if directed to do so by the driver.

Keep feet on floor of vehicle and off the seats.

Avoid using an excessively loud voice while riding.

Avoid roughhousing, crowding, or pushing while riding, entering, or exiting.

Use waste containers on vehicles to dispose of all trash.

Keep aisles of buses clear at all times.
Assist younger riders in following all bus regulations.
The good conduct policy is in effect and will be enforced.
Remain seated while on bus.

CAFETERIA

Mount Vernon Middle School hot lunches are served between 11:03 am and 12:52 pm 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 followed:

- 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.*

CARE OF SCHOOL PROPERTY

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

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

CHANGE OF LEGAL STATUS

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

CHILD ABUSE

It is the policy of the Mount Vernon Schools that any employee who has reason to believe that a student has been abused, as defined by law, must report to the Department of Human Services. Legal reference: Chapter 35A, the Code of Iowa. The level one investigator for suspected abuse by a district employee is our school nurse.

CLASS SCHEDULES

All middle students will take four core classes math, science, social studies, and language arts. Students in fifth, sixth, and seventh grade will also take a reading class. All students can participate in a number of specials classes art, music, physical education, health, band, choir, orchestra, and ELP. Students may not be able to participate in all specials classes based on their music choices. If you have questions concerning your student's schedule please contact the office 319-560-3174.

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:

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

COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES

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

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.

MOUNT VERNON COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT DISCIPLINE GUIDE

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

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

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

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

Level 1

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

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

Consequences for Level 1 Offenses:

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

Conference with teacher
Verbal Reprimand

Contact with parent
Loss of privileges
Time Out from class
Behavior Contract
Assignment of Detention

Level 2

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

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

Consequences for Level 2 Offenses:

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

Referral to administrator
Contact with parent
Loss of privileges
Time Out from class
Behavior Contract
Assignment of Detention
In school or out of school suspension up to ten days
Referral to outside agency
Change of class schedule
Contact with law enforcement

Level 3

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

1. Violent behavior toward another student or adult that is assaultive in nature
2. Sexual Harassment including use of inappropriate and suggestive sexual language
3. Sexual Assault
4. Vandalism involving significant damage to school property or the property of others
5. Stealing, theft of items valued at more than \$100
6. Use or possession of alcohol, illegal drugs, controlled substances or imitation items represented to be illegal in nature
7. Distribution of alcohol, illegal drugs, controlled substances or imitation items represented to be illegal in nature
8. Possession or use of a weapon

9. Bullying or hazing of another student or students
10. Chronic disciplinary concerns of a serious nature
11. Possession of materials that are of a violent or vulgar nature including pornography
12. Engaging in sexting or other inappropriate use of technology including, but not limited to, the use of computers and cell phones to record or share inappropriate and pornographic materials
13. Inappropriate use of school provided equipment whether in or out of school
14. Possession or use of fireworks or other dangerous items
15. Threatening actions directed toward students or the school district with the intent to cause fear or a major disruption to the school environment

Consequences for Level 3 Offenses:

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

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

DRESS CODE POLICY

Students are expected to adhere to reasonable levels of cleanliness and modesty in the way they dress for school. Student dress at school should show respect for themselves and others within the educational environment. Students who dress in a manner that causes a disruption to the educational environment will be asked to remove, change, or cover up the objectionable attire. Students who fail to comply with these requests will be referred to administration. Students will be disciplined according to the nature of the offense, circumstances surrounding the offense, and the frequency of the offense.

Examples of student dress that may be considered disruptive include:

- *Clothing containing slogans and/or designs that advertise or promote illegal or controlled substances, or that may offend other students for gender, race, sexual orientation and/or religious reasons.
- *Clothing worn in a manner that reveals excessive skin or chest areas (i.e. low-cut shirts, undershirts worn as shirts), stomach areas (i.e. low-rider jeans/shorts), or buttock areas (sagging pants, pockets revealed, or underwear showing).

In addition, the following items may not be worn at school:

- *Shoes with spikes, wheels, or cleats may not be worn in the middle school building
- *See-through or net clothing
- *Chains longer than twelve inches
- *Spiked straps worn on the neck, arms, or wrists

Ultimately, appropriate clothing to be worn at school is left up to administrative discretion. Whether or not hats may be worn in the classroom is left up to the discretion of the individual teacher. Some type of shoe must be worn when in the hallways, office, or cafeteria at all times.

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.

DUAL ENROLLMENT

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

ELECTRONIC DEVICES DURING SCHOOL DAY (CELL PHONES, IPODS, OTHER NON-INSTRUCTIONAL TOOLS)

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.

EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

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

EXPULSION

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

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

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

EXTENDED LEARNING PROGRAM (ELP)

Mount Vernon Middle school supports a diverse program to meet the needs of gifted and talented students. We recognize that gifted learners each have unique talents and needs that require a continuum of options for challenge and acceleration of academic programs. The mission of the Mount Vernon Middle School Gifted and Talented program, grades 5-8, is to recognize the academic and affective strengths and needs of all gifted learners, and to actively support their growth.

For complete information about our gifted and talented program please contact DeAnn Scearce (319) 895-6254 ext 3122.

FEES

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

Waivers:

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

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

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

FIRE, SEVERE WEATHER, AND INTRUDER DRILLS

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

FREE /REDUCED LUNCH

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

HATCH AMENDMENT

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

HARASSMENT OR HAZING

District policies protect staff and students from harassment under three circumstances:

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

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

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of the student's participation in school programs or activities;
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by a student is used as a basis for decisions affecting the student; or
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with a student's performance or creating an intimidating or hostile working or learning environment.

Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to:

- Verbal, physical, or written harassment or abuse;
- Pressure for sexual activity;
- Repeated remarks to a person with sexual or demeaning implications; and
- Suggesting or demanding sexual involvement, accompanied by implied or explicit threats.

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

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

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

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

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

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

HARASSMENT REPORTING PROCEDURES

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

1. Communicate directly to the harasser that they expect the harassing behavior(s) to stop. If the victim of harassment is uncomfortable confronting the harasser alone, the victim should ask a teacher, counselor, or the principal for assistance.
2. If the harassment continues after step #1, give a written record of the harassment incident to a staff member, counselor, or the principal. This documentation must include the following information:
 - What, where, and when the harassment incident happened
 - The name of the person alleged to have harassed someone
 - The names of any witnesses to the incident
 - What the harasser said and did during this incident and afterwards
 - What the alleged victim said and did at the time of the harassment and afterwards
 - How the harasser responded to the words or actions
 - How the student felt during and after the harassment incident.

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

HEALTH FORMS AND IMMUNIZATION CERTIFICATES

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

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

STUDENTS WITH SHORT AND LONG TERM HEALTH CONDITIONS

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

STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES

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

It is essential that current health information is on file with the school to best assist students. This information is provided through the registration process and can be updated with the school nurse during the school year.

Our school nurse, Linda See (Missy Hauser), works at both the middle and high schools (elementary school) and is available from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. daily. She can be contacted at: (319) 895-6254, ext. 3003, or by email: lsee@mountvernon.k12.ia.us (or Missy's contact information).

ILLNESS AND INJURY

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

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

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

LOCKERS

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

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

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

Students should report any thefts of personal items to the principal immediately.

LOST AND FOUND

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

MEDICATION

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

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

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

- The medicine must be prescribed by a licensed medical provider or dentist.
- A *Medication at School* form is to be completed and signed by a parent/guardian and will be kept on file in the school nurse office. Forms are available in the office and online through the district website.

- The medication must be brought to school in its original container and will be labeled with the following information (pharmacies will provide an extra medication bottle labeled with the prescription information to be kept at school):

1. Name of student
2. Name of medication
3. Directions for use
4. Name of physician or dentist
5. Name and address of pharmacy
6. Date of prescription

- The medication, while at school, will be in a locked drawer or cabinet. When required, refrigeration will be provided.
- Students who use inhalers and/or Epi-pens for severe allergies are allowed to either carry them at school or have them kept in the school nurse office. A *Self-Medication at School* form must be completed and signed by the student's parent/guardian and kept on file in the school nurse office. Forms are available in the office and online through the district website.
- Access to all medications will be under the authority of the school nurse/office personnel.
- A written record will be kept for all medications dispensed at school. This record will include: the student's name, the name of the medication, the amount of medication given, and the time it was dispensed. The person who dispenses the medication will initial the medication list form.
- All medication that is not dispensed by the end of the school year will be returned the student's parents/guardians or destroyed. No medication will be stored at school through the summer months. If the medication is destroyed, a notation will be made on the student's health record.

OPEN ENROLLMENT

Parents who wish to transfer students from other school districts to the Mount Vernon Community School District or who wish to transfer out of our school district to another district under open enrollment provisions may pick up the appropriate forms in the superintendent's office. These forms must be completed and returned to the superintendent's office by March 1st of the year preceding the requested transfer.

Under certain conditions, the March 1st deadline may be waived for good cause. For the purposes of open enrollment, good cause means that a change in the status of the student or the student's resident district has occurred. A change in the status of the student may include:

- Change in family residence
- Change in the state of residence
- Change in parent's/guardian's marital status
- A guardianship proceeding

- Placement in foster care or adoption
- Participation in a foreign exchange program
- Participation in substance abuse or mental health treatment program

A change in the status of the resident district may include:

- Failure of negotiation for whole-grade sharing agreement
- Reorganization of the school district
- A dissolution agreement
- Rejection of the current whole-grade agreement

In all good cause cases under resident district status changes, the parent/guardian must file within 45 days of the first Board action or within 30 days of the certification of the election, whichever is applicable.

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. **Cheating on a test, exam, or assessment will merit the same consequences as plagiarism.** 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 (2nd 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.

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.

SCHOOL COUNSELING SERVICES

School counseling services are available to all students. 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.

SEARCHES

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

STUDENT RECORDS

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

- identification data
- attendance data
- records of achievement
- family background information
- aptitude assessments
- achievement tests
- educational and vocational plans
- honors and school activities
- discipline data
- objective counselor/staff ratings and observations
- outside agency reports

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

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

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

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

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

A student record may contain information on more than one student. Parents/guardians have the right to access the information related to their student or to be informed of the information. Eligible students also retain these same rights.

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

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

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

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

- to school officials within the school district whom the superintendent has determined have a legitimate educational interest;
- to school officials from another school district in which the student wishes to enroll, provided the other district notifies the parents/guardians the records are being sent and that the parents/guardians have an opportunity to receive a copy of the records and to challenge the contents of the records;
- to the U.S. Comptroller General, the U.S. Secretary of Education, or state/local educational authorities;

- in connection with financial aid for which the student has applied or received if this information is necessary;
- to organizations conducting educational studies and the study does not release personally identifiable information;
- to accrediting organizations;
- to parents/guardians of a dependent student as defined in the Internal Revenue Code;
- to comply with a court order or judicially issued subpoena, only if the district makes reasonable effort to notify the parent/guardian or eligible student of the order or subpoena in advance of compliance;
- in connection with a health or safety emergency or as directory information.

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

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

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

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

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

When students are referred to the office for suspected use/possession of tobacco, alcohol, and/or a controlled substance at school, on school grounds, and/or during school sponsored events (both on and off our campus), the following procedures will be followed:

1. The student will be interviewed about the observations leading to the suspicions about tobacco, alcohol, and/or drug use or possession.
2. Assessments of physical condition (i.e. redness of eyes, pupil size, alertness), coordination, odor, and short term memory will be conducted by the assistant principal or other trained personnel.
3. If these assessments point to suspected use/possession of tobacco, alcohol or controlled substance use/possession, a search of the student's person and their belongings (i.e. book bag, locker, etc.) for items related to tobacco, alcohol, and/ or drug use/possession (i.e. bottles, pipes, lighters, baggies, etc.) will be conducted.

4. If the results of this search show convincingly that tobacco, alcohol, and/or drugs were used/possessed or the student voluntarily admits to use/possession, parents will be contacted and advised of the matter and requested to come to the school. If police involvement is appropriate, parents will be advised at this time.
5. If items related to possible tobacco use/possession are found during this search or if the student fails the assessments in step #2 above, the police will be contacted to cite the student for illegal use/possession for tobacco.
6. If items related to possible alcohol use/possession are found during this search or if the student fails the assessments in step #2 above, the police will be contacted to conduct assessments which may include but not be limited to an intoximeter (breathalyzer) exam. The results of the intoximeter assessment will be used to enforce school disciplinary and good conduct consequences. Legal consequences may also result from the intoximeter results.
7. If items related to possible controlled substance use/possession are found during this search or if the student fails the assessments in step #2 above, the police will be contacted and the school disciplinary and good conduct consequences will be applied. Legal charges may be filed based upon the results of the police investigation.

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

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

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.

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.

VISITORS

The Mount Vernon Community School District welcomes our alumni and guests of our students. All visitors must check-in at the office on arrival, notify office personnel of their presence, and wear a visitor name tag during their visit. Student visitors, such as friends or relatives from other schools, must be approved by the building administrator before they will be allowed into school.

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

WEAPONS POLICY

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

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

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

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

Weapons under the control of law enforcement officials are exempt from this policy. The principal may allow authorized persons to display weapons, other dangerous objects or look-a-

likes for educational purposes. Such a display will also be exempt from this policy. Upon request by an administrator, the weapons used as a part of an educational presentation will be stored in the office when the weapons are not being displayed.

WITHDRAWAL FROM SCHOOL

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

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

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